

# New Jersey Junior Bullseye Newsletter

February 2013

Dear Juniors,

The first stage of every Bullseye match is SLOW FIRE – and I often hear Juniors (and others!) express that it feels like the most difficult part! So, that's the topic this month!

Many of our contributors have fired 99s and 100s in Slow Fire, and we thank them for offering suggestions to help you find your own “equation” for Slow Fire success!

Last year at Camp Perry during team matches, I enjoyed “eavesdropping” on some High Masters discussing focusing on the red dot vs. focusing on the target...and they didn't all agree! There is not one unique “right” answer, but there are common themes - i.e., they all agreed they FOCUS on something!



Some of the concepts described are “advanced” - using your subconscious, running a mental program and using visualization... keep in mind that you first need to “master” THE FUNDAMENTALS! You need to work on your own “shot plan” and the specific skills and techniques you need to fire one shot that goes right where you want it, to the X ring! Concentrate on developing those skills - then you'll be able to work on “automating” that shot process – it will come, like learning to ride a bicycle!

Best wishes,  
Mary [noalibis.mary@gmail.com](mailto:noalibis.mary@gmail.com)

## HOW DO YOU SHOOT YOUR BEST SCORES IN SLOW FIRE?

14 replies:

– DRY FIRE

- Run a MENTAL PROGRAM

– CONCENTRATE - FOCUS on sight alignment/dot

– ACCEPT and TRUST your hold

-Use a CONSISTENT grip, rhythm

- Don't be afraid to PUT THE GUN DOWN / don't hold "too long"

- Don't scope "too much"

- Commit to an UNINTERRUPTED trigger squeeze

-SLOW DOWN – use your 10 minutes

-RELAX / BREATHE

- [2-time National Pistol Champion, Jim Henderson - *Slow fire: visualize the perfect shot EACH time, before firing each shot?*  
Yes, I think a good visualization program is key. But remember, perfection is a hard thing to see. So keep your thoughts obtainable, but ever striving forward. – read more at <http://www.bullseyepistol.com/henderson.htm>]
- [11-time National Pistol Champion, Brian Zins - The slow fire shot process is the process that will be used in timed and rapid fire as well. You may have to tweak the process that you developed in slow fire to ensure that it works in all three stages. – read more at <http://www.brianzins.com/2010/03/28/anticipation-part-ii/>]
- [Nat'l Record holder, Frank Higginson - You are the only person on the range!!!! Don't concern yourself with the problems of the other shooters, you are the only person on the range. – read more at <http://www.bullseyepistol.com/frankhig.htm>]

HM – Shooting your best slow fire scores (or any other scores) is less about what you do in those ten minutes and mostly about what you do every day. The more you practice the more comfortable you will be, the easier it will get and the higher your scores will be. If you have any doubts about that, let me compare that idea to video games. In some games, you progress through different skill levels. The first few times you get through a new level it will be difficult, but the more times you complete that level, the easier it becomes. Until what was once a difficult level that sometimes ended your game becomes just a simple path you need to take to get to the more advanced levels that today seem difficult, but soon will be routine. If you have limited, time, money or access to a practice range, dry firing, mental training, visualization and rehearsal will all help improve your slow fire scores. Everyone wants to shoot better scores at the next match. It is what you do in between matches that will help you improve.

[additional note:] I run a mental program before every shot or string of shots when I am firing and do the same when I dry fire. I do not pull my trigger without first running a mental program, ever!

HM - Dry fire, dry fire, dry fire - this should be done just as you shoot with ear muffs on, all equipment set up like you normally do and NO AMMO ANYWHERE NEAR!! Use range time to practice TF and RF as this is 2/3 of the match.

HM - To shoot good slow fire you must focus intently on the sight alignment, accept your wobble area on the target while simultaneously squeezing the trigger without stopping until it breaks. Concentrate so much so that the world around you disappears. At the end of three slow fires you should be tired from the mental exertion.

[additional note:] I believe that you are born with an ability to focus your concentration. Don't know how to train for it unless meditation type exercises like the Indians and Tibetans practice would do it. I remember when I was younger...if I was reading the newspaper and someone said something to me, I would not hear it...and they would get mad at me for being rude.

MA - I have been working on my slow fire recently. I think it boils down to how bad you want to improve, how much trigger time you can put in, and how much mental toughness you have.

MA - The phrase “Pull the trigger all the way until it stops” is something I took away from a seminar that Frank Higginson gave a few of us in 1988.... Another way to say it is, “Pull through the shot.”

[MORE from this contributor – see following article!]

***[EDITOR'S CHALLENGE – Name one of Frank Higginson's currently standing NATIONAL PISTOL RECORDS – first JUNIOR to reply to me with a correct answer will get a “prize of the month”! Last month's winner was Michael B Soklaski!!]***

MA - Consistency more than speed. Even though I can take and do sometimes take 2 or 3 shots together in slow fire it's not because I am trying to speed things up but because I am back on the center. And doing things consistently will net better results. We do so well in timed fire we can apply some of that into our slow fire as well. But if there is a need I am not afraid to slow it down, put my hand down and rest and regroup my thoughts.

MA – [who just fired a 99-1 SF with .45 at our Jan. OBRPC 2700] - Slow fire has stopped being slow fire. It's less about score and more of a confirmation process... Sound weird?

The gun comes up, the trigger starts going back. The dot floats into the black, and somewhere in there, the shot goes off. My goal is to make the trigger subconscious. The "bad" shots are when I have to think about the trigger. And by bad, I mean NOT GROUPED. ...It's when you have to think about trigger control that causes you to hold too long (and I'm a big fan of long holds). It also happens that thinking about moving the trigger also makes it go off too soon, as you're trying to play around with trigger finger pressure. You just have to accept that it's going to go BANG at the same place every time. And the only way to get there is to dry fire. Yes, the magic number of reps is huge - in the thousands. But it costs you nothing to seriously click away in a quiet room.

There's only one difference between my first shot and the rest. After the first shot, I call the shot, and then look in the scope to see if I am on-call. If I am, then the scope is left alone until the next string of slow fire. Ken Saunders showed me this - too much peeping in the scope screws with your mind. Of course, Ron S. hates this approach, because he feels that you can't adjust mid-string if you have to. Indoors, who cares - the environment never changes. Outdoors is harder - you have to "feel" if you need to re-examine the target.

... I don't think the magic is found in the grip style but in the consistency of grip. One thing else I have learned the hard way - the strength of grip. Shoot every gun like it's .45 rapid fire. Hold that gun FOR REAL. Even a .22 gets the same treatment. There is no mentally saying, "it's slow fire, recoil doesn't matter, so just ease up on things." Each time I do that, I get this lovely 7-ring group. I am not advocating an Iron Man grip here. Just make sure that you hold a gun like it's your last bottle of beer - lovingly, firmly, the same way every time, never let it go. *[Editor's note – sorry, I couldn't think of a way to edit that for "junior consumption" without destroying the contributor's imagery!]*

EX - When shooting slow fire I often find myself thinking. This is to be avoided at all costs!!! My best matches are those where I am able to shut down and just do it. I focus on staring at the front sight (my coach use to say, "Pretend there's a pretty woman on it!") and nothing else! By practicing and by shooting frequently, I have found that if I focus solely on the front sight, my muscle memory will handle the job of pulling the trigger straight back.

Of course, it doesn't always work out the way you want it to. Sometimes, you just can't shut down and thoughts intrude upon you while you try to shoot. When this occurs for me, I find that small distractions can help. I'll get a song in my head and focusing on that. It isn't mentally taxing to sing to myself, and I find it relaxing. Besides that, it doesn't affect my ability to focus on the sight and pull the trigger. I also sometimes find myself (when outside) staring off at the trees or something relaxing such as that will also help me relax and push out those pesky thoughts.

EX - My best slow fire(s) are shot when I shoot one shot then rest/relax for about 30 seconds. Each shot is fired while concentrating on my shot plan. If a stray thought intrudes during this process I need to put the gun down, then re-grasp and start from the beginning of the shot plan again. My best slow fires are a 99-5 shot at 50 yards with my .22 and a 99-7 with my .45 at 25 yards.

SS - [soon to be EX] - Slow fire is the hardest course of fire for many reasons for all of us. Matches are lost in timed and rapid fire, but they are won in slow fire.

First thing I did was buy a timer so I could see how much time was left in the string. Many times before I had a timer I would think I was getting close to the time limit of 10 minutes, begin to rush my shots only to find out I had several minutes left. I just keep the timer on the bench and glance at it occasionally to reaffirm I have plenty of time left.

Next, use all the time you have. I take almost the full minute between shots, roughly 45-50 secs. If a shot does not feel right I will put the pistol down, rest for about 15 seconds and restart the shot process. This seems to be the main point for me in improvement. Many times I have kept the pistol up thinking I can get the shot off only to have the trigger break and immediately call the shot far from perfect. I now force myself that as soon as I begin to question my ability to get a shot off that I put the pistol down and restart the process. I tend to be the last one firing on all slow fire targets.

Last, I only use the scope at the very start to make sure my point of aim has not changed. Once I know my sights are true I no longer use the scope till all 10 shots are taken. Put 5 shots in the X ring and know that before the next 5 shots will put additional pressure on most of us. I shot my best 45ACP slow fire last week at Riverdale's 2700 (96 4-X) and never knew it till the target was back in the stall. Could I have done it knowing what my first 5 shots were....maybe, but I also know I would have put more pressure on myself as well.

SS - have had some success SF lately... after firming up fundamentals re: stance, grip pressure, independent finger squeeze ...I'd have to say the most significant item was: "Accept your wobble area, stare down the black target, let your subconscious work for you. You see red dot, however 'look' at target..."

SS - A good nights rest and being relaxed on the line always produces the best results for me.

MK - [about to be SS] - Get into a rhythm similar to how you shoot timed or rapid. Don't hold on the target a long time, this distracts from your concentration. Give yourself no more time for a shot to break than you would for timed fire. Work on your breathing. Deep breath, exhale, shallow breath and fire.

MK - I started to improve my slow fire scores when I stopped looking through my spotting scope after every shot.

## **How to shoot better bullseye scores (Immediately) – part I**

- by Dave Salyer 2/26/2012

1\*\* Accept your present wobble area rather than trying to reduce it.

Your hold ability or wobble area will be a certain size on a given minute, hour or match day. Accept it.

You can improve on it in a training session of dry firing or holding/gripping exercise on another day.

No need to try and hold tighter than what's comfortable on match day. Struggling will cause trigger errors. Shots that go outside your comfortable wobble area are the result of trigger errors!

Again, accept your comfortable hold and smoothly apply ever increasing trigger pressure straight to the rear. The shots will land within your hold area and cluster to the middle.

2\*\* Standardize your thought process during raising the arm and shooting.

Talk to yourself! Preach the same sermon before each shot in slow fire and before each string in sustained. This will trigger your conscious and subconscious mind to concentrate on the exact same things for each shot. Some top shooters go through the commands from, "Is the line ready?" to "Ready on the firing line.", before each shot or string.

3\*\* Apply steady pressure straight back on the trigger while not altering your firm grip on the pistol.

4\*\* Keep this pressure mounting until you feel the trigger go up against its over travel stop. Then release.

Notice that this instruction does not mention shoot or shot. This is an important point! You do not want to know or decide exactly when to shoot. Your job is to pressure the trigger straight back until the trigger stops. The shot will happen somewhere between starting the trigger pressure and when the gun recoils. Your job is just to actuate the trigger somewhere within the window of time that the sights have entered anywhere into the wobble area. Follow through will be achieved.

5\*\* Immediately start mounting pressure straight back on the trigger again even though the gun is at peak recoil.

As soon as the gun recoils restart the above process of applying pressure to the trigger and moving the sights or dot into the aiming area. This is recovery, not follow through.

In slow fire, stop the recovery process there.

### **Hand to eye coordination**

We hear a lot about this being good for athletes. It doesn't work too well with shooters because we must do it backwards. We must take what we see and do hand and finger coordination to cause a shot to leave the barrel at the right time and direction. This is not so precise because what we think we are seeing is not real time but is actually recent history. Plus, it takes a finite amount of time for what's happening to reach the eye, move to the brain for processing and send a message to the trigger finger to pull the trigger. By the time the shot fires the sights have moved around somewhere else in the aiming area. (Hopefully)

So, again, we must start and continue trigger movement before we see a perfect sight picture.

We can achieve almost perfect sight alignment with our eye by choosing the same grip on the pistol for each string. Then sight picture can be the less precise but adequate to keep our shot(s) inside our aiming area. Nature and statistics will make most hits cluster in the middle of our area.

---

[Dave is an avid master level pistol competitor who has managed to compete in every National Conventional Pistol Championship at Camp Perry, Ohio since his first in 1983. He was a member of the VSSA Pistol Team from 1984 through 1993 before his move to Rock Hill, South Carolina and China. Since then he has been a member of the SC State team, or Greenville Gun Club team. He started bullseye shooting in 1977 in Corpus Christi, Texas...and he reportedly has a 100-7X slow fire target (.45 caliber!) framed and hanging on his den wall!

Read more at <http://www.bullseyepistol.com/salyer1.htm>

### **Junior Competitors Report:**

**Jan 11-12 – Riverdale 2700** – 1 junior - Michael B Soklaski was top SS in both .22 and CF Rapid Fire!

**Jan 19 - IMCI at Monroe Sports Center, Monroe Twp, NJ** – Juan Pena-Velasquez qualified for 2013 Junior Olympics in Air Pistol!

**Jan. 20 – CRRP Air Pistol, Princeton Junction, NJ – Michael B Soklaski AGAIN** was the overall match winner, topping 11 other air pistol competitors (including his father!!) He fired 533.05!

**Jan 26-27 – OBRPC 2700 – 7 juniors - Sushisman Gangopadhyay** was Top Junior firing his “personal best” indoor .22 score with iron sights (626-2X) and his first .45 caliber match! Trevor Houlis was 2<sup>nd</sup> MK in .22 aggregate with 810-14X, taking 1<sup>st</sup> in Timed and Rapid Fire! Gabrielle Petruso fired her “personal best” 697-5X, as did Aman Minhas with 627-5X despite a “double alibi!”



Nicholas Bova had a really pretty Timed Fire target with 5 X (above, right)

-----

### Upcoming NJ Matches:

**SPECIAL JUNIOR EVENT - Feb. 10 – OBRPC – Indoor 900 + Team Match for JUNIORS ONLY – .22 caliber at 50 feet – relays at 12:30 PM and 3 PM – JUNIORS SHOOT FOR FREE - contact Mary Badiak – 908-788-5503 or [noalibis.mary@gmail.com](mailto:noalibis.mary@gmail.com) or sign up at [www.NJPistol.com](http://www.NJPistol.com)**

**Feb 16-17 – OBRPC – Sectional (NRA Indoor National Championship) – Indoor 900 at 50 feet with .22 cal. Only + fired team match! Relays 9 AM, 11:30 AM and 2 PM on each Saturday and Sunday - JUNIORS SHOOT FOR FREE - contact Mary Badiak – 908-788-5503 or [noalibis.mary@gmail.com](mailto:noalibis.mary@gmail.com) or sign up at [www.NJPistol.com](http://www.NJPistol.com)**



**March 15, 16, 17 – OBRPC and Riverdale – NJ INDOOR STATE PISTOL CHAMPIONSHIP** – relays Friday and Saturday at Riverdale (6 PM Fri., 8 AM and 1 PM Sat.) and Saturday and Sunday (8 AM and 1 PM) at Old Bridge – JUNIORS SHOOT FOR FREE AT EITHER VENUE (AND YOU GET A POLO SHIRT, TOO!) - contact Mary Badiak (OB) – 908-788-5503 - [noalibis.mary@gmail.com](mailto:noalibis.mary@gmail.com) or Dave Lange (Riverdale) – 201-251-0933 - [DL2700@aol.com](mailto:DL2700@aol.com) or sign up at [www.NJPistol.com](http://www.NJPistol.com)

**Mar. 23** – Falls Twp., PA – Indoor 2700 – 1 PM – Juniors pay regular match fees – contact Ron Steinbrecher - **215-836-7184** or [ronstone2664@yahoo.com](mailto:ronstone2664@yahoo.com)

**Mar. 30** – Gibbsboro, NJ – Indoor 2700 – 8 AM – Juniors pay regular match fees – contact Paul Adamowski - 609-390-3941 or [PaulAdamowski@comcast.net](mailto:PaulAdamowski@comcast.net)

### Junior Leagues Report:

**Old Bridge (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays at 5 PM – unless we have matches then!):**  
Chairman: Ed Glidden at <mailto:eglidden@yahoo.com>

**CJRPC in Jackson, NJ (Thursdays 6 PM):**  
Chairman: Mike Westock at <mailto:topgun22x45@aol.com>

**SCFGPA in Bridgewater, NJ – (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday at 5 PM, last 2 Wednesdays of the month at 7 PM):** Chairman: Ray Badiak at <mailto:raybadiak@embarqmail.com>

---

### TIP OF THE MONTH:

#### **Avoid the Fateful “Double Alibi”**

You are allowed ONE alibi “per match” (30 round NMC, 20 round Timed Fire match, 20 round Rapid Fire match) – if you have had an allowed alibi, and you have yet another misfire or jam in the next string (or in the alibi string) you should do your best to try to clear it and get as many shots off as you can manage!

Mark your magazines – if you have repeated trouble, it may be the fault of one particular magazine (which you won't know unless you have a way to distinguish it from the others!) Also try a drop of oil on the brass part of the top round in each magazine!

**PREVIOUS NEWSLETTER ISSUES CAN BE FOUND AT:**

[http://www.njpistol.com/Junior\\_Newsletter.htm](http://www.njpistol.com/Junior_Newsletter.htm)