

thing to do with my normal approach to shooting; it's in keeping with my overall preferences to keep going — keep doing — shot to shot.

I have characterized myself as an “aggressive” shooter. That term is accurate only as long as it doesn't imply in some way throwing caution out the door or losing patience. That would be a mistake. Maybe “assertive” is a better evaluation, more of the time. By “assertive” I mean being positive and decisive. Sometimes the most positive decision in the wind, though, is to hold up. Determine the cause of a bad shot (or keep from making a bad shot) right then. Don't think nothing happened, because something did. If the shot is off call, and the shooter is confident in the correctness of his call, he needs to find the cause before anything else gets done. It may seem longer, but it's usually a matter of only seconds to make a more educated evaluation.

There is no time like the present to make the bullet go where you want it to. Part of being aggressive is making the decision — beforehand — to follow the fears, so to speak, in assessment of condition effects. Again, I would honestly rather move the shot out myself than have the wind move it out. The results might be the same on the scorecard, but one has left me better prepared and equipped to effect a positive change on the next shot. Backing off an over-correction, in this sense, is preferable to understating the need for a correction. Usually.

There is also no question that shooter skill plays a part in being able to determine



Making a change is best done now rather than later. The shooter shouldn't wait to see if he should have made a correction. Faced with a “maybe,” it's better to make the correction and see if it was the right thing to do.

the validity and need for making a sight correction. Essentially, it's the quality of the shot call: how close was the result to what it should have been, or vice versa depending on how we look at it. Only if the call is done confidently can the result be equally confidently acted on. The group size the shooter is capable of firing under good conditions also factors heavily, and this also influences the quality of the feedback from a rifle as well (some certainly shoot better than others). Did the wind move the bullet or did the bullet move there regardless of influence or intention? No matter, I would still suggest making a correction based on evidence from the target compared to assessment of current conditions, but as confidence grows so too does the shooter's capacity for intelligent and positive sight changes.

Confidence is an inextricable element in mental control and management. The more sure someone is the easier it is to attend to the external factors acting on the bullet,

which are sight corrections and the wind. Dealing with internal factors such as fear, indecision, anxiety, confusion, and other detrimental thought processes, detracts from the efficiency of good shooting. And good shooting is an efficient process, or can be. The better the position, the call, rifle accuracy, and shooting technique, the less and less these things factor into results on target — when they can be trusted then shot dispersions have been reduced to wind and sights (plus other environmental factors, but the idea is still the same).

This aspect of shooting is something I have fallen back on many times. The inexplicable change on the target. The shot that is suddenly and seemingly randomly high or low, left or right. I said elsewhere that probably my least favorite thing to contend with at 600, or elsewhere for that matter, is an elevation change on the target. That gets us all wondering about rifle problems, ammunition, sight mounts, and so on. Well, I have to fall back on my confidence that, no, there shouldn't be anything technically wrong with my equipment. I called the shot and the shot ended up where it went. I will bring it back where it should be, and I will do so before firing another. It's the same risk as running an uncertain correction in the wind: the point loss from doing nothing is potentially the same as a point loss from doing the wrong thing, but going with intuition and substance, and the desire to move confidently ahead in the string, and making the correction more often than not turns out to be the right thing to do. If a point loss occurred, chances of another point loss can be higher following that shot with another done with no changes made. If the change made for the next shot turned out to be an over-correction, then bring it back. Whatever damage was done was done, but now we'll know which direction to take on the next round.

Decisive, confident shooting shouldn't know boundaries in shooter experience and skill. There is no question that the new shooter will learn his lessons, and learn them faster and better, by taking charge of his efforts and making positive corrections or taking positive actions. The newer shooter might have a tendency to be tenuous or timid about trying to stay ahead of conditions or shoot offhand using a planned approach, but like learning to swim after being thrown into a creek, there's no time like now to get the feet wet. He will no doubt make mistakes, but those mistakes will more often than not be of his own doing. Less is being “done” to him, where the circumstance is inaction. He's not watching mistakes unfold. I truly believe that starting out making the best choices he's capable of making, and making those choices before firing, not after, is a springboard to gaining valuable experience — and increasingly higher scores.

I also touch on this in the material on training, but the following also has some roots in learning to move ahead and gain confidence. The only shooting that many High Power competitors do is in matches. There is then less time for training, less time for working on the skills and controls. It's good advice to many of these shooters to tell them to take breaks from competition. Go a year and only shoot half the number of events. Train instead during times he'd otherwise be competing. Unfortunately, competitive stress, or whatever we might call it, can create a screen or barrier to genuine improvement. The focus tends to be on maintaining, rather than elevating, a score level. When a shooter is always worried about his local finishing position he might not look ahead or beyond the goal to repeat, month to month to month, his average score. I think he should look for more than that.

The beginning shooter's call radius will