

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

In training, everyone I believe is aware of the importance of working to improve weak areas. There are four courses of fire in a High Power event and normally everyone has one that's not up to what they want. Pay attention to details or dry fire that one more — work on it. For me it changes year to year. It's normally not standing, but it could be. My answer to a



weakness is always to train more: work on natural point of aim, run the experiments, look at the rifle (and maybe even the load), focus on the issue at hand. Get it fixed.

Another consideration, though, is not to neglect the strong suits. Don't spend so much time training standing, for instance, that the other, stronger suits go by the wayside. Don't take things for granted. Let's say someone goes to Camp Perry one year and he's been shooting phenomenal short range scores. That's what he's been working on in preparation for the nationals. He has been shooting good 300 and 600 but hasn't paid that much attention to those events; he didn't work on the loads as much or didn't work on training these events as much, so he goes up and shoots great short line but the other events are where he lost the points. Speaking for myself, at Camp Perry I seem to either have great 600s and mediocre standings, or great rapid fires and mediocre 600s. That was what I brought back home and know that is what I need to work on, but by the same token I have to also realize that nothing can get overlooked. That may have been the problem: los-

ing somewhere else after focused or concentrated gains were intentionally made elsewhere. A shooter has to really be careful not to develop another weakness somewhere else through training to overcome the obvious weakness at hand. Another thing to be aware of is that there are twelve months between national championship events. Things change all by themselves sometimes. I like to solve any problem I encountered right off and then come back to it again when it's a little closer to time to go back to Ohio and see how that solution still fares. That, of course, is the advantage to anyone who is able to practice regularly. Constant, continual attention, and the possibility of attention, means, or should mean, that weak areas and strong areas are all given adequate attention.

I found that the new rifle again helped me all around to better see the importance of well rounded skills training. A new rifle design understandably and necessarily demands attention from the shooter for all events. While I saw this in switching to the TUBB 2000 I was made most notably aware of it going from years of using a Model 70



Winchester to my SR-25. It was like starting over, and nothing got spared attention.

I made an assertion just a bit ago about an advantage in practicing regularly, continually. I, yes, would like to try that sometime, but honestly cannot guarantee to myself how much help it would really be. I find that motivation and focus are primary factors in how well I perform. I don't think I'd get bored or lose interest if I worked daily on shooting, but I'm not so sure getting into that routine wouldn't possibly become a rut. There would always have to be a realization of improvement, and seeing that might actually require me backing away and taking a break. So as not to appear contradictory, what I have in mind is considering the ultimately most effective experience in training, and that is seeing improvement — moving forward. My goal in frequent practice would be to sense continual improvement and I believe that I would not hesitate to stop and stand back, and redirect my focus or efforts, if I had the sense that improvement was not commensurate with the effort I was making to attain it. Seeing the same things over and

over every day may shut the window to the chance of seeing something different, and, therefore, to making a real improvement.

Back to the premise given earlier about how so many High Power shooters only attend matches for practice: Doing the same things over and over again doesn't automatically mean getting better. There are people who have been shooting the same scores for years

and years, and they may have even gotten the idea that is what they shoot. They own a score just like they own a rifle. Maintaining a certain scoring level is always a goal in that no one wants to shoot a score lower than their previous best (gauged by conditions), but for myself that level must also increase.

I think that the physical training aspect of it is probably the most important to put on a strict schedule, and that's where the benefit from physical training originates. During the time on the bike, for instance, I find that I am also mentally focused on shooting, and that is a big part of the training by itself. The physical training absolutely has a positive effect, as one would imagine. Being in better condition means a steadier and possibly lower heart rate, more strength and endurance, and less effect from travelling and from keeping the long hours and daily routines at an event like Camp Perry. Another benefit from it, though, is harder to measure, and that is knowing that you're doing something to help your shooting. This by itself can be a motivational issue, and feeling good about it all the way around sure doesn't hurt the score.