

THE SHOOTER'S SCOPE

Inaugural, Olympic Edition Vol 1. Monthly Journal

Sportsgiri Pvt Ltd

Manu Bhaker, Sarabjot Singh, and Swapnil Kusale hit the bullseye, clinching bronze at the Paris 2024 Olympics!

AUGUST 2024, VOL 1

'Highlighting the special edition dedicated to the triumphs and challenges of the Paris Olympics 2024'.

PRECISION.
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Mission

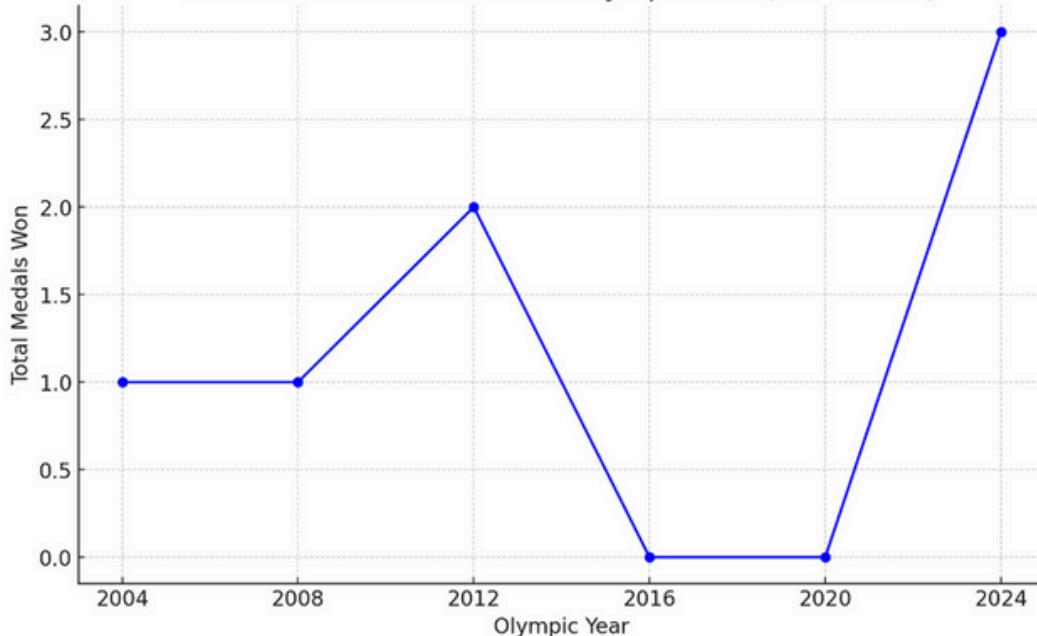
To democratize sports shooting in India.

To help overcome challenges faced by sports shooters, coaches, range owners, OEM and other stakeholders by technology infusion.



India's total medals won in each Olympic year

India's Total Medals in Each Olympic Year (2004-2024)



**'PERFORMANCE
DIGITALLY
DELIVERED'**

Sports shooting in India has evolved from a niche activity post-independence to a major competitive sport by 2024, marked by milestones like Jaspal Rana's 1994 Asian Games gold and Abhinav Bindra's 2008 Olympic gold, having a total of 7 medals in shooting. With increased government support and emerging young talents like Manu Bhaker, India has established itself as a formidable force in the global shooting arena.

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Sports shooting is an Olympic event. Sportsgiri Pvt Ltd functions as the aggregator of all major needs of the shooters, coaches, range owners, OEM and the shooting community at large.

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Editorial: Inaugural Edition

As the Paris Olympics draw to a close, one is left mesmerised - with stories of superlative performances and troughs of disappointments, cloud nine elation and downright dejection, some underdogs hogging the limelight while hyped stars biting the dust and new kids on the block making new world records - and - megabucks; with simultaneous tears of success and failures caking the cheeks of grown-up men and women, rallying under varied flags and nationalities in the largest and the most import sporting event on the globe. In the era of social media and instant gratification, while some gained sky-high popularity, some others managed to gather enough embarrassment as well.



Bharat too has had its mixed bag of hits and misses, performance being a tad paler than Tokyo Olympic, plunging its position from 48 to 71 in Paris, with no Gold, 1x Silver, and 5x Bronze medals and multiple near-misses.

The best performance was delivered by the sports shooters' 21-strong contingent with three bronze medals, a first-ever in the Olympics. The multi-talented Manu Bhaker stole the show with two bronze medals, including one with Sarabjot in the mixed 10-meter team and a third by Swapnil Kusale in the 50-meter rifle event. Apart from the winners and participants, compliments are in order for the NRAI, SAI, state associations and parents, who kept the faith while the players and coaches kept moving the needle. Well done, indeed!

This monthly magazine is but a humble contribution towards the slow and steady rise of sports shooting in India. It is a unique journal in the sense that it is dedicated only to the sport of shooting. This is our inaugural edition and could not have come at a better time, with shooters proving their mettle in the Olympics 2024. The magazine aims to augment the growth of shooting by building a thriving community across the country, learning from each other, spreading awareness, analysing the challenges before the stakeholders and democratising the sport - a task so mammoth that, for this arduous journey, we would need support from every major stakeholder in the sport.

We would eagerly await your feedback at magazine@sportsgiri.com. Bouquets and brickbats are equally welcome. Only stakeholder reviews can help us improve, both the quality and content.

Like the shooters, our best is yet to come.

Greetings on Independance Day! Jai Hind

Col Prem Rajpurohit (Veteran)

15/08/2024



A message from the Sub-Editors

In the vibrant world of competitive shooting, "The Shooters' Scope" has emerged as a beacon of insight and inspiration. This e-magazine, launched under the banner of Sportsgiri, serves as an essential resource for aspiring shooters and a celebration of the sport's rich heritage.

As contributors to The Shooters' Scope, we, Zoya Khan and Astha Bisht, have dedicated ourselves to creating engaging and informative content that reflects our passion for shooting sports. Our combined efforts have infused the magazine with a unique blend of expertise and creativity. Zoya Khan brings a deep understanding of the sport and a commitment to storytelling, while Astha Bisht offers a fresh perspective and creative flair.

Our work aims to provide not only comprehensive coverage of shooting events and athlete profiles but also valuable insights into training, techniques, and the latest developments in the sport. By showcasing the achievements of athletes and sharing their inspiring stories, we seek to motivate and guide the next generation of shooters.

Through The Shooters' Scope, we aspire to foster a vibrant community where the spirit of competitive shooting can thrive. The magazine stands as a testament to our dedication and enthusiasm, reflecting our commitment to making a meaningful impact in the world of shooting sports and supporting those who strive for excellence.



Astha Bisht

15/08/2024



Zoya Khan

15/08/2024

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An overview of the origins, evolution, global popularity, and highlighting its historical development, major competitions, and the impact of technological advancements.

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BOOSTING SHOOTING PERFORMANCE WITH NEUROSCIENCE 34

The article discusses how applied neuroscience, including neuroplasticity and mental training techniques, can enhance shooting performance by improving focus, accuracy, and emotional control.

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About Shooting!

“A sport where millimeters as well as milliseconds make all the difference.”

- Matt Emmons

The act of firing a projectile from a ranged weapon—such as a rifle, bow, crossbow, slingshot, or blowpipe—is referred to as shooting. Shooting can occur during conflict, in hunting, on a shooting range, or in the countryside.

In Europe, shooting sports arose more than 500 years ago. With the establishment of a national association for this sport in the 1950s, it gained popularity in the US. This sport is now popular and well-liked all around the world.

A **shooter** is the individual who engages in shooting activities. A person's level of shooting expertise is referred to as their marksmanship. A proficient shooter is a marksman or sharpshooter.

About **shooting ranges**— A shooting range, also known as a firing range, gun range, shooting ground, or specialty space, is created especially for firearm usage requirements, instruction, training, or competitions.

While most shooting ranges are privately owned by individuals and sports organizations and primarily serve recreational shooters, the armed forces or police enforcement runs others.

Equipment, shooting distances, targets, time constraints, and levels of athleticism required can all be used to classify shooting sports. Shooting sports can feature both team and individual competition.

The typical method for evaluating team performance is to add up the scores of each member of the team. Shooting sports are usually held in either approved permanent shooting ranges or temporary shooting fields in the area away from the settlements due to the noise of the gunfire and the high impact energy of the projectiles.

Shooting sports have also played a significant role in popular culture, inspiring numerous books, movies, and video games that highlight the thrill and precision of marksmanship.

Today, shooting sports are governed by numerous international bodies, such as the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF), which oversees competitions and standardizes rules. Various disciplines, including precision shooting, rapid fire, and skeet shooting, cater to a wide range of skills and interests. Technological advancements in firearms and equipment have further enhanced the accuracy and safety of the sport. As a result, shooting sports continue to attract enthusiasts of all ages, fostering a community that values precision, focus, and camaraderie.



Origins of Projectile Weaponry

How shooting came into existence:



"Queen Victoria, an avid enthusiast of rifle shooting, once remarked, 'To sit or to stand with a rifle is a study of patience, precision, and quiet determination.'"



Long before guns were invented, archery was the first sport in which players would shoot a target as a test of skill. It is unknown when target shooting started because of the unclear early history of weapons. Weapons were initially employed in combat and then in sport shooting (hunting).

The first known shooting contest took place in 1477 in Eichstat, Bavaria, with competitors competing at 200 meters (220 yards) and most likely with matchlocks.

Participants fire at background targets from covered, enclosed shooting booths. Every target has a little house on either side where a target marker is hidden during shooting and is used to indicate to the shooter and judges the hit value using a staff or pole. At a table beneath a ceiling in the right foreground are the judges and scorekeepers. There are many wind flags in the air, and onlookers are visible.

Target shooting with rifled arms was a common recreational activity throughout much of Europe by the sixteenth century, particularly in the Germanic nations.

In 1834, the first rifle and handgun public shooting range was established in St. Petersburg.

In 1808, the first English-language book on target rifle shooting was released. Research on numerous rifles from 1800 was done by the English military, with a focus on long-range shooting.

Long-range shooting gained so popularity that Queen Victoria, an advocate for the sport of rifle shooting, often endorsing its practice during her reign. Her interest in the sport underscored the importance of discipline and precision, qualities she valued greatly. She fired the opening shot at the National Rifle Association's first prize meeting in 1860. Following World War I, target rifle shooting gained a lot of popularity.

In 1896, rifle shooting was included in the first modern Olympic Games, solidifying its status as a competitive sport. Today, target shooting remains a globally recognized and practiced sport, with numerous international competitions and a wide range of disciplines.

BEST REST FOR THE QUEEN'S RIFLE.

A Global Snapshot of Shooting Sports

Shooting sports have captivated enthusiasts around the globe, blending precision, concentration, and skill in a thrilling competitive arena. This article delves into the fascinating world of shooting sports, shedding light on its widespread popularity, notable achievements, and statistical insights.

Global Reach and Popularity

Shooting sports boast a rich history and diverse disciplines, ranging from rifle and pistol to shotgun events. According to the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF), there are over 150 member nations participating in international shooting competitions. This global reach underscores the sport's universal appeal, drawing competitors from varied cultural and geographical backgrounds.

Major Competitions and Their Impact

1. Olympic Games: Shooting has been a staple of the modern Olympics since 1896, featuring 15 events in the current program. The 2020 Tokyo Olympics saw 360 shooters from 101 countries, highlighting the sport's international presence.
2. ISSF World Cup: Held annually, the ISSF World Cup series attracts top shooters who vie for medals across different host cities. In 2023, over 1,200 athletes participated, representing more than 80 countries.
3. World Shooting Para Sport Championships: This event showcases the talents of para-athletes, promoting inclusivity and excellence. The 2022 championships in Al Ain, UAE, saw participation from 43 nations with 234 athletes competing.

Statistical Insights

Participation and Growth

The global shooting community has seen significant growth in recent years. Data from the ISSF indicates a 15% increase in registered shooters from 2015 to 2023. This growth is particularly notable in Asia and Africa, where emerging talent is making a mark on the international stage.



Record-Breaking Performances

Shooting sports are constantly evolving, with athletes pushing the boundaries of precision and accuracy. The current world records reflect this relentless pursuit of excellence:

- 10m Air Rifle Men: Sergey Kamenskiy of Russia set the record with a score of 630.2 in 2018.
- 10m Air Rifle Women: India's Apurvi Chandela holds the record with a score of 252.9, achieved in 2019.
- 50m Pistol Men: Jin Jong-oh from South Korea set the record with a score of 583 in 2012.

Economic Impact

The shooting sports industry contributes significantly to the global economy. In the United States alone, the shooting sports market was valued at approximately \$15 billion in 2020, encompassing equipment sales, training facilities, and event hosting. Europe follows closely, with a market size of \$12 billion, driven by a strong tradition of hunting and competitive shooting.

Promoting Safety and Education

Safety is paramount in shooting sports, with stringent regulations and training programs in place. The National Rifle Association (NRA) and other governing bodies offer comprehensive safety courses, ensuring that participants are well-versed in handling firearms responsibly. The ISSF's "Athlete Education Program" further emphasizes the importance of ethical conduct and sportsmanship.

SOUTH KOREA

South Korea has emerged as a formidable force in shooting sports, particularly in pistol events. Korean shooters have achieved significant success in the Olympics and ISSF competitions, with over 20 Olympic medals. South Korea's rise in shooting sports is supported by its well-structured training programs, which emphasize discipline and technical skills. The Korea Shooting Federation provides extensive resources, including coaching, facilities, and international competition opportunities. Notable athletes include Jin Jong-oh, one of the greatest pistol shooters of all time with four Olympic gold medals and multiple world titles, and Kim Jang-mi, an Olympic gold medalist in the 25m pistol event at the 2012 London Games.

RUSSIA

Russia, and previously the Soviet Union, has a storied history in shooting sports, with a strong presence in international competitions. Russian shooters have excelled in various disciplines, particularly in rifle and pistol events, amassing a significant number of Olympic medals, with over 80 to their name. Russia's success is underpinned by its rigorous training systems and sports schools, which identify and nurture talent from a young age. The Russian Shooting Union provides comprehensive support, including coaching, facilities, and international competition exposure. Notable athletes include Sergey Kamenskiy, a top contender in rifle events, holding world records and multiple World Championship titles, and Vitalina Batsarashkina, an Olympic gold medalist in the 10m air pistol and 25m pistol events, known for her consistency and precision.

UNITED STATES

The United States has a rich history in shooting sports, consistently performing well in international competitions. The U.S. boasts a substantial medal tally in the Olympic Games, with American shooters winning over 110 medals. The success of American shooters can be attributed to robust training programs and facilities. Organizations such as USA Shooting and the National Rifle Association (NRA) provide extensive support, including training camps, coaching, and funding for athletes. Notable athletes include Kim Rhode, the most decorated Olympic shooter in history, with six medals in double trap and skeet events, and Vincent Hancock, a two-time Olympic gold medalist in skeet shooting, known for his consistent performance and precision.

CHINA

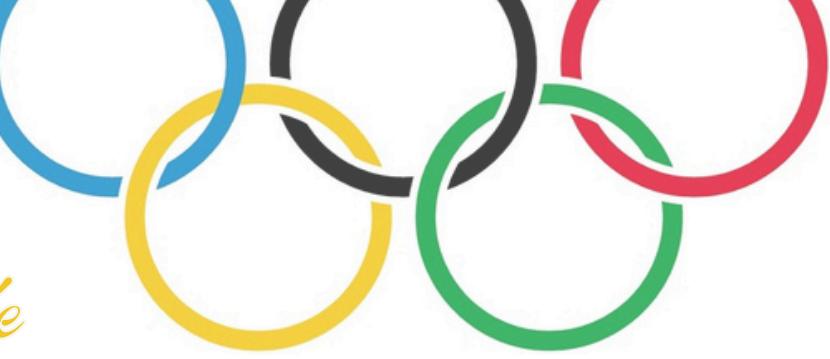
China has rapidly ascended the ranks in shooting sports, especially since the 2000s. Chinese shooters have made their mark in the Olympics and ISSF World Cup events, with an impressive haul of over 70 Olympic medals. China's success can be attributed to its rigorous state-sponsored training programs. Athletes are identified at a young age and provided with specialized coaching, state-of-the-art facilities, and comprehensive support systems. Notable athletes include Zhang Mengxue, an Olympic gold medalist in the women's 10m air pistol at the 2016 Rio Games, and Yang Haoran, a dominant figure in the 10m air rifle, with multiple World Cup and World Championship title

GERMANY

Germany has a long tradition of excellence in shooting sports, excelling in rifle and pistol events. German shooters have consistently performed well in the Olympics and European Championships, contributing to the country's impressive medal count of over 50 Olympic medals. Germany's success is bolstered by its comprehensive training infrastructure. The German Shooting Federation (DSB) plays a pivotal role in nurturing talent, offering extensive training camps, competitions, and support for athletes at all levels. Notable athletes include Ralf Schumann, a legend in rapid fire pistol shooting with three Olympic gold medals and numerous world titles, and Sonja Pfeilschifter, a dominant force in air rifle and small-bore rifle events, with multiple World Championship titles and World Cup victories.

OLYMPIC SHOOTING

A Complete Guide



Since the inaugural Olympic Games in 1896, shooting has been an Olympic event. It is the only sport to compete in the Olympics in both the winter and the summer. At the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, shooting garnered the third-highest number of participating nations, with teams from 100 different countries competing.

While other sports require strength, speed, or agility, shooting requires not only exceptional vision and rapid reflexes but also stillness, coordination, and focus. These abilities must be honed to an incredible degree, and the athlete must be able to perform with unwavering discipline and accuracy in any circumstance if they are to triumph at the Olympics.

The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) oversees the sport. India has had some success in the past few Olympics shooting competitions. Between 2004 and 2012, Indian marksmen won four medals at three straight Games; in Beijing 2008, Abhinav Bindra became the country's first individual gold medal winner.

Types of Firearms

Rifles: shoulder guns featuring rifled bores and lengthy barrels. They usually need to be held with two hands and are lengthy. High power rifle, benchrest shooting, gallery rifle, and four position tiny bore shooting are popular shooting sports that use this kind of weapons. There are 300-1200-meter shooting ranges.

Pistols: compared to rifles, are smaller, utilized at shorter ranges, and have less accuracy. only meant to be used with one hand. Modern pentathlon is a popular shooting sport that involves timed air pistol shooting. Next came the shooting of silhouettes. Reaching every metallic target at varying distances is the aim. The number of targets struck determines the score.

Shotguns: weapons that are shoulder-mounted smoothbore weapons with two barrels. They resemble rifles quite a little. They are typically used for single-shot and reload or pump-action operations. Shotguns are typically used in practical shooting and cowboy shooting. They are more common in nations where firearms are prohibited.

Measuring the time, it takes a shooter to hit one or more targets is known as action shooting. Targets may be in motion or remain still. Accuracy of the falling or heated targets may be used to determine scoring. Athletes compete in rifle and pistol events inside, firing at stationary targets. Shotgun, on the other hand, is played outside with targets thrown into the air for the shooters to aim at. Athletes shoot from a set distance (10, 25, or 50 meters), trying to hit a bullseye on a paper target or shoot "clays" with a shotgun.

As the Paris 2024 Olympics commence, we take great honor in making it the theme of our inaugural edition. The world's elite athletes will gather in the City of Light to showcase their prowess, and the shooting events will undoubtedly capture the essence of precision, skill, and unwavering focus. With events ranging from rifle and pistol shooting to the dynamic and fast-paced shotgun events, the stage is set for another thrilling chapter in Olympic shooting history. We look forward to celebrating the remarkable achievements of these athletes, who exemplify the spirit of excellence and perseverance.

India's Pride: Paris Olympics' Winners



(Picture by Getty Images)

Manu Bhaker

Shattering Records: India's first female shooter to win Olympic bronze, Manu Bhaker, creates history as the first woman shooter to bag two bronze medals at the Games!



In the quiet town of Goria, Haryana, a young girl picked up a rifle and aimed at a target, unaware that she would soon become one of India's most renowned athletes. Born on February 18, 2002, Manu Bhaker has captivated the nation as a shooting prodigy, achieving Olympic success by winning a bronze medal at the 2024 Games in Paris. She recently added another accolade by winning a bronze medal in the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event at the World Shooting Championships alongside her teammate Sarabjot Singh.

Early Life -

The gifted shooter Manu Bhaker was raised in a household that emphasised dedication and hard effort. Her father, chief engineer Ramkishan Bhaker of the Merchant Navy, saw potential in her wide range of sports pursuits. Manu was good at boxing, skating, and tennis until she realised at the age of 14 what her actual passion was. Her father made sound decisions in training and specialised equipments. Manu's commitment to shooting and her ability to manage her studies and training regimen allowed her to place first in local competitions and pave the way for her success at the national and international levels in the future.

The Meteoric Rise

Manu's rise in the shooting community was impressive and quick. After capturing an impressive nine gold medals at the National Championships in 2017, she first attracted national notice. She made a fantastic debut on the international arena in 2018 at the ISSF World Cup in Mexico. Manu became the youngest Indian to win a gold medal in the 10m Air Pistol event at the age of sixteen. Her performance received widespread praise, and the shooting world acknowledged her as an emerging star.

Manu maintained her winning streak after winning the World Cup. After winning a gold medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, she went on to excel at the Asian Games and the Youth Olympic Games in the same year. Her winning streak made her a formidable opponent and a source of inspiration for young athletes all throughout India. With a score of 240.9 during the Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia, she broke the previous Games record and showed her extraordinary skill and composure under duress.

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Reflecting on her experience, Manu shared her insights, emphasizing the invaluable lessons she learned: "The Tokyo Olympics was a significant learning experience for me. Despite the challenges and setbacks, I gained invaluable insights into handling pressure and staying focused. Every competition teaches you something new, and this one was no different. I realized the importance of mental strength and preparation. Although I didn't achieve the results I hoped for, I am more determined than ever to improve and come back stronger. The support from my coaches, family, and fans has been incredible, and it motivates me to keep pushing forward. I am looking forward to applying these lessons in future competitions, including the Paris 2024 Olympics."

*"Hit the mark,
chase the dream"*

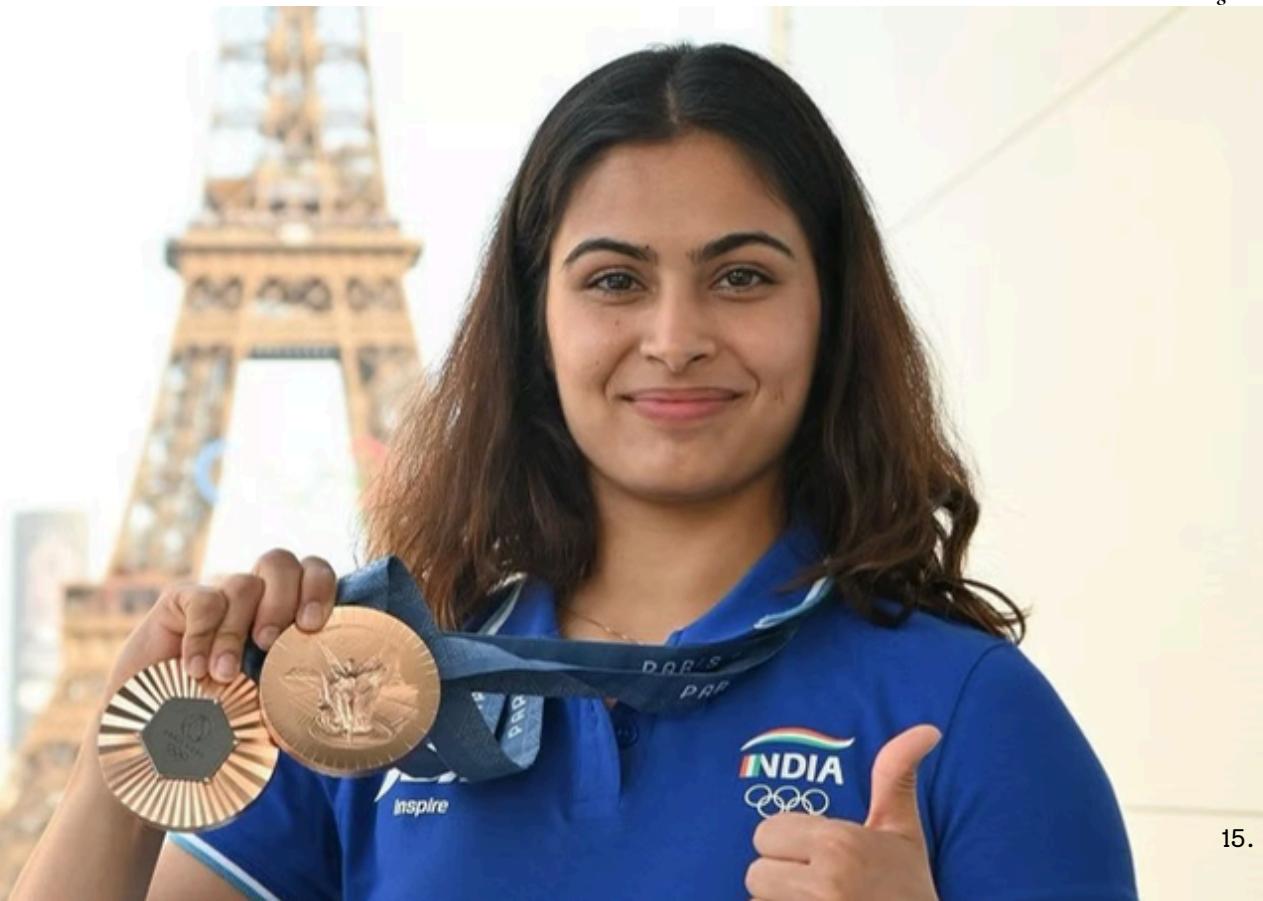


Getting Past Roadblocks-

Even with her early success, Manu had to overcome hurdles that tried to break her resolve. The pandemic forced the Tokyo 2020 Olympics to be hosted in 2021, and it turned out to be a fierce battlefield. She was the clear favourite going into the 10m Air Pistol event, so her surprising early withdrawal was a major setback. Her poor performance was a result of both technical problems with her pistol and the intense pressure of the Olympics. But Manu, ever the resilient person that she is, saw this as a teaching moment that strengthened her resolve to return.

As the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris approach, Manu Bhaker is determined to realize her Olympic dream. Among the 21 shooters announced by the National Rifle Association of India, she demonstrates exceptional talent and dedication. Her story is not just about breaking records but also about breaking barriers and inspiring a generation. With her bronze medal victory at the 2024 Olympics in Paris, Manu Bhaker's legacy as a trailblazer in Indian sports continues to grow, shining brighter with each passing day.

Credits: Manu Bhaker Instagram





Sarabjot Singh

Precision and Poise in the Spotlight of Indian Shooting

In a groundbreaking achievement for Indian shooting, Sarabjot Singh, alongside teammate Manu Bhaker, clinches a bronze medal in the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event at the Paris 2024 Olympics. This victory, achieved at the National Shooting Center in Châteauroux, marks India's first-ever Olympic bronze in a shooting team event and makes Bhaker the first athlete from independent India to secure two medals in a single Olympic edition. Facing the formidable South Korean duo of Oh Ye Jin and Wonho Lee, Singh and Bhaker deliver a thrilling performance, emerging victorious with a 16-10 win. Singh's exceptional final shots are pivotal in securing the medal, showcasing his precision and composure under pressure.

Born on September 30, 2001, in Dheen village, Haryana, Sarabjot Singh's early life was marked by modest beginnings. His father, Jatinder Singh, worked as a farmer, while his mother, Hardeep Kaur, was a homemaker. Originally aspiring to be a footballer, Singh's trajectory changed dramatically after he attended a summer camp where he was introduced to shooting. Captivated by the sport, he decided to pursue it seriously, despite the initial reservations of his parents.

Singh began his shooting journey at the AR Shooting Academy in Ambala Cantt, training under the guidance of coach Abhishek Rana. His dedication and talent quickly became evident, leading him to remarkable achievements in the shooting world.

Career Highlights

Junior World Championships 2019: Singh made a significant impact early in his career by winning a gold medal, which marked his entry into the senior ranks of shooting.

Asian Games 2023: Singh's performance at the Asian Games was stellar, contributing to the team's gold medal and securing a silver medal in the mixed team event.

Asian Championships 2023: Singh won an individual bronze medal, a result that earned him a spot at the Paris Olympics.

World Championships 2021: Singh showcased his prowess by winning gold medals in both individual and team events.

World Cup 2023: A standout moment came when Singh achieved a perfect score of 16-0, securing gold and solidifying his status as a top competitor.

Asian Games 2022: Singh earned gold and silver medals, further establishing his reputation in the sport.

(andrea caroppo)





Sarabjot Singh wanted to become a football player but fate had other plans.(Reuters)



The Paris 2024 Medal Journey

The journey to the Paris 2024 Olympic podium was not without its challenges. During the final, Manu Bhaker set a strong pace with an impressive 10.2 on her first shot. However, Singh's initial 8.6 put India behind. Demonstrating resilience, Singh quickly recovered, delivering shots of 10.5, 10.4, and 10, helping India regain the lead.

Bhaker maintained her high performance, scoring at least a 10 on her first seven shots. Despite South Korea narrowing the gap to 14-10, Singh's decisive 10.2 on the final shot secured the bronze medal for India. Bhaker praised Singh's performance, acknowledging the intensity of the match and the crucial role Singh played in clinching the medal. "It's great. The first medal was really good and again the fight was really tough. It was neck to neck with each shot, like with my first bronze. But the last shot was Sarabjot's, so big up to him," Bhaker said.

You can't put a limit on anything. The more you dream, the farther you get.
— Michael Phelps

Sarabjot Singh's journey from a small village in Haryana to the Olympic podium is a remarkable tale of determination and transformation. His rise in the shooting world reflects his exceptional talent and unwavering commitment to the sport. Overcoming financial constraints and the initial hesitation of his family, Singh has proven that with passion and hard work, it is possible to turn dreams into reality. His achievements are not just personal triumphs but also significant milestones for Indian shooting, inspiring a new generation of athletes to pursue their aspirations relentlessly.

As he continues to achieve new milestones, Singh's story serves as an inspiration to aspiring athletes across India and beyond. His dedication, resilience, and ability to perform under pressure exemplify the qualities of a true champion. Sarabjot Singh's legacy is now firmly established, not just in the annals of Indian sports history, but also in the hearts of countless young shooters who look up to him. With his eyes set on future competitions and continued excellence, Singh's journey is a testament to the power of perseverance and the spirit of sportsmanship.

Swapnil Khusale

The underdog who made history

India's Swapnil Kusale celebrates after winning the bronze medal in the 50m rifle 3 positions men's final at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Thursday, Aug. 1, 2024, in Chateauroux, France. (AP Photo/Manish Swarup)



In a moment that will be remembered for generations, Swapnil Kusale clinched a bronze medal in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions event at the Paris 2024 Olympics. This monumental victory marked India's third medal in shooting at these Games, setting a historic record for the nation in a single sport at the Olympics.

On a rainy match-day morning in Chateauroux, Kusale began his day with a calming cup of tea, hoping to ease his pre-competition anxiety. With his coach Deepali Deshpande providing unwavering support, Kusale focused his mind and steadied his nerves. His exceptional performance, scoring a total of 451.4, secured his place on the podium, making him an Olympic medalist.

Swapnil Kusale, born on 6th May 1995 in Pune, Maharashtra, India, is a distinguished Indian rifle shooter. Renowned for his skill and precision, Kusale has made significant strides in the discipline of rifle shooting. His journey from modest beginnings to becoming one of India's most celebrated shooters is marked by unwavering dedication, overcoming financial hurdles, and a steadfast passion for the sport.

Career Highlights

ISSF World Cup 2022:

Kusale achieved a significant milestone by winning a bronze medal in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions Men event at the ISSF World Cup in Cairo, Egypt. This accomplishment underscored his skill and consistency on the international stage.

Asian Games 2018:

At the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, Indonesia, Kusale represented India in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions Men event, demonstrating his prowess and establishing himself as a key competitor in Asian shooting sports.

National Championships:

Over the years, Kusale has secured multiple medals at the National Shooting Championships in India. His dominance in domestic competitions has solidified his reputation as one of the top rifle shooters in the country.

Recent Performances

Paris 2024 Olympics:

Swapnil Kusale's historic bronze medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions event is a testament to his skill, perseverance, and ability to perform under pressure. His achievement not only added to India's medal tally but also highlighted his mastery in the sport on the world stage.

Olympic Qualification:

Kusale's consistent performances in international competitions, including the ISSF World Cup events in 2023, have kept him in strong contention for Olympic qualification. His participation and successes have showcased his determination and skill, making him a prominent figure in Indian shooting.

Asian Shooting Championships:

Kusale achieved a significant milestone by winning a bronze medal in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions Men event at the ISSF World Cup in Cairo, Egypt. This accomplishment underscored his skill and consistency on the international stage.



Swapnil Kusale won India's third medal at Paris Olympics 2024. AP

The Journey to the Podium

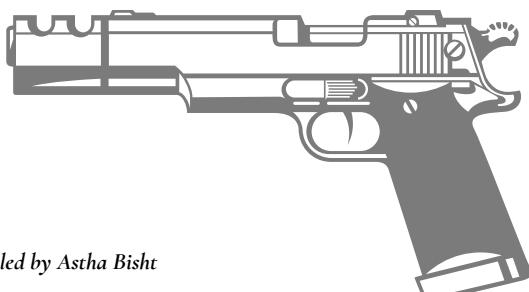
Swapnil Kusale's path to Olympic success was paved with significant challenges. Coming from a family with limited financial means, his father, a school teacher in Kolhapur, took a bank loan to support Kusale's shooting aspirations. The family's financial struggles meant Kusale had to ration the bullets he used for training, each costing Rs 120, making every shot count.

During the Paris Olympics, Kusale's mastery in shooting from kneeling, prone, and standing positions was on full display. His journey in the final reflected his career trajectory—starting with a low score and gradually climbing the ranks. From sixth place after the kneeling round to fifth after the prone, Kusale made a decisive push in the standing position, overcoming past setbacks to secure his place on the podium.

In the end, Kusale's focus and determination paid off. As the Indian flag was raised for the third time at the shooting range, Kusale solidified his legacy in Indian sports history. Tattooed on his back is a religious verse about immortality, symbolizing his journey and triumph.

Swapnil Kusale's journey from the modest surroundings of Kolhapur to the Olympic podium is a remarkable testament to perseverance and resilience. His bronze medal win at the Paris 2024 Olympics in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions event is not only a personal triumph but also a landmark achievement for Indian sports. Overcoming financial constraints and personal challenges, Kusale has showcased an exceptional ability to perform under pressure, elevating his status and bringing unprecedented recognition to the sport of shooting in India.

Kusale's success extends beyond individual accolades, highlighting the rising prominence of Indian shooters on the global stage. His performance in Paris reflects a deep well of focus and determination, and his story serves as a powerful inspiration for aspiring athletes. As Kusale continues to set new benchmarks, his legacy as one of India's finest shooters is firmly established, and his achievements will inspire future generations, proving that with dedication and hard work, historic triumphs are within reach.



"One needs to be mentally strong, focused, and dedicated to achieve greatness. Every setback is a lesson that paves the way for future success."

Abhinav Bindra

MEET THE INDIAN SHOOTER'S TEAM

1. Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar



(PTI Photo)

Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, born on February 3, 2001, in Ratanpur, Madhya Pradesh, is a top Indian shooter known for his precision and calm under pressure. His career highlights include gold at the 2019 ISSF Junior World Cup, a world record at the 2021 ISSF World Cup, and multiple medals at the 2022 Asian Championships.

3. Arjun Babuta



(Press Trust of India)

At 28, Sandeep Singh's journey from a lower-middle-class family in Faridkot, Punjab, to securing a position in the 10m air rifle event for the Paris Olympics is nothing short of inspiring. Initially preparing for the Army entrance exam, his talent for shooting was discovered during his training, leading to national recognition and a silver medal at the 2018 National Championships.

5. Elavenil Valarivan



(Press Trust of India)

Elavenil Valarivan, born on August 2, 1999, in Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu, is a top Indian shooter specializing in the 10m air rifle event. She has won gold at the 2018 ISSF Junior World Cup, 2019 ISSF World Cup, and 2021 ISSF World Cup.

2. Sandeep Singh



(India Today Times)

At 28, Sandeep Singh's journey from a lower-middle-class family in Faridkot, Punjab, to securing a position in the 10m air rifle event for the Paris Olympics is nothing short of inspiring. Initially preparing for the Army entrance exam, his talent for shooting was discovered during his training, leading to national recognition and a silver medal at the 2018 National Championships.

4. Anjum Moudgil



(HT Photo)

Anjum Moudgil, born on January 5, 1994, in Chandigarh, is a top Indian shooter specializing in the 10m air rifle and 50m rifle 3 positions events. She won silver at the 2018 ISSF World Cup and the 2018 Commonwealth Games, and represented India at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Known for her precision and mental strength, Anjum continues to train rigorously, and inspiring young athletes across the nation.

6. Ramita Jindal



Ramita Jindal, born on August 7, 2001, is a promising Indian shooter specializing in the 10m air rifle event. She earned silver at the 2021 ISSF Junior World Cup and bronze at the 2022 Asian Championships. Based in Haryana, Ramita is known for her dedication and focus, making significant strides in the sport.

7.

Sift Kaur Samra

(KhalsaVox)

Sift Kaur Samra, born on September 15, 2001, in Punjab, is a rising star in Indian shooting, specializing in the 50m rifle 3 positions event. She made headlines by winning gold at the 2023 ISSF World Championship and has consistently performed at various international competitions. Known for her exceptional focus and dedication, Sift represented India at the Paris 2024 Olympics, showcasing her talent on the global stage.

Arjun Cheema

(Press Trust of India)

Arjun Cheema, an upcoming Indian shooter, is making waves in the 10m air rifle event. Known for his precision and dedication, Cheema has shown promise in national and international competitions. His commitment to training and improving his skills has quickly established him as a rising star in Indian shooting.

11.

Vijayveer Sidhu

(NRCAI Photo)

Vijayveer Sidhu is a promising Indian shooter specializing in the 25m rapid fire pistol. He clinched gold at the 2021 ISSF Junior World Cup and has multiple national titles to his name. Known for his precision and dedication, Sidhu is quickly establishing himself as a top competitor.

8.

Esha Singh

(PTI Photo)

Esha Singh, born on July 1, 2005, in Hyderabad, is a prodigious talent in Indian shooting, specializing in the 10m air pistol event. She burst onto the scene by winning multiple gold medals at the 2019 Asian Airgun Championship and has continued to excel in national and international competitions. Esha's remarkable composure and technical prowess have earned her accolades and recognition, including representing India at the Paris 2024 Olympics.

10.

Anish Bhanwala

(EduInnovations)

Anish Bhanwala, born on September 26, 2002, in Karnal, Haryana, is one of India's leading shooters, specializing in the 25m rapid fire pistol event. He gained international recognition by winning a gold medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, becoming the youngest Indian to achieve this feat. Anish has consistently showcased his talent and determination in various international competitions, including representing India at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

12.

Prithviraj Tondaiman

Prithviraj Tondaiman, born on November 30, 1986, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, is a distinguished Indian shooter specializing in the trap shooting event. He has represented India in numerous international competitions, making a mark with his consistent performances and dedication to the sport. Prithviraj won a bronze medal at the 2023 ISSF World Cup, highlighting his prowess and competitive spirit.

13.

Ashi Chouksey



Ashi Chouksey, born on July 26, 2001, in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, is a promising Indian shooter specializing in the 50m rifle 3 positions event. She has rapidly risen through the ranks, earning accolades in both national and international competitions. Ashi gained significant attention with her performances at the ISSF Junior World Championships and has continued to impress with her consistency and technical skill.

14.

Rajeshwari Kumari



Rajeshwari Kumari, born on June 5, 1991, in Patiala, Punjab, is a talented Indian shooter specializing in the trap shooting event. She has represented India in various international competitions, earning recognition for her skill and consistency. Rajeshwari made her mark by securing a bronze medal at the 2023 ISSF Shotgun World Cup, showcasing her precision and competitive spirit.

(APNA)

15.

Anant Jeet Singh Naruka



(PTI Photo)

Anant Jeet Singh Naruka, born on July 28, 1996, in Rajasthan, is an accomplished Indian shooter specializing in the skeet shooting event. He has represented India in various international competitions, including the ISSF World Cups and the Asian Shooting Championships, where he has consistently showcased his talent and competitive spirit. Anant Jeet has made significant strides in his career, earning recognition for his sharp reflexes and precision.

16.

Shreyasi Singh



(Indian Shooting)

Shreyasi Singh, born on August 29, 1991, in Gidhaur, Bihar, is a prominent Indian shooter specializing in the double trap and trap shooting events. She gained widespread recognition after winning a gold medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, adding to her earlier silver medal from the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Shreyasi has represented India in numerous international competitions, including the ISSF World Cups and the Asian Games, consistently performing at a high level.

17.

Maheshwari Chauhan



(Official INRAIA/X)

Maheshwari Chauhan, born on January 27, 1996, in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, is a talented Indian shooter specializing in the skeet shooting event. She has made a significant impact in the sport, becoming the first Indian woman to win a skeet medal at the Asian Shooting Championships, where she secured a bronze medal in 2017. Maheshwari has consistently performed well in national and international competitions, earning recognition for her skill, precision, and dedication to the sport.

18.

Divyansh Singh Panwar



(Indian Shooting)

Divyansh Singh Panwar, born on October 19, 2002, in Jaipur, Rajasthan, is a highly skilled Indian shooter specializing in the 10m air rifle event. He quickly rose to prominence by winning a silver medal at the 2019 ISSF World Cup and securing a spot at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, where he represented India with distinction. Divyansh is known for his unwavering focus, technical precision, and calm under pressure, which have earned him numerous accolades in both national and international competitions.

Road to Paris 2024

The Intense Selection Process for India's Elite Shooters



(Photo:medium.com)

First and foremost...

To ensure that only the best shooters represent India on the international stage, the selection process for the Indian shooting team for the Paris 2024 Olympics is thorough and meticulous. Becoming an Olympic athlete requires mental fortitude, consistency, and precision. Here is an overview of the selection process with real-life examples:

1- Olympic Qualification Quota: The Opening Door

The first step in the selection process is to secure quota seats, which are slots allotted to countries based on the performance of their shooters in international tournaments organized by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF). Indian shooters participate in ISSF competitions, including the World Cup, Continental Championships, and World Championships, where performances are critical.

For example, Indian shooters have secured quotas through their top performances in ISSF World Cup competitions. These quotas are for the country, not for individual shooters. Consistent performance in ISSF tournaments also enhances shooters' world rankings, which can influence selection decisions.

2- National Selection Trials: The Battleground of Competitors

Once quota positions are secured, national federations like the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) hold a series of selection trials to determine the shooters who will fill these quota slots.

Domestic Competitions: Results from domestic competitions, such as the National Shooting Championships, are crucial. For instance, an outstanding performance at the National Championships can solidify a shooter's spot on the national squad.

Selection Committees: A panel of experts, including coaches, officials, and former shooters, evaluates these performances. The selection process involves assessing performance under pressure, consistency, and scores to ensure the best candidates are chosen.

3- Assessments and Training Camps: Fostering Excellence

National Camps: These camps provide a controlled environment for intense training, often held at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi. Shooters receive physical training, mental training, and personalized coaching. The NRAI organizes several camps to prepare athletes for international competition.

Physical and Mental Evaluations: In addition to technical instruction, shooters undergo mental and physical conditioning. Sports psychologists help athletes develop resilience and focus, essential for performing under the extreme pressure of the Olympics.



Photo: Hindustan Times

Fun Fact: Did you know that the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi is one of the largest and most advanced shooting ranges in the world? Spanning 72 acres, it features state-of-the-art 10m, 25m, and 50m ranges, complete with electronic scoring systems and climate-controlled indoor facilities. This premier venue, which hosted the 2010 Commonwealth Games, offers world-class amenities such as a dedicated armory, a gym, and spaces for mental training sessions with sports psychologists. It's a crucial training ground where India's top shooters hone their skills and prepare for Olympic glory with the help of cutting-edge technology and comprehensive support.

4- Final Selection and Team Announcement: The Culmination of Efforts

Following intense preparation and try-outs, the final team is chosen based on form, consistency, and competition readiness.

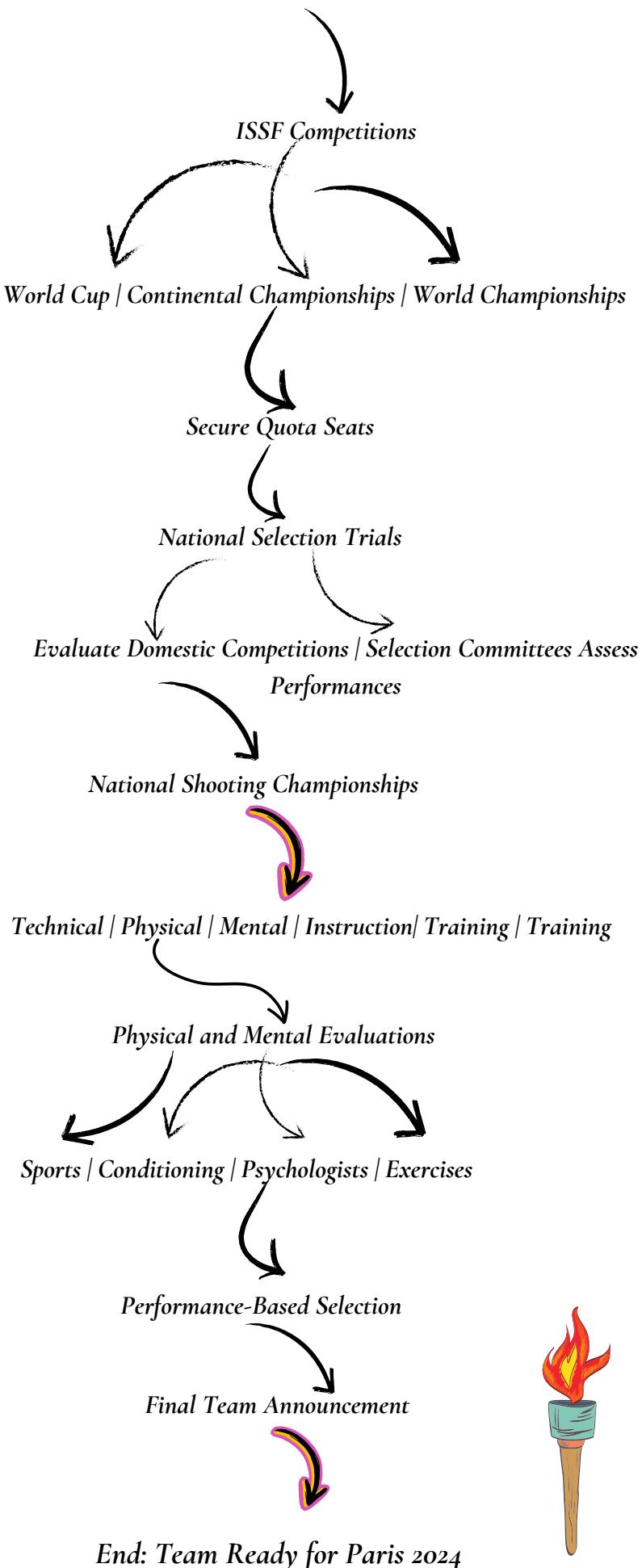
- Performance-Based Selection: Results from the most recent national and international events are taken into account when making the final choice. The NRAI selected the squad for Paris 2024 following rigorous testing and monitoring to guarantee that the worthiest shooters were included. Star performers who have demonstrated exceptional consistency, such as Saurabh Chaudhary and Elavenil Valarivan, were among them.
- Official Declaration: The 21-person Paris 2024 team was formally announced by the NRAI after months of planning and assessment. This openness and systematic methodology guarantee that the selection process stays credible and merit-based.

The selection process for the Indian Olympic shooting squad demonstrates commitment, diligence, and meticulous preparation. They must endure difficult hardships, tough training camps, and an uncompromising dedication to perfection in order to reach Paris in 2024. Their journey is inspirational because it exemplifies the spirit of sportsmanship—the unwavering quest of perfection.

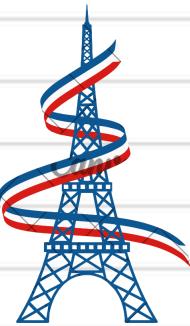
The ISSF will allot quota places for the 2024 Paris Olympics during the 2022 and 2023 World Championships



Selection Process



Olympic Shooting Event Summary: Top Performers and Medal Counts by Event

Event	Category	Country	Name	Medal
	Women	KOR	Y. Oh	Gold
	Women	KOR	Y. Kim	Silver
	Women	IND	Manu Bhaker	Bronze
	Men	CHN	Y. Xie	Gold
	Men	ITA	F. Maldini	Silver
	Men	FRA	P. Monna	Bronze
	Mixed	SRB	Arunovic/Mikec	Gold
	Mixed	TUR	Tarhan/Dikeç	Silver
	Mixed	IND	Bhaker/Singh	Bronze

Skeet	Women	CHI	Francisca Crovetto Chadid	Gold
	Women	GBR	Amber Jo Rutter	Silver
	Women	USA	Austen Jewell Smith	Bronze
	Men	USA	Vincent Hancock	Gold
	Men	USA	Conner Lynn Prince	Silver
	Men	TPE	Lee Meng Yuan	Bronze
	Mixed	ITA	Bacosi/Rossetti	Gold
	Mixed	USA	Smith/Hancock	Silver
	Mixed	CHN	Jiang/Lyu	Bronze

Trap	Women	ESP	A. Ruano Oliva	Gold
	Women	ITA	S. Stanco	Silver
	Women	USA	P. Smith	Bronze
	Men	GBR	N. Hales	Gold
	Men	CHN	Y. Qi	Silver
	Men	GUA	J.P. Brol Cardena	Bronze

Event	Category	Country	Name	Medal
25m Pistol	Women	KOR	Yang Jiin	Gold
	Women	FRA	Camille Jedrzejewski	Silver
	Women	HUN	Veronika Major	Bronze
25m Rapid Fire Pistol	Men	CHN	Li Yuehong	Gold
	Men	KOR	Cho Yeongjae	Silver
	Men	CHN	Wang Xinjie	Bronze
 Small Bore Rifle 3-Pos. 50m	Women	ITA	C. Leone	Gold
	Women	USA	S. Maddalena	Silver
	Women	CHN	Q. Zhang	Bronze
	Men	CHN	Y. Liu	Gold
	Men	RUS	S. Kulish	Silver
	Men	IND	S. Kusale	Bronze

Shooting Events Medal Summary

In the shooting events, China emerged as a dominant force, securing a total of seven medals across various categories, including three golds, two silvers, and two bronzes. Their success was particularly evident in the 25m Rapid Fire Pistol and Small Bore Rifle 3-Position 50m events, where they claimed multiple podium finishes.

The United States also had an impressive showing, especially in the Skeet events, where they won four medals: two golds and two silvers. Vincent Hancock and Conner Lynn Prince led the way with a gold and silver in the Men's Skeet event, while the mixed team of Smith and Hancock added a silver.

South Korea performed exceptionally well in the 10m Air Pistol events, earning two golds and one silver. Their shooters, Y. Oh and Y. Kim, dominated the women's category, while Cho Yeongjae added a silver in the 25m Rapid Fire Pistol event.

India managed to secure three medals in total: a bronze in the Women's Air Pistol 10m by Manu Bhaker, a bronze in the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event by Bhaker/Singh, and another bronze by S. Kusale in the Men's Small Bore Rifle 3-Position 50m event.

Italy and Serbia also made significant contributions, with Italy winning three medals, including a gold in the Small Bore Rifle 3-Position 50m event and a gold in the Skeet Mixed Team event. Serbia's mixed team excelled in the 10m Air Pistol event, winning gold.

Overall, China and the United States emerged as the top performers in the shooting events, with China leading the medal tally and the United States dominating the Skeet shooting categories.

BULLSEYE! INDIA'S OLYMPIC SHOOTING VETERANS

India's journey in Olympic shooting has been a thrilling saga of precision, perseverance, and triumph. Our sharpshooters have brought home not just medals but also immense pride, setting new benchmarks on the global stage.

ABHINAV BINDRA: THE GOLDEN MARKSMAN

Abhinav Bindra, born on September 28, 1982, in Dehradun, emerged as India's first individual Olympic gold medalist. His journey began at a young age, nurtured by a supportive family. Bindra's fascination with shooting started in his school days, leading him to train under some of the best coaches in the world.

However, his path to glory wasn't smooth. Bindra faced numerous challenges, including a severe back injury that almost ended his career. His relentless pursuit of excellence saw him overcome these obstacles, driven by an unyielding determination to succeed.

Bindra's meticulous approach and focus on mental conditioning played a crucial role in his success. This success soon came his way. The 2008 Beijing Olympics marked the pinnacle of Bindra's career.

Competing in the Men's 10m Air Rifle event, he displayed unparalleled precision and composure. Bindra's final shot, a near-perfect 10.8, secured him the gold medal, etching his name in history and bringing immense pride to India. His victory inspired countless young Indians to pursue shooting, revolutionizing the sport in the country.

RAJYAVARDHAN SINGH RATHORE: THE TRAILBLAZER

Born on January 29, 1970, in Jaisalmer, Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore's early life was rooted in discipline and resilience, qualities inherited from his army background. Rathore's journey into shooting began during his service in the Indian Army, where he discovered his talent in the Double Trap event.

Rathore faced significant challenges, including limited resources and training facilities. Despite these hurdles, his determination and hard work paid off when he won the silver medal at the 2004 Athens Olympics in the Men's Double Trap event.

His Olympic success was a testament to his perseverance and dedication. Rathore continued to contribute to sports and public service, eventually serving as India's Sports Minister, where he implemented policies to nurture and support budding athletes.



(Getty Images)



VIJAY KUMAR: THE RAPID FIRE CHAMPION

Vijay Kumar, born on August 19, 1985, in Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh, showcased a natural talent for shooting from a young age. Joining the Indian Army helped him hone his skills and provided him with the platform to excel in the sport. Although his father's firearms "always intrigued" Kumar, his real passion in shooting didn't begin until he enlisted in the Indian Army.



Sourced by - (India times)

Kumar's journey was fraught with challenges, including rigorous training schedules and the pressure to perform on the international stage. His Olympic medal was a significant achievement for Indian shooting, highlighting the nation's growing prowess in the sport.

Kumar's dedication and hard work serve as an inspiration for aspiring shooters, proving that with perseverance and commitment, one can overcome any obstacle. His breakthrough came at the 2012 London Olympics, where he won the silver medal in the Men's 25m Rapid Fire Pistol Event that was held.

Kumar's precision and calm under pressure were instrumental in his success. "This was my strength and I knew I could deliver," Vijay Kumar said.

GAGAN NARANG: THE SHOOTING SENSATION



Sourced by - (India times)

Despite these obstacles, his dedication and hard work culminated in a bronze medal at the 2012 London Olympics in the Men's 10m Air Rifle event. Narang's consistent performance and determination were key to his success.

His Olympic medal was not just a personal triumph but also a significant moment for Indian shooting. Narang's achievements have inspired many young shooters in India, contributing to the sport's growing popularity.

Currently, Narang is leading the Indian contingent of 117 members for the Paris 2024 Olympics. In his role with the Indian Olympic Association, Narang emphasized the importance of nurturing and supporting upcoming athletes, further contributing to the sport's development in the country.



Diet and Health for Sports Shooting: Fuelling Precision and Performance

Sports shooting, a discipline that demands precision, focus, and steady hands, is as much a mental game as a physical one. While it might not seem as physically demanding as other sports, the right diet and health regimen can significantly impact a shooter's performance. Here's a comprehensive look at how nutrition and overall health play pivotal roles in excelling in sports shooting.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION

1. Balanced Diet for Consistent Energy Levels

A balanced diet is essential for maintaining steady energy levels throughout training and competition. Shooters should focus on:

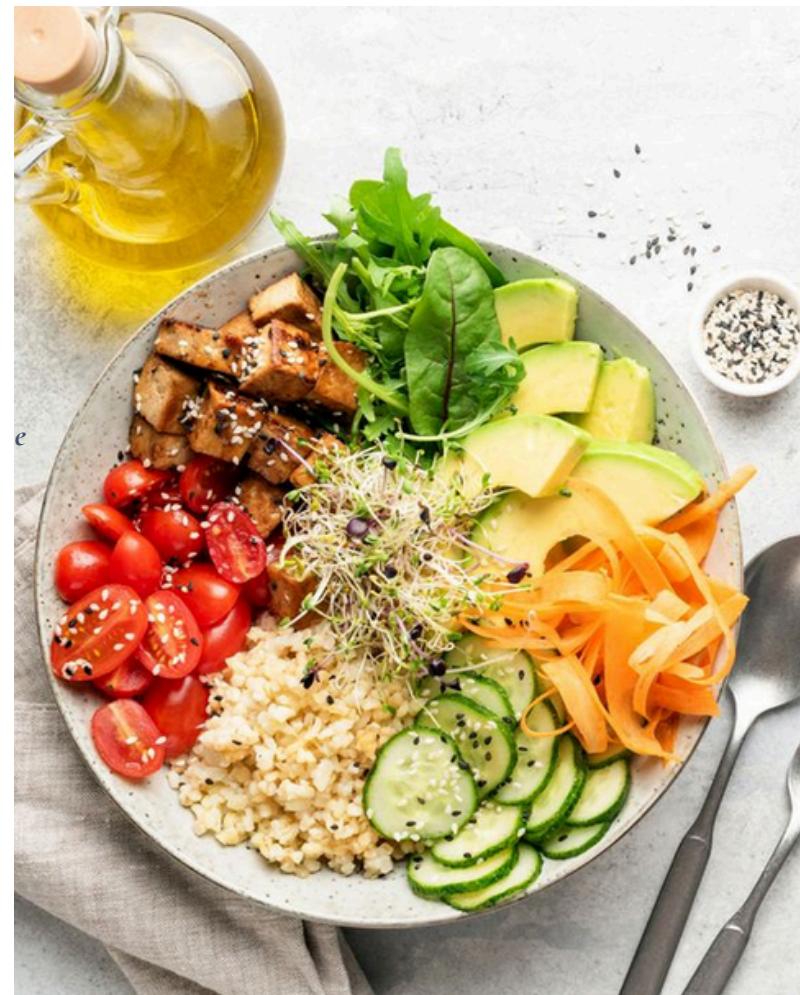
- Complex Carbohydrates: Foods like whole grains, vegetables, and legumes provide a slow and steady release of glucose into the bloodstream, ensuring sustained energy levels.
- Lean Proteins: Incorporating lean meats, fish, eggs, and plant-based proteins supports muscle repair and recovery.
- Healthy Fats: Sources such as avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil are crucial for brain health and help maintain focus and concentration.

A study published in the *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition* found that athletes with balanced vitamin and mineral intake exhibited 15% better cognitive function during high-pressure tasks than those with deficiencies.

3. Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamins and minerals are essential for overall health and specific aspects of shooting performance:

- B Vitamins: These are crucial for energy production and cognitive function.
- Magnesium: Important for muscle relaxation and preventing cramps.
- Vitamin D and Calcium: Essential for bone health, which is crucial for maintaining proper shooting posture.
- Antioxidants (Vitamin C and E): These help reduce oxidative stress and improve recovery.



college nutritionist.com

2. Hydration

Adequate hydration is vital. Even slight dehydration can impair cognitive function and physical performance. Shooters should drink water regularly throughout the day and consider electrolyte-rich drinks during longer training sessions or competitions to maintain electrolyte balance.

Hydration Tip -Include electrolytes in your diet through sports drinks or natural sources like coconut water.

4. Pre-Competition Nutrition

What a shooter eats before a competition can significantly affect their performance:

- Complex Carbohydrate-Rich Meal: Consuming a meal with complex carbohydrates 3-4 hours before competition helps ensure steady energy levels. Examples include oatmeal with fruits, a turkey sandwich on whole-grain bread, or a quinoa salad.
- Light Snack: About an hour before shooting, a light snack such as a banana, a handful of nuts, or a granola bar can provide a quick energy boost without causing discomfort.

5. Physical Fitness

While shooting may not require the same level of physical fitness as other sports, maintaining a healthy weight, and having good posture and muscle strength are crucial. Regular exercises such as yoga, Pilates, and lightweight training can help improve core strength and stability, which are vital for shooting accuracy.

Fitness Routine for Shooters

- Yoga: Improves flexibility and mental focus.
- Pilates: Enhances core strength and stability.
- Light Weight Training: Builds muscle strength and endurance.

7. Mental Health

Mental resilience is key in sports shooting. Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, and visualization can help shooters maintain calm and focus under pressure. Consistent sleep patterns and quality sleep are also crucial for mental sharpness and emotional stability.

Mental Training Techniques

- Meditation: Reduces stress and enhances focus.
- Deep Breathing Exercises: Promotes relaxation and steady hands.
- Visualization: Helps in mental preparation and confidence building.

About Author



**SMITA BHATNAGAR
CERTIFIED NUTRITION & FITNESS COACH**

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6. Mental Focus and Nutrition

Sports shooting requires immense concentration and mental clarity. Certain foods can help enhance cognitive function:

- Omega-3 Fatty Acids: Found in fish, flaxseeds, and walnuts, these fats support brain health.
- Dark Chocolate: In moderation, dark chocolate can improve blood flow to the brain and enhance cognitive function.
- Green Tea: Contains L-theanine, which can promote relaxation without causing drowsiness, and caffeine, which can improve focus.

Key Takeaways:

- A balanced diet and hydration are crucial for maintaining steady energy levels and cognitive function.
- Pre-competition nutrition can significantly affect performance.
- Mental focus can be enhanced through specific foods and mental training techniques.
- Physical fitness and mental health practices contribute to overall performance improvement.

This detailed approach ensures that shooters can not only maintain peak physical condition but also optimize their mental focus and overall well-being, leading to improved performance and success in competitions.

EMPOWERING LIVES WITH NUTRITION & FITNESS COACHING

Smita, a devoted nutrition and fitness coach, is committed to assisting individuals in reaching their health and wellness objectives. She develops customized programs tailored to each client's specific requirements. Smita advocates for a comprehensive health approach, highlighting the significance of a well-rounded diet, consistent exercise, and a positive outlook.

Qualification:

Diploma in Nutrition & Fitness, INFS
Specialization in Diet Planning, INFS
Specialization in Exercise Science, INFS

Fact: According to a report by the American Psychological Association, athletes who regularly practice meditation show a 25% increase in performance consistency.

Conclusion-

In sports shooting, where precision and steadiness are paramount, nutrition and overall health play critical roles. By adopting a balanced diet, staying hydrated, and maintaining both physical and mental fitness, shooters can enhance their performance and achieve their goals. Remember, the key is consistency and making mindful choices that support both the body and the mind.

This detailed approach ensures that shooters can not only maintain peak physical condition but also optimize their mental focus and overall well-being, leading to improved performance and success in competitions



Jitu Rai

Marksman Jitu Rai, who won gold at the Asian Games, made a big announcement by declaring that he will be leaving the Indian Army to focus on training new athletes to be elite shooters.

A Journey of Triumph and Inspiration

Jitu Rai was raised in the Sankhuwa Sabha area of Nepal, and his journey to the top of the shooting world is proof that skill and pure willpower can triumph over adversity. Being the only shooter from India to win a gold medal at the 2014 Incheon Asian Games, Rai has dispelled the misconception that having a modest upbringing prevents one from succeeding. He was elevated to the esteemed position of Honorary Captain in the Indian Army as a result of this outstanding accomplishment.

"Rai received many distinctions throughout his 17-and-a-half-year service, the bulk of which he spent in Lucknow with the 11 Gorkha Regiment. These included the Khel Ratna, Padma Shri, and Arjuna awards. In a social media announcement of his retirement, Rai showed his sincere appreciation to the Indian Army for moulding his character and profession."

A New Chapter: Mentoring the Upcoming Generation

Rai's life after the Army will be dedicated to training and guiding aspiring shooters. He intends to open a shooting academy, but he hasn't chosen where yet. Because of his personal journey and the assistance, he gained along the way, Rai is passionate about passing on his vast expertise and knowledge to the younger generation.

"I have taken retirement from the Army to make a foray into coaching. I will try to compete as much as I can but will also like to share my experiences with younger generation," Rai stated in an interview from Bagdogra, West Bengal.

His willingness to keep making a bigger impact on Indian shooting was further demonstrated by his expression of interest in joining the national coaching staff. Rai stated that he was prepared to take on additional tasks and that he intended to apply for the high-performance coach position posted by the National Rifle Association of India.

SWAPS UNIFORM FOR COACHING JACKET: AIMING TO SHAPE FUTURE SHOOTING STARS"



The Champion's Legacy

Jitu Rai has had many notable accomplishments throughout his career. In addition to winning gold and bronze in the 50-meter pistol and 10-meter air pistol events at the Asian Games, he also won gold at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow (2014) and Gold Coast (2018).

Rai's abilities were further showcased by winning two gold medals in the World Cup in Maribor and New Delhi, as well as a silver medal at the 2014 World Championships in Granada. Even though he lost the 10m air pistol final, his participation in the 2016 Rio Olympics adds another chapter to his remarkable career by demonstrating his unshakable enthusiasm and determination.

Continuing the Legacy

Many will continue to find inspiration in Jitu Rai's path as he moves from being an active athlete to a mentor and coach. His principles as a recognised shooter and throughout his tenure in the Indian Army are reflected in his efforts to foster discipline, dedication, and excellence in young athletes. Rai is positioned to make a substantial contribution to Indian shooting, guaranteeing that the nation will continue to develop elite marksmen, thanks to his wealth of expertise and love for the sport. When his shooting academy is built, it will serve as a legacy of learning and achievement, encouraging next generations of shooters to flourish on the international scene.

From Toy Guns to Top Ranks: Srijay Ranjan's Early Fascination with Shooting

Srijay Ranjan's rise from a young shooting enthusiast to a national and international contender showcases his exceptional talent and resilience. In this interview, he reflects on his memorable moments, personal growth, and the challenges he has overcome along the way.

Q: Can you tell us about your early days in shooting? What sparked your interest in the sport?

A: My journey into the world of shooting started quite early, with toy guns capturing my imagination as a child. My grandfather, who was a police inspector, kept a rifle at home and would often share stories of his experiences. Those stories, combined with a school trip where I tried archery and balloon shooting, really intrigued me. It was during that trip that I decided I wanted to pursue shooting seriously. I joined a local club, and people quickly noticed my potential, encouraging me to take it up as a hobby. For the next two years, I practiced basic level shooting without any formal coaching, yet I managed to win several state-level medals and ranked among the national level players. That initial success without professional training made me even more determined, and I soon found myself ranking in the top 10 nationally alongside my parents support throughout my entire journey.

Q: How has your journey in shooting shaped you as a person beyond the sport?

A: Getting into shooting at a young age allowed me to mingle with older players, and as I grew up alongside them, I picked up on their maturity and how they dealt with life's challenges. These were adults with responsibilities like families, finances, and work, and observing them taught me valuable life lessons early on. I've been able to incorporate these teachings into my day-to-day life. As a shooter, I've learned to stay calm, break things down, and view situations with empathy and positivity, which helps me resonate with others' experiences.

In shooting, rash decisions and aggression can lead to missed shots, so I've developed a sense of composure that I carry into my personal life. Being an athlete has made it easier for me to handle challenges outside the lane. I don't dwell on the turmoil I face; instead, I stay present, whether I'm enjoying time with friends or focusing on my training. This ability to stay grounded and in the moment has been one of the most significant ways shooting has shaped me beyond the sport.



Q: What does your typical day of training look like, and how do you balance your physical and mental health during the process?

A: My training routine is a mix of physical and mental preparation, guided by my coach, Neha Ma'am for which I'm truly grateful that she has taken me under her wing. Being under her guidance feels like a privilege, and I'm constantly inspired by her dedication to nurturing the next generation of shooting champions. Neha ma'am is also the coach of Elavenil Valaivan, who represented India in the 2024 Olympics. Her expertise and dedication have been instrumental in shaping my training.

For my Training, I split my time between Chennai, where I train regularly under her guidance, and Bangalore, where I practice on my own. In Chennai, my day usually starts at 9:30 AM with shooting practice that goes on until 1:30 PM. After that, I take a break for lunch and rest for an hour. By 4 PM, I head to the gym. Since shooting is a calm and sensitive sport, my gym routine focuses on lighter weights with more repetitions to maintain muscle tone and ensure quick recovery.

Balancing mental health is equally important. Shooting requires staying still for long periods, demanding peak concentration. To manage the emotions that come with both good and bad shots, I practice visualization and breathing exercises. When we step into the shooting lane, we take a few minutes to hold and find our balance, followed by two deep, relaxing breaths. This routine helps achieve peak stability and concentration. While aiming, we exhale, hold it for a few seconds, follow through with the shot, and then inhale again. This breathing technique is crucial for staying present, which is essential in shooting. Each step of the way, we break down our process to stay focused and in the moment.

In Bangalore, training is more relaxed but still involves the same warm-up, breathing exercises, and visualization techniques. These practices help me mentally rehearse each shot, ensuring I stay balanced and centered in every session, whether in Chennai or Bangalore.

Q: Which has been the most memorable moment in your journey of shooting?

A: One of the standout moments in my shooting career was at the 2017 Nationals. The year before, I was ranked around 400th, but by 2017, I made a dramatic leap into the top 10—a huge jump for a 14-year-old. My scores were reaching international standards, and I was representing Karnataka, which was considered an underdog at the time. What made this experience truly memorable was my mindset. I wasn't focused on winning or obsessing over scores; I was simply enjoying the sport. The match, held in Trivandrum, Kerala, was where I first realized that I could compete at a high level while staying true to my love for the game.

Another unforgettable experience was my first international match in Doha in November 2019. At 16, I was the second youngest in a contingent of 120 shooters. I approached the competition with the same philosophy—no pressure, just focus on performing well and enjoying the moment. That mindset paid off as I finished 2nd in both the qualifications and the finals.

Interestingly, I didn't have a national medal at that point, though I had won many others. But I didn't let that affect me—instead, I skipped over national wins and went straight to excelling in international competitions. These experiences have shaped me as a shooter and taught me the value of enjoying the sport while staying focused on my goals.

Achievements

- International Medalist, Ekalavya Awardee -2022,
- Indian junior squad member since 2019,
- Karnataka Olympic association awardee 2019



Q: How have you navigated the lows in your shooting career, and what are your plans for the future?

A: My journey has certainly had its highs and lows. From 2017 to 2021, I experienced a winning streak that was exhilarating. However, I also faced significant challenges, including a weapon malfunction due to a factory defect in the barrel, which impacted my performance for nearly two years. This period also included a mental block that made things even more difficult.

The past year has been more promising. I've set realistic goals and am focusing on moving forward. Looking ahead, I'm preparing for the Junior World Championship coming up in October. Additionally, I'm setting my sights on the Commonwealth Games in Australia in 2026. These upcoming events are a chance to apply what I've learned from my challenges and continue growing as a shooter.

Q: What other activities do you like to engage in outside shooting?

A: Maintaining balance is essential to my approach both as an athlete and as an individual. I strive to stay active and engaged, avoiding a sedentary lifestyle. One of my key interests outside of shooting is cooking, which I find both enjoyable and fulfilling. I take particular pride in preparing dishes like chicken quesadillas and lemon butter fish. This culinary passion not only offers a creative outlet but also serves as a productive way to relax and recharge, complementing my overall balanced approach to life and sport.

Career Highlights

- 14th ASIAN SHOOTING CHAMPIONSHIP DOHA, QATAR 2019
- INDIAN JUNIOR SQUAD MEMBER since 2019
- MASTERS MEET SHOOTING CHAMPIONSHIP-NRAI
- NATIONAL SHOOTING CHAMPIONSHIP -NRAI INDIAN TEAM TRIALS -NRAI
- KHELO INDIA YOUTH GAMES REPRESENTED KARNATAKA STATE IN U-21 & U-17
- SOUTHZONE SHOOTING CHAMPIONSHIP in 10 & 50 meters rifle event
- NATIONAL LEVEL KARNATAKA STATE LEVEL CHAMPIONSHIP. ALL categories -Men, Juniors & Youth respectively for 10 & 50 meters Rifle events



Applied Neuroscience for Superior Performance in Competitive Shooting

What is Applied Neuroscience and Why Should Professional Shooters Care?

Imagine stepping up to the shooting range, feeling utterly focused, calm, and in control. Your mind is clear, your body steady, and your aim true. What if there was a scientific approach that could help you achieve this level of performance consistently? This is where applied neuroscience comes in.

Applied neuroscience is the practical application of our understanding of the brain and nervous system to improve human performance. The brain, a complex organ made up of billions of neurons, acts as the control centre for all mental and physical activities. It communicates with the rest of the body through the nervous system, which includes the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord) and the peripheral nervous system (nerves that branch out to the rest of the body). This intricate network allows for the coordination of voluntary movements, like aiming and shooting, and the regulation of involuntary functions, such as heartbeat and breathing. By understanding how these systems work together, shooters can harness this knowledge to enhance their skills and performance. For professional shooters, understanding and leveraging the principles of neuroscience can significantly enhance their performance and provide a competitive edge. But how exactly can neuroscience help shooters? Let's dive in.



Principles of Applied Neuroscience and Their Applications

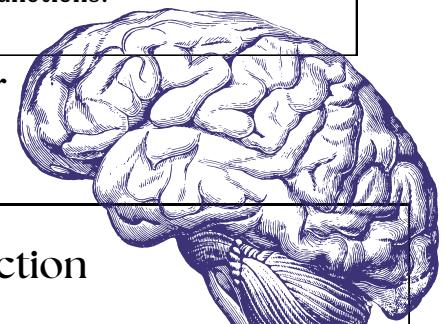
Neuroplasticity

- Principle: The brain has the ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout life.
- Application: Through consistent practice and mental exercises, individuals can strengthen neural pathways associated with specific skills, leading to improved performance.

Neurogenesis

- Principle: Our brain can 'grow' new neurons. The formation of new neurons, particularly in the hippocampus, the part involved in learning and memory is of significance.
- Application: Activities like physical exercise, learning new skills, and maintaining a healthy diet can promote neurogenesis, enhancing cognitive functions.

"Sharpen your mind, steady your aim – unleash the power of applied neuroscience in shooting sports!"



Neurotransmission

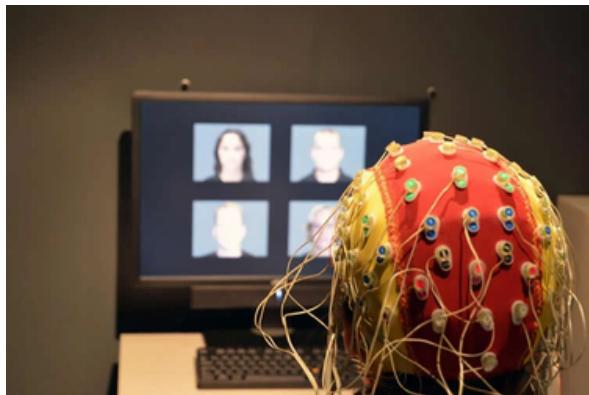
- Principle: Neurons constantly chat with each other. The process by which neurons communicate with each other is through neurotransmission.
- Application: Understanding and influencing neurotransmitter activity (e.g., dopamine for motivation, serotonin for mood regulation) can help improve mental health and performance.

Brain-Body Connection

- Principle: The brain and body are connected and work together. The interaction between the brain and the rest of the body, emphasizes the role of the nervous system in regulating bodily functions.
- Application: Techniques like biofeedback, mindfulness, and breathing exercises can help regulate physiological responses to stress, improving performance and well-being.

Neural Efficiency

- Principle: The idea that more efficient brain function leads to better performance.
- Application: Training and mental conditioning can make brain processes more efficient, allowing for quicker and more accurate responses in high-pressure situations.



A subject solves a facial recognition task while EEG measurements of electrical activity in his brain are measured. Image credit: Fabio Bergamin / ETH Zurich.

Attention and Focus

- Principle: The brain's capacity to direct and maintain attention on relevant tasks can and should be optimized.
- Application: Training attention and focus through exercises like meditation, and reducing distractions can improve concentration and task performance.

Emotional Regulation

- Principle: Our brains have the ability to manage, respond to, and regulate our emotional experiences.
- Application: Practices like cognitive-behavioural techniques and mindfulness can enhance emotional regulation, leading to better performance under stress.



The adult brain can generate new neurons, particularly in the hippocampus, enhancing learning and memory throughout life, which means that continuous learning and mental exercises can keep your brain sharp and improve performance in any field, including competitive shooting.

Cognitive Load Management

- Principle: Learning occurs best under conditions that align with our cognitive architecture which helps manage cognitive load.
- Application: Techniques like chunking information, taking breaks, and prioritizing tasks can help manage cognitive load, improving productivity and decision-making.

Sleep and Recovery

- Principle: Sleep plays a critical role in brain function and overall health.
- Application: Ensuring adequate and quality sleep can enhance cognitive functions, memory consolidation, and physical recovery.

Environmental Influence

- Principle: External factors have considerable impact on brain function and behaviour.
- Application: Creating optimal environments (e.g., reducing noise, ensuring good lighting) can support better cognitive performance and mental health.

Learning and Memory

- Principle: Learning and memory are a function of the processes by which the brain encodes, stores, and retrieves information.
- Application: Employing effective learning strategies and memory aids can enhance the acquisition and retention of new information.

Applied neuroscience uses these principles to create practical strategies that enhance performance, learning, mental health, and overall well-being. By understanding and applying these principles, individuals can optimize their brain function and achieve their personal and professional goals more effectively.



Credit: Neuroscience News

Applications of Neuroscience for Professional Shooters

Five Applications for the Mind and Their Benefits

Mental Imagery and Visualization

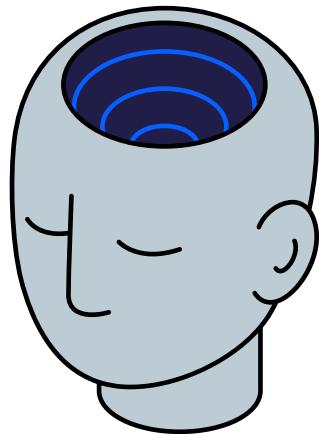
- Question: How can visualizing your performance improve your shooting skills?
- Answer: Visualization involves mentally rehearsing your shots, which can strengthen neural pathways related to the skills you're practicing. Famous athletes like Michael Phelps use visualization to enhance their performance. For shooters, visualizing the perfect shot can help improve accuracy and consistency.

Neurofeedback

- Question: What if you could train your brain waves to optimize performance?
- Answer: Neurofeedback uses real-time monitoring of brain activity to teach self-regulation of brain function. Athletes like golfer Phil Mickelson use it to improve focus and calmness, which can be incredibly beneficial for shooters aiming for precision.

Goal Setting and Mental Resilience Training

- Question: How can setting the right goals boost your shooting performance?
- Answer: Setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals can enhance motivation and focus. Mental resilience training, used by athletes like Serena Williams, prepares shooters to recover quickly from setbacks.



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Credit: york university

Mindfulness and Focus Training

- Question: How can mindfulness help maintain focus during competitions?
- Answer: Mindfulness practices, such as meditation, can enhance focus and reduce anxiety. Elite athletes, including LeBron James, practice mindfulness to stay in the moment. For shooters, this means maintaining steady concentration, even under pressure.

Cognitive Behavioral Techniques (CBT)

- Question: Can changing thought patterns improve performance under pressure?
- Answer: CBT helps in recognizing and altering negative thought patterns. By addressing performance anxiety and self-doubt, shooters can maintain a positive mindset, much like Olympian swimmer Katie Ledecky.



"Mind Games: The Funny Side of Applied Neuroscience"

Why did the neuron join a gym?

To work on its neural network and build some serious brainpower!



Applications for the Body and Their Benefits

Source: insportscenters

Proper Sleep Hygiene

- Question: How important is sleep for a professional shooter?
- Answer: Quality sleep is crucial for cognitive function and physical recovery. Athletes like Roger Federer ensure they get enough sleep to perform at their best. For shooters, good sleep can improve reaction times and decision-making skills.

Nutrition and Hydration

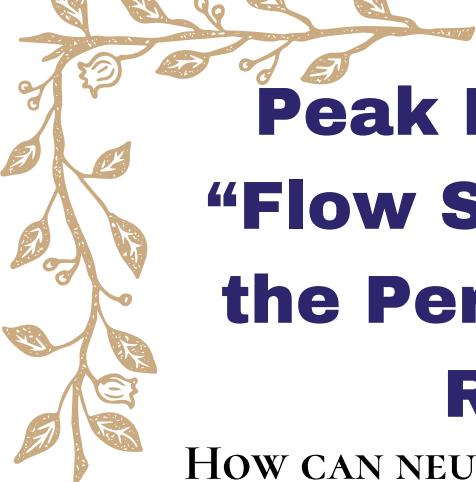
- Question: How can diet affect shooting performance?
- Answer: A balanced diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, and proper hydration can enhance brain function and overall performance. Tom Brady's meticulous diet is a great example of how nutrition supports athletic excellence.

Physical Exercise and Conditioning

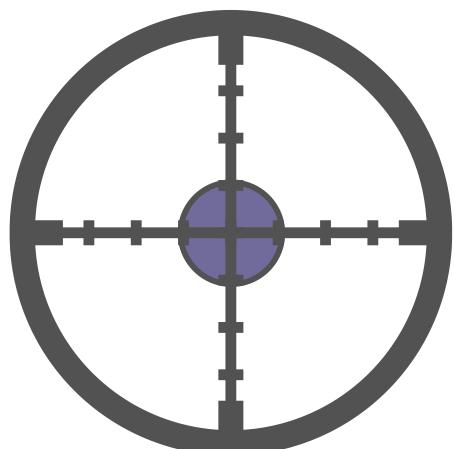
- Question: Why should shooters focus on physical fitness?
- Answer: Regular physical exercise improves cardiovascular health, strength, and endurance. Shooters like Kim Rhode incorporate physical training to maintain steadiness and stamina during competitions.

Breathing Techniques

- Question: How can controlled breathing enhance accuracy?
- Answer: Techniques like diaphragmatic breathing help regulate the autonomic nervous system, reducing stress and improving focus. Shooters can benefit from practices used by elite marksmen and snipers to maintain calm under pressure.



Peak Performance or “Flow State”: Achieving the Perfect Shot at the Right Time

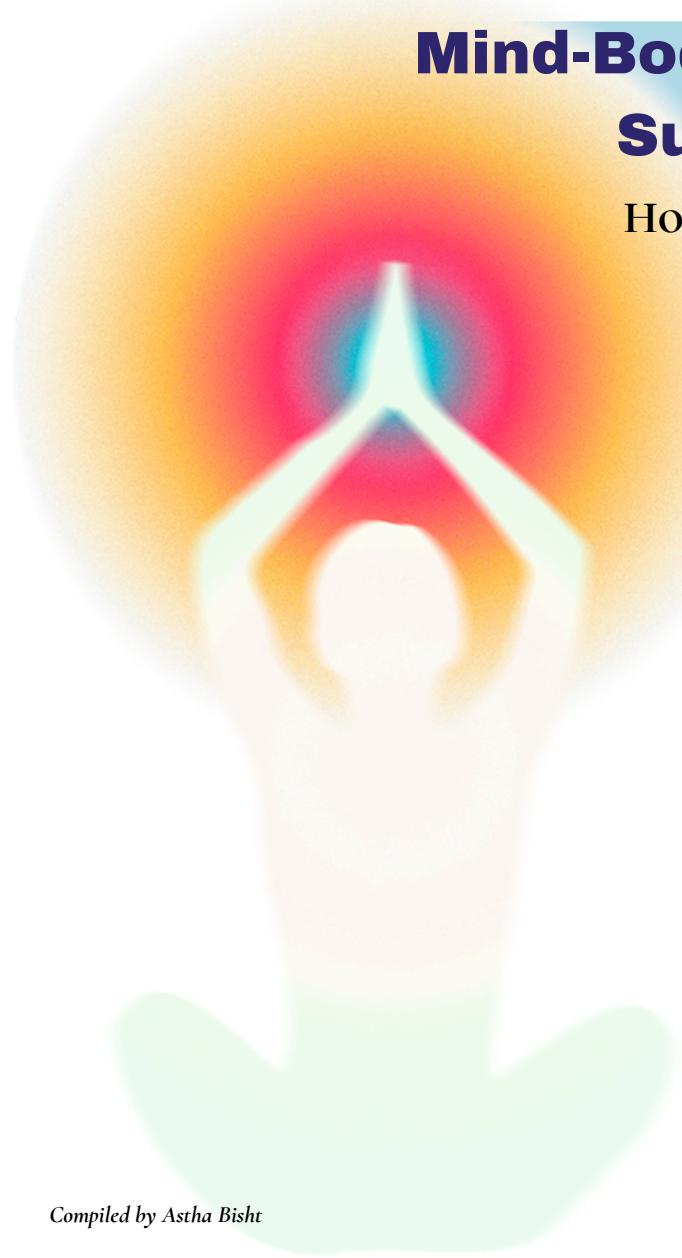


HOW CAN NEUROSCIENCE HELP SHOOTERS ATTAIN PEAK

PERFORMANCE AT THE CRUCIAL MOMENT?

Peak performance is about being able to deliver your best when it matters most. Neuroscience can help shooters achieve this through techniques like flow state induction, which involves being fully immersed and focused on the task at hand. This state, often referred to as "the zone," or being in "Flow State," is characterized by a merging of action and awareness, where distractions fade away and performance becomes effortless. By using mindfulness, neurofeedback, and visualization practices, shooters can train their brains to enter this optimal state more readily. Legendary athletes like Usain Bolt have mastered this, using mental preparation to perform flawlessly under immense pressure. For shooters, mastering peak performance means hitting the target with precision when it counts the most.

Mind-Body Integration: The Key to Superior Performance



**HOW CAN BEING 'NEURO-INFORMED' HELP ACHIEVE
SUPERIOR MIND-BODY INTEGRATION?**

Being neuro-informed means understanding how the brain and body work together to enhance performance. This integration is crucial for shooters and athletes at all stages of their training and competition.

- During preparation, neuro-informed techniques like visualization and neurofeedback can train the brain to sync with physical movements.
- In the run-up to the event, mindfulness and relaxation strategies help maintain a calm and focused state.
- Just minutes before the event, controlled breathing and mental imagery can ensure that both mind and body are in perfect harmony.
- Finally, "in the moment," while actually shooting, the seamless integration of mental and physical training allows for automatic, precise actions without conscious effort.

This holistic approach ensures that every shot is taken with the utmost accuracy and confidence, leading to superior performance.

The Role of Neurochemistry in Enhancing Performance



Source: Troy Erstling

HOW CAN NEUROCHEMISTRY ENHANCE A SHOOTER'S PERFORMANCE?

Neurochemistry involves the study of chemicals, including neurotransmitters, that influence brain function and behaviour. For shooters, understanding and optimizing neurochemical balances can lead to:

- Enhanced focus, reduced anxiety, and improved mood.
- Neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin play critical roles in motivation, concentration, and emotional regulation.
- Techniques such as meditation, physical exercise, and proper nutrition can positively influence these neurotransmitter levels, creating a mental state conducive to peak performance.

Athletes like Novak Djokovic use diet and mindfulness practices to maintain optimal neurochemical balances, which supports their high levels of performance under pressure.



Djokovic plays a return against Matthew Ebden during the first round of the Olympics. Patricia De Melo/AFP/Getty Images

The Role of Neuroplasticity in Enhancing Performance

HOW CAN NEUROPLASTICITY IMPROVE SHOOTING SKILLS?

Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout life. This adaptability allows shooters to:

- Learn new skills, refine techniques, and recover from setbacks more effectively.
- Through consistent practice, mental imagery, and feedback, shooters can strengthen the neural pathways associated with shooting skills, leading to improved accuracy and consistency.
- Neuroplasticity underpins the ability to develop muscle memory, which is crucial for executing precise and automatic movements during competitions.

Athletes like basketball player Kobe Bryant have harnessed neuroplasticity through relentless practice and visualization, leading to exceptional performance and mastery of their sport.

Kobe Bryant celebrates after the Lakers defeat the Boston Celtics in Game 7 of the 2010 NBA Finals at Staples Center. (Robert Gauthier / Los Angeles Times)

How Neuroscience – Informed Coaches Can Enhance Performance

Neuroscience-informed coaching is crucial for sports coaches as it provides a scientific foundation for optimizing athlete performance and well-being. By understanding how the brain and nervous system function, coaches can:

- Tailor their training methods to enhance focus, motivation, and resilience in their athletes.
- Integrate techniques such as mental imagery, mindfulness, and neurofeedback into coaching practices to improve cognitive and emotional regulation, leading to better performance under pressure.
- Additionally, neuroscience-informed coaching can help in designing effective recovery protocols and managing stress, ensuring athletes maintain peak performance while minimizing the risk of burnout and injuries.

This approach not only elevates athletic performance but also fosters a more holistic development of athletes, addressing both their physical and mental needs.

Integrating Neuroscience Applications into Practice and Competitions

During Practice

- Integrate mental imagery sessions into your daily routine.
- Practice mindfulness and focus exercises regularly.
- Use neurofeedback sessions to train brainwave patterns.

During Competitions

- Implement breathing techniques to maintain calm and focus.
- Stick to your nutrition and hydration plan to ensure optimal performance.

After Competitions

- Reflect on performance using CBT techniques to identify areas for improvement.
- Ensure adequate rest and recovery to maintain long-term performance.



Amazon.com: Hotel Saudade eBook : Kelly, Michelle: Kindle Store

Pitfalls in Application

Awareness of Over-reliance and Balance

While neuroscience offers powerful tools, it's important not to rely solely on them. Balance mental training with physical practice and avoid neglecting any aspect of your preparation.

Your Call to Action !

Why should you start today?

Embracing applied neuroscience can unlock your full potential as a professional shooter. By integrating these scientifically-backed techniques into your training and competition routines, you can achieve greater focus, precision, and resilience. Start incorporating these practices today to not only enhance your performance but also gain a competitive advantage in the world of professional shooting. The science is on your side—now it's time to take action and elevate your game.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR - LTCOL. SUMANT KHARE

This article, part of a series on "Neuroscience in Shooting" in *The Shooter's Scope*, is authored by Lt Col. Sumant Khare, a leading expert in applied neuroscience with over 40 years of experience. He is the Principal Consultant at Nvision Learning & Development.

Founder & Principal Consultant, Nvision Learning & Development.

Total experience : Over 40 years; 22 years in the Indian Army, nine years in the Corporate Sector and 12 years as an entrepreneur.

Area of Expertise : Applied Neuroscience for People & Business Excellence .

Professional Credentials

- Expertise in Applied Neuroscience : 13 International Certifications from Harvard, MIT, University of Colorado, The Neuroscience Academy, My Brain International, among others.
- Expertise in Behavioural Science : Eight International & Indian Certifications.
- Board Member, HRME Dubai.
- Fellow at the Institute of Organizational Neuroscience, Munich.

Experience : Designing and conducting programs and workshops on :

- Strategy and Strategic Thinking.
- Leadership & Managerial Development.
- Building Teams.
- Behavioural Skills.
- Change Management.
- NLP.
- Emotional Intelligence (EI).
- Trained over 50,000 working professionals and Coached over 500 corporate leaders and managers.



Corporate Experience : Worked in senior HR roles at Airtel, Reliance Retail, Future Group, and Varuna Integrated Logistics.

Education : BSc, MBA (HR), MSc in Defence & Strategic Studies.

Hobbies & Interests: Playing guitar, singing, painting, sketching, and writing poetry.

Compiled by Astha Bisht

Unlock your Potential

Compiled by Sumant Khare

Passionate About Shooting Sports? So Are We!

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THROUGH SPORTSGIRI.



The Silent Threat

In competitive sports, doping has been a dark shadow, compromising the honor and justice of athletic achievement. Doping is frequently associated with physical endeavors such as bodybuilding, cycling, and running. It also appears to exist in shooting sports, which emphasizes mental clarity, attention, and precision. This article explores the ramifications, substances involved, and current underway efforts to counteract this quiet threat as it dives into the complex problem of doping in shooting sports.

Sports requiring precision, concentration, and a steady grip tend to be less vulnerable to doping initially, particularly such shooting sports. On the contrary, a few competitors at times recourse to illegal substances in their attempts to achieve a competitive edge. Rather than concentrating on physical attributes like strength and stamina, as is prevalent in endurance athletics, shooters may look for psychological as well as physiological advantages involving enhanced concentration, reduced anxiety, and steadier hands.

Frequently Used Substances

In contrast to other sports, shooting sports commonly involve numerous substances for misuse. Performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) that are frequently used in shooting include:

Beta-Blockers: These medications assist in minimizing anxiety levels, tremors in the muscles, and the pace of the heart. Beta-blockers have an easing impact whilst reducing the physical signs of stress, which can greatly improve a shooter's accuracy and focus.

Stimulants: Substances which spike alertness and vigilance include amphetamines and modafinil. Although these drugs have the ability to momentarily improve cognitive abilities, they also come with substantial potential dangers such as addiction and negative side effects.

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Anxiolytics and sedatives: To alleviate tension and diminish performance anxiety, medications like diazepam (Valium) and other anti-anxiety medications are employed. These drugs can, however, impair judgment and reaction time, producing an uncertain risk-reward situation.

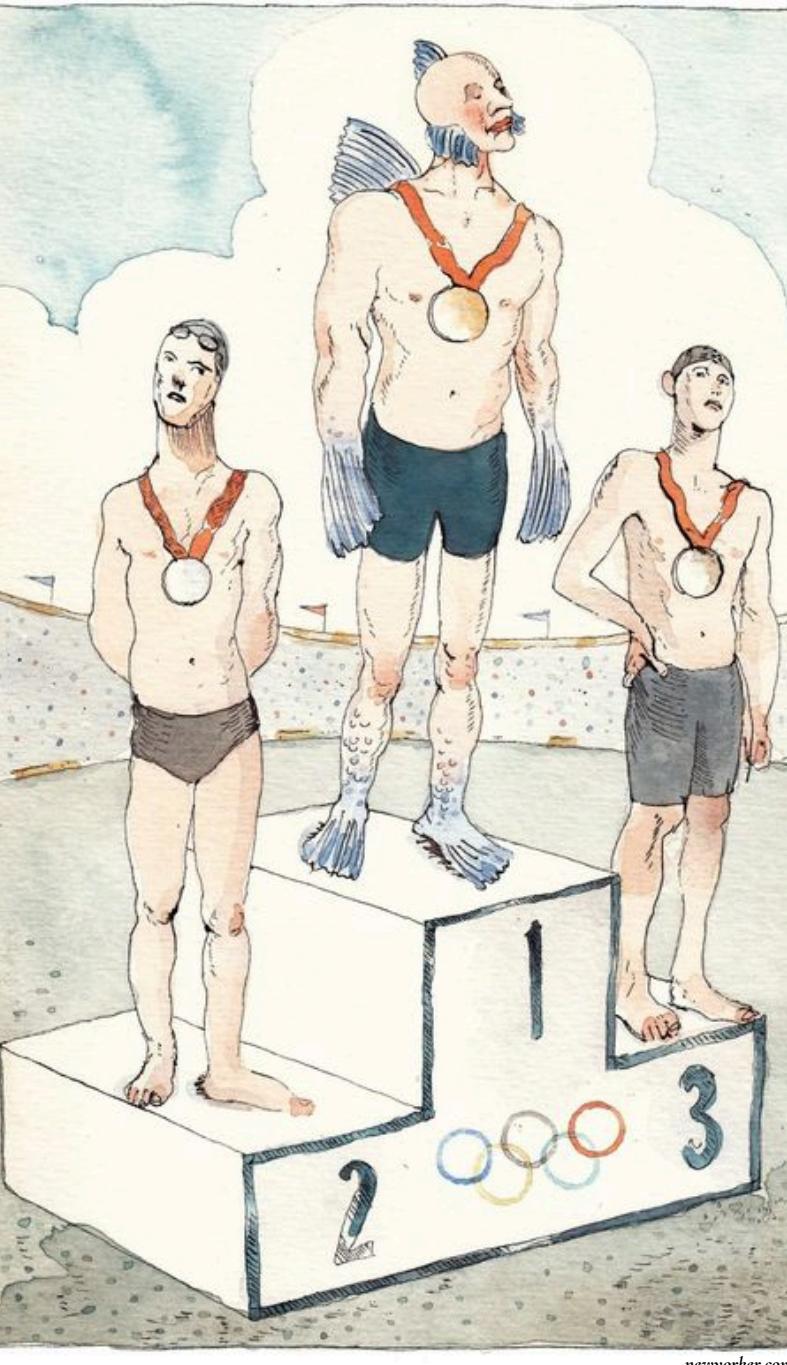
Along with giving an unfair advantage, using performance-enhancing chemicals in shooting sports erodes the spirit of competition that is equitable. Doping can have detrimental effects on an athlete's health as well as damage the sport's reputation and competitors' trust. When athletes misuse illicit substances, the focus and self-control that characterize shooting sports are weakened.

Moreover, doping might have a serious psychological impact. Doping athletes frequently experience anxiety, resentment, and a perpetual worry of getting exposed. This can result in a vicious cycle whereby they are reliant on drugs to maintain their performance as they struggle with the moral and health implications of their behaviour.

The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF), whose Anti-Doping Programme is based on the "spirit of sport," is devoted to preserving the integrity of sports. In addition to fostering justice, respect, and good health, this idea highlights the moral pursuit of human achievement via the committed refinement of each athlete's innate abilities. By forbidding the use of illegal substances and techniques, the ISSF programme seeks to safeguard athletes' health and maintain fair competition.

Maintaining these principles honors the human soul, body, and mind and guarantees fair play. These ideals are ingrained in all competitors by the ISSF's anti-doping education programs, which promote a clean and healthy sports culture.





newyorker.com

Elite sports is a contest among athletes with an uneven set of genetic endowments and natural advantages.

Illustration by Barry Blitt

Elite sports often highlight a competition among athletes who possess varying levels of genetic advantages, such as height, muscle composition, or endurance. These natural traits can significantly influence an athlete's success, making the playing field inherently uneven. While training, dedication, and strategy are crucial, genetic endowments can provide a significant edge, challenging the notion that sports are entirely merit-based. Barry Blitt's illustrations, known for their satirical take on societal issues, could capture the complexities of this idea, shedding light on the often-overlooked role of genetics in determining athletic success.

In addition to the established anti-doping measures, the role of education and awareness cannot be overstated in the fight against doping in shooting sports. Continuous efforts to educate athletes, coaches, and support personnel on the dangers of doping and the importance of clean sport are essential. The ISSF, in collaboration with WADA, regularly updates and disseminates information on prohibited substances and methods, ensuring that athletes are well-informed about the latest regulations.

World Anti Doping (Code)

The ISSF complies with the World Anti-Doping Code's regulations in all facets of its anti-doping programme as a signatory. This commitment entails the Prohibited List's adoption and enforcement, which lists substances and practices prohibited in competition, out of competition, and in certain sports. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) maintains the Prohibited List, which is updated yearly and essential to the international standardisation of anti-doping laws. In order to prevent unintentional infractions, ISSF athletes and their support staff need to remain aware of the Prohibited List. Urine tests to check for the presence of banned substances are also necessary for compliance with the Code. The ISSF uses these tests as a crucial component of their plan to guarantee fair contests devoid of doping.

Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUE)

Athletes may apply for a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) if their medical circumstances require the use of drugs or other forbidden substances.

International athletes submit their applications to the ISSF's TUE Committee, which examines them and, if certain requirements are satisfied, grants exemptions. These prerequisites include the need for the drug to treat a recognised medical condition, the lack of performance improvement above and beyond normal health, along with the absence of appropriate legal substitutes. TUE applications must be sent in by athletes within thirty days before participation. Athletes competing at the national level who possess a TUE must make sure the ISSF recognises it before competing internationally. While doping in shooting sports may not make the same amount of news as it does in other sports, it is still a serious issue that needs to be addressed. While we honour the accomplishments of sharpshooters worldwide, one should also be on the lookout for the silent danger of doping, making sure that each shot made during competition is a real testimonial to the athlete's talent, commitment, and integrity.

Moreover, fostering a culture of integrity and ethics within the sport is crucial. This involves not only adhering to anti-doping rules but also promoting values such as sportsmanship, respect, and fairness. By instilling these principles from the grassroots level, the shooting sports community can create an environment where doping is universally condemned and clean athletes are celebrated for their true abilities. In this way, the sport can continue to grow and thrive, with every shot fired representing not just precision and skill, but also the unwavering commitment to the principles of fair play and honesty.

SLOW DOWN

One out of Infinity

THE PARENT'S SCOPE

"I, as a father and a parent did mid course correction on the same day of the advise given to me by the shooting coach of my son. Today, I am more of a facilitator between the coach and my son and no more a barrier or an impediment"

My Son, picked up shooting when he was eleven and a half year old and it was NIYATI which took us to the shooting range and today after one and a half years, today, he is doing well as per his age and experience as he has qualified for Nationals in his first year of shooting.

I his father, am a proud soldier too, who now knows the nuances of shooting and the efforts, time and energy required to perfect the art of shooting. This is the first article from the series of articles (1/oo) which is the firsthand personal ground experience and purely a father's perspective which has been formed after watching his son's changeover from a normal kid to aspiring shooter.

SLOW DOWN, as the heading of the article says is to slow down the expectations so that the nature take its own course in shaping up the new plant to become a formidable tree that will be asset for all. These Golden words SLOW DOWN are specifically an advise or request to the parents who advertently or inadvertently put pressure on themselves, their shooter ward, and the coaches who are scientifically progressing towards the target of achieving the final aim, thus derailing the efforts of all the stakeholders.

As my story goes, in the initial 4-5 months of my son joining the shooting academy, in my exuberance and over-expectation, I expected my son to be and behave like a PRO. But I was grossly wrong. The first coach of my son told me, "Sir, aapka beta ek lambi race ka ghoda hai, wo shooting ke liye hi bana hai aur wo bahut achha karega (your son will do very good in shooting, someone to watch out for, he is made for shooting and he will surely do well) and then in the same breath she advised me to SLOW DOWN.

This was the first most important lesson I learnt that day. All stakeholders viz the shooter, the parents, the coaches need to slow down. The sport, the shooting is like a train journey and we all stakeholders are the passengers. At the end of the day, it is certain that we will reach the destination. So it is paramount for all the passengers to enjoy the journey part with the natural pace.

Just to reiterate, your shooter ward is already under tremendous pressure to perform. He is already practicing on gaining focus, and concentration, working hard in achieving consistency, expectations of the coaches, doing meditation, yoga exercises, and developing important variables like patience and persistence in addition to his academics and that too at this tender age. And on the top of this is the OVER EXPECTATIONS of the parents. So, here, the earnest request for the parents is to slow. No parent in this world would think that his/her ward to fail. So foster a love for the sport in the tender mind of your ward, be there with him at/beyond the saturation point, watch him grow with the sport, maintain open communication, be a role model for them and show him the right path and guidance with unwavering support to your ward so that he pursues his sports shooting career and achieves the designated dream of his life.



By - Lokman Singh Adhikari(Father)

Aniruddh Singh Adhikari(Son)

The Visionary Journey of

Col JS Nagpal

From the Battlefield to the Shooting Range

Excerpts from an interview with the Editor

In the world of sports shooting, few names resonate with as much respect and admiration as Col JS Nagpal. Col JS Nagpal is a distinguished Chandigarh-based entrepreneur renowned in the sports shooting domain. An ex-NDA and a military career officer, Col Nagpal's illustrious career in the Indian Army spanned 24 years, during which he served the nation with unwavering dedication and valor. In 2017, he embarked on a new leadership journey by establishing Colonelz SharpShooterz Shooting Academy in Jalandhar. This venture aimed to harness and nurture the burgeoning interest in shooting sports within the country.

Colonelz SharpShooterz, under Col Nagpal's leadership, has become a premier Sports and Defence Consultancy and Infrastructure Developer, executing successful projects across India. Leveraging his military expertise, Col Nagpal has established ISSF-standard shooting ranges in schools, institutions, and defense establishments. The academy provides top-tier training, promotes shooting sports through events and competitions, and offers consultancy services for setting up world-class infrastructure. Col Nagpal's transition from military officer to entrepreneur underscores his dedication to elevating shooting sports in India and inspiring future champions.

Let's reminisce a little about your army career and the decision to hang the spurs.

Twenty-eight plus years given as an Infantarian to the Indian Army was amazing in itself, having fought the Kargil War, Anti Terrorism operations in J&K, represented the country in the United Nations, a well-respected Weapons Instructor at the prestigious Infantry School, Mhow, numerous High Altitude postings in Ladakh, besides being a topper in all Army Courses, and so on!



I belong to a business family, so starting a business was a foregone conclusion post my Army career. Since my wife had been managing the business during my years in service, it was a smooth transition. I hit the ground running, having successfully bid for some shooting sports equipment and range setup tenders immediately after I hung my boots.

My focus on providing quality and honest services, without being expensive, was what provided me with a good start in this field.

Instead of a steady job, why did you choose entrepreneurship? In your view, how suitable are veterans in these kinds of endeavors?

Entrepreneurship offered me the freedom to innovate and create something meaningful. Veterans are incredibly suited for entrepreneurial ventures because of their leadership skills, discipline, and ability to thrive under pressure. These qualities are invaluable when starting and running a business.

Plus the regard given by society for your background means you have to be upright in your dealings, lest you spoil the trust imposed in you.

What factors made you choose the shooting domain?

Shooting has always been my passion. My background and expertise in handling firearms and deep knowledge of shooting ranges made this a natural choice. Additionally, the precision, control, and focus required in the sport are qualities I deeply admire. I wanted to create a platform where others could experience the joy and discipline of shooting, especially the younger generation.

What exactly do you do in this sphere?

At Colonelz SharpShooterz, we set up shooting ranges in schools, institutions, Armed Forces Cantts, and live ranges for the Defence Services.

Besides, we provide training to aspiring shooters for the state and national levels and promote the sport through various events and competitions. We also provide the best air weapons and related shooting sport items, both directly and through our online platforms. We aim to nurture talent and provide the necessary infrastructure and support to help shooters excel.

Take me through the journey of Colonelz SharpShooterz - the name, the beginning, the teething troubles, and the turnarounds.

The journey started a decade ago with a vision to popularize shooting sports in India. The name 'Colonelz SharpShooterz' reflects our commitment to precision and excellence. The early days were challenging, with hurdles like securing funding, setting up infrastructure, and attracting students. However, our commitment and perseverance paid off as we started seeing our students excel and win medals at national and international levels.

We were supported greatly by the leading media house Punjab Kesari, who appreciated our contribution to the sports scene of the country.

Today we are the only ISO 9001-2015 certified, Woman entrepreneur-led, MSME registered company that has been in the business of Shooting Sports for a full ten years, since 2014.

What have been the biggest achievements of your efforts so far?

Our notable achievements include setting up over 30 shooting ranges adhering to ISSF standards and organizing numerous tournaments. Our students have won medals at national and international levels. We also conducted a successful online fitness challenge during the pandemic, attracting over 4000 participants globally. Each success reflects the hard work and dedication of our team.

Give us the macro scan of sports shooting in India.

Sports shooting in India has grown significantly with increased awareness and improved infrastructure. However, challenges such as high costs and limited access to quality training still persist. The anticipated success of Indian shooters in the Paris Olympics is expected to further boost the sport's popularity and growth.

What are the major challenges that face this sport in the country?

Key challenges include the high cost of equipment, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to qualified coaching. Additionally, there's a need for more grassroots programs to identify and nurture talent from a young age. It's encouraging to see a growing recognition of the value of investing in quality infrastructure, which can provide significant long-term returns.

And what are the solutions to these challenges?

Solutions include increasing the number of shooting ranges, making equipment more affordable through subsidies or sponsorships, training more coaches, and providing financial and infrastructural support from the government and private sector. Awareness campaigns to promote the sport are a must, as also removing the elitist tag that comes with the game.

How affordable is sports shooting in India, compared to other sports?

Sports shooting is relatively expensive compared to many other sports due to the cost of equipment and training. However, with the right support and funding, it can be made more accessible to a broader audience. Compared to sports like cricket or football, the initial investment is higher, but the rewards and personal growth it offers are immense.

Which is where institutions like Colonelz SharpShooterz come in, providing the best training with specialist coaches, and complete weapons and equipment, at a cost less than playing tennis!

Where is Colonelz SharpShooterz headed in the next four to five years?

In the next four to five years, we aim to expand our reach by setting up more top-quality shooting ranges across India, increasing our training programs, and producing more champions. We also plan to collaborate with international bodies to bring the best practices and technologies to our infrastructure setup and training methods.

We are also actively looking at creating our space in the buoyant Defence segment in the near future, with the Prime Minister's Make in India push. Having achieved early success by making a Test Shooting Range for the Adani Group, and with my extensive experience, we are uniquely poised to take huge strides in this field.

As a keen shooting enthusiast, what are your expectations from the shooting team this Olympics?

I have high expectations from our shooting team. With the talent and training they possess, I am confident they will perform exceptionally well. My hope is to see them bring home multiple medals and inspire a new generation of shooters.

From the experienced Anjum Mudgal, Haryana lad Sarabjot Singh, the versatile Manu Bhakar and Saurabh Chowdhary to the golden girl Sift Kaur and all others, we wish them the best of luck, and look forward to their victorious return.

How is talent identified and nurtured at the national level?

Talent identification is a structured process involving regular competitions and talent hunts through schools, colleges, and sports academies. The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) facilitates this through training camps and scholarships to support and develop identified talent.

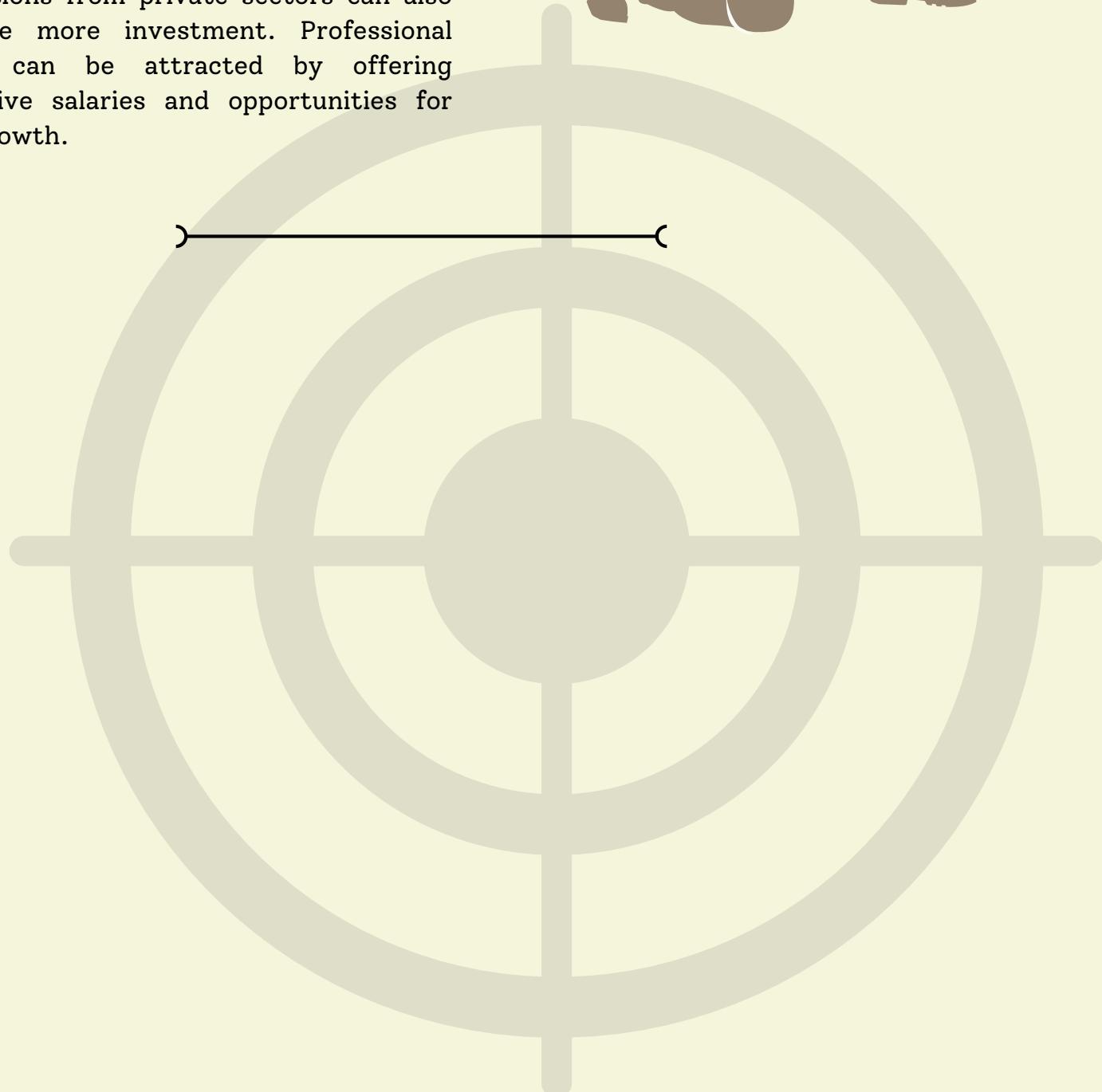
So, identified shooters do get support. How can the vast majority of shooters from the hinterland continue to afford this costly sport?

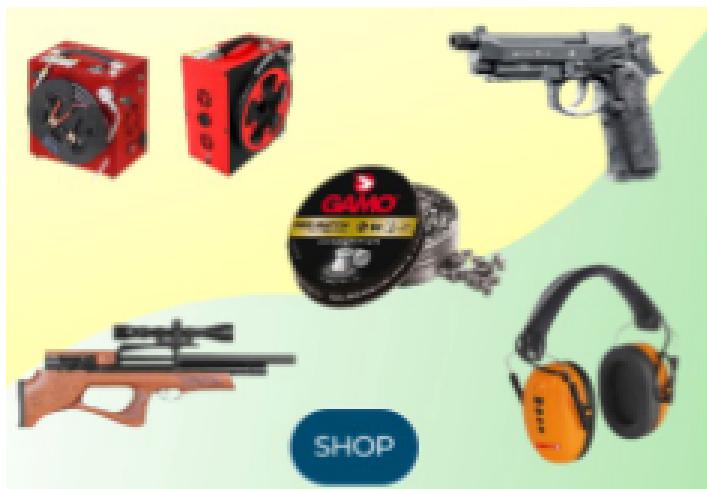
Support for shooters from remote areas comes through government schemes, sponsorships, local sports associations, and community initiatives. Affordable equipment and access to local ranges are also crucial. State-level government initiatives, such as Haryana's sports nursery scheme and Punjab's coach hiring scheme, are providing positive results.

We know that you are promoting and supporting the sport in many ways. What more is needed to be done to attract private industry, sports federations, and professional coaches?

To attract private industry, sports federations, and professional coaches, it is essential to highlight the sport's potential and the success stories of shooters. Creating more competitive events and showcasing the sport's growth and popularity can attract sponsors and private investment.

Providing tax incentives and recognizing contributions from private sectors can also encourage more investment. Professional coaches can be attracted by offering competitive salaries and opportunities for career growth.





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Col JS Nagpal's journey from the army to entrepreneurship is a testament to the power of passion and perseverance. His dedication to promoting sports shooting in India has not only created champions but has also inspired many to take up the sport. With his vision and relentless efforts, the future of sports shooting in India looks promising and bright.

"The vision for Colonelz SharpShooterz is to be the leading force in promoting and nurturing shooting sports in India. The mission is to provide world-class infrastructure, training, and support to aspiring shooters, making the sport accessible and popular across the country. We aim to produce champions who can compete at the highest levels and inspire others to take up the sport."



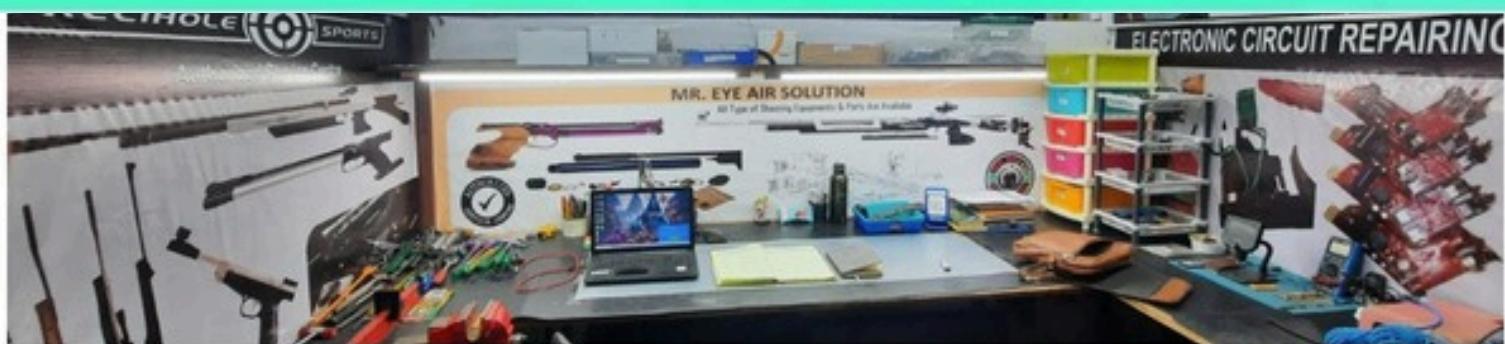
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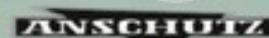
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