



who appear to be consistent winners and after noting what type of equipment they use, ask if they would have time to explain exactly what they use and why.

Our observations at matches indicate that the choice of handgun action type will be either a revolver or one of a self-loading design. Remember that the 2002 NHA prescribes that all calibres must be not greater than .38, except for those events such as Handgun Metallic Silhouette. NRA Action Pistol competitors use either a .38 Super or 9mm Parabellum in self-loaders, and .38 Special/.357 Magnum in revolvers. Minimum calibre allowed by the NRA rules for any handgun of any type in any category is 9mm fuelled by not less than a power

factor (bullet weight x muzzle velocity) of 120,000.

Handguns used in NRA Action Pistol shooting fall into four categories for the competition: Open, Open Modified, Metallic Sight and Production.

Open class includes highly modified firearms with optical sights allowed and other major changes to the handgun including 'wings' for stabilising the handgun when used in conjunction with the barricade. These are the type that are generally used in competition and when you read of possible scores being shot and winners being decided upon the X-ring count, you can be assured that they are using specialised handguns fitted with optical sights. The

Open Modified class does not allow the metal wings and is a class suitable for IPSC open guns.

Metallic Sight class specifically disallows the use of peep, optical or electronic sights, orthopaedic grips, thumb rests or compensators or ported barrels. Barrel length on self-loaders is limited to 6.25" and revolvers 8.625". These handguns normally have custom frame extensions fitted to the base of the pistol grip so that when the competitor 'goes prone' the metal sights settle at the right 'attitude' in relation to the target. These handguns, either revolver or self-loading, are normally modified to ensure maximum accuracy coupled with reliability. IPSC standard guns and Service pistols can

Rudy Dufour Down Under

by senior correspondent Jennifer Martens



Action Pistol is just one of the disciplines that has felt the effects of the Australian Government's handgun restrictions. However, it still has a healthy following. Recently, a number of these devotees met to contest the NRA World Action Pistol Championships held at the Blacktown Pistol Club in Sydney. The event attracted hundreds of people - one of whom was the NRA's pistol department manager, Rudy Dufour.

Rudy has been with the NRA, based in Fairfax, Virginia, in the US, for seven years. He first started in the Education division and then served as the Action Pistol coordinator for four years. In October 2006, he was promoted to his current position of department manager. He is responsible for the Pistol Postal Program, Conventional Pistol and Action Pistol in the US. Under this banner, he is responsible for running the state, regional, national and international pistol competitions. It was this aspect of his job that brought him to Australia for the first time to coordinate policies and procedures for the NRA Action Pistol Championships event management staff and to serve as a technical advisor and as an NRA representative on the protest committee.

His goal as the pistol program director is to generate interest in competitive shooting, specifically among young people. Within Action Pistol, Rudy encourages young shooters just starting out to use a rimfire pistol rather than a centrefire pistol because a rimfire is often more economical.



Taking time to see the outback was a highlight of Rudy Dufour's trip Down Under.

"Once the interest has been established, they can move up to a centrefire," said Rudy. "Often, people think they need to have all the specialised gear, which is often prohibitive."

One of Rudy's more exciting tasks is to run the National Action Pistol Championships - better known around the world as the prestigious Bianchi Cup. In 1979, John Bianchi of Bianchi Holsters and Ray Chapman, a well-known IPSC champion, teamed up to create an event that paired top-level competition with an impres-

sive social event. And, for the past 28 years, that has been the case as hundreds of elite pistol shooters from around the world come to contest the event and win a portion of the thousands of dollars available in prizes.

Rudy's shooting career started when he joined the Marine Corps' Competition in Arms Program. It was there he learned the finer techniques of the shooting sports. When he wasn't competing, he served as a combat photographer. After 22 years, he retired as a gunnery sergeant.

The skills he learned during that time have earned him the titles of distinguished rifle marksman, pistol shot and smallbore prone shooter. These are titles given by the NRA and Marine Corps and earned by competing in various competitions and accumulating points based on performances and placings at the events. Some of his other shooting accomplishments include being a member of the Marine Corps High Power Rifle team, winning a smallbore national title and competing in the US Olympic shooting trials in 1984.

While on his visit to Australia, Rudy was pleased to find that Australian shooting associations such as the SSAA have similar interests and goals as the NRA and that they are doing much to generate interest in the shooting sports. Rudy said his experience in Australia was first-rate. He has taken back to the US a positive impression of the Australian people, the landscape and of the future of all types of Australian shooting sports. ●