

THE JUNIOR Shooter

An introduction for Junior Shooters & Hunters

Issue 21



WIN
a Bistoli Range Bag
and Beanie

A Bistoli Range Bag and a beanie.

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Contents

- 2 Editorial
- 3 A lesson learnt - stalking and trophy-mounting stags
- 8 First aid for juniors
- 10 Know when to take a rest
- 13 Youth training schemes for juniors
- 14 Benefits of the Youth Training Scheme
- 14 Junior-only competition
- 15 Sponsoring a junior pays off
- 16 Sign up a junior

Editorial

There is plenty on the agenda in the 21st issue of *The Junior Shooter*. Keen youngsters are always eager to sample life in the outback during hunting expeditions. But beware - dangers can be lurking in the wild, as Christie Pisani explains. The *Heart of the Huntress* star lists some of the things that can hurt us in remote terrain, ranging from critters akin to snakes for instance, to inanimate objects like our own tools in the form of sharp knives or rifles. Hence, Christie stresses the need to be conversant with first aid procedures. Joseph Nugent is a young shooter who knows the ins and outs of being aware of your surroundings in the bush. Here he

highlights the techniques of stalking large game such as a mature red stag. Once the deed is done, Joseph runs through preparations for mounting your trophy. Hunting is also a journey sampled by Dick Eussen, who imparts how using a rest with your rifle can assist accuracy. Elsewhere, Sam Talbot outlines a couple of youth training schemes in New South Wales and Victoria designed to foster familiarity of the sport for youngsters who have no family connections with shooting. Completing our line-up, a Bistoli Range Bag and Beanie is the enticing prize on the competition page.

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A lesson learnt

- stalking and trophy-mounting stags

By Joseph Nugent



Joseph cautiously approaches a favored hunting spot.

A mature red deer stag is quite a large animal; robust and sturdy. However, through the use of stalking techniques to close the range and proper shot placement, they can be humanely despatched with a medium calibre rifle. When using a rifle chambered in .223 or the like, the hunter must stalk within 50-60 metres and place the shot perfectly behind the front shoulder or at the base of the neck. There really is no margin for error if an immediate kill is to be achieved. Understandably, the use of a larger calibre rifle allows the hunter more potential to take game at extended ranges. The increased power and penetration from a larger round reduces the chance of the animal running off wounded. Unfortunately it took a missed opportunity in the field resulting in the loss of a really nice trophy, to reinforce this point to me. It was on a hunting trip early in 2017 when dad and I realised it was time to upgrade my rifle to something a bit larger in calibre.

An opportunity lost

My dad and I had arrived at one of the properties we hunt shortly after dawn. I had my Tikka T3 chambered in .223, a

rifle that had proven its ability to despatch deer in the past. We had begun to walk up a grassy valley known for regularly holding stags in its clearings and meadows. The wind was good and the sun was beginning to rise. We approached the main meadow and immediately were greeted by the sight of a fleeing wild dog. He had been crouched low in the grass, probably warily watching our approach. We swiftly cycled our rifles but unfortunately he was too quick for either of us to fire a shot. On a subsequent trip a few weeks later, dad did manage to nail him though, much to the property owner's delight as his cattle were beginning to calve.

Somewhat disappointed we continued on in search of a deer. After approximately 100 paces dad looked up into the tree line and quietly whispered "Joe there's a cracker of a stag looking toward us, don't move". He had spotted a mature stag bedded at around 70 metres, an 8 pointer. Sadly what followed was quite a farce as dad had not realised, like I had, that there were actually two good stags bedded together. I cycled my .223 as quietly as I could and said excitedly "which one are we going to take?" to which dad responded "what do you mean which one?" Unfortunately,

by the time realisation dawned and we had sorted ourselves out, we'd been spotted by one of the two stags and both had moved off rapidly through some lantana bushes. Though I had one briefly in my sights I was unsure about the placement of the light 55-grain projectile so I had to let the stags flee over the ridge and into the dense bush below. I was under-gunned for the situation we had encountered. I knew it and so did dad. We went home empty-handed with dad muttering "never again".

A new rifle

We had no doubt that a larger calibre such as a .270 or .308 would have easily dropped the deer. It was time for an upgrade and as result three weeks later I was at our local gunshop taking possession of a new rifle. My rifle of choice was a Tikka T3X super lite stainless chambered in .270, topped with a Tasco 3-9x40; it soon became my favourite. I decided to buy a similar style rifle to the one I already owned, as I trust Tikka rifles and like the modern look they have. The rifle is very light, weighing in at just 2.5kg and will hold up to the test of time as the synthetic stock and stainless barrel are very weather resistant.

I chose a .270 as it is a flat shooting and fast moving round, ideal for deer hunting. When fired out of my very light rifle it has similar recoil to my dad's .308, which is still fairly mild compared to other popular large game calibres such as a .300 Win Mag or .30-06. After zeroing the scope and firing a few test shots to adjust to the increased recoil, I was ready to go deer hunting. I was keen to make good on the opportunity we had lost earlier in the year.

Dogs and deer

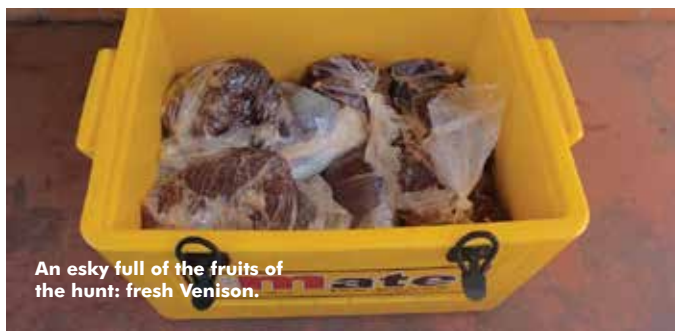
By now it was late September 2017, the game meat freezer was empty so we decided that it was time to try our luck on the property once again. We were slowly cruising along one of the boundary tracks heading towards a favored hunting area, when I spotted a small herd of 6-8 deer about 150 metres away in the adjacent paddock. They had obviously



The dog shot on a subsequent hunt of the property.



Two wild dogs on the property, including the black one that distracted the deer.



An esky full of the fruits of the hunt: fresh Venison.

been accessing the permanent spring there and appeared to be a bachelor herd (a group of young stags). There were deer of a variety of sizes and ages evident, some still antlered others having already cast. This was perfect as a young stag would fill the freezer nicely and offered the bonus of a trophy as well. Immediately dad brought the ute to a halt so we could observe the deer, monitor where they were heading and plan our stalk. We sat in the car and watched the deer feed and spar for about five minutes before they became uneasy and trotted off over the ridge.

Fortunately, there was a gate right beside where we had pulled over. After driving through, we swiftly geared up, assessed the wind and headed along the fence line over the ridge the herd had just skirted. As we slowly crested the ridge and scanned the small valley below we could not see a single animal. It was unlikely that the deer could have jumped the fence into the neighboring property as we had guarded against this by stalking up the fence line; they must have opted to move



Joseph's new rifle : Tikka T3X in .270 topped with Tasco 3-9x40.

further into the ridge country than we had at first anticipated. We had only stalked another 300 metres onto the next ridge line when I spotted the herd again. They were contentedly feeding away from us on the open face of the next ridge, a good 300-400 metres away, well out of my comfortable range. One of the younger deer, possibly a doe or spikey, had spotted us. So we were forced to keep still and wait for it to settle and continue feeding before we could make our next move.

To my surprise what drew the deer's attention away from us was not its next mouthful of grass, but a jet black wild dog trotting out of the long grass and across the ridge slightly below the herd. It was too far away for a shot, which would have compromised our stalk anyway, but it did distract the deer and provided a window of opportunity for us to ease into a dry creek bed in order to use the dead ground its high banks provided to mask our advance. After moving out of the deer's line of sight, dad decided the only way to get a good shot was to follow the creek bank about 100 metres to our left and move into the trees on a small knoll. This would position us slightly above and in front of the herd and allow us to take a shot once they had grazed within range. However, just as we exited the creek and moved toward the knoll, dad noticed a deer head emerge over the top of the tall grass to our front. The herd had moved much quicker than we had anticipated and now all we could do was wait and see what opportunity might present itself. The animal in question was a stag that had recently cast its antlers, not an animal I wanted to shoot, and to make matters worse it had seen us and was examining us intently. All we could do was sit still, hope that the inquisitive stag did not sound the alarm and wait for a more appropriate animal to present itself.



The first stag to fall to Joseph's new rifle.



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One more step

Luck was with us and soon after, another head popped up over the tall grass of the knoll and this one was antlered! He was a 7 point stag, a perfect candidate to fill both the freezer and some space on the pool room wall. He was much less cautious and paid no heed to the behaviour of the animal watching us. After about five minutes he had moved closer and was now partially visible through the long grass but not quite in the open. Dad was whispering to me, "wait, wait... two more steps. one more step. Can you see him clearly?" As soon as I said "yes" dad gave me the okay to take the shot. It seemed to have taken forever, but in reality was only a few minutes and allowed me the opportunity for an unimpeded, clean kill. The stag was quartering across us at around 110 metres, I placed the crosshairs on the centre on his chest, steadied my breathing and squeezed off the round. The shot felt good and after standing up and walking forward 10 or so metres I could see that the 130-grain Nosler ballistic tips had done a good job. The stag was down instantly. Upon inspection of his chest I could see that the projectile had passed completely through the deer. The .270 is quite a big step up from the .223, however, I enjoyed the confidence which came with having the increased power available when hunting large game such as a mature red deer stag.

After taking a few photos, we removed the back straps, haunches and head. From there we began the walk back to the truck. Unlike some hunts, the walk was quick as it was only about 1 kilometre back to the vehicle. In fact the

hunt had taken all of 45 minutes. Once we arrived home we processed the venison into a variety of different cuts with plans to distribute it between our hunting friends and neighbours. I always look forward to eating fresh venison after the hunt, it's my favourite of all the game meats. We also set aside some of the meat for me to make my signature jerky recipe.

The head was a nice memento of the hunt and the next step was to prepare it for mounting. I prefer a traditional European skull mount and use a five-step process which dad and I have developed through trial and error.

Step 1: Fleshing out the skull

The first step in preparing a European mount, is to remove all soft tissue from the head. This means that as soon as possible, you need to skin the head, remove the bottom jaw, remove the eye balls and cut away any large pieces of tissue from the skull. This is done to reduce the amount of time needed for remaining organic material to properly decay.

Step 2: Natural decay process

The second step is to allow the skull sufficient time for the natural processes of decay to take place. This requires you to leave the head in a garden bed or on an ants' nest for approximately three weeks. This will allow ample time for maggots and ants to eat away at any remaining soft tissue and partially clean the skull for you.



Joseph prepares to get to work.



Step 2

After three weeks of natural decay.

Step 3: Boiling the head

The third step is to simmer the skull. To do this it is best to find an appropriate container in which to place the skull. Once filled with water add some liquid detergent, as this will help to cut through any fatty deposits remaining on the skull. You should simmer the skull as required, but do not boil for an extended time as you risk splitting the nasal bone and losing the teeth.

Step 4: Scraping the skull

After taking the skull from the boiling pot, loose tissue and sinew will be ready for removal. To do this you can either use a pressure hose or a knife or paint scraper to dislodge any remaining tissue. It is important that the skull is completely clean, as the quality of the final finish is at stake.

Step 5: Whitening the skull

The last step is to whiten the skull. To do this use a mixture of water and hydrogen peroxide in a tub or bucket to whiten the bone. Note, this solution will whiten bone but does not alter the color of the antlers. The skull should sit in this solution for 3-5 days then be removed to sit in the sun for a day or two in order to dry it out completely.

Now the European mount is complete and ready to display as you see fit, sometimes we use a mounting board, sometimes not. I am happy to have taken such a fine animal and the trophy reminds me of the experience each time I look at it. However, I am looking forward to the 2018 roar when I can hopefully harvest a truly top class trophy stag. ●



The finished product ready for display.



Step 3

Simmering the skull.



Step 5

Hydrogen peroxide bath.

First aid for juniors

by Christie Pisani



There are many things that can hurt us out in the bush such as snakes, unstable ground, the weather, even the tools we are using like sharp knives, arrows and rifles. In our hunting courses, at the club, and while on manoeuvres hunting, safety should be our first priority. I remember when I was a young girl, dad teaching me the fundamentals of gun safety from an early age. But sometimes accidents happen, no matter how careful we are.

Have you ever thought about what you would do if one of your family was hurt in the bush? Maybe you figure that your parents, or one of the adults in the group, can sort it out. Perhaps you think it's more likely that you (being an adventurous, naughty, or clumsy kid) will be the one needing sorting out or that somebody else will deal with it.

Unfortunately, having that mindset will land you in trouble. Adults and kids alike need to be prepared for emergencies. The more we get away with having an 'it won't happen to me attitude', the more complacent we become. It's kind of like picking on your little sister. If you get away with it, you keep doing it... until one day, she fights back!

Nothing can replace the knowledge that you will acquire from doing a first aid course. So if you ever have the opportunity for first aid training at school or your sports club, take it. You could learn to save the life of somebody you love. In the meantime, here is a summary of some of the most common injuries that happen in the wilderness and how to treat them.

When they spring a leak

For a major open wound, you can save the victim's life just by stopping or slowing the loss of blood using direct pressure. Apply direct pressure over the bleed site with a bulky bandage (or even a t-shirt if that's all you have) and your hand. Secure it with a roller bandage that you will find in a first aid kit. Elevate the wound if possible, by putting it in a sling or supporting it over a raised object such as a rolled up swag or pack. This uses gravity to slow the blood flow



A hunter suffering from the cold is wrapped up to protect him from the elements.

and allows a blood clot to form. Resting and reassuring the patient slows their heart down and stems blood flow.

Keeping out the creepy-crawlies

In a wilderness environment, infection is the 'silent killer'. A wound, no matter how small, must be cleaned and redressed daily and monitored for signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, pain, discharge or heat. You can do that by flushing it thoroughly with water (clean drinking water is fine) and putting a clean dressing over the top. Check things every few hours to make sure it isn't becoming 'festy'!

Sticks, stones and broken bones

Fractures or embedded injuries can cause severe blood loss if they are not cared for properly. The principles of management are to stop any external bleeding (using pressure) and keep the



Hunting guide Mike Mackay prepares to apply an arm splint using a deer antler.



Ben Janson's broken leg is immobilised using a splint made out of a sleeping mat and padding.



Two hunters apply a pressure bandage to a young victim's wound.

casualty and their injured part still. In the case of embedded objects we can use a donut bandage to surround the stick and secure that in place with a roller bandage.

For a broken bone, protect the limb, with whatever you can, to stop the bones from undergoing further movement. This will reduce the patient's pain and prevent added injury. You might have to call 000 to summon the ambulance to you. Putting your dad in the back seat of his Prado and driving him to hospital with a broken leg will probably mean you are grounded - for a few reasons.

Battling the elements

Hypothermia is defined as low body temperature, which according jokingly to the average Queenslander, is a condition caused by alighting from a plane in Sydney. The principle of treatment is to prevent further heat loss by warming and drying the casualty. Re-warming must be gradual, so avoid re-warming shock (ie, don't chuck them in the barrel of boiling deer heads). Food and a warm, sweet drink such as hot cocoa can be given but only if the patient is fully alert. Otherwise you run the risk of blocking their airway if they chuck it back up.

On the other side of the scale, is a person suffering from heat illness... Humans, like animals, have learnt to avoid this by adopting the concept of an afternoon siesta, which is easier to accomplish on holidays than at work. Nonetheless, if affected, the casualty should be removed from the source of heat and put in the shade and hydrated with lightly salted water. If the casualty is confused or groggy, lie them down with legs elevated. Cool packs can be placed at the neck, groin and armpits to gradually chill the bloodstream.

Use fanning and misting to increase evaporative cooling. Recovery can take 24 hours, so you will need to be strict with your casualty and make them rest up until you are sure they are fit to continue with activity. If the casualty shows signs of shock, confusion, convulsions, collapse or severe flushing, seek medical aid.

Biters and stingers

All Australian snake bites are treated with the Pressure Immobilisation Technique. It is now known that venom from Australian snakes and some spiders is injected into the lymphatic system, which is driven by muscular movement. The Pressure Immobilisation Technique has been proved to slow lymph flow by compressing the lymphatic vessels and restricting muscular movement. This technique is used for all Australian snakes, funnel-webs and mouse spiders, blue ring octopus and cone shells.

The technique involves applying a compressive bandage over the bite site, beginning from the bottom of the limb and bandaging the whole of the limb, up to the groin or armpit. Do not wash the bite site. Also do not cut it, suck it or, yuck, lick it! Instead, mark the area with a cross once the bandage is applied. The hospital can run tests on the bite site to find out the type of snake. So, don't chase the snake either.

A padded splint should then be applied and secured to one or both legs, or the arm, to keep them super still. Any patient who goes unconscious, or complains of wanting to vomit, should be positioned in the side recovery position to maintain a clear and open airway.

Was that too much information to take in? Well the great news is, if you don't know what to do when somebody is hurt, you can always call 000 and the Ambulance service will be able to send help your way. Your most important job is to be able to get into contact with them, so always make sure you have some kind of communication device (with reception) and know how to use it.

Chat with your parents about what you should be carrying in case of an emergency, such as two-way radios, mobile or satellite phones, personal locator devices or distress beacons, and of course, a first aid kit. Remember that being prepared is everybody's job. Don't leave it to the grown-ups, because they forget things too - and they turn more forgetful the older they become. Until next time, play safe! ●

Know when to take a rest

As **DICK EUSSEN** explains, using a rest out hunting in the field assists with accuracy from all ranges.



Bunny busting is great fun with long-range rifles. Daniel Giblin spots while Jenny Leighton aims a .270 Weatherby Magnum rifle fitted with a model #25 Harris Bipod Rest. Claire Giblin looks on.

If memory serves me correctly, I had a review on the Harris Bipod Rest published in the very first issue of the *Australian Shooters Journal* at the time edited in Brisbane. That was back in the late 1960s. The rests were unavailable in Australia and I imported three from the US. Of course, there was no email back then and it took a fair time, with letters for pricing and orders which was followed by a long wait to clear Customs, who added extra costs.

The outcome was that the Harris Bipod Rests were imported into Australia by a distributor who did extremely well, as there was a steady demand for a handy carry-a-field rifle rest. I still use these rests on my long-range rifles when I hunt on open plains. A rest makes good sense as few hunters shoot well enough to make constant and predictable hits on game when shooting from the shoulder. I have

seen a couple of shooters do it well, fellow shooting scribe Nick Harvey and old mate Wally Brummell were top off-the-shoulder shots in their time. I could match them on a good day, but these days there would be more luck than skill involved. I am sure that Nick and Wally have the same problems with ageing eyes and slowing reflexes.

I shot lots of shotgun trap back then and the follow-through method on a moving target was natural. I rarely missed moving or running targets with a rifle, making some amazing long-range shots in front of witnesses. Of course, the speed of the .270 Weatherby Magnum's 130-grain Nosler Partition projectiles helped.

But wherever possible I use a rest when shooting. Any rest is useful – pack, tree trunk, rock or a vehicle. If nothing is available, I try sitting or a prone position if the grass height allows it. Shooting sticks are all the rage nowadays,



but I find the extra weight and object a hassle to carry. I think that the shooting stick thing originated in Africa where gun bearers carry the load. But they are really good as they can extend the range of a rifle for long-distance shots, the same as a bipod does. The only difference is that shooting sticks can be used while standing; the highest a bipod rest allows is the sitting position. Shooting sticks are useful in long grass and scrubs. I will have to procure myself a gun bearer.

A long-range shot, especially on a moving target, is not recommended, but there are shooters who consistently score doing so. I have done it and seen it done, but I have also seen a lot of shots miss their targets. The average hunter only ventures out a few times a year – if at all. Taking potshots at moving targets is beyond their capabilities. Paper punching on the range helps, but those targets don't move and are at a known distance. Target shooting does help to keep the trigger finger in tune and the eyes aimed, so anyone who plans to hunt owes it to themselves – and the game – to go out on the local SSAA range to practise – and practise some more before hitting the game trails.

Most range shooting is about using a rest, mostly a sandbag, under the front stock. After all, you are out there to shoot paper bulls, so any rest helps. However, many shooters ignore this in the field and insist on shooting off their 'hind feet like a man!' That is all very well, but even with a rifle capable of putting five shots inside the X-ring at 100m from a rest, some shooters can't hit a boar in the bum at half that distance, especially when the heart is pumping and the hands are trembling. Don't laugh, it happens. Another factor is that many shooters don't like recoil or muzzle blast and who would blame them? Thus, when shooting on the run you don't have a rest or earmuffs and it all boils down to missing, even at close range.

Three-positional

You should also practise three-positional shooting – prone, kneeling and standing. In all three positions your body should be facing the target at about a 30- to 35-degree angle to the right of it (for a right-handed shooter). The proper kneeling position (for a right-handed shooter) is sitting on the instep of your right foot with your right leg in the vertical position. In the sitting position you sit on your butt with



The prone position is the most unlikely one to be used in the field, but it works from a high vantage point if available as Jenny Leighton demonstrates.



Jenny Leighton aims at a distant bunny with the .270 Weatherby Magnum rifle, which is fitted with a model #25 Harris Bipod Rest, set in its lowest position.

the feet apart and knees pulled up to provide support for your elbows, which rest inside the knees, not on top.

The most practical field position is standing as it gives the best visibility of the country you are shooting in, but offhand shooting is also the most unsteady of the three positions. This is where long shooting sticks are exceptionally handy if you are prepared to carry them and have the time to set them up. They come in three types, one-, two- and three-legged, and are made from lightweight aluminum tubing or Kevlar. They are generally about 1.80m in height and held together by tubing or straps about 12cm below the top of the two- and three-leg models. They only take a few seconds to set up in a handy tripod position. But they are more bother in the field than I care for and I continue to take the odd running shot from the shoulder, unless I have the time – and the clearance – to click the Harris Bipod into battery position. The one-legged bipod is faster and easier to carry and would be my choice, but it is not as steady.

Don't ignore the rest

Unless you have done a lot of offhand shooting and are good at it, avoid taking potshots at game. Most people will hit their target after three or four shots when in the open, but the aim is to do that with one shot. This brings us back to using a rest to help out and put us on track for a one-shot kill. There are several good rifle rests on the market and you only have to source the local gunshop, or the pages of this publication, to find what you need.

Don't fool yourself that you don't need one. Any help is

good. A rifle rest, like the Harris Bipod Rest or its hybrids, is attached to the front QR swivel stud on the rifle's fore-end or the barrel. Such a rest weighs little. It is almost unnoticeable in the field and allows you to shoot from either a prone or sitting position. It also allows some side movement, but not much, especially if the target species is running at top speed.

With the Harris Bipod, or its hybrids, the sling swivel allows it to be attached semi-permanently to the rifle if you wish. The bipod also has a sling stud, which replaces the stock stud, so you can continue to carry your rifle with the sling attached. These units have spring-loaded folding legs and fittings that lock into position, either at battery or when carrying. The legs are telescopic and can be adjusted for various heights. They only take seconds to erect into position. Because they push forward during recoil, accuracy is unaffected and in fact improves it. Harris Bipods are available in various sizes for use from a bench or in the field. The Harris Rest and its hybrids are lightweight, being manufactured from aluminum and with fittings that consist of gun-blued hardened steel. Contact areas are coated with non-slip Corfam, or similar, to prevent marring of the stock.

These rests do not stop you from using the rifle offhand, standing, kneeling or prone. As every hunter is aware, there are times when game flushes and you have little or no choice but to risk that all-important running shot, because no game animal is going to wait around for you to put the fold-up rest into battery mode, or reach a convenient tree or other object, for help. If the range is close and the shot is taken quickly, the chances are that it will be a swift, clean kill. It is a good reason to participate in as much offhand

shooting as you can, even on stationary range targets.

But in many cases you will have the element of stealth in your favour, giving you enough time to have those bipod legs down and locked before you squeeze the trigger for a long-range instant kill. There is nothing unsporting in using a rest to take game – nothing at all. Think about that before heading bush. If you have doubts then buy, beg, steal, or borrow a rifle rest and try it out where it shines – on the hunting ground. ●

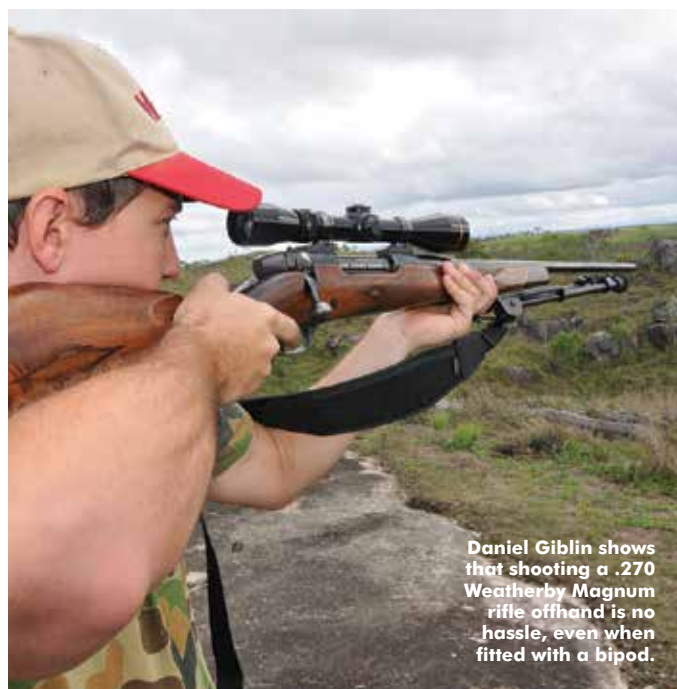
The fittings on the Harris Bipod Rest look complicated, but it takes only a few seconds to fit, or remove, the rest.



The spring-loaded legs enable the Harris Bipod Rest and its hybrids to spring into action at the push of a button release, for either extension or retention.



Claire Giblin shows the proper way of using a sitting position as a handy rest when field shooting.



Daniel Giblin shows that shooting a .270 Weatherby Magnum rifle offhand is no hassle, even when fitted with a bipod.

Youth training schemes for **juniors**

by Sam Talbot



Shooters at Eagle Park in action.

There are lots of juniors throughout Australia who are interested in shooting and really want to give it a try, but don't know the right people or are lacking the equipment. Luckily, the SSAA offers a wide variety of programs designed for juniors with no shooting experience.

One of the SSAA's most successful junior programs is the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) run at the Eagle Park and Springvale ranges by SSAA Victoria. Any juniors over the age of 12 are welcome and most go on to obtain a junior shooting licence at the end of the introductory program.

First time attendees receive induction to both safety and marksmanship. While the initial training at YTS is for prone shooting, participants quickly transition to traditional SSAA disciplines as their skills develop. The training is carried out using .22 bolt-action rimfire rifles which provides a low recoil non-threatening introduction to shooting at an affordable price, coupled with the accuracy and national competition availability necessary for development.

After their first shoot at Eagle Park, YTS participants are invited to join the monthly junior club competition and

receive training in either Field Rifle, 3-Position or Metallic Silhouette disciplines. Of course, you don't need to bring your own firearm, there are a number of rifles available for use free of charge, although depending on attendee numbers there may be some sharing.

Parents are encouraged to get involved as well – why should the kids have all the fun! After her son Lachlan showed an interest in shooting, Belinda Walton took it upon herself to find out how she could get Lachlan involved.

“The SSAA Victoria website was very comprehensive and told me everything I needed to know. The people at the YTS have been great and even led to me getting my firearm licence,” said Belinda.

“Lachlan and I, as well as my husband, can't get enough of shooting now, and when the time came to buy our own rifle the team at the YTS helped out and gave me great advice.”

Over the border a similar program is run at St Mary's Indoor Shooting Centre in Sydney. Similar to the YTS, the SSAA NSW Junior Development program introduces juniors aged between 12 and 17 to shooting on Saturday mornings over a 12-week period.

No matter where you live, the best place to start your junior shooting career is by contacting your SSAA State Office. With more than 400 SSAA clubs scattered across Australia there are loads of camps, competitions and come-and-try days constantly on offer to junior shooters. Plus, most clubs are more than happy to help and support juniors during their regular competitions. It has never been easier to become a junior shooter. ●

For more info about YTS at Springvale: 0427 819 233

For more info about YTS at Eagle Park: 03 5283 1575



Hands-on training is important for proper junior development.



Benefits of the Youth Training Scheme

- Learn how to shoot the following disciplines: 3-positional, field rifle and metallic silhouette.
- Gain exposure to regular competitions as well as access to state and national competitions.
- Foster a positive learning environment with respect for the safe use of firearms.
- Meet new people and make lifelong friends.
- Shooting tends to be less physical than traditional team sports and is ideal for anyone unable or uninterested in more physical sports.
- Receive quality coaching from the first lesson to the elite level - accredited coaches offer training and support.
- Develop mental strength and learn about the psychology of sport.

Juniors-only competition

Only junior SSAA members are eligible to enter. One entry per member. To enter, simply write your name, address and membership number on a piece of paper and mail it to us at:

May 2018 Junior competition
 SSAA National
 PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061

or online at ssaa.org.au/win

Competition closes May 31, 2018

WIN a Bistoli Range Bag and Beanie



Valued at \$75
 Kindly donated by Tezniek
tezniek.com.au

Sponsoring a junior

by Sam Talbot

pays off



**Shooting pals:
Patrick and Noah
Challis.**

Throughout 2017, we ran our successful ‘Sign up a Junior’ campaign to help introduce youngsters to recreational shooting. Juniors are essential to the ongoing strength and vitality of the SSAA as well as to shooting in general, so we are pleased so many of you embraced the campaign. An impressive 1553 juniors were sponsored throughout 2017, leaving our sport in an extra 1553 safe pair of hands heading into the future.

As a reward for backing this program, we gave away a \$1000 SSAA Shop voucher to a randomly-chosen member who sponsored a junior, as well as a \$500 SSAA Store voucher to a junior who was sponsored.

Our lucky backer was John Murphy, a grandfather from NSW, who chose to sponsor his grandson Elih to teach him how to use an air rifle and show him general firearm safety.

“More young people should get into shooting instead of computer games,” said John. “It teaches them discipline and helps them learn more about responsibility.”

As a landowner in country NSW, John knows firearms play a key part in living off the land and just how important safety is.

“Safety is crucial in the bush and on the range. What you learn on the range translates to the bush, where safety and discipline are even more important.”

As for Elih, John’s grandson, he’s a former city dweller who, after moving closer to his grandfather in the country, has taken to shooting like a duck to water. The grandfather and grandson pair are best of mates, with just about all their conversations quickly turn to firearms and shooting.

“The two spend so much quality time together chatting about shooting and firearms and it has really brought Elih and John together. I never know what they’re talking about but they are both really into it,” says Patricia, Elih’s mum and John’s daughter.

Patricia is interested in trying shooting but doesn’t have her licence yet. She says her next step is to get a gun safe in

the house so that when the time eventually comes, Elih will have a place to safely store his rifle - a time Elih is hanging out for.

“Since we moved to the country, Elih has been bitten by the shooting bug. His friends are hunters and hunt kangaroos from time to time, which are at plague proportions out here,” said Patricia.

John was blown away by the \$1000 SSAA Store voucher and couldn’t decide what he was going to buy, but was keen to start exploring the SSAA Online Shop.

“Elih has a long wishlist of things he has been looking at and will be keen for his grandad to share the voucher with him - which he’ll be more than happy to do!” said Patricia.

Our lucky junior winner who has received a \$500 voucher is Victorian Noah Challis who was sponsored by his dad, Patrick. Noah and Patrick are shooting pals who can be often found at the SSAA Shepparton range and other rifle clubs in their area.

As a teacher, Patrick has been heavily involved in junior shooting and has supervised his school’s clay target shooting competition for a number of years.

“Last year we had 43 students head down to the range for the competition and many of those junior shooters were females who ranged from year 9 to year 12,” he said.

Patrick signed up his son because the SSAA offers an excellent way to introduce juniors to the shooting sports.

“It’s important young Australians, particularly those in rural areas, understand that a firearm is just a tool. But in addition to that, shooting is such an interesting sport and it’s a good way to learn about safety generally,” said Patrick.

SSAA National would like to thank all the SSAA members who signed up a junior as well as the juniors themselves. Our future looks bright and we hope *The Junior Shooter* encourages you to start or keep on shooting.

Sponsoring a junior is just an extra \$25 and you can do it when you sign-up or renew your own SSAA membership. ●

