

Babies, We Don't Need No Stinkin' Babies

June 13, 2015 Match Analysis

Early summer saw a return to the traditional running and gunning match with a heavier than normal 36 target course. When all the gunsmoke cleared, 528 zombies lay permanently dead. We had zombie killers from Alabama, North Carolina, Indiana, Tennessee, Ohio and Kentucky and quite a few first timers. The weather on match day was hot, but it never rained on us as they predicted and the woods stayed fairly cool. Shooters had the run of the left side of the range to practice and plink the whole day.

We started out very short staffed but with the aid of Dale Winchester, Wes Brehm, his mom, and John Thompsett, we got the match laid out and set up in about 4 hours in the oppressive heat on Friday. On match day ZK Lonnie Leake surprised us by stopping in to RO the shotgun stage in the morning before he went into work. Wes took over after he left and John kept score and handled admin all day. Newcomer Joey Booker also helped reset targets all day. (He shot well too.) In the afternoon we had some welcome relief when four new volunteers arrived: Patrick Best and Amanda (who Patrick implausibly claimed was his girlfriend), Jacob Macon and Kevin Powell. As usually, our shooters pitched in and we got through the whole course around early evening. The matches would be impossible to put on without volunteer support and we owe a lot to their generosity and enthusiasm in all kinds of crazy weather over long hours. Their reward is rarely more than a sandwich and a bottle of Gatorade.

The shotgun stage had 12 targets set from 20 to 40 feet inside the shady woods with the exception of the last target (the shredded one armed zombie in the remnants of his business attire) that stood in the waist high undergrowth at the end of the course. Shooters could not close with the targets because of the abundant poison sumac and had to aim carefully and shoot from range as they moved through the bright, hot sunshine along the wood's edge. Most shooters noticed the clues (empty silenced pistol and bloody nun's habit) on the ground near the end of the course and picked up a single precious bonus point. Sometimes these bonus points are subtle, as they were in this case. Each shooter had to do the course safely carrying an infant child in a backback. That much was clear from the scenario. However, if you put yourself in that situation, you would be looking for clues as to how a perfectly healthy baby ended up by himself in the Dead Zone. The other thing to keep in mind is that we don't just casually lay things around our ZSU courses. Everything is there for a reason. Remember that in the future. We actually had three perfect shotgun stages. The fastest was shot by ZK Beane in 63 seconds, followed by rookie ZK Dave Kilburn at 77 seconds and finally ZK Datillo at 90 seconds.

We had a very hot 21 target pistol stage along 100 yards of trail through the forest. This time of year the underbrush is waist high and the targets we purposely used the trees to screen some of targets but most of our shooters spotted them all. The same cannot be said for the baby formula they were supposed to recover. Quite a few shooters forgot to point out five of the seven brightly colored Simulac containers and lost out on two mission points! The match was really decided on the bonus and mission points. Just about every shooter took note of the kids car seat suspended high above the undead from a tree limb at the end of the course. The audio recording of the caterwauling baby was actually my daughter. She was the one that actually gave me the idea for this stage.

Nobody shot a perfect stage and quite a few came close to the 50 round limit on it. The best performers on this stage were ZK Datillo who did it with the fewest shots (31) and ZK Thomas who shot

it the fastest (118 seconds). If ZK Thomas had pointed out the baby food and picked up the two mission points, he would have won the match. Unofficial style point should go to ZSU rookie Sean Schumaker who shot the stage two handed gunfighter style with a brace of 1873 Single Action Army's. The slow loading killed his time, but he hit 20 out of 21 on the stage. We haven't seen any two handed shooting since our very first match and it was long overdue.

The rifle stage was a fixed distance course with targets from 60 to 75 yards. The objective was not to hit the human nestled in tightly among the zombies. I was impressed at how well shooters did on the rifle stage. ZK Boyd told me that the practice time he had during the free shooting that was going on to the left of the course was helpful to him. He dropped all five targets on the course. While nobody shot a perfect rifle stage, Doug Parrack shot the best one. He dropped all five zombies with only seven shots in 36 seconds.

Unfortunately, I was too worn out to be sure of my scoring tabulations and we weren't able to award prizes at the end of the match. It was all for the best because when reviewing my notes, I realized that ZK Ulfr Dokkr, despite shooting one of his best matches ever, had to be disqualified because of a weapons failure on the shotgun stage. As you know, ZSU matches are "no-alibi-matches". However, I hate to see anyone not shoot a stage because their gun craps out on them so we got another shotgun in his hands and he dropped every targets. I sincerely apologize for the error.

We will get to awarding prizes shortly now that I know who actually won. If all shooters at this match are going to be present at the August 15th match, we can begin the event with last the June door prize drawing. Please sound off if you are coming so I can determine if this is workable.

FYI, the match title paid homage to the classic 1949 film **Treasure of Sierra Madre**, To my disappointment, nobody showed up in a soiled fedora and khaki shirt and shot the match with a Colt Police Positive double action revolver. Nobody even asked if I could help a fellow American who was down on his luck. Perhaps I need to use more recent cultural references in future match titles.

Our next match on August 15th will be at least partially, and possibly fully, truck mounted. Get your guns tested out and sighted in and get pre-registered! See you in August. Thanks goodness Odessa will be back for that one.