

Lorretta Sinclair

A Competition Necessity

The Gear Bag

Special Feature

At our first competition nearly three years ago, we realized we had little knowledge of tournament preparation as far as what to bring with us. Traveling half-way across the country, sitting on a grass field, needing a Wal-Mart and having no clue where one is, is not a good time to discover you really could use one of those multi-tools or a propane torch to replace arrow points. Nor is it a good time to realize that you need archery tackle that would take days to order and have delivered. Planning must start weeks ahead of your first tournament.

It was with our usual, “we learn it the hard way” discovery that we became proponents of the gear bag. And not just one gear bag. With three archers using equipment, and sometimes on different fields, we realized that each archer needed his own gear bag, even if it meant duplications. I don’t have enough fingers and toes to count when someone forgot ‘their’ screwdriver, or ‘their’ multi-tool, despite double checking the check list and needing to dig

around in one of their brother’s bags for the necessary equipment.

You might think then that three gear bags ‘fully loaded’ would do the job. Nope, we’re equipment junkies. Mom has one of her own where she throws the real odd-ball stuff, like extra grips, and the stuff she sees at the last minute as we leave the house for a trip (those bow squares that seem to always be laying around, extra stringers, that metric multi-tool that you just never know you might need, my own ‘hot melt’ because the boys hot melt seems to disappear at the thought of needing it). I like to sometimes keep the ‘found at the last minute’ stuff in the gear bag until the owner of the needed gear realizes they need



it. To watch them after three years come over and ask, “Mom, do you possibly have my . . .” gives me the opportunity to again remind my archers why we have checklists and why we actually should ‘check’ them. I could do all the checking myself, but at some point, they will need to go to tournaments on their own, and

“Mom, the Fall Back Equipment Gal” won’t be there to save them. They need to learn to keep their gear bags stocked properly and be prepared at tournaments. I’ve given up on the ‘neat and orderly’ gear bag and now only care that they’ve got everything in the bag.

In our gear bags, we have learned to keep duplicates of everything. For this, we use a few different sized fishing tackle plastic boxes. A small one with lots of small compartments holds the real small items like nocks, pin nocks, and fletches. Another one with longer compartments holds the tools, the backup items, and pens. Another one holds all the screwdrivers, pliers, and wrenches. A partial list beyond the obvious fletches and nocks: Beiter clicker, plunger (set to current plunger setting), arrow rest, finger tab (already broken in), strings (nock point set to match current string), glue (I like fast set), multi-tools, screw drivers, pens for marking arrows, pens for scoring, Lock-tite, Band-Aids, safety pins, . . . to name a few. I also carry extra screws for the finger tabs and extra springs/buttons for plungers.

In addition, we always have emergency snacks, an extra shirt, practice target, golf tees for hanging a target, and backup shirt protectors and armguards in the bags.

A well stocked gear bag has saved my archers more than once. Best of all, our well stocked gear bags have been able to keep other archers shooting too. There have been many occasions in the last few years where someone needed a screw for a finger tab, or a finger divider that just broke and is needed in a hurry, or a different color nock because everyone on the same target was shooting blue nocks. Once when I was attempting to help another archer, someone joked that the little vial was probably marked ‘Cavalier parts,’ only to discover that yes, in fact, all of the containers are labeled; it is so much quicker to find things that way. We have not hesitated to dig into our gear bags to help other archers, even during competition. It has led us to make friends with people we perhaps would



SATCHMO PRODUCTIONS

DESIGN AND LAYOUT SERVICES

Let us lay out your next advertisement, brochure, or catalog.

ARCHERS SERVING THE ARCHERY COMMUNITY SINCE 1999

Call Claudia at 1.800.671.1140

not otherwise meet, and it has felt good to be able to hand over ‘whatever was needed’ to get an archer back on the line, which leads to a very satisfying day at a tournament.

Loretta Sinclair is the mother of Dakota, Clarke, and Barrett Sinclair. President of Clarke Sinclair Memorial Archery Scholarship (www.clarkesinclair.org) and collegiate division publicist (www.collegiatearchery.org).

