

# CONSTRUCTIVE PRACTICE NEEDS A GOOD PRACTICE FACILITY

## SAYS DAVE HOLMES

Supporting clays has come a long way since I first pulled the trigger on a sporting course over 25 years ago. Perhaps most notably, the competition bar is set much higher these days with more and more shooters (many of which are youngsters) pushing to get to the top.

Keeping up with the game requires constructive practice. Cruising the local course every weekend may be fun, but it offers limited opportunity to progress. Good practice requires a good practice facility. For many of us, that means coming up with some arrangement of our own. It isn't an inexpensive step but for those of us with a real desire to improve, it's the only option.

I have four traps mounted on Renair bases at my home, so I can throw just about any practice target you can imagine. But that requires someone to push the buttons – or a voice activated remote. The remote system is an added layer of expense in the initial setup, but one that is absolutely necessary to make the most of training opportunities, simply because the remote system allows you to shoot on your schedule – and that neatly leads me to introduce Barak Dar who I met at the World FITASC last year.

He started shooting skeet in

2008. Capitalizing on his knowledge of medical equipment design, he designed a wireless voice release system – and EZPull was born. The line evolved and EZPull has become a one-stop shop for all range needs – trap, skeet, international, sporting, target counting card systems and voice activated systems. All are designed by Dar and built at EZPull in Minnesota.

My first-glimpse attraction of the EZPull system wasn't based around what was there – but what wasn't (ie: external antennas). The system I was running at home had them and the survival rate wasn't good. The transmitter antenna was forever getting damaged. Drop a shell, bend the antenna. Load a trap, bend the antenna. Reach in the car to get something out, bend the antenna. Replacements aren't inexpensive.

The pro version of EZPull's TX-4 four-trap transmitter has no external antenna. The MX8-VR, eight-trap, voice release capable/5-Stand transmitter has a 1 1/4" plastic nub, integral with the case. The receivers have no external antennas. You can't break what isn't there!

The circuit board in the receiver wasn't a visual match for the ones I had at home. Dar chuckled and told me how much capability was wasted in the boards





in my current receivers. The amount of info transmitted to operate a trap is relatively small. The EZPull board would perform every task that ever need be done. There's no advantage to having board capacity that will never be needed.

In addition, EZPull's smaller board allows it to be mounted vertically in the middle of the receiver box so that, if moisture ever gets in, the board isn't laying in it. While I hadn't 'lost' a board with the receivers I already owned, I had opened them up more than once to get rid of moisture, so I could easily see the advantage.

The cases for all the units have a solid feeling, with no hint of fragility. That makes the boxes more expensive, but the quality/durability is superior. Dar considers the added value an investment in reliability.

## On Test

Of course, the proof is always in the pudding. Dar sent me some receivers – an MX8 transmitter and a TX4 four-trap controller for me to work with. Here's a quick breakdown of what I found.

- Transmitter range. Further than you can see a clay pigeon and much further than one would ever be thrown from, even if you lived where the wind never blew.

- Receivers. These have now been out in the cold, rain and snow of a northern Michigan winter for several months. We're talking night time below zero to 45 degrees and raining. They are sealed, splash, dustproof and have no external antenna opening in the case. They have handled the weather thrown at them with no leakage and no condensation issues.

- The TX4 transmitter has a Pro version designed to work with the EZPull card system and a standard version for recreational shooters. This unit will handle up to four traps and will throw



true pairs by simply pushing the TP button in the center, then the numbered trap release buttons. The buttons are raised with a distinct 'nipple'. They can be felt through gloves and cold weather shooters will love them. The TX4 would be great for a super sporting setup, new style FITASC or any four-trap sporting layout.

- The MX8 is the front counter at the candy store. It comes with 5-Stand menus installed which can be changed if needed and can be configured to work with the card system. It can also be voice activated and that's my happy zone. It throws singles, report pair, raffaels (if the trap functions quickly enough) and true pairs. It runs on AA batteries that last a long time. It took over 3 months to wear out the first pair. There's also a low-power indicator.

- The voice activation is reliable. The MX8 does what it is supposed to – all the time. A feature I really appreciate is that in voice activated mode, the target presentations can be locked in with an on-screen indicator so you know the target's locked in – and it stays locked in until you unlock it. Simply program the trap selections, then push any trap button and hold it until you see the padlock icon on the screen. You'll love the consistency and reliability, but perhaps not appreciate it fully unless you have had to make do without it. In the 'locked' mode, the system takes roughly five seconds to reset, basically reloading time for a shooter. While throwing singles, a sporting shooter pounding targets with a second shell ready to go may find that pace not quite quick enough to satisfy one's 'urges'. Not to worry – simply program a raffael pair and you can burn shells at an amazing rate when you're in the middle of a field by yourself. You won't need a lot of time to get a lot of practice. (Hint: Limit the number of shells you take with you!)

If you are in the market for a target release system for range or personal use, do yourself a favor and look into EZPull's product range. The website ([www.ezpullers.com](http://www.ezpullers.com)) has instruction sheets for all the models and shows the full gamut of trap release products offered. Contact EZPull for pricing information for your specific needs.

I can't find anything not to like. Robustly built, simply designed and reliable as can be, you may find EZPull's products an easy purchasing decision. Good stuff, made in the USA. ■

