

Indoor competitions – what’s that about?

Well, I decided to find out by entering one – I figured I had nothing to lose!

So I turned up at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff, I thought in plenty of time – about an hour before the assembly time. To my surprise, I walked into the hall to find it packed as a lady came towards me and asked “Richard?”. I thought that was a lovely personal touch that she should know all the entrants by first name, until I realised I must have been the last one to arrive and she was waiting for me! (Note to self: arrive earlier next time). I then rushed to get my bow set up ready to line up for a kit inspection, though the judges had all dispersed by the time I got mine ready and had to go find one! I found where my target boss was and then waited for the sighters end, of which there was one end of 3 arrows – hmm not used to that. The round was a WA18 and I soon got to grips with how the 4 people per boss took turns – first A&B then C&D for the first end and then swapping around for the next end so C&D then A&B. The lights and timing system was easy to follow, and you have surprisingly plenty of time (2 minutes) to shoot your 3 arrows.

Unwittingly I picked up one of the score sheets as nobody else did and after the first end started writing down the scores of those on our boss. After completely hashing up the score sheet several times by putting scores in the wrong place and having to get the judges over to correct it, I soon got the hang of it and only messed it up a few times after that. I have to say the other people and judges were very understanding, helpful and supportive, which is what I have come to expect from my time at Castle Bowmen.

So the afternoon went on, with a 10 minute break half way through, and three quarters of the way through my fibre optic fell out of my sight pin and left me in the dark! – oh well crack on. I finished with a score of 505 which I was well happy with for my first competition. I came second in my class, which sounds impressive until you realise there were only 4 of us in the class!

The whole experience pushed me on to want to do more so I put my name down for several more competitions, the WMAS/CWAA Senior indoor championships in Evesham and the Somerset County indoor championships near Weston-Super-Mare. The titles of competitions can be a little intimidating, but the fact of it is that its just a bunch of archers from all over and at all levels turning up to a hall to have a shoot. So the triple spot targets were a new thing to me, but had luckily practiced a few ends at St Germans, not that it made a difference! During one end I managed to shoot the target next door to the one I was aiming at – my excuse is that looking constantly at 3 spots gives you double vision. Luckily the gent next to me saw the funny side, though refused to give me the 7 points for the shot. Final score for the WA18 was 491, not sure where I finished in the rankings as my name didn’t appear on the results sheet!

So, final competition attended to date was in Weston doing a Portsmouth round – that’s more like it, a proper size target. The hall was freezing so I can only assume fuel has run out in North Somerset (note to self: take a jumper in your bag next time). People were also advised to bring their own chairs, so the rate this is going I’m going to need a bigger bag! Same drill with the timings, rotations and scoring, so by now its all becoming very familiar. Final score 536. Have I done better? Yes. Did I trash it? No, so that’s a win in my book (final results list I came 21<sup>st</sup> out of 34). Strange thing, if I’d have got my personal best of 559 I would have come 4<sup>th</sup>, so that’s something to take away from that competition and spurs me on to do more....

In summary, if you’ve maybe thought about doing an indoor competition or you’re worried you might not be good enough, stop faffing about and have a go! It doesn’t take much to get to grips with how it works and people are extremely friendly and helpful. At the end of the day, you’re not really competing against others, you’re competing against yourself.

All the best and good luck, Rich Davis (that’s me in the middle trying to figure out how to put the arrow on)

