

## 2018 Connecticut and Rhode Island JOSOC

The Chase Hall Range Complex at the United States Coast Guard Academy was a beehive of activity during the first weekend in January as it hosted the combined Connecticut and Rhode Island USA Shooting Junior Olympic Rifle and Pistol Shooting Championship Qualifier (JOSOC). With 67 combined entries Match Director Debbie Lyman reports that the match staff, under the direction of Dr. Richard Hawkins, Head Shooting Sports Coach at Coast Guard, kept everything in order and on time.

Cos Cob Connecticut's Junior Rifle Club's J1 rifleman Kyle Kutz topped the field in both men's smallbore air rifle and smallbore shooting a 580 air and a 568 smallbore. His performance guarantees him an invitation to the championship to be held this spring at the Olympic Training Center (OTC) in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Megan Wilcoxson, a J1 Stratford PAL alum, who now shoots at The Ohio State University, swept both air and smallbore in the women's category with a 382 and 563 respectively and will be invited to compete in the spring as the state champion.

Nutmeg State shooters who shot well and waiting to learn the cut off scores for invitation are male riflemen silver medalist John Lesica and Dan Wesson in both disciplines as well as bronze medalist Harrison Callahan in air rifle. Silver medalist Laura Milukas, bronze air medalist Kiera Ulmer, and Stephanie Allen await word in air rifle while Silver medalist Gillian Riordan and bronze medal winner Allen stand by for smallbore.

Feng Lu, from Avon Old Farms, had a personal best performance of 565 for 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in Mens Air Rifle. Lu is not a US citizen and therefore ineligible for resident medals and to participate in the US National Championship. Neutralizing the disappointment of not being able to shoot at the OTC is the fact that Lu is the first Avon Old Farms shooting athlete to place in the overall top three positions in a JOSOC qualifier.

Rhode Island Junior Rifle Director Brenda Jacobs worked in concert with Lyman and saw the Ocean State's DJ Titus and Grace Foley earn invites as state winners. It will be the first trip for Foley while Titus made his maiden OTC appearance last year.

Two pistol shooters from The Ohio State University were home on break and were sandwiched into the rifle relays. Connecticut's Con Merriman bested Ohio teammate, Bay State resident, Samuel Gens in sporter pistol and posted the only score in air pistol. Merriman will be receiving an invitation as state champion.

Lyman commented, "The match was a great success because of the Coast Guard Academy's generosity and hospitality as our host. The volunteer workers, Coast Guard's assistant shooting coaches Chuck Griffin, Ryan McKee, and Hap Rocketto along with the Academy Armory's fulltime staff CWO Paul Lahah, GM1 Charlie Petrotto, and GM2 Brent Craemer made for a smooth running match. We very much look forward to again returning."