

New London Match Results Information

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INTERLEAGUE ALL-STAR PISTOL TEAM MATCH

April 1, 2007

“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 2007
New London County Pistol League

LOCATION
E&B Sporting Goods
Competition Range and Clubroom
Route 85
Salem, Connecticut

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CONNECTICUT INTERLEAGUE ALL-STAR PISTOL TEAM MATCH 2007

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April 2, 2007

New London County League a Close Second in First Five-League All-Star Pistol Challenge

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

Sixty-three 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 a shoulder-to-shoulder Interleague All-Star Pistol Match on Sunday, April 1.

The Metropolitan league edged out both the league challengers at matches in the past two years, but the margins were close. 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 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. Each league's effort is considered excellent in the world of precision pistol shooting; just a few more points per competitor could have altered the rankings significantly.

This year, the 90-shot, 900-point match was hosted by the New London league at the E&B Sporting Goods competition range on Route 85 in Salem. Each of the 63 competitors fired a total of 90 shots, aiming for a possible top point score of 900 -- believed never reached in the history of indoor match shooting.

Steve Wheeler of Canterbury, a longtime competitor and coordinator of this year's match, said that "all participants had a fun-filled day. The match provided a platform for all the pistol leagues' best shooters to compete and to meet new dedicated, expert bullseye shooters from across the state."

Wheeler had praise for the Met League. "Fran Lerz, Met's All-Star Team Captain, consistently marshals a team of topnotch shooters," he said. "Their top shooter, Paul Valintakonis, achieved an 'incredibly superior' score for the grueling match. We were again very close but are eager to compete in 2008 and take the Interleague Trophy out of the Met trophy case. But until then, The Metropolitan League of Hartford unquestionably earned the right to say, "We are The Best of The Best!"

Wheeler adds that "All -Star Team Captains FranWaslinak, Bridgeport; Fran Lerz, Met; Jack Santo, New London; Bill White, Southwest; and Rick Kamp, New Haven, did an excellent job coordinating their teams' participation. Their efforts collectively produced a unique and very successful day for Connecticut bullseye shooting!"

Individual Excellence

The state's indoor pistol leagues enroll several hundred competitors during the fall, winter, and spring match seasons in the nationally standardized "bullseye" format. The top ten scores from each league count for the aggregate team score in the all-star match.

The high individual score of the day went to Paul Valintakonis 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 "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 other top New London shooters were Gregg Tucker, 848-22x; Jon Trudeau, 843-16x; Wayne Gronlund, 839-10x; Gary Berman, 830-14x, Matt Thompson, 829-13x; Ray Kozacensky, 827-19x; Brian Watrous, 825-17x; and Charlie Allen, 824-13x

BACKGROUND **The Match Format**

The bullseye-match format is an American refinement of centuries-old competitions conducted worldwide by civilian-sportsmen, police, and military organizations. 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.

A perfect score of 900 points is the goal of each all-star competitor, but such perfect scores have perhaps never been achieved. (The highest score recorded in national sectional matches in the past 52 years is 891.) The maximum All-Star team score is 9000 points.

The New London County League

The ten-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:

- E&B Sporting Goods (Salem area)
- Electric Boat Athletic Club (based at Groton Sportsmen's Club in 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)
- Pfizer Pistol Team (based at Mystic R&G)
- Quaker Hill Rod & Gun Club (Quaker Hill/Montville)
- Sprague Rod and Gun Club (Sprague area)
- U.S. Coast Guard Pistol Club (staff, faculty, and cadets)

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 holds a variety of competitions and classes including 900's, 1800's, air-pistol matches, state championship matches, pistol-permit courses, the Loomis Chafee (high school) Rifle Team, 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 2006-2007 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
- Tator's 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, Pardini, 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.

The 2006 Match

Last year the Metropolitan Revolver League of Hartford held on to its position as the winning league in Connecticut at the 2006 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.

In the match, the Hartford “Met” league fired 8546 out of a possible 9000, New London was second with 8500, and Bridgeport was third with 8386. Each league’s effort is considered excellent in the world of precision pistol shooting.

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 Match

In April 2005, the The Metropolitan Revolver League of Hartford clinched its victory over the New London County Pistol League in the last match relay of the afternoon. The inaugural 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.