

SPG Sales Junior's Match 12/31/2022

Friends and Shooters,

Oh my goodness, what a day we had yesterday! I have to admit it has been on the back of my mind for a couple of years, but it was Mark Pachares that kicked us off center. "Why don't we have a kid's match over Christmas break?" Mark asked after a match a while back. "Uh..." said I. Being unable to find any good excuse why we shouldn't, Coralee and I started working on it. When Larry Baker, Jr at SPG Sales heard about it, he loved it. "Just let me know what you need" he messaged to say. "Great! You can buy the prizes," and it all started coming together. What should the prizes be? What would kids like to win more than anything? Why, CANDY of course! Coralee went to the grocery store with the instructions to buy big and lots, and she didn't fail us. Large bags and boxes were purchased of Whoppers, Twizzlers, Starburst, Reese's, you name it! I knew the kids would like it all, but I grossly underestimated the enthusiasm there would be for the prizes. Coralee had it all displayed on the prize table, and it was a very popular spot to visit during the match. At any time, there were numerous kids around it pointing and planning on which one they were going to win. Then a hurried and nervous trip to the score board was made to see how they were doing. It was really fun seeing the smiles and enthusiasm about working hard to win something.

We limited the match to 16 kids, which made 4 relays on 4 targets, and we quickly filled it. We also limited it to a maximum age of 16, with no minimum age as long as they could safely handle the guns. We had 16 awesome youth on the range yesterday and I am so proud of them. There was zero less than desirable things happen. They were all very attentive, followed directions, tried hard, rooted for their competitors, helped each other out, it was all there and it was heartwarming. You could have heard a pin drop during the morning meeting as they all listened, then Phillip Dobkins lead us in a prayer, and we all placed our hands on our hearts and recited the pledge of Allegiance. "Powder River, Ler'r Buck!" was shouted at the conclusion of the pledge and I called "Relay One, Rifles and Equipment to the line!" Man, was it ever a great day!

I put a lot of thought into what exactly to do for the match and I think we got it pretty right. It needed to be challenging, but not too hard. The beginner kids needed to be able to hit at least some of the targets while the more advanced kids needed to be challenged. What we ended up doing was we moved the rams to the turkey line, the turkeys to the pig line, the pigs to the chicken line, and we put our Texas star spinning targets at about 25 yards. All targets were shot prone and we gave the kids 10 minutes instead of the normal 8. For anybody wanting to duplicate what we did, this worked out quite well. The Texas stars were easy, but I wanted it that way so everybody could get some hits. They did, and there was lots of smiles and giggling when a hit was made.

I made two divisions based on skill level and age. Division one had kids 11 or 12 and older and had shot quite a bit. Division two was for the younger kids or those that had not shot much. We gave an overall match winner and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in each division, as well as we had some “best of” certificates for special awards. Kindolyn Dobkins was our overall Match Winner after knocking down an impressive 39 of the 40 targets. Kindolyn is a very accomplished shooter in other rifle disciplines and is part of the “X-Caliber” Junior shooting team that uses our range to practice. Great Shooting Kindolyn! Kindolyn took home a gold medal, a 20 dollar bill, a brick of SK Match Ammo, and choice from the candy table.

In Division 1, 3rd place went to Benjamin with a 30, 2nd to Miranda with a 31, and 1st to Ena with a 35. In division 2, 3rd place went to Asa with a 21, 2nd to Belle with a 24, and 1st to Eli with a 24. They each got a gold, silver, or bronze medal, a cash prize, and choice from the candy table. Both 1st places also took home a brick of SK match ammo. Trigg took home Best of certificate for his 6 rams, Eli took a Best Of certificate for his turkeys, and Ena got one for her rams in division one. Best of winners also got to pick from the candy table. Great Shooting everyone!

I am still amazed at the interest, sincerity, and just general “try” the kids had. I have often heard how today’s kids are not competitive. Let me tell you, none of them were there yesterday. Everyone one of them gave it their absolute best! I also smiled about how there were several shy ones to begin with and the kids

were in multiple groups across the shed at the beginning, but by the end they were all friends and were talking and interacting. The parents were not a lot different as we had families come that had never been to Smithmoor before. I don't think they knew what to expect. By the time it was time to go home, there were lots of smiles and new friends were made. One of the main original goals of Smithmoor Range was to have a place where families, friends, and neighbors can connect, enjoy themselves, and generally come together in a positive way. We hit a home run yesterday!

There were lots that pitched in to make this special match happen, but I want to especially thank several people. It would have never happened without Mark Pachares's good idea, encouragement, and help. Thank you Mark! A giant thank you to SPG Sales for all of your support for this match, our range throughout the year, and especially for all you do for our shooting sport across the nation.

www.shopspg.net Mom and Dad, Gary and Lorraine Smith, donated the cash for the cash prizes, which was another great idea. Thank you! Although not able to be there for the match, Steve Anderson of Wyoming Sight Drifter contributed financially to the match. Steve's top notch Sight Drifters and unending support of Smithmoor Range are truly appreciated from the bottom of our hearts.

www.wyomingsightdrifter.com Thank you Steve! Scott "Grizz" Stephenson graciously donated a whole case of SK Match Ammo specifically to be used for supporting youth shooting. Thank you Grizz, it will be put to good use, I promise! I also want to sincerely thank Ed Himelhoch for all of his support. Ed is one of our regular shooters and can always be counted on to help. He comes early to set up, stays late to pick up, helped the kids all day with the Star target, and usually brings some kind of great goody to share. Thank you Ed! Your support, friendship, enthusiasm, and smiling face is always appreciated.

If anyone has any questions or there is anything I can do to help folks do this kind of thing at their place, please let me know. It was a great thing and hopefully we can do it each year during Christmas break. You can contact me through smithmoorange@gmail.com or try my cell phone at 307-630-6816.

Happy New Year my friends,

Cody

Shooter Star Pig Turkey Ram Total Place

Div 1

Kindolyn 10 10 10 9 39 MW

Tighe 10 8 4 7 29

Grace 9 5 5 29

Miranda 10 8 8 5 31 2nd

Madison 10 9 7 3 29

Benjamin 10 4 10 6 30 3rd

Ena 10 9 6 10 35 1st Best of Rams

James 10 1 6 0 17

Div 2

Belle 10 7 5 2 24 2nd

Matthew 7 6 0 5 18

Eli 5 9 6 4 24 1st and Best of Turkeys

Gage 10 4 1 1 16

Mary 2 0 2 3 7

Asa 6 7 2 6 21 3rd

Afton 10 0 1 3 14

Trigg 8 2 1 6 17 Best of Rams