



SUID-AFRIKAANSE METAALSILHOEËT SKIETVERENIGING

SOUTH AFRICAN METALLIC SILHOUETTE SHOOTING ASSOCIATION

16th IMSSU World Championship Report





Executive Summary

It was with great excitement and pride that the 14-member Metallic Silhouette Shooting Protea Team, accompanied by six supporters, departed from OR Tambo International Airport on Saturday, 4 July 2026, bound for Finland to compete in the 16th IMSSU World Championship in Heinola.



South Africa has a proud legacy at the IMSSU World Championships, built on years of outstanding performances, camaraderie, and sportsmanship. The 2026 team upheld this tradition, earning the respect, admiration, and warm reception of fellow competitors, officials, and spectators alike.

South Africa successfully competed against the best in the world; the medal tally ending as:

- Gold x 8
- Silver x 5
- Bronze x 11

The Heinolan Ampujat shooting range presented a demanding test for all competitors. Its challenging layout, combined with highly variable weather conditions throughout the championship, required competitors to continually adapt their techniques and strategies. Despite these demanding conditions, the South African team performed with distinction, demonstrating resilience, determination, and exceptional sportsmanship. The Junior U20 shooters were particularly impressive, producing performances well beyond their years and making South Africa immensely proud through their commitment and competitive spirit.

Lastly, we extend our sincere appreciation to SASCOC and SASSCo for their invaluable assistance and support, which helped make our participation in the Championship possible.



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The TRIALS

As per SAMSSA criteria the shooters had to achieve at least 2 qualifying scores after which they were invited to participate in the National Trials in the week of 02-07 February 2026.



Triallists

The weather did its part in making the trials a most joyous occasion for all. There was a strong component of juniors which bodes well for Metallic Silhouette Shooting.

The TEAM

The team to represent South Africa was capped at a luxurious ceremony in Bloemfontein on the 30th of April 2026 at the Bloemfontein Shooting Centre Hall:

Big Bore Handgun Aggregate:	Herman Rossouw, Annette Rossouw, Barry Grobbelaar
Small Bore Handgun Aggregate:	Benninghoff Siebert, Barry Grobbelaar, Mark Louw
Field Pistol Aggregate:	Barry Grobbelaar, Herman Rossouw, Benninghoff Siebert
Handgun Standing Aggregate:	Barry Grobbelaar, Herman Rossouw, Benninghoff Siebert
Big Bore Rifle Aggregate:	Damian van de Sande, Pannetjie Rossouw, Annette Rossouw
Small Bore Rifle Aggregate:	Damian van de Sande, Pannetjie Rossouw, Charlie-Benn van Schalkwyk
Small Bore Handgun Aggregate U20:	Martin Maasdorp, Tiaan Lambrechts, Juhan van Lill
Small Bore Rifle Aggregate U20	Gary Marx, Niel Scheepers, Juhan van Lill



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A special word of thanks is extended to the President of SASSCo, Bennie van den Heever, for attending the Protea Capping Ceremony and for the honour of officially presenting the Protea colours to the team. His presence and support made the occasion even more meaningful and memorable for all involved.

The PREPARATIONS

Preparations for the trip were fraught with uncertainty, as the escalating conflict between the United States and Iran significantly disrupted international air travel and limited available flight options. Despite these challenges, the team remained adaptable and committed, successfully overcoming the logistical obstacles to reach Finland and represent South Africa on the world stage. The impact, however, was a substantial escalation in travel costs, placing additional financial pressure on both the team and its supporters.

Ultimately, the only practical travel option was to fly with Turkish Airlines via Istanbul, as it was the cheapest of the few carriers able to accommodate the large number of firearms and associated equipment that needed to accompany the team. While this ensured that the team's equipment could be transported safely and in compliance with international regulations, it also contributed significantly



to the overall cost of the trip. We encountered another unexpected challenge when we were unable to secure a freight company willing to transport our ammunition to Finland. Consequently, the team had no alternative but to transport all ammunition as checked baggage on the commercial flights. This presented a significant logistical constraint, as international aviation regulations limit each passenger to a maximum of 5 kg of ammunition, requiring meticulous planning and distribution of ammunition among team members to remain fully compliant while ensuring sufficient supplies for the duration of the World Championship.

Obtaining export and import firearms permits proved to be challenging as well. At the South African side, SAPD did not understand the number of events any person could enter for, limiting the number of firearms that could temporarily be exported to 5 per person. SAMSSA wishes to express its sincerest gratitude to the President of SASSCo for his personal involvement and invaluable assistance in resolving this matter.

The TOUR

It was with a great sense of relief that the team finally assembled at OR Tambo International Airport on 6 July 2026, with all the required documentation in place, ready to depart on Turkish Airlines. Unfortunately, the departure from Johannesburg was delayed by approximately four hours, resulting in the team missing its connecting flight to Finland. Consequently, what was originally scheduled as a three-hour layover in Istanbul became an unexpected eleven-hour wait before the onward journey could continue.

A tired and frustrated team eventually arrived in Helsinki on Sunday afternoon after a long and demanding journey. Fortunately, this was where we experienced our first welcome stroke of good fortune. The Finnish Customs officials were exceptionally professional, friendly, and accommodating. Recognising us as an organised sporting team, they directed us to a dedicated processing line, allowing the purpose of our visit and the accompanying firearms and documentation to be explained only once. As a result, the remainder of the team was processed efficiently and without unnecessary delays, providing a much-appreciated end to an otherwise challenging journey.

Another compliment must be paid to the Finnish authorities for the efficient and professional handling of our firearms upon arrival. The collection process was well organised, and the team was able to retrieve all firearms quickly and without any complications. This efficient handling contributed significantly to a smooth arrival and was greatly appreciated by the entire team.

Despite the lengthy delay in Istanbul, the remainder of the travel arrangements proceeded as planned. The team was able to enjoy a full day in Helsinki before travelling to Heinola, taking the opportunity to experience some of the city's well-known attractions and enjoy traditional sightseeing activities. This provided a welcome opportunity to relax and recover from the long journey before the start of the World Championship. Public transport in Helsinki is top notch, and we were able to travel multiple times using our day passes.



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Helsinki Central Train Station Entrance

For the duration of the Championship, the team was accommodated at the Holiday Club Vierumäki Apartments. Although the accommodation was not the cheapest, the apartments were spacious, comfortable, and well equipped, providing an excellent base from which the team could prepare for and participate in the competition. Their quality and convenience contributed positively to the overall experience of the team throughout the Championship.





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After arriving at Vierumäki and settling in, the team visited the range in Heinola to familiarise themselves with the route to and the layout of the range. The competition was officially opened on Tuesday by the President of IMSSU, Rob Boucher, the Match Director, Sami Mäkelä and the Mayor of Heinola



Once the competition commenced on Wednesday, the days passed quickly. Conditions on the range were both demanding and unpredictable, with bright sunshine often giving way to overcast skies within moments, significantly affecting the sight picture. The constantly changing light conditions, combined with mirage, made accurate shooting particularly challenging, especially on the turkey and ram targets. This was reflected in the scores of competitors across the field.

Ironically, some competitors were fortunate enough to shoot during periods of cloudy or rainy weather, which helped suppress the mirage and provided more favourable shooting conditions. Nevertheless, despite the ever-changing conditions and the demanding nature of the range, the South African team remained resilient, adapted well, and gave their very best throughout the Championship.

The return journey to South Africa proceeded smoothly. The Turkish Airlines staff at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport were exceptionally helpful, professional, and efficient in assisting the team with the check-in process and the handling of the firearms. Their courteous service and attention to detail ensured that the departure formalities were completed with ease, providing a fitting conclusion to an outstanding tour.

SAMSSA extends its sincere appreciation to the South African Police Service for the prompt, professional, and efficient handling and inspection of the firearms upon the team's return. Their assistance ensured that the necessary procedures were completed smoothly and without unnecessary delay.



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The MEDALS

Big Bore Rifle Aggregate Team • Pannetjie Rossouw • Damian van de Sande • Annette Rossouw	Bronze
Production Air Rifle Standing	Bronze: Niel Scheepers*
Big Bore Handgun Revolver	Bronze: Mark Louw
Small Bore Rifle Silhouette	Bronze: Niel Scheepers*
Small Bore Rifle Light Open Sights	Bronze: Niel Scheepers*
Small Bore Rifle Silhouette Open Sights	Bronze: Niel Scheepers*
Small Bore Rifle Light Jnr U20	Gold: Gary Marx Silver: Niel Scheepers Bronze: Juhan van Lill
Small Bore Rifle Silhouette Jnr U20	Gold: Gary Marx Silver: Charlie-Benn van Schalkwyk
Production Air Rifle Standing Jnr U20	Gold: Gary Marx Silver: Charlie-Benn van Schalkwyk
Small Bore Handgun Revolver Jnr U20	Gold: Martin Maasdorp
Small Bore Handgun Production Jnr U20	Gold: Martin Maasdorp Bronze: Juhan van Lill
Small Bore Handgun Standing Jnr U20	Gold: Martin Maasdorp Bronze: Juhan van Lill
Small Bore Handgun Unlimited Jnr U20	Silver: Tiaan Lambrechts Bronze: Martin Maasdorp
Small Bore Handgun Aggregate Jnr U20	Gold: Martin Maasdorp
Small Bore Rifle Aggregate Jnr U20	Gold: Gary Marx Silver: Niel Scheepers Bronze: Charlie-Benn van Schalkwyk

** Denotes a Junior U20 winning a medal in the senior overall competition*

The LAST WORD

SAMSSA wishes to congratulate Finland on hosting an exceptionally well-organised World Championship. The competition programme was executed with remarkable precision and ran like clockwork throughout the event. The target setters performed their duties efficiently, ensuring the competition remained on schedule, while the Range Masters displayed professionalism, diligence, and consistency in the administration of the matches. Their collective efforts contributed significantly to a fair, safe, and enjoyable Championship for all competitors. SAMSSA wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the Championship Administrator, Emma Laaksonen, for her exceptional diligence, professionalism, and patience in responding to the team's many requests throughout the



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Championship. Her commitment to keeping the competition scores continuously updated, together with her prompt and courteous assistance, ensured that competitors, officials, and supporters always remained well informed. Her dedication and hard work were greatly appreciated by the entire South African team.

SAMSSA extends its heartfelt congratulations to all the South African competitors for their outstanding commitment, sportsmanship, and determination throughout the Championship. Competing against the world's best under challenging conditions, the team represented South Africa with distinction. Special congratulations are extended to those athletes who achieved personal best performances during the Championship—an accomplishment that reflects their dedication, preparation, and perseverance.