

Southland Championships 2024 & Second stage of the South Island Championships

held at Oamaru RC

10-11 February 2024

The annual migration south is sometimes one step too far for some marksmen and women. So, once again, the Southland Championships were held in Coastal Otago at the Oamaru Rifle Club's range, which runs parallel to Boundary Creek Road on the north side of town. The venue might have also had something to do with the Southern clubs' current inability to offer the 500 and 600 yard ranges.

Representatives of Malvern, Ashburton, Oamaru, Gore and Invercargill Rifle Clubs took flight and enjoyed a cocktail of sunshine, a detail of rain, a fresh and crispy Sunday morning. The wind was largely from 10 o'clock sweeping in from behind the butts and contouring off the hills to the right. This meant left to right wind at the target end of the range and a right to left wind at the firing point end. When all flags were pointing in the same direction, points were dropped!

Points were also dropped due to the eagerness of some shooters to test out the other targets. Charlie Ledbrook started immensely, in FTR-Classic, with three 60s followed by an unfortunate shot on the wrong target. Others followed. We won't mention their names but a look at the results will show you who plant...ed their shots elsewhere. The victims were spitting Phlegm (pron. Flem) in disgust. We also had a slight malfunction with a ShotMarker target. Close inspection revealed evidence of a projectile having left its mark in the sensor hub rendering it useless. John Miller conjured up a spare Sensor Hub and firing resumed on the ever reliable (when not shot) ShotMarkers.

Murray Cook was on the boil with three 60s over the course of the weekend, taking out F Open with 413.34 ex. 420.70. Charlie Ledbrook was also on fire with four 60s, but it was Matthew McCullum-Clark of Malvern RC who won FTR-Classic with a very steady 407.29. John Pearce of Oamaru won FTR.

In the TR categories, Martin Fleming won the Eastern Southland Aggregate (Day 1) A Grade but was surpassed by Southland shooter - Bruce Horwood - in the Grand Aggregate with a days 1 & 2 combined score of 345 ex 350, just a point and a handful of centres ahead of Richard Rowlands. The best individual shoots came at 500 yards with Bruce hitting 50.09 in the first 500 and Richard nailing a 50.08 in the second 500. John Snowden held on to win the South Island Championships with Richard Rowlands winning the SI Short Range Agg.

B Grade Southland was won by Robbie Gilchrist. John Miller, who switched form using his right eye to left eye, clawed his way back into contention after a shaky start to win the South Island B Grade.

And, in C Grade, Barry Brown dominated, top scoring in 5 of the 7 shoots.

A big "Thank You" to Ken Chittock and to Oamaru RC for ensuring the smooth running of the event.

Photo gallery can be found on the Oamaru RC Facebook page. Selection below:



Above: Martin Fleming (Eastern Southland Champ) & John Pearce (FTR)



Above: Matthew McCullum-Clarke (FTR-C) and Richard Rowlands (South Island A Grade Short Range Agg.)



C Grade 1st Day Barry Brown



Oamaru Rifle Club
B Grade 1st Day Robbie Gilchrist



A Grade Champion Bruce Horwood



F Open Champion Murray Cook



Above: John Fleming and John Miller in action