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● Newtownstewart shooter secures Irish Smallbore Rifle title in Dublin

● SILHOUETTE SHOOTING

Matthew again the man of the moment

Newtownstewart's Matthew Canning (pictured right) proved to be the man of the moment when he secured the coveted title of Irish Smallbore Silhouette Rifle Champion 2007.

Canning who returned from the European Championships in August with a Gold and Bronze medal has now added another title to his name as he became the new Irish National Silhouette Shooting Champion 2007 at the Irish Championships two day event hosted by BRC Shooting Club, Dublin.

Matthew, pleased with his recent performance at the European Championships in Germany was looking forward to competing at the Irish Championships. With a modest start on day one of 31/40 Canning was top of the leaderboard with Leitrim's Fabian Connolly and Wexford's John Walsh in hot pursuit with a two and three point difference. It was all to play for.

On day two as the wind picked up to around 20 MPH the rain also began to sheet in from the west, this was indeed a day that could see a lead

grow or disappear very quickly. It was all down to reading the wind and making the best of each shot. As the FIRE command sounded Canning got off to a great start as the wind had suddenly dropped. Matthew, knowing this opportunity would not last, quickly rested his sights on each target and making every shot count scored a perfect 10 targets.

As the detail continued Canning was continually watching the wind as it squalled up range. Using Kentucky windage (holdover) Canning tallied up an excellent opening score of 35/40 which would surely put the pressure on the trailing field.

At the end of day two and the heavily fought competition it was now down to stats to announce the winner. With a score of 66/80 there was a new Irish National Silhouette Champion, it was Matthew Canning.

Matthew said: "This is an honour I have sought after since I competed in my first silhouette competition in 2002 where I scored a hard earned result of 9/40. This is where my dream

of being the Irish Champion budded and today flowered 'dreams do come true if you believe in them and put in the many long hours both physically and mentally at the shooting range.

"It was the support of those that know me best and their love and care that helped me stay focused to see me smile once again as an Irish National Smallbore Rifle Champion. I cannot thank you enough for those words of encouragement and support."

