

MORE SHOOTING FUNDAMENTALS

By

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Also extremely hot days can affect the accuracy of ammunitions. Never leave your ammunition in the direct sun. Temperatures above ninety degrees F. can cause ammunition to be erratic if the ammunition is allowed to cook in the sun. Keep it in the shade until ready to shoot. This would also mean not leaving your magazines out in the sun while running your laps prior to firing.

Both summer and winter biathletes should test their rifle and ammunition to see which combination shoots the best group. If you are going to be competitive, the rifle and ammunition should be able to shoot a group no larger than a five-cent piece at fifty meters. Most good rifles and ammunition will shoot ten-shot groups smaller than a dime under steady wind Which Ammunition? Most target grade .22-caliber ammunition that does not exceed 1378 ft/sec at the muzzle can be used for the biathlon. However, extreme temperatures greatly affect the accuracy of some ammunition. Some ammunition performs better in cold temperatures than others thus winter biathletes should test their rifle with various ammunitions to see which shoots a smaller group in the cold temperatures.

In most rifles, barrel fouling caused by unburned powder in the cold is the greatest cause of inaccurate grouping. Usually each succeeding five shot group will be dramatically larger than the preceding group fired during sub-zero temperatures. While races are not supposed to be conducted at temperatures below zero F. often the sighting-in period will be conducted early in the morning and thus the temperature will be colder.

After sighting-in during extremely cold temperatures, clean the unburned powder from the bore with rod and brush. This will allow the first prone shots to be as accurate as possible. The adjustments for wind and light made during the sight-in will not be affected. If cleaning from the muzzle, which I don't recommend, be sure to tip the breech downward so the unburned powder falls away from the trigger and bolt.

We'll write in detail again about cleaning sometime in the future. However, a note for now is to carry a Teflon coated cleaning rod with .22 caliber bronze brush, a nylon brush, and patch tip in your rifle case. A bore guide, a metal or wooden tube that replaces the bolt during cleaning and allows the cleaning rod to be inserted without touching the chamber walls, should be part of the cleaning tool kit. Touching the bore with a metal rod could damage both the cleaning rod and bore surfaces. Other cleaning equipment should include soft cleaning patches, oil, bore cleaner, a toothbrush and either a powdered graphite or similar dry lubricant that can be used on the firing pin at sub-zero temperatures. A spray lock de-icer works well for drying any parts that might have water in them that could freeze. During extreme temperatures ice in the firing pin or magazines is a common cause of rifle malfunction. Keep them dry and don't take your rifle into hot, steamy rooms where the metal will become wet with condensation, which will freeze when taken back outdoors.

Both summer and winter biathletes should clean the rifle after every shooting session. Good rifles will seldom need to be cleaned during any shooting session of less than 200 rounds. However, if the rifle is not consistent in its accuracy, it may need to be cleaned more often.

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