

Media Advance Information

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**INTERLEAGUE ALL-STAR
PISTOL TEAM MATCH**

March 14, 2010

“A head-to-head shoot-off for League supremacy”

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Metropolitan Revolver League of Hartford
Bridgeport Rifle Club Pistol League
New London County Pistol League
Revolver League of Connecticut
Southwest Connecticut Pistol League

HOST LEAGUE IN 2010

Metropolitan Revolver League of Hartford

LOCATION

Metropolitan Shooters Inc.
Nike Recreational Center, 281 Garden Grove Road
Manchester, Connecticut

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CONNECTICUT INTERLEAGUE ALL-STAR PISTOL TEAM MATCH – 2010

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Statewide Pistol Teams to Meet Again in Sixth All-Star Interleague Challenge

Who are the state's best indoor-pistol experts -- and where are they from?

All five of the state's indoor leagues will be participating Sunday, March 14, in a "best of the best," all-star event to determine both statewide and regional supremacy. It's the sixth such match, and promises even closer margins of victory than past years.

The New London County Pistol League, the Metropolitan Revolver League of Hartford, the Bridgeport Rifle Club Winter Pistol League, the Revolver League of Connecticut of New Haven, and the Southwest Pistol League of Fairfield will vie for state honors at the one-day Interleague All-Star Pistol Match.

This year, the 900-shot, 9000-point competition will be hosted by the Metropolitan Revolver League of Hartford at the Metropolitan Shooters competition range in Manchester. Some 70 competitors will compete in the nationally standardized "bullseye" format. Each league's best shooters represent their region, and the top ten scores from each league count for the aggregate team score in the all-star match. The Metropolitan league has edged out the league challengers at matches in the past five years, but the margins have been growing increasingly closer, down to a just few points per shooter.

The Match Format

The bullseye-match format is an American refinement of centuries-old competitions conducted worldwide by civilian-sportsmen, police, and military organizations. For each individual, the formal, 90-shot "Indoor 900" Course of Fire is based on an aggregate of three, 30-shot National Match Indoor Gallery Courses (NMC). A single NMC match of 30 shots totals a possible of 300 points fired in slow-, timed-, and rapid-fire stages; thus a full 900 competition reflects 90 shots fired by each competitor.

The match is fired at 50 feet using .22 caliber target pistols and standardized "bullseye" targets, whose center "ten-ring" is about the size of a 25-cent piece (for slow-fire sequences), and a silver dollar (for timed- and rapid-fire sequences). A small, quarter-sized, "x-ring" is centered in the timed- and rapid-target's target's ten-point scoring-ring and is used to break ties.

Though a perfect score of 900 points is the goal of individual all-star competitors, such perfect scores have probably never been achieved. (The highest score recorded in national sectional matches in the past 54 years is 891.) The maximum All-Star Team score is 9000 points.

The New London County League

The nine-team New London County Pistol League was established in 1954. Most league teams have 15 to 20 shooters who compete weekday evenings during the late fall and winter. Several of the clubs had been in existence for decades when the league took shape in the early 1950's, and the teams and clubs welcome interested people from all walks of life.

The New London County League teams are:

N2 (based at Niantic Sportsmen's Club in East Lyme)

Electric Boat Athletic Club/Groton Sportsmen's Club
(based at Groton Sportsmen's Club, Stonington)

Mystic Rod & Gun Club (Stonington)

Niantic Sportsmen's Club (Niantic/East Lyme)

Nutmegs Pistol Club (based at Quaker Hill)

Pachaug Outdoor Club (Pachaug area)

Quaker Hill Rod & Gun Club (Quaker Hill/Montville)

Sprague Rod and Gun Club (Sprague area)

U.S. Coast Guard Pistol Team

(representing Academy staff, faculty, cadets; Station New London; CG/Navy veterans)

The Hartford Area's Met League

The Metropolitan Revolver League of Hartford was established in 1938 and now has 13 teams or clubs representing some 280 shooters. The teams are:

Bell City Pistol Team

Capitol City Rifle and Pistol Club Pistol Team

Metacon Gun Club Pistol Team

Silver City Gun Club Pistol Team

Torrington Gun Club Pistol Team

Windsor Rifle & Revolver Pistol Team

Colt's Pistol Team

Tolland County Pistols

Middletown Pistol Team

Charter Oak Pistol Team

Manchester Pistol Team

Eddy Glover Pistol Team

Telephone Pistol Team

Six of the teams operate the nonprofit Metropolitan Shooters, Inc. range in Manchester. In addition to hosting many Metropolitan League matches, MSI also hosts a variety of competitions and classes including 900's, 1800's, air-pistol matches, state championship matches, pistol-permit courses, and the Pratt & Whitney summer pistol league.

The Bridgeport Rifle Club Pistol League

Structured differently from other Connecticut leagues, the Bridgeport Rifle Club runs a Spring and Fall Wednesday Night Pistol League in which competitors shoot individually, not as teams, in the bullseye-match format. Every year the club hosts a major sporting event -- the NRA Indoor Pistol Sectionals -- in which hundreds of competitors from the Tri-State area compete. Originated in Bridgeport, the club is now based in Stratford and was established more than three decades ago.

The Revolver League of Connecticut (New Haven Area)

The Revolver League of Connecticut, located in the New Haven area, was incorporated on September 3, 1937. This League was formed when revolvers were commonly used for pistol competition. Over the years, more than 100 shooters have participated during a season; the League is actively seeking new members and clubs to participate in this well-established match format.

Matches are held Tuesday evenings beginning in October and ending in April. There are about 25 matches during each season. For the 2009-2010 season, two indoor ranges are in use. They are located at the West Haven City Hall (West Haven Police Range) and at the Yale University Armory. Several other ranges are used occasionally throughout the season. In June of each year, a picnic and awards ceremony is held at the East Haven Gun Club's outdoor range.

Six teams currently compete; they are:

- New Haven Police
- West Haven Rifle and Pistol Club
- West Haven Police
- Yale University Pistol Club
- East Haven Gun Club
- Elm City Gun Club

Over the years competition groups have included the New Haven Register Pistol Team, Branford Gun Club, Marlin Firearms Pistol Team, Armstrong Rubber Pistol Club, U.S. Army Reserve and Horse Guard, the High Standard Manufacturing Company Gun Club, Winchester Gun Club, Hamden Police Department, Milford Gun Club, and others.

Southwest Connecticut Pistol League (Fairfield Area)

The Southwest Connecticut Pistol League (SWCPL) is possibly Fairfield County's area's most venerable shooting sports tradition, having run continuously since the 1930's. League matches are friendly; in fact, the scoring system encourages beginner participation. Neophytes have an opportunity to shoot shoulder-to-shoulder with seasoned competitors without pressure, and can learn from both observation and coaching.

The league is open to any area club that wishes to sponsor a team and is willing to host matches at its range. There are currently five teams sponsored by three clubs with ranges in Cos Cob, Ridgefield, and Upper Westchester, NY. Competition is open to all members of participating clubs.

Current teams represent:

- Cos Cob Revolver and Rifle Club
- Stamford Pistol Team
- New Canaan Pistol Team
- Ramapoo Rifle and Revolver Club, Ridgefield
- Tators Pistol Team, South Salem NY

Member teams are open to new participants throughout the year, and clinics are held in the fall to acquaint new competitors with the nationally standardized match procedures. All competitors' scores are reported to the NRA for recording and credit towards national classification.

Competition Target Pistols

Specialized, .22 caliber match firearms by Ruger, High Standard, Smith & Wesson, and Browning are typical pistols used for bullseye competition both indoors and outdoors. They are often customized for their owners with special grips and sights, and precision trigger pulls. Olympic-grade arms by Pardini, Hammerli, and Walther are frequently encountered.

Experienced bullseye shooters often use optical or "illuminated-dot" sights that replace the adjustable, open sights that come with a fine target firearm. Nonetheless, indoor target shooting does not demand extremes in equipment; skill is more important than hardware.

ALL-STAR COMPETITION BACKGROUND

The 2009 Match

In the 2009 match, fired at the Niantic Sportsmen's Club competition range in East Lyme on March 29, the Metropolitan "Met" league emerged on top with a score of 8526-181, followed closely by the New London County league with 8491-197. The 35-point difference amounts to a bit more than 3 points per scored shooter -- quite close in match terms. The Revolver League of Connecticut followed up with 7893-115 and a combined Bridgeport Rifle Club-Southwest Pistol League scored 4570-92.

Individually, the day's high shooter was Paul Valintakonis of Met with 876-22, with Joe Sugden of Met second with 869-21, and Steven Wheeler of New London third with 865-20. Sixty-nine competitors fired in the fifth annual match; the top ten in each league team were chosen for score, with the maximum possible being 9000 points -- a never-achieved 900 per shooter.

"The 2009 Interleague All-Star match was a great day," observed Steve Wheeler, who was overall match coordinator. "All the shooters and match staff had fun and enjoyed visiting the Niantic Sportsmen's Club." He offered his direct appreciation to the host club, saying that, "On behalf of the New London County Pistol League, and also the New Haven Revolver League of Connecticut, the Southwest Connecticut Pistol League, the Bridgeport Rifle Club, and the Metropolitan League of Hartford, we thank you for making the facilities available to us, and thank your members for their great assistance in preparing for and supporting the event."

The 2008 Match

Shooting in Manchester on March 30, Hartford's Metropolitan Revolver League won the annual "best of the best" precision shooting event to determine statewide supremacy in bullseye match shooting. The match saw the highest-ever team scores in the competition, and the highest-to-date individual score as well.

Sixty-eight experts from the New London County Pistol League, the Metropolitan Revolver League of Hartford, the Bridgeport Rifle Club Winter Pistol League, the Revolver League of Connecticut of New Haven, and the Southwest Pistol League of Fairfield fired the shoulder-to-shoulder match. In the closest all-star match to date, the Metropolitan league squeezed by the other leagues' challengers. This was the fourth year of the statewide league competition, and the second in which all five leagues were represented.

The 9000-point match was hosted by Hartford's Met League at the Metropolitan Shooters, Inc. competition range in Manchester. The top ten scores from each league count for the aggregate team score in the all-star match. Each of the 68 competitors fired a total of 90 shots, aiming for a possible individual score of 900.

In that contest, the Met league fired 8598-236 out of a possible 9000, New London was second with 8543-200, the combination-team of Bridgeport-New Haven was third with 8159-134, and Bridgeport-Southwest was fifth with 5298-64. Each league's effort is considered excellent in the world of precision pistol shooting.

Individually, Steve Wheeler of Hebron, firing for the E&B Sporting Goods team of the New London league, hit the high of 878-34x, the best ever fired in an all-star match. Second was last year's winner, Paul Valintakonos of the Met League's Windsor club, with 877-34x. Jan Mandel of Bridgeport-New Haven made that combined-team's high with 848-19x, and Manuel Derieux led Southwest with 811-12x.

The "x" scores are used for tie-breaking and reflect the center circle of the 10-point scoring ring. The x-ring is about the size of a quarter; it is difficult to hit at 50 feet.

The All -Star Team Captains were Fran Waslinak, Bridgeport; Fran Lerz, Met; Jack Santo, New London; Bill White, Southwest; and Rick Kamp, New Haven. The state's indoor pistol leagues enroll several hundred competitors during the fall, winter, and spring match seasons in the nationally standardized "bullseye" format.

Though a perfect score of 900 points is the goal of each all-star competitor, such perfect scores have perhaps never been achieved. The highest score recorded in national sectional matches in the past 54 years is 891.

The 2007 Match

At the 2007 match held April 1 in Salem, Conn., Hartford's Metropolitan Pistol League won the first five-league "best of the best" precision shooting event to determine statewide supremacy in bullseye match shooting.

Sixty-three experts fired, representing the New London County Pistol League, the Metropolitan Revolver League of Hartford, the Bridgeport Rifle Club Winter Pistol League, the Revolver League of Connecticut of New Haven, and the Southwest Pistol League of Fairfield. This was the third year of the statewide league competition, and the first in which all five leagues were represented; it was a new test for the Met League, which had won the previous two years' matches by relatively close scores.

In 2007, the 90-shot, 900-point match was hosted by the New London league at the E&B Sporting Goods competition range in Salem. In the match, Hartford "Met" league fired 8492 out of a possible 9000, New London was second with 8421, Bridgeport was third with 8209, New Haven was fourth with 7479, and Southwest was fifth with 6846. Just a few more points per competitor could have altered the rankings significantly.

The high individual score of the day went to Paul Valintakonis of the Windsor team of the Met League, with 876-24x; Joe Sugden of Bridgeport was second with 864-25x; Paul DeJohn of Met was third with 863-18x; Chris Peterson of New London was third with 856-22x; and Steve Wheeler of New London was fifth with 854-22x. out of 900. High shooter for New Haven was Steve Spoldi, with 850-14x; and top shooter for Southwest was Bill White with 844-22x.

The 2006 Match

In 2006 the Metropolitan Revolver League of Hartford held on to its position as the winning league in Connecticut at the Interleague All-Star Pistol Team Match held at the Metropolitan Shooters, Inc. range in Manchester on Sunday, April 2.

The match saw the Hartford-area league, the New London County Pistol League, and the Bridgeport Rifle Club Winter Pistol League meet in a "best of the best" competition.

The Hartford "Met" league fired 8546 out of a possible 9000, New London was second with 8500, and Bridgeport was third with 8386. The high individual score of the day went to Larry Clark of the Windsor team of the Met League with of 877-33x out of 900, followed closely by Steve Wheeler and Mike Dane, both of the New London league's E&B Sporting Goods team from Salem. They shot scores of 871-32x and 870-37x respectively. The top three shooters each improved on their All-Star scores of last year. Joe Sugden was Bridgeport's high shooter with 860-24x.

The 2005 Inaugural Match

In the inaugural Interleague All-Star competition in April 2005, the Metropolitan Revolver League of Hartford clinched its victory over the New London County Pistol League in the last match relay of the afternoon. This first match was hosted by the New London league at the indoor range and clubroom of E&B Sporting Goods on Route 85 in Salem. Out of its possible 9000 points, the Met League scored 8562 with 198 "x-ring" hits, and the New London League scored 8493, with 190 x-ring hits.

The Met League held a small advantage through most of the day, sustained by their general excellence in the slow-fire stages of the matches, but a final, exceptional score put the Hartford-area league firmly on top. Eleven perfect, 100-point, targets were turned in during the match.

In fact, the best individual shooters for the Met League tied for the day's high score: Larry Clark of the Windsor Rifle and Pistol Club, based in Manchester, was the high scorer for the match. He posted 872 with 27 x-counts, while Paul Valintakonis, also of the Windsor club, scored 872 but had 19 x-ring shots. For each, the score translates into three conventional matches with scores of over 290: this scoring level is considered a major achievement in match conditions.

The top two competitors in the New London League were Steve Wheeler, of the E&B Sporting Goods Pistol Team, with an 870-24x, and Mike Dane, also of E&B, with an 867-24x. Dane, of Canterbury, has been the Connecticut State Outdoor Pistol Champion, as well as the Connecticut State Air Pistol Champion.

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Directions to the 2010 Match

DIRECTIONS: From Hartford...

The Manchester Shooting Club (MSI) is in the Nike Recreational Center, 281 Garden Grove Road, Manchester. Take Route I-84 East and then take the I-384 exit. Take Exit 2 for Keeney Street. Bear left at the off ramp stop sign. Travel one block and turn right at stop light on to Keeney Street. At first stop sign continue straight, pass school on your left, and at 0.8 mile turn left onto Garden Grove Rd. Follow Garden Grove Rd to the top of the hill. The MSI range is the last building, light blue, on your left at the top of the hill. The range telephone is 860 646 9210.