

Pull! Report on the 45th ABT Home International Competition – September 6th and 7^t

This year's ABT Home International, the 45th iteration of this highly competitive event, was held on September 6th and 7th at The North Ayrshire Shooting ground on Scotland's green and lush West Coast. Following an emphatic performance at last year's HI, the English team's confidence was high going into the event however competition proved to be much tougher than expected, culminating in a dramatic ending to the individual HG title race.

The main story of the weekend was the weather which was a tale of two halves, with Friday providing highly variable wind, light and rain and Saturday being much calmer and warmer albeit with light conditions which proved increasingly challenging as the day progressed.

It was evident from the outset that scores would be lower across the board than expected and this proved to be true, with a 22/23 being considered a respectable score. Straights were few and far between, and by the 50 bird mark only four clean rounds had been recorded; extremely rare given the experience and skill of the competitors. Scotland's ever-consistent captain Gordon Lumsden was on 48 as was his team-mate Cameron Hume, with England's leading lights a point or two behind. As shooters got to grips with the vagaries of the weather scores improved accordingly, and the end of day 1 saw Hume out in front on a highly commendable 95 – any score in the 90's was considered a good result. On the team front England's seniors held a narrow lead over Scotland with Ireland just behind.

Saturday was a whole new story – blue skies and light winds and scores improved commensurately; after a fairly lacklustre day – by his own high standards – on Saturday England's captain David Lloyd was showing the way with a superb 75 straight, closely followed by Cameron Hume with a 73. This put Hume one point ahead going into the final round, which he completed with a 24, leaving Lloyd needing a straight to match the HG score. In changing light conditions Lloyd shot his first 24 straight and the watching crowd held their collective breath as he called for his final bird – and missed, leaving Hume as the well-deserved HG! A tremendous effort nevertheless, and consistently good scores across the board gave the England senior team a winning score, an achievement matched by their junior team, albeit in a much closer competition, in the end just pipping the Scottish juniors by one bird. In the individual junior section Scotland's Ewen Ross maintained his consistent form this year by shooting an impressive 187, beating England's Cory Doble by five birds. Whilst England's Ladies did not have the best of the shooting on this occasion, particularly strong Vets and Super Vets teams won their respective titles.

Good speeches, great food and a friendly atmosphere at the banquet rounded off another successful HI weekend; well done and thank you to Scotland for being superb hosts and here's to an equally enjoyable and competitive ABT HI in Northern Ireland next year.