



SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR

Dave Westerhout has proved himself to be in a class of his own, not just in Rhodesia but in the world.

DAVE Westerhout is a perfectionist, and when he set his sights on winning the world practical pistol shooting championships it was a foregone conclusion he would achieve his aim.

In August this year, at Salisbury's Cleveland Range, Dave reached his target, winning the individual world title in grand style. He led from the start and finished 116 points ahead of the runner-up, Rhodesia's Peter Maunder, and 158 clear of his nearest American rival, third-placed Raul Walters.

His accomplishment did not come without a great deal of hard work, involving not only practice nearly every weekend, but also administration.

Rhodesia is a shooting country and competition for the national team in practical pistol shooting, or

combat pistol shooting as it used to be known, has always been fierce.

In the first world championship held in Zurich in 1975, Dave came 11th well behind fellow-Rhodesian Lionel Smith, who came third.

The following year in Salzburg, Austria, Dave moved up to fourth place, one behind Lionel who again came third.

Since then, there has been no holding Dave and during 1977 he has proved himself to be in a class of his own, not just in Rhodesia but in the world.

The Americans have been doing this kind of shooting for over 20 years and up to 1976 were the kings of the sport, but now Rhodesians have taken over as world leaders, with Dave well in the forefront.

Success has followed. Dave's life, as a glance at his record will show.

At the age of 18 he was

top-ranking British junior javelin thrower, but he turned to hurdling after an injury.

He ran for England in the 1958 Commonwealth Games and went on to represent Great Britain and Rhodesia in athletics.

Dave represented his college and London University at full-bore rifle shooting and has played first league rugby and cricket in Rhodesia, but his achievements have not all been in the world of sport.

In studying to be an optician, he twice attained marks of 100 per cent for examination papers in physiology of vision, and was awarded the prize for highest marks in both his intermediate and final examinations.

Dave specialises in contact lens practice, has written numerous papers on the subject for world circulation, and recently won a literary award for his published paper on "Special Uses of Contact Lenses".

What will he do next?

Rhodesia is proud of Dave and he is proud of Rhodesia. It says a lot for him that winning the team event for his country meant more than his individual success, which he regards more as a bonus.

Dave has been captain of the Rhodesian team since the first world event in 1975 when the team came third, and last year at

of the world championship really belonged to Dave Westerhout who had top score of all 86 competitors in four of the shoots and was always one of the leaders.

There were never many points separating the Rhodesians and Americans and the team lead swapped from one to the other during the championship. The results had to be calculated by computer and it was not until the contest was over that the winning team was known.

Months of hard work

Holding the event in Rhodesia was a victory all of its own and world champion Dave Westerhout was more responsible for that than anyone else. He represented Rhodesia at the conference of the International Practical Shooting Confederation where it was agreed unanimously to hold the championships in Rhodesia.

After that decision, the Rhodesian administrators were faced with many months of hard work to prepare the range and all the necessary facilities.

Apart from anything else, it cost thousands of dollars to provide the amenities, but Rhodesia's commerce and industry came to the aid of the organisers and the event was a huge success from both the competitors' and spectators' point of view.

Salzburg in a very close finish, Rhodesia beat Norway by 29 points.

The 1976 Rhodesian world champion team was: Westerhout (captain), Lionel Smith, Peter Maunder, Alex du Plessis (all airline pilots), and Dave Arnold.

This year the winning team was Westerhout (captain), Smith, Du Plessis, Andy Langley and Peter Boniface.

Tense, exciting week

The team was chosen after a series of trials and several shooters were unlucky not to make the team of five, but 12 other shooters were selected to take part in the championships as individuals.

The twelve in ranking order were: Danny Hartman, Nigel Parker, Tony Weeks, Dave Arnold, Clive Bloom, Digby Wells, Rob Johnstone, Pat Lacey, Dick Laban, Peter Maunder, Mike Large and Eileen Hartman.

Peter Maunder was ranked only 15th in Rhodesia at the start of the world championships but he proved himself to have been underrated by taking second place.

Peter scored a remarkable 170 in the Felon shoot, which was more than double Westerhout's total, and then double Westd him into the runner-up position.

But the exciting and tense week

The brunt of the organisation fell to Westerhout although he is quick to say he received help from every quarter, especially team members Andy Langley and Alex du Plessis.

It takes a true champion to win a world championship and organise it, and Dave Westerhout is just such a champion.

Combat pistol shooting is a growing sport in Rhodesia and has the backing of several clubs containing many members, including women.

Rhodesia's glamorous Eileen Hartman was the only woman competitor from Rhodesia in the world championships but a women's team came up from South Africa and one competitor came from Britain. Mrs Hartman won the women's gold medal.

The year was a highly successful one for the sport. Westerhout won the Mashonaland championship convincingly but was unable to defend his Rhodesian title because of a hamstring injury.

The Rhodesian title went to Lionel Smith and the runner-up was Alex du Plessis.

Rhodesia and Westerhout will hold their world titles for three years as the next world championships will not be held until 1980, and in what better hands could the trophies lie? ●