

DECISION

At the NRAA Board Meeting on Saturday 8th March 2008, it was agreed Australia would adopt the recently endorsed ICFRA International Targets (dimensions as shown at Annex A) for domestic competition. To allow S&T to exhaust current stocks, a tentative introduction date of 1st January 2010 is being examined.

The discussion paper below is provided to S&T so that the information used to reach this decision is understood.

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NRAA Chairman

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ICFRA TARGETS – THE FUTURE AN NRAA OPPORTUNITY

Introduction

After several years of debate, the ICFRA Council has approved targets for international ICFRA competitions such as the Australia Match and Junior and Veterans World Championships. It is anticipated that these targets will be introduced quickly and will certainly be used in the 2010 Australia Match in UK and for the 2011 Veterans and Junior World Championships in Australia. The dimensions for these targets and the current Australian targets are shown at Annex A. Current target dimensions for other countries are shown at Annex B.

ICFRA Target Aiming Mark Rationale

Debate within the various ICFRA committees resulted in a compromise of:

- Short Range 300 yds/m - NRAGB aiming marks, which are already in wide use through out ICFRA countries, would become the ICFRA short range 300 aiming mark.
- Mid Range 500/600 yds/m – a midway compromise between GB/CA and NZ and AS aiming mark of 915mm was reached.
- Long Ranges (800, 900 & 1000 yds & 700, 800 & 900m) – US PALMA Match aiming mark, which is used for the ICFRA World Long Range Championships, would become the ICFRA long range aiming mark.

- Additional Ranges (400 & 700) – for those ICFRA countries which shoot 400 yds/m it is recommended that the 300 yds/m ICFRA aiming mark be used and for 700 yds it is recommended the 600 m ICFRA aiming mark be used.

The Australian aiming marks were assessed by the participating ICFRA countries as being too small for international competition. The only exception was the NRAA 300/400m aiming mark which was 10mm bigger than the NRAGB equivalent.

ICFRA Scoring Areas

In 2003 the ICFRA ammunition rule was amended to any .308 cal projectile up to 156 gr. This ruling had a significant influence on the debate and subsequent decision on scoring areas for ICFRA targets.

Noting the ICFRA targets are more challenging than those currently in use by any ICFRA country, it was agreed that:

- All ICFRA countries should be strongly encouraged to adopt the ICFRA aiming marks for domestic use thereby achieving an international standard.
- Some ICFRA countries may not wish to adopt the ICFRA scoring areas due to the level of difficulty presented to their shooters. New Zealand's notorious winds at Trentham Range was used as an example where the much tighter scoring areas might not be appropriate for domestic competition. NRANZ Council was briefed on the ICFRA target dimensions in January 2008 and is now considering adopting the ICFRA targets in total.

Australian Analysis

A comparison of the dimensions shown at Annex A reveals that the ICFRA aiming marks are mostly larger than the NRAA aiming marks. Additionally, the scoring areas are significantly smaller than the NRAA equivalents except for the 700m Central and Bull. The ICFRA target will therefore be more challenging than the existing NRAA targets. Of note the NRAA 300 target is the only target where an outer (2) can not be scored in the aiming mark (see Annex B). Also, the NRAA 500 and 600 target is the only one where a magpie (3) can not be scored in the aiming mark (see Annex B).

In considering Australian State Championship Ranges, the ICFRA scoring areas may prove very challenging at Lower Light Range in SA and Campbelltown in TAS.

If NRAA is to conform to the ICFRA intent of standardising aiming marks internationally, then a new suite of targets will be required for domestic use. If the NRAA adopts the ICFRA aiming marks then it might also be appropriate to review the current scoring areas for ongoing relevance.

Current NRAA Target Issues

The NRAA continues to face an imbalance between numbers in the TR Grades which is partially due to the target dimensions not keeping pace with the precision equipment improvements occurring across the sport. Adopting the ICFRA target (complete) may provide a solution to this situation.

Within the NRAA F Class Standard competition, a requirement for an additional scoring area has been identified for count out purposes and to reduce the current number of range and aggregate shoot-offs. Adopting the ICFRA target (complete) for F Class Standard competition may be a more prudent option rather than creating an additional domestic target combination.

Some Clubs and Districts are experimenting with a variety of target combinations which suggests the current NRAA targets may not be challenging enough and require adjustment. Adopting the ICFRA target (complete) will provide an additional challenge and reduce the amount of target experimentation in the short term.

A key strategy to the growth in membership is retention and regular attendance of club members. It is perceived that regular range attendance varies across the country. This may be attributed to the attitude that, given reasonable conditions, all A and most B Grade members can expect to shoot possibles. Is it therefore likely that the current target is not providing sufficient challenge to stimulate and thereby retain the interest of the club's week-end competitor? Adopting the ICFRA target (complete) for domestic club use may provide an additional challenge for the club level shooting thereby improving the retention of the existing membership base.

Other Considerations

World Records. It is expected that the use of ICFRA targets will lead to the formal recording of 'recognisable' world records. Currently world records are informally claimed for a variety of matches but with the qualification of which country's target was used. The Individual World Long Range Championship and PALMA Match are the exceptions.

Other AISL Disciplines. For many years the NRAA has differed from other AISL disciplines in that the NRAA competitions were contested using a domestic target rather than an international standard. Adopting the ICFRA target may have a positive influence on AISL and the future dealings NRAA has with other shooting sports.

NRAA Options

There appears to be four broad options available to the NRAA in relation to ICFRA targets and aiming marks:

- **Option 1 – Do Nothing** thereby retaining the 'status quo'.

- **Option 2 – Adopt the ICFRA Aiming Marks** thereby conforming to an international standard but retaining the current NRAA Scoring Areas.
- **Option 3 – Adopt the ICFRA Targets (complete).**
- **Option 4 - Adopt the ICFRA Targets for F Class Standard only.**

A summary of these options highlighting the advantages and disadvantages is contained at Annex C.

Conclusion

There has not been any significant changes to the NRAA TR discipline since the introduction of the 155gr projectile (in 1998) and the minor adjustments to target scoring areas effective from July 2002. The introduction of the ICFRA targets presents an opportunity for the NRAA to align with an agreed international standard and to ‘freshen up’ the sport for both TR and F Class Standard disciplines.

Annexes:

- A. ICFRA vs NRAA Target Dimensions
- B. ICFRA vs ABCNZ Target Dimensions
- C. Summary of Options for Changes in NRAA Targets