

Sydney Katz – A Shooting Star

By Deb Lyman (Editorial assistance provided by Hap Rocketto)

Cos Cob Rifle and Revolver Club arrived at the US Coast Guard Academy's Chase Hall Range complex to shoot the Connecticut State Junior Olympic Shooting Championships in early January of 2014. Coaches Jude Collins and Rocco Cicci walked in with fifteen competitors and a host of parents into the unfamiliar world of electronic targets and stringent international shooting rules. The Blue Trail Range (BTR) staff had recognized the team's talent and support and encouraged them to move their club from training gallery shooting to grooming shooters for international competition. That day set a new course for Cos Cob, and one of their junior shooters in particular, to go from a goal of shooting a dime-sized five-shot group at 50 feet to producing groups small enough to be recruited by many of the top ten collegiate rifle teams.

Sydney Katz, and her father, Marc Katz, watched the Coast Guard's electronic target system's monitor as a couple of experienced international shooters kept their shots within the nine ring. They asked Dave Lyman what it would take for her to bring her shooting to that level. The answer was better rifle and shooting clothing, and match exposure. More importantly, the time and will to put in the hard work of training.

The equipment was quickly ordered, coaching scheduled, and the hard work began. Coupled with training hard on the range, she was also diligently traveling around the country to look at colleges. She toured and fired an open invitational match at The Ohio State University, but returned home to explain to her parents that she really liked the team and range, but the Animal Science academia just didn't seem to be a good fit. A little more than one year after she shot the 2014 JORC, the fruits of her labor have been recognized. Coast Guard made an attempt to recruit her but was told she had been accepted at the University of Kentucky. When it was mentioned that Wildcat Coach Harry Mullins was a lucky man, Sydney remarked that she was not a recruited athlete and hoped for a walk-on spot. Hearing that, the Coast Guard alerted Kentucky. When Sydney participated in the 2015 National JORC at Colorado Springs, Coach Mullin was seated right behind her firing point observing her very carefully.

A shooting star is a bright rapidly moving meteor entering the Earth's atmosphere. Sydney Katz is the shooting equivalent, a bright rapidly moving contender entering Division I varsity rifle competition. She is very modest about her accomplishments and possesses the Wildcat demeanor that will make her a formidable member of the UK rifle team (she leaves Connecticut driving a Jeep with "UK 10.9" on her license plate).



The “modest” and “formidable” Sydney Katz. May 2015, using a Remington 700 caliber (7MM Ultra), she took down a 7’4” Chocolate Phased Black Bear in Superior, Montana.