

**In Wiechlice:
IPSC Rifle 2023**

Regen bringt Rain brings

... this applies to agriculture, but not necessarily for outdoor shooting sports. VISIER author Erwin Hendel, who took part in it, now explains why the IPSC Rifle 2023 competition in Poland thrilled the participants despite adverse weather conditions.

IPSC Rifle is demanding because it has to be completed under time pressure and over varying distances. Although this shooting sport discipline is also part of the offering of the Association of German Sports Shooters (BDS), there are not too many IPSC rifle matches in Europe. Anyone who has played a top match as a European so far wanted to, usually had to travel far and drive long distances. Wondering if there is nothing that can be achieved after a tolerable distance. Sure: Wiechlice in Poland, located behind the German-Polish border.

The Airbase Shooting Range, which opened last year on a former Soviet Air Force airfield, is a large-scale facility. This allows exercises to be carried out that are not possible elsewhere are, for example, at distances of 2 to around 300 meters, exercises in which you have to fire hands-free without support at distances of around 100 m, long running stages that require a high degree of concentration, stages with a firing range of up to around 310 degrees and depending on the match, all 3 standard IPSC target sizes: normal targets, mini targets, microtargets, and steel.

The diversity makes the difference to other systems. For the sake of completeness:

The outdoor facility has everything a shooter's heart can enjoy. More than 30 shooting boxes from 25 to 300 m away, two 360 degree boxes and long range shooting ranges up to 1200 m. And arriving participants will find plenty of accommodation after a good 30 minute drive. The IPSC Rifle 2023 match took place in Wiechlice on the penultimate weekend in April. Over 180 starters came, from Norway to Switzerland, from the Netherlands to Bulgaria, athletes from 13 countries. Most of them came from Germany, including me. We all faced one thing in common - the weather: August 2023

Segen ... blessings...



Running stage with targets at around 100 meters and 3 side corridors on the left with further goals. You had to run directly into these sides and then back onto the main line in order to then return to this stage from the last box after completing the course..

It rained the entire day of arrival, raging spray on the motorway, accidents in the opposite direction on the journey via Plauen, Dresden, Görlitz across the former border into Poland. When we turned right from Warszawska Street at Pałac Wiechlice (Gut Wichelsdorf), into the dead-end road leading to the former airfield, it was still pouring: the color brown dominated, soaked, heavy soil on the Edges and on the street, draped with generous puddles. Although it didn't rain on the following days, we noticed that some stages were badly muddy -with the result that we shooters had to slow down our running speed.

We were compensated by perfect organization and the warmth of the hosts. Everyone had been sent a document with a barcode in advance, which was now used for registration via a reader. Done quickly and easily, then the firearms passport and serial number were manually entered into a notebook and the registration formalities were over. When the competition began the following day, we shooters stoically pulled our carts with our shooting equipment through the dirt and mud, like a procession of ants on their way to the burrow.



After the section with the 300 meter targets, there was an adjoining running course with further IPSC targets on the left and right.



Sprint to the first position of a course with shooting distances of approximately 100 meters, but also with targets at close range.



The shot at the first targets over a good meters through an opening above ground: a stooped, kneeling position necessary.

Fotos: Erwin Hendel

It started at 8 a.m. with the first of a total of 12 exercises (two more were planned, but were canceled due to technical problems). It started with a medium course consisting of several paper targets up to 110 m away. When it comes to distances, you appreciate being able to fire and hit hands-free over such distances before.

Sometimes you just don't have the support of a frame or the ability to shoot with a bipod while lying down. The first target was to shoot at an IPSC target through a nasty window while kneeling or crouching, followed by two targets about 1 m away (fair compensation) and more paper targets. The first exercise of the day is always the most exciting, although not the most difficult:

Just the adrenaline released above normal levels, that pushes the body into a mixture of extreme attention, tension and expectation. After our squad got through this beginning without any collateral damage, the match resumed its normal course. There were 7 stages scheduled in the morning and the remaining 5 in the afternoon. There was a long break in between, which was due to a traffic jam in front of a complex medium course. Its paper targets, located 310 m away, had to be approached and taped off after each pass by a range officer using an e-mountain bike. This cost time and made the e-bike increasingly dirty because of the many puddles.

The first highlight was an unorthodox exercise, because in relation to the starting point there were shooting angles that were greater than 180 degrees. After the start, make a courageous turn in a semicircle to the left, shoot at the first of the large IPSC targets, turn 90 degrees to the right to the next target and then cover the other targets in steps between 50 and 90 degrees in a circular segment measuring approximately 270 degrees. Last but not least, 3 more targets in the main direction, very relaxed with 2 Alphas each. In itself, it's not a difficult matter if the direction of rotation is maintained and you don't hit the ROs and spectators with the muzzle of the AR-15 due to an unmotivated wrong change of direction. But no, that didn't happen, thanks to the very high professionalism of all the shooters. Three other exercises are worth mentioning. Firstly the exercise mentioned with the paper targets at a distance of 310 m, secondly a section with 3 side stands and thirdly a round in which we had to shoot the steel targets (all over 70 to 120 m away) freehand. And then came the most interesting exercise: a "360 stage", i.e.: 360 degree shooting angle, not quite, but approximately. It was a 40-shot course, with distances up to around 25/30 m, 20 paper targets nicely distributed over a large area.



A highly concentrated participant stands in a waiting position before the command "Load and make ready".



Shooting at targets located approximately 25 meters away in a standing position through a gap in the cover in front of the targets.



Here one of the participants in the IPSC Rifle 2023 fires at targets on the right while running forward on a running course.



Starting position in a course with 300 meter targets, which are shot at from a supported position.



And at times the atmosphere of the competition in Wiechlice resembled that of a mud fight: short course with a minimum of 12 shots and difficult movement in the demarcated course due to the soft ground.

That meant a minimum of 40 rounds with the barrel fired hot afterwards. At first things seemed complicated. We had to remember at least 20 targets and if we forgot or ignored one, it would almost certainly not be shot at later in the course. We had a 5 minute walk-through. Slowly, after the 2nd or 3rd run, a simple and smooth running strategy emerged to complete the course safely and completely. The angles weren't a problem either because the chosen running strategy didn't come into conflict with the small, "forbidden" rest of the circle segment. Start. After the beep slightly to the left, 2 slices down, to the right 300 degrees

swept over, in the safe segment along the wall, 4 targets from 4 m away, swiveled to the left, 2 targets, further to the left, 1 target in a cage-bullet trap on the ground, the barrel charged diagonally forward in a straight position, 1 Target shot in the direction of the barrel, 100 degrees to the right, a bullet trap on the ground, further to the left, through a window to a target on the front wall. Further, a few meters back and rotated another 90 to 130 degrees, the remaining targets on the adjoining wall of the rectangle were shot at. Complete. Was it 20 targets? Yes, you had this security if the strategy was right and your

concentration didn't wane during the round. I think quite a few participants would have liked to shoot this challenging exercise again.

And all of this makes you want more, especially since Wiechlice is preparing to become the Euro shooting center - what has been achieved there within just under a year is impressive. So again next year, but hopefully with better weather.

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