RIFLE CLUB 2016/2017

Over the summer, four of our team members chose to represent themselves and the university in the annual Scottish NSRA competition. Competing against shooters with much greater experience, our members not only gained valuable experience, but also brought home some trophies for us. Congratulations to Ian Brotherston, Kathryn Williamson, Ewan Scougall and Megan Auld for their achievements. Megan and Ewan not only brought home trophies for themselves, but also won C&D Class Pairs while representing the University of St Andrews Rifle Club.

Our academic year began with three members of our committee attending a weekend NSRA coaching and RCO (range conducting officer) course. All three members returned with the qualification to become valuable coaches to younger or new members of the club. We have not only continued to encourage new members, but build on the work of last year, encouraging our older members to refine their technique. This allowed us to put our best foot forward in preparing our competitive team for the Scottish Student Sport (SSS) season.
We began our season SSS with the Aberdeen and Robert Gordons Universities two-day competition. The team selection included two new members, one of whom, Catalina Kim, had never shot before this year. Despite this, Catalina achieved 3rd in Aberdeen's and 2nd in RGU's Novice class competitions. Angela Ou gained 2nd in B class on Saturday, while Katherine Nevin came 3rd on Sunday. On both days, our Team of VIII came 2nd and our Ladies Triads came 2nd and 3rd, which are some excellent team results. It is particularly notable that St Andrews submitted three teams for the Ladies' triad, while many other teams had only one, or no team; for a sport that is often low on women, our club leads others in encouraging high numbers of female competitors.

We then travelled to Edinburgh University a few weeks later for their competition, with another notable performance by Catalina, who won Novice Class. The Team of VIII and Ladies' Triad also both came 3rd that day.

Into second semester, our club competently juggled the refreshers fayre, and hosting our own SSS grand prix all during the same weekend, an impressive feat for our relatively small club and small facilities. As well as hosting our two-day competition, our social secretaries organised a fantastic event for all the competing teams. We had a good haul at our own competition: B class win from Katherine Nevin; 3rd place in Novice class for Catalina; 3rd place for the Team of VIII and Ladies'; 2nd in A class and 1st in B class pairs.

The team fell only slightly short of BUCCS Indoors qualifications, though Catalina Kim did qualify individually as a novice. Although Catalina ultimately could not attend the BUCCS competition, we are very proud of her achievement. It demonstrates not only the commitment of one of our newest members, but also the club’s ability to train up new members to a strong beginner level.

In Glasgow, our team once again made an impressive performance with 3rd in the Team of VIII, 2nd in A class pairs, as well as 1st in the Ladies' triad and B class pairs. However, one of our most impressive performances came a few weeks later in Perth for the SSS Championship. Special mention goes to Katherine Johnson, who not only came 2nd in B class, but also qualified for the final to shoot alongside international shooters. The Team of VIII came 2nd, as did the Ladies' triad, and a 3rd in B class pairs. With both Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities having very strong teams, we were pleased to maintain 2nd or 3rd place throughout the year.
After Perth, our season moved to outdoor training, shooting at 50m and 100 yds, on which the team wished to place a higher focus this year. Our first outdoor competition was in Aberdeen, where many of our individuals made impressive performances, including Tom Golding, (3rd in B class) with Claire Gregory and Katherine Johnson following close behind. The team of VIII came 2nd and the Team of IV and Ladies’ triad came 3rd, as well as gold for the B/C class pairs. This was in many ways preparation for our Outdoor BUCS at which the Team of VIII narrowly missed out on 3rd place (losing only on countback) and the Ladies’ triad came away with Bronze medals.

Throughout the year, as well as our university training, two of our members, Ewan and Megan, took part in the Scotland Juniors U21 squad, where they attended several training sessions that provided them with knowledge of training techniques that they can then pass onto the other members of the club.

We have attempted to maintain last year’s work improving the competitive nature of the team, but have also kept focus on the social aspect of our club, making use of Tilt to organise events for the team, as well as Twitter and Instagram (both @saintsrifle) and encouraging new members to interact socially not only with our own team but also other shooters across Scotland.
Ultimately, the club is in a good position moving forward, and it remains only to thank the hard work of our committee from this year, particularly to our captain, Amanda, without whom the club would not have run so smoothly. She leaves us to study a Masters at Glasgow but will be keeping up with shooting as next year’s SSS coordinator. As for Claire Gregory, our incoming captain, we wish her the best in her role, as the club looks to the future and an even higher standard all round.

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