New “Pull” Systems from Briley

By Nick Sisley

Electronics seem the way of the world these days, and modern-day electronics are stepping up to insure that we skeet shooters get a perfect “pull” 100 percent of the time. Briley Manufacturing in Houston, Texas has stepped up to this electronic plate to offer more than one system for throwing these perfect electronic pulls.

Enter the High Tech Voice Release Pickle—which I will also refer to as the wand. Over a year ago a Briley electronic prototype device similar to this was used at a Briley-sponsored skeet tournament. While that early wand worked, Cliff Moller at Briley knew it needed to be fine tuned. Typically, an electronic release will throw a skeet target, or a trap or sporting clays target, at the first noise the device hears.

This problem is particularly germane to skeet squads and at sporting clays stations where squad members are prone to talking a bit, encouraging team mates, whatever. If a shooter comes off a station and a partner congratulates with something like, “Great breaks,” a target can get thrown.

This “chatter” is less of a problem in American trap as most squads get in a tempo—each of them calling pull within a few seconds of the last thrown target. So, there is no talking. When five shots are completed at a trap station the shooter on pad 5 walks to pad 1. Any talking during this time will cause a target(s) to be thrown. With International trap (bunker) and International skeet, participants are forbidden to talk at all. Consequently, unwanted targets that get thrown are minimal—if any at all in these latter two games.

With Briley’s relatively new wand, throwing unwanted or uncalled for targets can be eliminated. Note the photos of the wand and where it can be properly positioned by the referee. The wand (about two feet long) is attached to what looks like a standard skeet pickle or push button. After the skeet shooter closes his gun the ref can push the proper button on the pickle—high, low or doubles. There’s no talking by the squad because squadmates know that their partner is getting ready to shoot. So the first sound the wand hears is “Pull.” Out comes a perfectly timed target.

Initially, some experienced referees may not like the idea of the wand. They might be very experienced pullers and well noted for their great pulls—or some may think of themselves as great pullers. Some are, some are not. A second issue when using the wand is where the ref stands. Obviously, that position is going to have to be different than the usual ref pulling spot. So there may be some refs who are uncomfortable with this new positioning—which is definitely closer to the shooter. Moller suggests that there has been some referee tendency to stand back too far and thus necessitate leaning forward appreciably. Again, note the photo of the properly positioned wand as the shooter is getting ready to call. Some referees can fail to get the wand up under the arm, or above the shoulder, where it should be. For obvious reasons some refs could be reluctant in this positioning with women.

On the positive side, many referees love the wand system because they don’t have to worry about giving even a good pull, let alone a perfect one, 500 times in a row on a five-man squad. In contrast refs can focus their full attention more on rulings.

In some areas of the country experienced referees are difficult to find, especially for finding a lot of experienced refs say for a big shoot. But with the wand there’s not as much need for referee experience. At the California State Shoot last year, after the 500 targets were pulled in one event, one of the shooters asked the referee, “How do you like the wand and the electronic system of throwing targets?”

That ref came back with, “I don’t know what you mean sir.” Through further questioning by the shooter, it was discovered that this referee had never used the old system (I say old system, but, of course, this is the system used even today at most clubs) a normal skeet pickle and pushing the button after each “pull” call. This reaction by the obviously new ref in California does further indicate that vast pulling experience is not necessary when using the wand.

Briley is in the process of making an instructional video for referees on the use of this wand device. Moller suggests, “Referees should look specifically at the wand when putting it into the correct position. They should not look up away from the wand, like toward the house, until the bird has been released. If the referee looks for the target before the target release, there is a tendency for the end of the wand to wave around, in some cases touching the shooter at this critical time.”

Briley was having some issues with high winds triggering unwanted targets. Cliff worked with Billy Williams, who
shoots a lot in Montana, and Paul Newman, who shoots a lot in New Mexico (both areas noted for wind) to come up with a wind guard on the wand that now works well (i.e. not throwing unwanted targets) even in winds of 40 miles per hour, and, of course, most of us don't want to shoot in such windy conditions anyway.

Target counting systems are becoming popular because they are such money savers to gun clubs. The wand can be purchased with a counter. When shooting practice just turn the wand back in at the club and the number of targets thrown is clearly shown—so pay for the number of birds you have shot. Clubs can also purchase a module that can be wired into the clubhouse—also for counting targets.

The current wand cost is $300— and this includes the 100-foot cord to go with it. This unit uses a 12 volt system. If your fields are wired for 110 volts that takes a $100 converter, also available from Briley. The counter for the wand also is an additional $100, which should pay for itself very quickly according to every club target record I'm aware of. As Moller says, “This is a very inexpensive way to control target costs.”

Further, the wand has a manual mode as the electronic mode where you can just press the pickle button(s) as you normally would. Briley has also come up with an inexpensive wand that shooters can use privately—i.e. when shooting alone. This is a very short wand—only a few inches long—also attached to an electronic pickle. Just put the short wand in your shooting pouch. Press the button on the pickle for the target(s) that you want thrown, don’t say anything, call for the bird and out comes the target in perfect timing. You can also have a two second delay built into this short wand. Compared to some electronic-throwing systems the short wand looks like a real cost winner.

The regular wand is also perfect for sporting clays stations. Use a 3 to 6 foot electric cord that you hook up to the power on each station and throw the sporting birds you want, including doubles. This is another target saver if the $100 counter is added. Bring the wand back to the clubhouse; if the counter says you threw 320 targets, that’s what you pay for. No trap boys are required.

It should be pointed out that in skeet or sporting—you don’t pay for broken birds with this system. That’s because counting only takes place electronically through the sound of the shot. So if a bird comes out broken and you don’t shoot —the built-in counter doesn’t count that broken target.

There’s a lot more available electronically from Briley, including the iPull (capable of performing far more functions than the wand), coin boxes for buying x-number of targets, an eight-trap machine control box, other electronic pickles, the Elfipa Skeet Release and more —all of which could be material for future verbiage in this column. Check out www.briley.com.

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