

4-10-2008

**While the season is already a few weeks old, there is never a bad time to talk about getting ready for the matches and what our expectations are after a few months of non-match activity. Here is a response I made to Vince Lucchetti about this very topic. My thanks to Vince for giving permission to use and post it.**

**Vince,**

**What I meant to relay about match nerves and winter rust wasn't so much about your competitive spirit or mental programming, but rather your state of mind and hand eye coordination.**

**Some people come out early in the season expecting, planning, or sub consciously trying to shoot the way they did at the middle or end of the previous season. We constantly try (or struggle) to get better and we forget that sometimes we have to take a step back to move two steps forward. You've heard the saying, "you never forget how to ride a bike". Our body and muscles don't really forget the mechanics or speed, especially if we do a little dry fire over the winter.**

**The problem is our eyes and/or brains are not up to the same speed. What happens when we get hurried or excited? We get a small degree of panic, or we lose concentration and make dumb mistakes (like being late for work and forgetting your wallet). When our bodies are trying to move faster than our eyes and mind can keep up, our brain feels rushed and we lose our concentration.**

**Then it is that tiniest of concentration breaks. I can see them, that one little instant when the front sight was not as crisp as it was on the shot before - mike.**

**If you knew you missed by calling your shot, why didn't you make it up? That's the statement that makes me think your body was moving a little quicker than your eyes/mind.**

**When I'm at the line, I have confidence in my plan, I've reviewed it a half dozen times (per your teachings), I know where I want my feet, where my marks are, I "know" I will do well.**

**The other possibility is that you're SO focused on your foot work, marks, and plan, that it's causing you to lose concentration for short moments. When you called the bad shot(s), were they on the first shot or second? If you're missing on the second shot, perhaps your mind is thinking about your next move, reload, or getting to the next mark that it's getting ahead of itself. Your eyes are focused on the sights (you called the shot) but your mind is telling your body to start moving, make a reload, or look for that spot instead of thinking about follow through and pressing the trigger smoothly.**

**When I start the season, I don't put as much thought and time into mechanics and foot work as I do into calling good shots and trying for A's. I've shot clean so far, I've only taken 3 extra shots on steel (including two Texas Stars), and I've only shot 5 D's (3 through the barrel at PMSC). I practice more group shooting and trigger control than movement and footwork. I can see some sloppiness and places that I need to work on but that stuff will catch up after a few matches. I FEEL slow but my times on the stage and video show the opposite.**

**I would say put some time into dry firing draws and reloads but first and foremost get to the range AT LEAST once a week and shoot some groups. Here is the progression that I use. I don't move on to the next level until I can successfully complete each one three times in a row. This is all using a standard NRA B2 target.**

- 1. 25 feet 6 shots within 8 ring. Slow fire but keeping the gun up for all 6 shots.**
- 2. 50 feet 10 shots within black. Same as above.**
- 3. 25 feet 10 shots within black, rapid fire.**
- 4. 50 feet 10 shots within black, rapid fire.**

**Once you do that well you can do the same rapid fire drills adding in draws and reloads. Do the same thing with USPSA targets at different distances and only shooting A's. Make sure you see the sight picture lift off of EVERY shot before you move to the next target. Don't forget about your movement and tactics, but put a little more time into shooting and accuracy.**

**Hope that helps,**

**Matt**