

ZACHARY OSVALD CLAIMS GOLD IN BOTH AIR & SMALLBORE RIFLE

In spite of the COVID season and restrictions imposed upon junior and high school sports, the Connecticut State Rifle & Revolver Association (CSRRA) partnered with Blue Trail Range Corporation and Stratford PAL to host the State Junior Olympic Air and Smallbore Rifle Championships on February 28 and March 6 & 7, 2021.

The competition started at the indoor range at Blue Trail Range in Wallingford, Connecticut. Senior Zachary Oswald, setting his sights on a chance to be accepted at Akron or OSU for the opportunity to be a part of a collegiate rifle team, wanted to ensure this match was the performance of his life. He set his goals, found ways to practice around COVID restrictions, and registered for the match. For both men's events, he fired personal bests in each match for the Gold Medallion in both events. He posted a 564 in Air and 567 in Smallbore Rifle. Landing Silver and Bronze were two of his teammates, David Khun and Brent Ling. While all three shooters shoot for Blue Trail Range, Zach also fires for Vinal Tech as his school Kaynor Tech does not have a rifle team; David attends Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy; and, Brent attends Old Saybrook High School. A clean sweep of the Gold, Silver & Bronze medals for the Blue Trail Range team.

Air Rifle - Men					Smallbore Rifle - Men				
Osvald	Zachary	J1	564	Gold Medal	Osvald	Zachary	J1	567	Gold Medal
Khun	David	J2	521	Silver Medal	Ling	Brent	J2	517	Silver Medal
Ling	Brent	J2	508	Bronze Medal	Khun	David	J2	503	Bronze Medal
Monte	Chris	J2	492		Monte	Chris	J2	458	
					Christian	Justin	J2	424	

The Stratford PD graciously opened their doors to the Air Gun competition with Melissa Niemiec and Alan Wilcoxson stepping in as co-Match Directors.

"Little" Nicole Gardecki, a four-year shooter for Stratford PAL, captured the Gold in Air Rifle, her favorite discipline. While vertically-challenged, she is very patient, and works hard. In spite of her first appearance in such a prestigious match, she put in a solid performance. She plans to train even harder next year to add another Gold to her collection. Only one point behind for the Silver was teammate Taylor Niemiec. Veronica Martino garnered the Bronze medal with a 565.

Hoping to attend either the US Coast Guard Academy or SUNY Maritime, Autumn Smith led the pack in the Smallbore Rifle Women's event with a 547 for the gold. Stephanie Rota and Taylor Niemiec were awarded the Silver & Bronze medals, respectively with scores of 534 and 530.

Air Rifle - Women					Smallbore Rifle - Women				
Gardecki	Nicole	J2	571	Gold Medal	Smith	Autumn	J1	547	Gold Medal
Niemiec	Taylor	J2	570	Silver Medal	Rota	Stephanie	J1	534	Silver Medal
Martino	Veronica	J2	565	Bronze Medal	Niemiec	Taylor	J2	530	Bronze Medal
Smith	Autumn	J1	557		Martino	Veronica	J2	511	
					Gardecki	Nicole	J2	507	
					Miller	Kelly	J2	488	
					Carroll	Samantha	J3	362	
					Bernier	Katherine	J2	326	
					Carroll	Madelynn	J3	269	

Zach, Nicole and Autumn will receive automatic invites to compete at the National Junior Olympic Rifle Championships to be held at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan, home of the USA Shooting National Team and sanctioned shooting sports development programs. The match days for both Smallbore and Air Rifle, Men and Women will occur May 12-16 at the Margot V. Biermann Athletic Center.

The Match Directors, on behalf of the CSRRA, wish the best of luck to all athletes who are selected and accept the invitation to compete at the Nationals in Michigan. Congratulations to all athletes that competed and the parents and coaches that continue to be ambassadors to the shooting sports.

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Prepared by Deb Lyman/Alan Wilcoxson