



How To Stay “On The Mark” and Right On Target: Motivation to Keep Your Winning Edge

By Lisa J. Markland, MSW, FAPA

Motivation | □mōtə□vā sh ən|(noun):

We all know what motivation is, but at times it can sure be hard to find. Especially after a long shooting season when you might be feeling a little burned out from constantly practicing, competing, then practicing some more. All the while trying to find time for friends, family, dating, fun, school, jobs and just being a “kid.”

You’ve probably heard the saying, “Sleep, Eat, Shoot.” Sounds funny unless you are a competitive shooter with your eye on the biggest target of all: Olympic shooting (let alone Junior Olympics, national or international tournaments, marksmanship programs and others). But to become an elite level shooter and to make your mark in the shooting world, there will seem to be little time for anything beyond sleeping, eating and shooting—other than of course, shooting some more. But making time for fun things outside of shooting can be just as important, and help you stay motivated in the long run.

One thing to remember is that every dedicated athlete from beginner to elite will need to take some down time, and sometimes even a complete break from shooting when motivation is low or absent. If this happens for you, try to focus on all the fun you had during practices, matches and camps. Think of the traveling and opportunities to make new friends, along with earning awards and medals. Take pride in getting to do something so special that very few of your friends outside of shooting will ever get to experience.

Often just getting involved in something other than shooting for a brief period can bring back that enthusiasm and dedication that you found so fascinating and exciting. One option is to

try a totally different sport during your break from shooting. Since you need a strong mind and body to shoot well, try a sport that will push your endurance like kickboxing or a cardio class. You could even find some inexpensive boxing gloves and a target pad to get rid of any tension while getting stronger and more focused at the same time. Try swimming to extend your breathing and breath-holding ability, as well as your endurance—or even try training for a full or half marathon. Most people think they “can’t” do things like this, but if you focus on your ability to actually do it, you will likely surprise yourself. In the long run, adding other sports and activities to your training can be fun and a great way to increase your shooting ability and scores.

If you feel “stuck” in moving forward with your skills and training, try setting short and long term goals. CMP has journals that are great for the beginner to advanced shooter, and are aimed at helping juniors to document many aspects of their sport. You can obtain these journals through their website at www.odcmp.com/Programs/publications.htm. The Advanced Shooters Journal is downloadable for free (but since it is 104 pages, you may want to consider just purchasing it for only \$2.00 plus shipping and handling). These tools can help you to keep focused on your goals and heighten your determination to take your skills to the next level. As you keep track of all of your rifle/pistol/shotgun settings and position information, also take notes on your performance and scores. Try journaling about what makes shooting fun for you such as the opportunity to travel to new places, meet new people, attend awesome camps and be rewarded for doing great in your sport. Any

journal can be great for keeping notes, if you don’t want to use the journal published by CMP, make your own with a spare notebook. The key is to find what method works best for you and always use it with your training.

In any part of your life try not to focus on obstacles, instead turn obstacles into new opportunities. You get to choose how you will approach your shooting goals, and you have the ability and power to succeed. If something goes wrong, find an alternative—be creative if you are ever faced with an unexpected challenge. If you injure an arm or leg, don’t drop out; find a way to work around your injury with alternative positions. The same is true if some part of your equipment is missing or damaged, which can happen on the way to a big match. Don’t just quit, use your imagination and find a way to shoot well despite the issue at hand. You can prepare for this by trying little drills in practice like having a teammate change your sights, and only having a limited amount of time to zero and shoot a specific number of shots. Facing challenges in practice and journaling will help you to stay focused and calm when faced with a challenge of any kind in an actual match, as well as elsewhere in your life.

Bob Inness, a long-time CMP and Junior Olympic Coach, had a few words to add on staying motivated between extensive periods of shooting. He remains adamant that the key to staying motivated during and following long shooting seasons is to “make it fun.” He encourages juniors to continue shooting in the summer months and attend camps if possible. In fact, Inness believes programs like the CMP Summer Rifle Camps are “the magic” that can be the difference for many junior shooters who

need a change of pace, or who need help rediscovering the fun that is so essential for an athlete seriously pursuing a sport. He also notes that camps are also a great way to meet with old and new friends, travel, find new opportunities and have a nice break from the rest of the year's shooting.

There are also other incentives out there to keep you focused on a goal, such as the Junior Distinguished Badge Program for Three-Position Air Rifle that began in 2001 for excellence in junior competitions. The Distinguished Rifle and Pistol Badge programs, started in 1884, are designed to recognize excellence in Service Rifle and Pistol competitions like the National Trophy Matches. You can also work to get college scholarships to compete on a NCAA shooting team in college. A number of universities offer great opportunities for accomplished shooters, and you can find many of these programs through the NRA's website at <http://www.nrahq.org/compete/coldir.asp>. Collegiate Rifle Coaches Association is also a great resource for athletes looking for NCAA Rifle programs.

Without passion and desire in your shooting, the fun might disappear and the sport might become more of a job than an adventure. Sports should be fun, and that means shooting should be fun! If you find that you are not feeling excited about shooting, consider a brief break or another sport or activity to break up your training and competing. Then come back fully focused and up to the challenge of increasing your scores, skills, and all the fun that comes with becoming a talented athlete. Define your accomplishments, your goals and your dreams, and go after them with the same passion and interest that brought you to shooting sports in the first place. Then you will truly be a winner!

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Cadets and Teams Advance to 2011 Service Championships

Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force JROTC rifle teams kicked off their 2010-2011 competition year as they competed in the JROTC Air Rifle Postal Competitions to qualify for service championships in January and February.

For postal results, log onto <http://clubs.odcmp.com/cgi-bin/matchResultSearch.cgi?designation=AIR>.

Winning unit teams and individuals representing each service advance to the JROTC National Championship 24-26 March, 2011 in Anniston, AL.

About the Author



Lisa began competitive shooting at the age of 15 and was a Junior NRA Coach by the age of 16. Many years after nearly becoming an Olympic athlete she began training for the Paralympics in shooting when she was in her forties, becoming the top female Paralympic shooter in the country before illness forced her out of competition. She has coached many sports including shooting, and became a motivational speaker and journalist after leaving a career in clinical social work.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Calendar of Events is featured in every issue of *On The Mark*. If you would like your match or clinic listed, please contact the CMP at onthemark@odcmp.com, or call 419-635-2141, ext. 1111. Please include the name of the event, date, whom the event is open to and contact information and web site (if available). The CMP will do its best to accommodate each request to be included in the Calendar of Events.

- 10-12 February, 2011**
Navy JROTC Service Championships – Anniston, AL
- 17-19 February, 2011**
Army JROTC Service Championships – Camp Perry – Port Clinton, OH & Anniston, AL
- 17-20 February, 2011**
Marine Corps JROTC Service Championships – Albuquerque, NM
- 24-26 February, 2011**
Air Force JROTC Service Championships – Anniston, AL
- 19 March 2011**
CMP Monthly Air Gun Matches Camp Perry – Port Clinton, OH & Anniston, AL
- 24-26 March 2011**
National JROTC Championship – Anniston, AL
- 28-20 March 2011**
U.S. Army Junior Air Rifle Championships – Fort Benning, GA
- 24-26 March 2011**
JROTC National Championship – Anniston, AL
- 6 May 2011**
Garand-Springfield-Military Rifle Clinic – Camp Butner, NC
- 7-10 May 2011**
CMP Eastern Games – Camp Butner, NC
- 11-15 May 2011**
Creedmoor Eastern Games – Camp Butner, NC
- 21 May 2011**
CMP Monthly Air Gun Matches – Camp Perry– Port Clinton, OH & Anniston, AL
- 30 May -3 June, 2011**
Junior Air Rifle Camp 1–Anniston, AL
- 6-10 June, 2011**
Junior Air Rifle Camp 2–Anniston, AL
- 13-17 June, 2011**
Junior Air Rifle Camp 3 – Camp Perry – Port Clinton, OH
- 20-22 June, 2011**
Junior Air Rifle Advance Standing Camp – Camp Perry – Port Clinton, OH
- 25 June – 1 July 2011**
Eastern Junior Highpower Clinic & Championship Camp Butner – Butner, NC
- 26-28 June 2011**
National JO Precision Championship Camp Perry–Port Clinton, OH
- 29 June 2011**
1 July National JO 3-P Sport Championship Camp Perry–Port Clinton, OH
- 29 June–1 July 2011**
National JO Sporter Championship Camp Perry–Port Clinton, OH
- 1-3 July 2011**
Daisy Air Rifle Championship–Rogers, AR
- 6-8 July, 2011**
Junior Air Rifle Outreach Clinics
- 18-22 July, 2011**
Junior Air Rifle Camp 4–Anniston, AL
- 25-29 July, 2011**
Junior Air Rifle Camp 4–Anniston, AL