

Attributes of a Champion

Army Marksmanship Unit

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Qualities of a Great Team Shooter

The one popular fallacy that good pistol scores are engendered by stupidity has been proven completely erroneous. A quick look at the nation's outstanding pistol marksmen will show you individuals of higher than average level of intelligence. The necessity for intense concentration and strict adherence to a multitude of sometimes unnatural but correct shooting fundamentals, quickly eliminates those of slower intellect.

A good team shooter need have many attributes; however, if he lacks the ability for complete concentration and the intestinal fortitude to make up his mind to adhere to fundamentals regardless of match pressure, adverse weather conditions or any other conceivable distractions he is useless to you and the team.

1. **Compatibility.** A team member must so conduct himself so that his presence is enjoyed by his team mates, win or lose. Hot tempers, temperamental prima donna activities and arbitrariness will do little to improve shooting ability and will do a lot to alienate shooting companions and quite possibly have a detrimental effect upon the team score.
2. **Sure-Footed and Careful.** This is no game for the indecisive. Each step must be planned and deliberated. Decide what has to be done, then carefully and methodically do it.
3. **Confidence.** A shooter must have no doubt whatsoever about his ability or the accuracy of his guns.
4. **Consistency.** A team shooter must be consistent enough that his performance can be predicted within reasonable limits.
5. **Tranquillity.** Although a good shot must place all of his mental and physical ability toward shooting a good score, infrequently he will fail in this. Suffice to say that when this happens if he admonished himself severely, or falls into a fit of complete depression because of a poor score, he will hurt greatly his chances for the rest of the match. It is not intended that you laugh off or treat lightly a poor performance; however, you must possess the presence of mind to accept the bitter with the sweet.
6. **Good Health.** The eyes are important so they must be perfect or corrected to this condition. Good physical condition is imperative to give resiliency to the muscles and better nerve control. The day of the drinking, smoking, have-a-good-time pistol champion is long past. To win today a shooter must refrain from any habits of either eating or living that will impede his ability to perform at his best.
7. **Open Mind.** The shooter who has placed himself in the mental state that he can accept no help, no coaching-, nor a frequent re-evaluation of his technique, can never. In addition to those proven ill effects on general health and longevity, the following effects and reactions will definitely prevent the shooter from reaching his maximum potential. Do not attempt to fool yourself, or to justify your own inability to refrain from either (or both) of these bad habits by pointing out the "exceptions" who are apparently able to fire good scores in spite of their habits. Most good shooters do not smoke at all or drink before or during their shooting.

8. Sportsmanship. A poor sport has no place on any Army team. He is a representative of the US Army and a member of the team that produces more winners than any other. Shoot to win, but if you are not the winner you should be proud of a team mate who is. There is no honor in winner over a team mate who did not shoot his best scores, so don't play underhanded and try to create unfavorable conditions for him. Win your matches by shooting.

Physical Conditioning

To be effective, physical training for the pistol shooter must be realistic and continuous. The objective is to so condition the body that the general health is excellent and that the muscular and nervous systems are fully capable of withstanding the grind of match conditions and enable the shooter to fire his maximum scores.

Physical training should be progressive, either in repetitions performed or in the resistance used. Conditioning must remain short of the fine drawn conditions sought by track athletes, as this is generally considered detrimental to good pistol shooting. Violent and strenuous athletics which may result in injuries should be avoided.

A series of non-strenuous exercise of the type that require body bending and stretching, deep breathing and moderate muscular tension are best suited toward obtaining a condition defined as body tone and a feeling of well being.

When you exercise, go at it with enthusiasm; if you are going to spend the time, get the results your time deserves. Simply going through the motions of an exercise is of no advantage whatsoever. You must put some effort into your exercising. Don't expect that just because you started exercising on Monday you are going to realize an appreciable raise in score by Friday. Physical conditioning is a relatively slow process.

Detrimental Habits for Shooters

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1. Smoking (these are proven facts).
 - a. Shrinks capillaries causing increased heart action resulting in blood circulation difficulties, rapid, shallow respiration, increased pulse activity and frequent nerve pulsating in the extremities of the body.
 - b. Dry and "cures" large areas of the lungs, preventing proper utilization of oxygen breathed, and causing thereby the need for much faster and deeper breathing when under pressure.
 - c. Dulls certain sensory nerve endings in mouth and throat causing increased nervousness when under pressure.
2. Alcohol.
 - a. Causes temporary (eventually permanent) loss of sense of values and judgment.
 - b. A depressant, alcohol and its tail end effects will lessen the desire to win.

- c. It will dehydrate the body causing permanent ill effects to blood, nerves and certain brain areas.
- 3. Drugs.
The debilitating after effects of even the mildest drugs are well known. Once used, requirements increase rapidly, causing eventual habitual need.
- 4. Coffee.
Coffee overcomes depression. Three cups of coffee are equal to a five-alarm fire in your nervous system during a match.
- 5. The following suggestions are offered concerning the above.
 - a. The use of tobacco is to be discouraged. The smoker is slowly tightening an unbreakable linkage around his nervous control that will eventually destroy that control.
 - b. Alcoholic beverages when used should be in moderation and of the light variety, i.e. beer, and only after completion of the day's shooting.
 - c. Mild drugs of a nature intended to calm the nerves and give a false feeling of stability in hope of attaining high scores under pressure are worthless.
 - d. Overeating and late hours when you are trying to accomplish the difficult task of developing into a better shooter or attempting to produce scores in a match that will enable your team to win, will definitely remove that brisk, enthusiastic alertness so necessary when you need every point you can get.