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Of the Register-Guard



Twins impressive at nationals

BIG HITS in junior smallbore competition during the National Rifle Association's rifle and pistol championships at Camp Perry in Ohio were Eugene twins Matt and Will Soggs, who also proved later that they're more than a little skilled at firing high power weapons.

As Oregon's two-man team in the national shoot, the 12-year-olds scored 1,753-52X to place third among eight teams in the expert class and 15th among the 29 teams in overall competition.

"Considering how much younger they are than most of the others they were shooting against," says Sid Jones, junior director for the Oregon State Rifle and Pistol Association, "they did remarkably well. Ages of the winning team from Texas, which shot 1,828-56X, were 19 and 18.

"Wherever the twins went, they drew a crowd.

"They're used to being big fish in a little pond in Oregon, so this level of competition was very good for them. They showed that they were ready for it."

MATT AND WILL earned the right to represent Oregon in the national shoot when Matt was first and Will was third in state competition at Four Corners Rod and Gun Club's range near Salem. The shooter who was runnerup was unable to go to Camp Perry.

The twins have been shooting smallbore for three years and are members of Emerald Empire Junior Rifle Club, where they're coached by Emmet O'Connor, an oldtimer in high power rifle. Each has been firing about 10,000 rounds of .22 caliber per year. They practice either at the club's McGowan Creek range or at the Oregon National Guard base on Centennial Boulevard. Two to three hours per day, three days a week.

"Even as young as they are," says O'Connor, "Matt and Will have the competitive spirit that's needed — whether they're shooting against

themselves, each other, or whoever. These boys have the desire. It's natural and they go at it very quietly but intensely."



Matt and Will Soggs are shoulder to shoulder in their intense shooting rivalry

Jones credits their excellence to good coaching and good parental support from Bill and Mary Soggs. "to the point of fanaticism, sometimes the only way to get a top shooter."

THE TWINS AGREE that each has benefited greatly from the keen competition between them.

"They're shoulder to shoulder in shooting ability and this makes it all the better for them," says their father. "Sometimes one will be on top, then the other, but they're seldom more than one or two points apart."

While Matt was the state winner this year, Will was the champion in 1979. He beat his brother by one point.

Matt's big dream is to go for the World Shooting Championships, while Will wants to make the Olympics — hopefully, in 1984 at Los Angeles.

Let's goals for 12-year-olds, for sure, but they're well on their way.

FOR WE WHO seldom put gun to shoulder other than in hunting seasons, Emerald Empire Gun Club's annual Sighting-In Days program will start Monday at the McGowan Creek range northeast of Springfield.

benchrest, spotting scope, targets, and assistance if wanted will be furnished for \$1.50 per gun, according to O'Connor. The range will be open every day, from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Proceeds from this popular project are used to improve the club's range facilities. Nearing completion is a clubhouse and indoor smallbore range, which will be used in winter by the juniors.

Any youngster interested in joining the junior club should phone O'Connor at the range, 747-6666. He's there Monday through Friday.