Marlborough Championships, Labour Weekend 24-26th October 2026

Marlborough turned on the warm sunshine for the weekend but then added in a bit of nor'westerly wind to make things interesting. All classes found the conditions challenging with the variable cross wind proving hard to read and changing quickly.
With the 33 shooters firing a total of 320 matches, only 13 possibles were shot, with half of those shot at 500 the second morning.
The number of TR cometitors was well down on usual with the NZ team members that had been in Australia for the 2 weeks prior not attending or expected to attend, with a few exceptions.
One unwanted feature of the weekend was the number of wrong targets shot, must have been the distraction of flag watching and rushing to get shots away, although one person did wait over 3 minutes to fire one.

The strong field of 10 in F Open was led home by Ian Hughes, Cheltenham, with 579.41, including 3 possibles, closely followed by Mike Chui, Ashburton, on 577.37, Les Grimsey, Oamaru, on 576.37 and Murray Cook, Ashburton, on 575.34.

The FTR-Classic was won comfortably by Athol Henderson, Oamaru, on 544.25 with Coby Snowden, Ashburton, 2nd with 537.25 and Sharon Grimsey, Oamaru, on 536.23. Athol got clear by top scoring the last 3 ranges.

The open TR title went to John Snowden, Ashburton, fresh home from Australia, with 471.37, with Samantha Riddle, Malvern, 2nd on 468.35 and Malcolm Dodson, Kaituna, 3rd on 466.43.
The final 900 yard match was shot with the 6 leaders shoulder to shoulder. The wind had got fairly boisterous by this stage going from 4 to somewhere around 10 minutes which made it difficult to say the least. Dylan Mathieson, Kaituna, top scored with 44.2 with the rest spread down to 38.

Dylan, also fresh home from Australia, dominated B grade to win on 462.32, from Clinton Whyte, Kaituna, on 457 24 and Chris Burgess, Kaituna, 3rd on 452.22. Dylan's aggregate place him 5th overall.

The father and son battle in FTR went to the experienced side of the Gardiner family with Phil winning on 540.21 from James on 538.20, although James did win the short range aggregate with a 10 point margin, but Phil's 12 point win at the longs saw him clear. They were both shooting the one rifle.

The C grade was a solo effort for Mandy Mathieson, Kaituna, totaling 420.17.
FPR was also a solo shoot with Peter Webster, Kaituna, on 512.14.

With only four teams of four for the coached 900 yard match and the prevailing conditions it was reduced to 10 shots from 15. Only two were TR teams and two were F teams the format was points down and centres up.The Kaituna “age and treachery” TR team won 24 down and 7 centres, from the Kaituna “young guns” 28 down and 7 centres. The young guns had 27 seconds left when they fired their last shot. Ashburton F were third 32 down and 2 centres.
The coachs were worn out at the end of it, and so were the wind knobs. Top scorer was Clinton Whyte 4 down with 3, coached by Jacob Morriss and Andre Doyle 4 down with 2 .