

Bulls EYE aim

For two days over the weekend of 1st and 2nd August, the Queensland State archery competitions were held at the North Albert Field Archers (NAFA) ground's at Yatala.

The event attracted a nett 100 contestants from all over the region and from as far afield as Casino, Lismore and even Germany. Despite the competitive nature of the event there was a festive atmosphere with tents erected across the grounds, cook fires burning and groups of archers gathered together in a variety of colourful club shirts, talking, demonstrating, expounding and reminiscing all things that belong to this ancient sport.

NAFA member, Mark Boatfield, was enthusiastic about getting the real message across about the true nature of the competition. "Too many people think that it's just shooting at round targets" he complains. A tour through the clubs 3d target course dispels that impression.

The 3d targets are created in the form of typical game animals out of hard compound rubber. The targets are placed in natural bush settings with designated shooting sites set at a distance in accordance with age divisions or bow type. Some of the shots are designed to be quite difficult with a narrow window to the target between trees and other obstacles. Miss the target and good luck finding your arrow. There is a protocol for moving from target to target so that at no time is any person moving behind an active shooting zone, which, with an arrow travelling up to 100 meters a second, would be unfortunate.

Most of the targets come from the U.S. and so it's not uncommon to see in these Yatala woods a bear, a bison or a wolf, but the Australian Archery Association are careful to lay out courses in the same format as the Americans as many Australian archers travel over there to compete. For example, local archer Bill Watson, Australia's national shooter of the year, last year won the World Championships held in the U.S.

This weekend there were 21 divisions of competition. The ages represented were between 5 and 70 and the bow types varied from traditional wood and string bow, to a recurve variety and up to the state of the art compound bow that looks more like ship rigging than a weapon. A top ten shoot off was the premier event and won by Gavin Brown in the sighted bow division, who also was the only contestant to achieve a perfect score of 100 over a ten target round, and Sue Elliot won in the bare bow division.



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