

FITA Field is, as far as I know, a European invention. It has made a very limited inroad here in the US but there are only 3 or 4 FITA Field shoots a year around the country. One is here in Arizona, put on by the Arizona State Archery Association. If the club I'm working with does one on an annual basis it would mean two in Arizona each year which would just about make our state the FITA Field HQ in the US.

FITA Field is generally a 2 day shoot with the first day being unmarked and the second being marked distances. They shoot 24 targets (as opposed to the NFAA's 28) and they shoot 3 arrows at each target. Distances are in meters and the targets are scored 5, 4, 3, 2 & 1 with the 5 and X being gold (yellow) and the rest of the target black. There are four target sizes which correspond to the distance involved: 20cm, 40cm, 60 cm and 80cm. Interestingly the unmarked targets are generally about 5m closer for a given target size than the marked ones. You can shoot as close as 5m and as far as 50m (barebow and longbow) or 10m to 60m (compound and Olympic recurve). Each target has two stakes, blue and red with the blue being closer. Blue is the barebow and longbow shooting position while red is for those with sights. FITA Field has no fan or walk up targets like NFAA Field. All the arrows for a given target are shot from the one position and the shooter must stand behind the marker not straddle it like with the NFAA.

One of the more interesting aspects of FITA Field, if the unmarked half isn't interesting enough, is their emphasis on target placement and difficult shooting positions. The ideal FITA Field course would be in very rugged, hilly terrain. They like a lot of steep up and down hill shots. I've seen photos of targets that are almost straight down over the edge of a cliff. One uphill shot I saw in a European shoot was so steep a rope was provided to assist getting up to score and retrieve arrows. Targets are often placed in "challenging" locations like among rocks, inside a dark tunnel or building (while the shooter is outside in broad daylight), through the window or doorway of a stone or brick building and one diabolical target out on the end of a boat dock in the middle of a lake. No sign of a diver to retrieve missed arrows (LOL).

Maximam score for a 24 target round is 360, 720 being the

obvious total for a 2 day shoot. I've been told (and proved it to myself) that surprisingly most people shoot better on the unmarked portion than the marked. It was suggested this was in part because the targets average further on the marked course and people relax because it is the second day and they know the targets distance will be provided. Can you say loss of focus (LOL again).

If there were more FITA Field events being put on I think it could be an attraction for longbow and recurve shooters. The maximum distance is 50m (55 yards) which is a lot easier than NFAA's 60 to 80 yard shots. The 72 arrows shot in a day is easier to take (control) the NFAA's 112. And finally, the difficult target placement and shooting positions would be great practice for hunting archers, not to mention the challenge of the unmarked first day.

I'm still a fan of NFAA Field but I will do my best to promote FITA Field as well. Victorio and Michael Frangilli say in their book "The Heritic Archer" that the FITA indoor is primary school, the 900 round is secondary school, the full FITA round is high school, and field is the university.

Dave