

Olympic Shooting Games and Medal Outlook

The upcoming Atlanta Olympic Games will feature 15 shooting sports events, eleven of which are rifle and pistol competitions. Here are brief descriptions of each rifle and pistol event and an insider's view of how U.S. shooters are likely to do.

PISTOL

Women's Air Pistol

The event is 40 shots in the standing position (prelims) and 10 shots in the final. Targets are placed at 10 meters. Pellets of .177 caliber are used.

JoAnn Sevin of Brockway, Pennsylvania, qualified for the U.S. Olympic Team at the Atlanta World Cup event. Sevin's teammate in women's air pistol is Rebecca Snyder of Grand Junction, Colorado.

The PFS Handicap: U.S. shooters have never medaled in this event, and they are unlikely to in this Olympiad. Jasna Sekaric of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria's Maria Grozdeva, and Nino Salukvadze of Georgia (the country, not the state) are the top shooters.

Men's Air Pistol

The event is 60 shots in the standing position (prelims) and 10 shots in the final. Targets are placed at 10 meters.

Ben Amonette of Radford, Virginia, and Neal Caloia of Cottage Grove, Oregon, make up the Atlanta Olympic air pistol team.

The PFS Handicap: Amonette and Caloia will be lucky to make the finals. The real duel in this event will be between Roberto DiDonna, 27, of Italy and Yifu Wang of China. During the World Cup, they were tied for the gold on the ninth shot of the 10-shot final. Di Donna fired a perfect 10.9 to Wang's 10.1 to take the gold. Serguei Pyjianov of Russia is the world record holder.

Women's Sport Pistol

This 60-shot match is conducted at 25 meters. Shooters shoot a rapid-fire string (30 shots) and a slow-fire string (30 shots) at a 2-inch 10 ring. A 600 is a perfect score. Handguns of .22 caliber are used.

Libby Callahan of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, and Connie Petracek of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, will represent the United States.

The PFS Handicap: Callahan might make the finals, but will be hard pressed to beat shooters like Agathi Kassoumi of Greece, Maria Grozdeva of Bulgaria, and Nino Salukvadze of Georgia for a medal.

Men's Rapid Fire Pistol

This 60-shot match is conducted at 25 meters over two days. Shooters shoot at a 4-inch bullseye in strings of five shot each. The times for the strings are eight, six, and four seconds. A 600 is a perfect score.

John McNally of Heath, Texas, and Roger Mar of Seattle, Washington, make up the rapid fire team.

The PFS Handicap: The rapid fire pistol gold has practically been ceded to world-record holder Ralf Schumann of Germany. Poland's Krzysztof Kucharczyk was the last person to beat Schumann two years ago. McNally took third behind those two at the World Cup, so he has a chance to medal.

Men's Free Pistol

This 60-shot match is conducted at 50 meters. Shooters shoot at a 2-inch bullseye. A 600 is a perfect score.

Air pistol qualifiers Ben Amonette and Neal Caloia also make up the Olympic free pistol team.

The PFS Handicap: Italy's Roberto Di Donna, Martin Tenk of the Czech Republic, and China's Xu Dan are likely medalists.

AIR RIFLE (.177 Caliber)

Women's Air Rifle

The event is 40 shots in the standing position (prelims) and 10 shots in the final. Targets are placed at 10 meters.

This will be the first medal event of the Olympic Games. U.S. Olympians include Elizabeth Bourland of Wichita Falls, Texas, and Nancy Napolski of Downers Grove, Illinois.

Other top shooters to watch include 1992 Olympic air rifle silver medalist Vessela Letcheva of Bulgaria; 1994 UIT World Cup air rifle silver medalist Mladenka Malenica of Croatia; Bettina Knells of Germany; Hungarians Eva Forian and Eva Joo; Poland's Malgorzata Ksiazkiewicz; Anna Malukhina of Russia; Jung Kim of Korea; and Irina Shilova of Belarus.

The PFS Handicap: Napolski showed she had the steel to win in Atlanta by holding onto first place in a tight final. She could win an Olympic medal. Bourland has to get her game together to make the finals.

Men's Air Rifle

The event is 60 shots in the standing position (prelims) and 10 shots in the final. Targets are placed at 10 meters.

U.S. Army Marksmanship Cpts. Glenn Dubis (Bethel Park, Pennsylvania) and Rob Harbison (Fallston, Maryland) double qualified in this event and men's 3x40 rifle. Dubis is a two-time Olympian. This is Harbison's first trip to the big show.

The PFS Handicap: It's unlikely that either U.S. shooter will



Left to Right: Three of the top competitors in the Olympic air pistol and free pistol events are Jasna Sekaric of Yugoslavia, Italy's Roberto Di Donna, and Yifu Wang of China.

be able to captain a spot in the finals, much less win a medal. Leif Stein Rolland of Norway, Anatoli Klimenko of Belarus, Young Sueb Lim of Korea, Petr Kurka of Czechoslovakia, Torsten Krebs of Yugoslavia, Wolfram Waibel, Jr., of Austria, and several other shooters are tops in air rifle.

Running Target

The event is 60 shots in the standing position (prelims) and 10 shots in the final. Targets are placed at 10 meters. Shooters fire 30 shots in a fast run and 30 shots in a slow run. The target moves left and right in both runs. Shooters have five seconds to shoot in a slow run, and 2.5 seconds in a fast run. Shooters must start their guns at hip level, and not mount the gun until the target appears.

Twenty-year-old Adam Saathoff of Hereford, Arizona, will represent the U.S.

The PFS Handicap: Saathoff has a chance of making the finals, but will likely not medal with shooters like Russia's Dmitri Lykin in front of him. Lykin won the gold medal at the Atlanta World Cup and equaled the current world record set in May 1995 by Miroslav Janus of the Czech Republic, who placed third behind Czech teammate Lubos Racansky.

.22 RIFLE

Men's Free Rifle Prone

The event is 60 shots in the prone position (prelims) and 10 shots in the final. Targets are placed at 50 meters.

Bill Meek of Upland, California, shot his way into first place in men's free rifle prone at the World Cup. A second U.S. shooter made it into the final tied for third place. Eric Uptagrafft of Spokane, Washington, dropped out of the medals to finish

fourth at the World Cup by two tenths.

The PFS Handicap: Meek and Uptagrafft could double medal in this event. However, there are at least a dozen other top shooters, including Tadeusz Czerwinski of Poland, Juha Hirvi of Finland, Artem Khadjibekov of Russia, Kurt Koch of Switzerland, and Michel Dion of Canada for the Americans to contend with.

Women's 3x20 Rifle

The event is 20 shots each in prone, standing, and kneeling positions (prelims) and 10 shots standing in the final. Targets are placed at 50 meters.

Jean Foster of Bozeman, Montana, and air rifle qualifier Elizabeth Bourland will represent the U.S. in this event.

The PFS Handicap: Either U.S. shooter will be hard pressed to make the finals. Potential medalists include Irina Gerasimenok of Russia, Olga Pogrebniak of Belarus, and Korea's Kong Hyun.

Men's 3x40 Rifle

The event is 40 shots each in prone, standing, and kneeling positions (prelims) and 10 shots standing in the final. Targets are placed at 50 meters.

Air rifle qualifiers Dubis and Harbison will also shoot these events for the U.S.

The PFS Handicap: The captains will be hard pressed to medal in this event because of Serguei Martynov of Belarus, Artem Khadjibekov of Russia, and Anatoli Klimenko of Belarus.

Also, world-record holder Rajmond Debevec will likely be a force, as will Peter Bubernik of Slovakia, Sergei Kovalenko of Russia, and Milan Bakes of the Czech Republic.