



CRACK TEAM: Our rifle heroes Fabian Connolly, Nicholas Flood and Matthew Canning are double winners on the world stage

Our world champs right on target

IRELAND today won a European Championship and a World Cup – in rifle shooting. An Irish team competing over the past week at Decin in the Czech Republic took top honours against marksmen from 10 countries as far apart as Finland and Australia.

Irish shooter Nicholas Flood, from Terenure, Co Dublin, finished first place overall, and also won the

gold medal. The Irish team beat off strong competition to win the European Championship and the 2005 World Cup with 182 points.

France, with 177 points, and Austria, with 165, finished second and third.

Fabian Connolly, Kinelough, Co Leitrim, won the third place individual bronze medal with 30 points; while Matthew Canning, Tallaght, Dublin, with 24 points, took

first place in the AA class.

Nick Flood used a .308 calibre rifle in the long range silhouette shooting – just over a year after he won a groundbreaking High Court case.

Nick (38) won the right to compete internationally using a .308, a calibre civilian shooters could not use for the last 30 years in Ireland.

Shooting organisations,

which which funded Nicholas' case, argued that not granting Nicholas a licence restricted his right to earn a living and to succeed as a sportsman.

Gardai had refused to grant sports shooters a licence for anything larger than a .270 calibre.

But since Nick's successful High Court bid, shooters have been licensed to use calibres of .308 or larger.