When You Are Pressed for Time:

The shooting rhythm is the time in which a competition series is divided. For the 40 shot air rifle match, you have 75 minutes. The practice shots, 40 competition shots and occasional breaks must be completed within this time limit.

Fast shooters are often finished after 40 minutes. The perpetually slow usually hear the "10 second" command and still have to fire another 15 shots. While the neighboring shooters mercilessly pack their gear together, the stragglers continue to shoot under great pressure. Tragic breakdowns occur in such situations especially at important championships. Everyone has his characteristic pace, whoever talks fast also eats fast, tends to start early and packs his suitcase quickly. And whoever is cautious usually arrives later, gets off to a late start, takes longer, hides his time and does not finish until the last moment.

In crisis situations, such as a competition, these tendencies are strengthened. The hectic shooter tends to seek refuge in attack, while the hesitant shooter freezes to a standstill. Both extremes are problematic, but the tendency towards caution and delay is far more frequent among shooters.

To counter this danger, a special rhythmic training is especially recommended for stragglers. It starts with a change of thinking, such as with a firm resolution to complete the series within 80% of the maximum time, so that sufficient reserves are maintained. During training, swift shooting is rehearsed. A limit is set for practice shooting, such as a maximum of 10 shots within 15 minutes at the most. For the 10 shot series, a time limit is set with a maximum of 12 minutes, which is 84 seconds per shot. These limits are controlled during training and lowered in special practice exercises. In this way, a feeling for time is developed which offers security. Outstanding scores usually occur at high speed. Although rapid shooting is not automatically good, good shooting usually does not take long.

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**Rhythm – Time Schedule and Final Training**

**Fig. 1**: The shot pattern of the competition above. Only two shots project from the center, and these other eight mistakes give a total of 395 points. That was enough for 6th place in Milan. The grapes hang high on the international scene, and the tendency is rising.

**Fig. 3**: The protocol of an air rifle match by Gaby Bohlemann at the 1995 World Cup in Milan. Both the times and the hits were registered therein by an electronic scoring machine and displayed for the shooters. The time axis is recorded in minutes at the bottom, and you can see the 10 shot series with duration, points and decimals below it. The grid above it registers the shot values in decimals. The time intervals from shot to shot are symbolized by the width of the segments between the points. The evaluation of this protocol allows several interesting conclusions.

**Fig. 5**: One of the most effective forms of rhythmic training is the final. All shooters react to the group timing through the common command to start which usually leads to triggering after 20 to 25 seconds. Slower competitors sometimes find themselves already late. At that point, the shooter should correct his starting time. He is better to take a moment to think over your technique and to start again with a new approach, as soon as you have recovered your self-confidence. But when things are going well and the feeling is right, you should go for it with determination and speed. Speed and hitting are allies which enable high scores when they harmonize.

The ideal shooting rhythm is variable. Speed up when things are rolling but take your time, as soon as you have doubts. You should be "fast on the trigger" and controlled in a crisis and you should always practice both in critical competitions. The moment comes in most battles when you finally decide on the courageous attack. Seeking refuge in attack is usually more fruitful than all forms of caution.