

# THE BLACK POWDER SHOOTING UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

*Formerly The Historical Firearms Shooting Union Founded in 1958*



[www.bpsu.co.za](http://www.bpsu.co.za)

Affiliated to:

MUZZLE LOADER ASSOCIATIONS' INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

SOUTH AFRICAN BISLEY UNION (SABU)

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## NEWSFLASH NO 9 OF 2013

Dear BPSU members

We understand that there are some members, who for some reason feel that the Long Range World Championship receives preference to the Short Range World Championship. If this is so, then it is surely a sad day for our sport and for the trust placed in the Management Committee by the members. It is the same Management committee who negotiated hosting the Short Range World Championship that had to make a call to rather have it move to another country to host.

The reasons giving rise for us to finally take the decision was always a possibility discussed as far back as the 2012 Exco and repeated during the 2013 Exco meetings. We however continued with our attempts to secure the championship.

We had to be fair to the MLAIC in such a way that we had to reach a cut-off date to make a final call if we would be able to guarantee that sufficient black powder would be available. At the current stage we cannot give such a guarantee and so can't the importers, hence why we had to make the call.

We thought it best to communicate some more detail in an attempt to remove fears / allegations that we acted in any way that favoured the long range event. Let's summarise the facts as it currently stands.

The cancellation of the hosting of the Short Range World Championship was in large a logistical decision made with much deliberation. The Long Range World Championship is normally attended by 50 to 70 shooters. The Short Range World Championship attracts between 300 and 450 shooters; some of these shooters enter 5 to 14 events. The supply of the powder alone is a much larger issue. The only powder available to us is Wano 3f and 2f, Swiss 3f and 1½f. The Long Range Championship makes use of Swiss 1½f predominantly and to a lesser extent Wano amongst the SA long range shooters, purely because of cost. Although there is enough powder to accommodate the long range shoot, we cannot be guaranteed of enough powder or enough of the right type for the short Range (a vast difference in quantities too). A large number of European shooters use Swiss no 3 (2ffg) and we do not have any Swiss no 3, nor have we ever had supplies of this granulation.

Our suppliers are waiting for samples from China for us to test, as this could be a much more affordable source due to different laws governing transport of powder from the East. The samples come with an order of blasting powder, and depending on when the current supplies are exhausted, an order is placed. When the samples arrive they must be tested by the full spectrum of the disciplines we shoot, a report made back to the suppliers on the suitability and then an order placed

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with no guarantee on the Lots we receive being the same as the samples, but we must try. The current demise of the Rand will make further imports from Europe completely unaffordable at current exchange rates (we are doing our best to resolve the impasse, therefore the Chinese Option). The powder will remain in storage, no one will buy it and that could seriously jeopardise future imports.

Our powder has always come as a small part of a larger order in order to cut costs which would otherwise make the costs too high. The powder may not be kept in storage for longer than 5 years and any remaining stocks are then destroyed according to the Explosives Act (it was previously 18 months). So, a careful assessment of future sales has to be made. As it is, our supplier is supplying the powder to BPSU members at cost. Any powder imported from Europe has to be imported on its own, as the blasting powder is not sourced from Europe. The current European laws governing the shipping of explosives prescribe a 60 foot container on a Grade 1 Freighter, maximum of 3 tons. 3 tons would not be sold in a 5 year period, so 1.5 tons is brought in (to hopefully be sold in a 5 year period) and the container may not contain a mixed load. So, the whole container must be paid for, never mind the premium paid on transporting explosives. So, clearly economy of scale dictates the price to a large extent. Import duty and distribution costs for an explosive when landed are also high, as this is governed by current legislation.

So, rather to land up in a situation where we cannot guarantee the right powder and the right quantities, the MLAIC was informed of the situation. Some people have suggested building or hiring a magazine. Current legislation regarding a magazine dictates a 300m radius free of other structures, the stringent laws governing the structure, security (armed guards), a perimeter fence and a sales distribution office with personnel ... do the maths. Clearly not an option. The Chairman and Vice Chairman had a lengthy meeting with our supplier's MD of the explosives division and Product Manager where we negotiated the current pricing structure for BPSU MEMBERS.

We hope that this communication would put to rest the malicious rumours of favouritism towards the long range event. The moment that we are in a position to guarantee sufficient quantities of the correct granulation of powder, we will immediately submit another proposal to host the Short Range World Championship.

Kind regards

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