

Nostalgia Corner

30 Years Ago ... by Paul Davison

The Beginning of the End of an Era



In 1972, there were 56 NFAA National Tournament scoring records listed for the 14 adult divisions then recognized. Twenty eight of these records were broken at the 27th Outdoor Nationals held near Ludlow, MA. The new compound bow was a factor, but the recent legalization of the release aid led to an incredible eight, first-ever, perfect 560's being shot in the Field (1) and Hunter (7) rounds. Although not a first, three perfect Animal rounds were also shot.

In those days, the 5-ring was exactly half the diameter of the outer 3-ring. High scores were getting too easy. Something had to be done about changing the target face and/or the way it was scored. This issue came to a head in 1976 when two perfect 2800's were shot by Amateur freestylers Barry Velarde and Phil Schmidt at the Aurora (IL) Nationals.

One proposal in 1972 was to use the current faces, but change the 5-3 scoring to 5-4-3. The small bullseye (aiming spot) in the center of 5-ring would be the new 5-ring, while the balance of the 5-ring (the white area on the field face) would be the new 4-ring. The 3-ring would remain the same. This proposal, however, was a real slap-in-the-face to the poor, average shooter trying to earn a 500 patch. The idea of making the new scoring scheme apply only to freestylers wasn't workable either ... especially when those shooting (and scoring) together were of different styles.



The NFAA Board of Directors mulled over a target face change for the next four years. This change was somewhat complicated by the threat

that the entire nation was going metric — quarts to liters, pounds to kilograms, yards to meters, etc. Should the NFAA change all their shooting stakes from yards to meters, and should the target faces be converted from inches to centimeters?

Public outcry finally killed the metric initiative in the US, as well as the 100% conversion by the NFAA. As long as we had to change our target faces, however, why not make them metric? We did, in fact, and the 5-4-3 metric Field and Hunter faces as we know them today were introduced at the 1977 National Outdoor in Clemson, SC.

The top shooters still shot near, but not quite, perfect scores. The average shooters, however, saw their scores drop somewhat. There was an attempt in the mid 1990's to replace this 5-4-3 target with an easier-to-score, retrograde version, but fortunately it died quickly.