Missed by a bullet: riflers rank No. 2 in championship

by Chris Vaughan
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It was a heartbreaking loss for the UAF rifle team this weekend. The Nanooks were the No. 1 seed entering the 1998 NCAA Rifle Championship, held Mar. 6-7 at Murray State University in Kentucky.

The team finished second overall in the team competition with a total score of 6211, only three points behind West Virginia University. Kelly Mansfield, Neil Wright, Dan Jordan, Joacim Trybom and Stephanie Thomson represented the Nanooks in the team competition.

The team fell short in its quest for a national championship due, in part, to Jordan's honesty. The freshman missed the target while sighting his rifle, a 10-point penalty under tournament rules. He immediately admitted the error to officials and the team lost the points.

Regardless of the mistake, Jordan did the right thing, according to UAF rifle coach Randy Pitney. "He stood up and admitted it. It was very honorable of him," said Pitney.

Pitney was also quick to praise Jordan, one of the Nanooks' top shooters while only a freshman. "He performed outstanding. These things happen," said Pitney.

While the Nanooks did not accomplish their goal of winning the championship, they look forward to next season. The team will only be losing one senior, Wright, and have a strong nucleus returning. Pitney cited team unity as one strong quality his team possesses.

Pitney said it was a sad ending to a great season by the Nanooks, but an experience that all the team members learned from and something that will not set them back. "I could not ask for any more from the kids," said Pitney.

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