

## 2008 California State Championship International Air Pistol Results By John Bickar and Robert Cobe

The Palo Alto Rod & Gun Club hosted the California State International Air Pistol Championship January 12th and 13th at its indoor facility in Redwood City, CA. A total of 24 competitors participated, including three Juniors.

This is the first time this event has been held in a number of years. CRPA is eager to renew and revive this particular competition as airguns become more popular with juniors and adults.

International air pistol is an Olympic event that draws the best competitors from around the world, yet it provides an inexpensive entry into the shooting sports for novices. Competitors have one hour and 45 minutes to fire unlimited sighter shots and 60 record shots at a target ten meters distant, from a one-handed standing position. The ten ring is just under a half-inch in diameter.

In the Olympics, men and women compete separately. Men shoot the course of fire described above, and women fire 40 shots in one hour and 15 minutes. Competitors shoot at a single target, which is scored automatically by a computerized system that displays where each shot strikes the target. The current Olympic records are 591/600 and 390/400 for men and women, respectively.

Prices for new pistols range from under \$400 for a manually-cocked gun, up to \$2,000 for a top of the line pistol powered by compressed air held in an attached cylinder.



For the 2008 State Championship, competitors fired on targets holding four scoring bullseyes. Competitors were responsible for placing their targets on movable carriers and retrieving them when finished shooting. Thus, each competitor could shoot at his or her own pace during the championship. The Range Officers collected targets periodically and submitted them to the statistical office for scoring. Ron Morales takes aim at a target.

The typical air pistols used are powered by an attached compressed air cylinder, feature a customized hand grip, are extremely accurate (one-hole groups at 10 meters from a machine rest), and fire a 4.5mm lead pellet. These pistols are single shot and have many components (e.g., trigger, grip, and sights) that can be adjusted to fit the gun to the competitor. Anna Monene attaching the air cylinder to her Anschutz LP@ pistol. The LP@



has a stabilizer bar beneath the air cylinder that permits sliding weights to be placed accurately in order to reduce perceived vibrations and stabilize Anna's hold.



The overall size of the pistol is strictly governed by the rules. Steve Lum, the Match Director, is shown here checking the size of a pistol by inserting it into a box with the overall dimensions of 420mm x 200 mm x 50 mm (approx. 16.5" x 7.8" x 1.9"). If the pistol fits within these dimensions, it is cleared to be used in the competition.

The trigger pull can be no less than 500 grams, which is approximately 1.1 pounds. Here, Ron Morales is gently lifting his pistol into the air with a 500 gram weight attached to the trigger. If the weight attached to his pistol clears the table when lifted, then the trigger passes inspection. (Ron's passed.)



Target scoring sometimes proved difficult, as competitors fired three shots on each bull. Gauges and magnifiers were used to determine the accurate value of a shot. Sometimes two - and occasionally three - shots would make a jagged hole. Competitors' accuracy sometimes presented a challenge for the scoring judges.



John Bickar of Menlo Park won the match with a score of 569. He was followed by Robin Lee at 562 and David Alaways at 559. Bickar, Lee, and Alaways also will be competing in the US Olympic Team Trials for Men's Air Pistol, held in Colorado Springs, CO, from March 1st – 3rd. Liz David of Sunnyvale was the High Woman with a personal best score of 532, and Lea Reizman was the High Junior with a 500. Bickar (left) is being presented the CRPA bear trophy by Robert Cobez (CRPA Board of Director member and Pistol Committee Chairman)

The Palo Alto Rod & Gun Club would like to thank all the competitors and volunteers who made the match such a great success. The CRPA appreciates all of the time, energy, and enthusiastic effort that the Palo Alto Rod & Gun Club members invested to make this championship such a success. We all look forward to having more participants and excitement next year. Best wishes to those participants going on to compete for a spot on the US Olympic Team.