

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, July 13, 2015

**Trapshooters' Hot Streaks:** Although trapshooting stories of old have limited interest, I haven't written one for some time, so here is a new one. During my time as a trapshooter from about 1937 until 1950 (shooting was sharply curtailed in 1943, '44, and '45), several outstanding feats were achieved by those I knew. Some, having to do with long runs without a miss and official national averages, were widely reported within the trapshooting community and through the *Sportsmen's Review*, the official weekly magazine of the Amateur Trapshooting Association.

Two nearby shooters, Steve Crothers of Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania, and Walter Beaver of Berwyn in the same state, made their respective marks during the 1920s and '30s. Crothers won the Pennsylvania State Championship 14 times in 21 years (1921–41), and won the Marshall Marathon at Yorklyn five times. Beaver won the Grand American Handicap in 1933 with 98 from 25 yards, the only shooter to do this during the 30 years that 25 yards was the maximum handicap distance behind the trap.

The world's squad record, with each of the five shooting 100 registered targets, was broken at Yorklyn in 1935 when Arthur Cuscaden, Ned Lilly, Hale Jones, Joe Hiestand, and Bill Eldred broke 498 out of 500, breaking the old record of 497 made at Maplewood, New Hampshire, in 1916. The same 1935 squad broke their own record, again at Yorklyn, in 1936 with 499. Steve Crothers won the Marathon in 1931 with 499 out of 500, a feat duplicated by Joe Hiestand in 1935. In 1938, Fred Tomlin, a "pro" shooting for Remington, broke 400 straight at Yorklyn to extend a long run to 702 straight, only to be overtaken 10 days later by Joe Hiestand. Hiestand broke the last 66 targets at Yorklyn before going to the Grand American tournament at Vandalia, Ohio, that started just a week later. He shot 900 16-yard targets at Vandalia, breaking them all over a 5-day period. Before his official long run was ended about a month later, he had broken 1,179 straight. In the late 1930s, the high-average shooter for a calendar year often averaged over 99% on 2,000 or more registered targets. All these feats were well publicized.

I well recall some lesser-known "streaks." John B. "Cap" Grier of Rockland, Delaware, shooting for Western-Winchester, broke 100 straight doubles at Yorklyn in 1941, followed two days later by 97 out of 100 from 25 yards on a very windy day (only amateurs were eligible to win the handicap, which was won by P. J. Jones of the Canal Zone with 95 from 22 yards).

John Rigg of nearby Conshohocken, PA, was a Class A shooter (not AA), who usually shot from 23 yards in handicap events, in those days at the discretion of the handicap committee at the host gun club. Early in 1939, however, he started to shoot very well, and by June, when the nearby State Championships came around, he was handicapped at 25 yards, the maximum at that time. At the New Jersey State Shoot held at the North Jersey Gun Club at Fairfield he not only broke 100 straight in the handicap (from 25 yards), but 200 straight in the 16-yard event, and 97 out of 100 doubles for an all-around total of 397 out of 400. If this was not enough, Rigg won the Pennsylvania State Handicap at Reading a week later, again with 100 from 25 yards! Never in a class with Crothers and Beaver, he performed other streaks, like when he didn't miss a target at six straight Penn-Del League shoots at Yorklyn (50 targets each time) over a two-year period after World War II.

A complete "dark horse," Roy Hemmig of Reading, shooting in the last squad of the day, won the 1937 Pennsylvania State Championship at Shamokin with 200 straight. Shooting very little between, he shot again in this championship at Brinton Lake in 1938, again breaking 200 straight (this time he was tied by Walter Beaver and Walter Penrose, and Beaver won after breaking 75 more in the shoot-off).

I had never heard of Walter Penrose of West Chester, Pennsylvania, when he appeared at a Penn-Del League shoot at Longwood, two days before the start of the 1938 State Championships at Brinton Lake. He missed his first target and broke the next 49 at Longwood. In the 200-target championship, he broke 200 straight, and kept his record perfect until the 3<sup>rd</sup> shoot-off, when he finally missed one, giving Walter Beaver the championship. In

the wrap-up event the last day, again he broke a perfect score of 100. Always jovial and fun to be around, Penrose, who was less than 5 feet tall, shot a lot during the next 15 years but never so well as during that streak in June 1938.