



rifle at 30 pounds or more, combined with a very efficient muzzle brake, makes it a pleasure to shoot. The typical recoil can be compared to a .243 rifle or a 12-gauge trap load. On the other hand, the burning of a typical load of 230 grains of powder combined with that muzzle brake makes the muzzle-blast experience exhilarating. A first-time shooter will fire, pause for a moment in awe at the muzzle blast, and then break out into what has become known as "The .50 Caliber Grin," almost impossible to wipe from one's face.

My Daughter started competing with the .50 BMG at 18 (115 pounds of tall, skinny girl) and happily shoots 100-plus rounds in the course of a match. Her grin on the last round is as wide as on the first! Many members and competitors in the FCSA are women, and many have distinguished themselves as excellent marksmen – having set world records on numerous occasions.

Is owning and shooting a .50 BMG caliber rifle expensive? Relatively speaking, yes, but one must put it into perspective. Rifles may run from \$2500 to \$7000, maybe even more for a top-of-the-line custom rifle. A good scope will set you back \$500 to \$1500; and while excellent commercial ammo is available, it runs from \$3 to \$5 a round. Most serious shooters start reloading for the rifle as soon as practical, not only for the economics of reloading, but also for the ability to fine-tune custom ammo for their specific rifle; it's a very rare

match that is won shooting commercial ammo. I recently compared the cost of my hobby – owning, shooting and competing with the .50 BMG, with a friend who's hobby is snowmobiling. Factoring in the cost of equipment, licensing, gasoline, clothing, etc., it was soon obvious that my hobby was significantly less expensive than his; again, putting it into perspective.

So how does one get started? You could do as I did, purchase a rifle not knowing what you were really getting into, or you could come out to an FCSA-sponsored event, shoot a number of different rifles, rub shoulders with those who have already taken the plunge, and see if this sport is right for you. While membership in the FCSA is required to compete at a FCSA event, it is not required to come and experience first hand what is going on. If you have any inclination that you are interested in the extreme sport of long-range, big-bore shooting, then a year's membership in the FCSA is only \$60 (\$20 for active-duty military) a significant bargain if it helps you make just one well-informed equipment choice. In addition, one of the primary functions of the FCSA is helping to identify active members near you who can help you understand just what is involved and help you "get your feet wet" in this challenging sport.

For more information, check out the Fifty Caliber Shooters Association website at FCSA.org.

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