



# **NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA LTD**

ABN 91 373 541 259

PO Box 414, Carina, QLD, 4152

Tel: 07 3398 1228; Fax: 07 3398 3515; Email: [nraa@bigpond.com](mailto:nraa@bigpond.com)

## **NRAA ELECTRONIC TARGETS COMMITTEE**

### **ARTICLE 2 – November 2011**

#### **PRELIMINARY ADVICE TO ASSOCIATIONS AND CLUBS CONCERNING ELECTRONIC TARGETS**

This article is in no way prescriptive and the advice contained herein is in no way definitive. It is mainly preliminary advice about what the Electronic Targets Committee sees as a potential landscape and developments with E-Targets. Much work is still to be done and there is still a lot of consulting to be done with both Suppliers and Users. However there are Clubs who are considering purchasing now or in the near future.

This Article outlines in brief what we see as being desirable and/or possible with E-Targets in the future and hopefully will help Clubs in their planning if they are considering purchasing soon. Much of it is self evident, but probably needs to be stated.

The committee's intent is to produce a draft user requirement and a draft set of SSR provisions that will be thorough enough to ensure our competitions are as effective and as enjoyable as they are now, and generic enough that all suppliers should be able to meet these requirements with ease. The committee intends to ask suppliers to demonstrate that this is so. Purchasers intent on proceeding now are advised that the options available are on the move and trying to anticipate the relative merits of these options comes with risks that purchasers must accept.

The Committee envisages Three (3) different levels of requirement and needs throughout the Australian shooting landscape.

#### **1. Club Level**

At this level, probably one or two targets will be sufficient. Usually some sort of monitor is supplied which shows both a shooting plot and the shot by shot score. Both the Shooter and Scorer use this single monitor, and the Scorer records the score manually on a scorecard. All results are manual, as once the monitor is reset, the score is usually lost. At this level, most clubs do not use a Check Scorer and it is probably not needed now. However, it should be considered mandatory that there is at least a Scorer at all times, mainly for safety reasons such as cease fires, cross fires, misses and relaying Range Orders. Also, should there be a power failure or malfunction, scores would be lost if they are not recorded manually.

The system may or may not cope with such things as Match Rifle competition and consideration should be given to a system which will cope with Inter-Club Teams Matches being held and using the system. In such cases, Coaches and opposition team check scorers may all want to use the single monitor.

## **2. Prize Meeting Level**

A simple system similar to the Club Level may be sufficient, but there are other features desirable and available at this Prize Meeting Level.

- (a) A Second Monitor for the Scorer would be desirable. There are systems available which use wireless connections and equipment such as Tablets, Netbooks, Laptops, PC's, Kindle Books and even Smartphones can link in to display the same information as the Shooter's monitor.
- (b) It is probably desirable to display the normal "Scoring Blackboard" behind each shooter.
  - (i) A Check Scorer for the Blackboard is probably not needed nor is a shot by shot record on the Blackboard needed.
  - (ii) The Board should display the list of shooters scheduled to shoot on the target.
  - (iii) When each shooter is finished the Scorer should mark the final score on the Blackboard.
  - (iv) The Board list and its progress will give preparing shooters an indication of when they should be ready.
  - (v) The list of completed scores on the Board would add to the whole "Visual" appeal of the shoot. There have been many comments about the lack of atmosphere and visual appeal where there is only a monitor for the shooter and no results are displayed.
  - (vi) An Open Prize meeting should as much as possible conform to SSR's. This should include "proper" SSR aiming marks for F Class shooters. The E-Target Committee will eventually be publishing a set of "E-Target" SSR inclusions which will describe minimum conditions to be met.

## **3. A System Capable at State or National Level**

- (a) A State or National Level Competition could probably be run with the system described at the Club level. The Prize Meeting Level would make it even better.
- (b) Electronic targets systems are potentially capable of much more than simple manual results. If you are contemplating a system capable of running at a State or National Level, be sure, even if the software will not perform some of the more exotic functions at the moment, that it is capable of being upgraded in the future.
- (c) There are systems being developed already which will do one or more of the following:-
  - (i) Read all the results from one monitor onto a USB Stick or similar, which is later downloaded into the Office Server Computer.
  - (ii) Systems which will connect straight into the Office Computer and record the results live.
  - (iii) Systems which will display the Scoring Monitor and show the shot by shot progress live on the Web or on TV screens on the Office or Club Hut.
  - (iv) Systems where, with the touch of a button you can also see the shooting plots of a number of targets on either side.
  - (v) Systems where the up-to-date and live running scores, range by range, can be shown on the Web. (The NRAA achieved this during the recent World Long range Championships in October 2011 at Brisbane.)
- (d) Europe especially has had extensive and sophisticated systems for years. Monitors and screens for spectators have made competitions a popular spectator event, with live scores and shot by shot displays being common. However, it is important to note that all of these systems are

mostly for short range smallbore competitions and the longest usually being 300 metre Centrefire. Given the size of the market in Australia, it is doubtful if many of these European manufacturers will be very interested in designing or adapting their systems for long range Australian conditions, but we can hope and the Committee will do what we can to encourage this.

### **Team Shooting on Electronic Targets**

Things get a little more complicated when we begin to consider the needs for team shooting.

- (a) Whilst the Team Shooter may not need a monitor the Coach certainly will.
- (b) Teams usually supply their own Scorer and a Check Scorer for one of the Opposition teams. All of these will want to look at some sort of monitor, so more than one per target will be needed if we are to continue with anything remotely resembling present SSR procedures. Once again the ability to have more than one monitor to view plots and scores will be necessary.
- (c) Coaches like to have the ability to scan along the range to see where shots are going on other targets. On electronic targets this won't be available right at the moment. However some systems being developed plan to have the capability of showing 3-4 targets on either side of the target being shot at. Press a button and change the screen display from 3 -4 targets or 1 only.
- (d) If a State is considering equipping their home range fully with E-Targets, they need to consider the following if they hope or plan to hold the usual Interstate Teams Matches.
  - (i) Around the shooter there is the Coach, a Plotter, the Scorer and a Check Scorer.
  - (ii) Often the team also has a Master Coach and usually the Captain wants to see what is going on as well.
  - (iii) Each one of the above needs to be able to observe the plot and scoring. That could be as many as 6 or many monitors of some kind for just the one target. Either that or one very large monitor behind the mound for each shooter which all of the above people can look at.
- (e) My point above may seem extreme but it is a real live situation that occurs and needs to be planned for. The idea of simply buying electronic targets, putting them up, and all problems are solved forever, is not going to happen.

### **Summary**

- (a) The concept of Electronic Targets being the silver bullet that solves all our problems is not as simple as it first appears. Whilst at a Club level it may be relatively simple, there is a need for an ongoing and strict maintenance program and the development of quite some expertise by members. Perhaps major events should have individual/s that check the maintenance level or targets and pass/fail same for use, all of which should be done in advance of a shoot in case works are required.
- (b) At the Second Level, there are many clubs that have 5 or 6 targets and run an Annual Prize Meeting. Setting up 5-6 electronic targets with attendant multiple monitors will take some skill and planning. In addition they will need to plan for shooters turning up who have never used a monitor or shot on an E-Target. What procedure will they have in place when that new shooter presses the wrong button and wipes his/her whole score? Certainly there should be contingency and backup plans in case in case of power failures or target failures.

- (c) There is at least one supplier, and now perhaps more, who are designing systems where more than one shooter can shoot on the same target and at the same time. If 2 -3 shooters can shoot on the same target at the same time (i.e. NOT Bisley style) it may well reduce the costs and complexity of a complete set of Electronic Targets for a State Home Range. One target serving 2 -3 shooters on a Club range may make it much more commercially viable. We can only hope that suppliers take into account what are at the moment very substantial costs and continue to develop systems that help reduce costs and the financial imposts that occur.
- (d) These sorts of things mentioned above are in the pipeline. If you are shopping around, ask your potential suppliers if they have or plan these features, and if not, encourage them to do so. We are in the very early days of this whole exciting new development. Shop around, take your time and plan thoroughly for as many eventualities as you can foresee that will satisfy your needs. It may well save you some angst later on.
- (e) Differing levels of "Want" by buyers will cost money and the ability to upgrade from small initial capital will most likely be desirable for most. The NRAA will certainly be encouraging Suppliers to design systems that have that ability and facility.
- (f) One of the tasks of the E-Target Committee is to consider procedures for electronic target shooting and its effect on the SSR's. The Committee's opinion is that the SSR's should be compromised as little as possible to accommodate Electronic targets. We should not allow a less satisfactory procedure or result to happen merely because it is not convenient, or its easier or cheaper to do it a different way on Electronic targets. Safety and the spotless record of Fullbore Rifle Shooting must be paramount at all times and rules and procedures should be drawn up to reflect that principle.
- (g) It is important to take care in comparing each supplier's offer – the systems do not all work in exactly the same way and their components are certainly not interchangeable – what appears to be a cheap component in one offer is likely to be offset by a dearer component – and there are components that purchasers have to source themselves to make the systems functional – purchasers need to compare the total cost (both up front and over a period of operation) required to do the job expected in whatever context.
- (h) Where targets have the potential for multiple shooters firing at will at the one target the up front saving that might be expected is offset to some degree by the need to be even more vigilant about repair and maintenance simply given the volume of projectiles going through the target, and also that irresolvable simultaneous shots will be a fact of life that may not be an issue at club level but may be at other levels.
- (i) Another common up front cost saving option may be that long range targets are used at all distances with appropriate masking of the sides at the short distances.

Bob Pedersen

Rules – NRAA