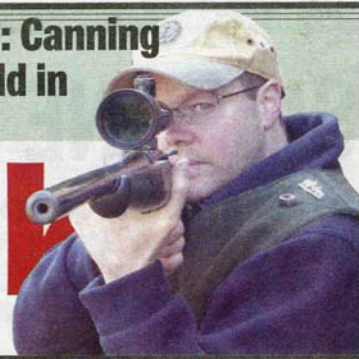


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SHOOTING: Canning strikes gold in Euros 73



Ulster Herald Sports Week

Thursday, September 6, 2007

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SPORT

SPORT | Round-up

● Ann McFarland completes successes at prestigious

● SILHOUETTE SHOOTING

Newtown marksman strikes gold

BY TOMMY NETHERY

NEWTOWNSTEWART man, Matthew Canning has struck gold at the 15th AETSM European Metallic Silhouette Shooting Championships while helping Ireland to bronze in the team event in Germany.

Along with teammates, John Walsh from Wexford and Dublin's Paddy O'Shea, Team Ireland, managed by Canning, pitted their wits against the cream of Europe, which included world and national champions.

The heat of competition was matched only by the soaring temperatures, and although the Irish showed some nerves in the opening rounds, they recovered well to be in real contention at the conclusion of the first day.

On day two, and with the top of the leaderboard within their grasp, Canning put the men in green in a promising position by registering scores of 32/40

and 30/40. When the final scores were tallied Ireland had to settle for bronze although Canning had qualified for shoot-offs for two individual medals.

In the Smallbore Light Rifle shoot-off Canning squared up to France's Luc Walgraeve for a pot at the bronze medal in the International class. Both shooters were inseparable following the first shoot-off, with the opponents felling three of the five targets.

With no outright winner, the targets were reset and a wholly engrossed crowd looked on as Walgraeve recorded a 100% success rate to edge out Canning, who missed just one of his five targets.

Determined to capture an individual medal, the Newtown man then challenged yet another Frenchman, Emmanuel Boudsocq for top spot in the International Smallbore Silhouette Rifle class.

Once again the fire com-



Newtownstewart man Matthew Canning who captured individual gold at the 15th European Metallic Silhouette Shooting Championships as well as helping Ireland claim bronze in the team event.

mand sounded and both rifles barked up the Philippsburg-based range but this time Canning emerged victorious by toppling three of five targets, one more than his opponent.

Canning's performances means the Tyrone sharpshooter has moved up the European rankings to sixth, which gave

him extreme satisfaction.

After the awards ceremony, the manager of Team Ireland said, "It was a great honour for the Irish squad to secure six individual medals and team bronze.

"The Irish were seen as underdogs in the team event but like the Irish Wolfhound we

stood tall and strong to prove that the team has what it takes to compete with the best that Europe has to offer."

Canning has personally thanked his sponsors, Newtownstewart building supplier, B McNamee and Co, and BRC Shooting Club Dublin for their continued support.