

## Competitive shooting

# SHARPSHOOTERS

Brothers combine for national title

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PERRY TWP. —

As all brothers can do, Keith and Scott Stich can bicker and fight. But on a shooting range, the pair becomes a team — a championship team.

Using a .22 rifle, the two combined to win the junior/senior championship at the Civilian Marksmanship Program National Matches in Camp Perry, Ohio.

The CMP national championships have been held every year since 1903 and attract 6,000 participants over a month-long series of competitions.

Using .22 rifles allows participants to compete without a major investment of funds. The investment of time? Well, there's no shortcut for that.

"I can't practice at all now because I'm at college (Centenary College in Minnesota)," said Keith, the senior part of the duo at 19. "The nationals will be held next July and I'll only have a couple of months to get ready once I get back.

"Last year, I shot three times a week to get ready."

Keith sounds like the only obstacle to his shooting success is the ability to practice. He doesn't men-



tion that he was born with spina bifida and shoots from a wheelchair.

"I'm allowed to use a benchrest since I'm in a wheelchair, "but I learned to shoot offhand so I don't use the rest," said Keith, who is studying orthotics and prosthetics at Century.

"I was at Boy Scout camp about six years ago when someone suggested I try shooting competitively. I had always shot tin cans with the .22 but never thought about shooting competitively. I was nervous the first time I tried it and I'll admit I still get nervous."

An Eagle Scout now, the nerves don't show, especial-

ly to younger brother Scott, a junior at Ellwood City.

"He's more steady than me," Scott said. "And he could even use a stand and doesn't.

"It's something we can do together and it's a lot of fun. I knew we had a top score but had no idea we had a score high enough to win."

The championships are structured so that each shooter participates individually and then scores are added together for the team competition. As a result, it's not easy to get a feel for how tight the



ELLWOOD CITY HIGH SCHOOL GRAD Keith Stich, left, and his brother Scott, above, combined to win the .22 rifle junior/senior championship at the Civilian Marksmanship Program National Matches in Camp Perry, Ohio.

team competition may be.

"It was unexpected that we won," Keith said. "My brother hadn't been shooting well but he did that day. It was pretty surprising that we won and it really felt good winning with my brother."

Individually, the Stich family did quite well also. Keith was awarded a gold medal, Scott a silver, and their dad, Rickie, a bronze. Locally, they shoot at the Koppel-Big Beaver Sportsmen's Club, which also brought home medals from the national match.