

Trestle Valley Rangers

COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™



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NEW SHOOTER ORIENTATION GUIDE

A guide for the new shooter getting started in Cowboy Action Shooting

(Edited for Trestle Valley Rangers by Charlie T Waite - RO Instructor SASS Life #79885)

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1. FIREARMS AND AMMO REQUIREMENTS.

Rifles: Any pistol caliber cartridge lever action, tube-fed original or reproduction, of a Henry, 1866, 1873, 1892, or 1894 Winchester-type, or “Lightning”-style slide-action rifles. Marlin, Rossi and Henry Big Boy and the Burgess, Lightning rifles are also allowed. Caliber must be center fire, .32 to .45 colt, or any caliber in-between that was COMMONLY used during the old west time frame, 32.20, 32 H&R, .357, .38, 38-40, 44-40, 44 special or magnum etc. (.22 rim fire may be used in the Buckaroo / Buckarett class only.) Micrometer type receiver sights are not allowed – old style tang sights are OK.

Pistols: (TWO required per, or shared by competitors) Any single action Ruger, or colt-type cartridge or percussion revolvers, whether original or replica. Fixed or adjustable sights of calibers as noted above of between .32 to .45 caliber (.22 for Buckaroo / Buckarett.).

Shotgun: Any side by side or single shot shotgun typical of the era without automatic ejectors, with or without external hammers, with single or double triggers. Lever action, tubular fee, exposed hammer shotguns of the period are allowed (e.g., Winchester Model 1887). Must be at least 20 gauge and no larger than 10 gauge. The ONLY slide action shotgun allowed is the Model 1897 Winchester, whether original or replica, in at least 16 and no larger than 12 gauge. The top opening lever on break action shotguns may be bent (re-profiled) by no more than ½” from the center of the tang to the outside edge of the lever, no additional metal may be added. Side-by-side, single shot and lever action center-fire shotguns in .410 are allowed within the Buckaroo / Buckarett Buckarett Categories only.

AMMO: Revolver ammo must have a velocity LESS than 1000 fps, and rifle ammo LESS than 1400 fps. Bullets must be ALL LEAD, and not jacketed, copper washed or hollow point, and round nosed soft point is the norm. Ten-X, Winchester, and several other firms offer “Cowboy Loads” in the box.

Shotgun: #4 or smaller NON plated, LEAD target type. Shot size used is generally #7 ½ and #8 TARGET type, of 2 ¾ Dram equiv.

2. CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS.

We realize that it takes time for the new shooter to acquire all of the clothing and fire arms necessary for this game. Having this in mind, the new shooter MAY be allowed to shoot a first match or two without fully complying with the clothing requirements:

A. Hats: Any cowboy-style straw, felt or leather hat, or sombrero, is allowed, but NO ball caps or Shady Brady feathered modern style hats.

B. Pants: Jeans of modern or repro design are o.k., but NO designer style jeans. Bib over-alls are allowed but not common.

C. Boots: Modern or old style cowboy boots of LEATHER construction are allowed, but NO combat or athletic-type shoes regardless of construction are allowed. Soles must be of leather or synthetic NON lug grip type. NOTE: IF there is a valid MEDICAL reason a shooter must wear a type of shoe

NOT normally allowed, he may obtain permission from the Match Director PRIOR to the match starting.

D. Gear & Gloves: are allowed if they are of NON modern grip enhancing Shooting-type, either leather or cloth. NO Velcro, plastic, or modern holsters, or other shooting gear are allowed ON the person. Any gun case or item in the shooters cart or equipment bag is ok.

E. Shirts: will be of long sleeve only. Women are the only ones that can wear short sleeves. Many manufactures supply the needs of your attire. Visit our website for ideas.

3. RANGE SAFETY RULES

THIS IS A .COLD. RANGE! All firearms will remain **UNLOADED** except while you are under the direct observation of a Range Officer.

All loading and unloading will be conducted **ONLY** in the designated areas.

Stage Conventions & Match Conduct

1. All SASS Rules apply unless otherwise indicated in the stage description. Basic philosophy in stage descriptions – “if the stage description doesn’t say to do things in certain way, then you can do as you wish, within the current SASS Rules.” SASS Stage Conventions apply.

2. Order of Engagement: Targets may be engaged in any order, unless stage descriptions indicate a specific order.

3. Comstock Shotgun Targets: All shotgun targets MAY be re-engaged – “Comstock Rules”. Shotgun targets may be reengaged at the end of the shotgun string or at the moment they have been missed.

4. Buckaroos and Buckarettes: need only HIT a knock down target, including plate racks – they do not have to go down. Alternate targets might be placed for all aerial targets that may be engaged at the shooters discretion. Misses will be awarded as per normal if aerial targets are engaged and missed.

5. Bonus targets: Bonus targets MUST be engaged, unless indicated as “optional” in the stage description

6. Make long guns safe: On downrange movement stages, long guns MUST be made safe. Failure to make long guns safe as indicated will incur a 10 second minor safety penalty

7. Long guns may be transported to the next shooting position unless stage description indicates otherwise.

8. Long guns open and empty: must be left open and empty at the end of the shooting string. If you open and clear the long gun, then place the long gun down and the lever closes, you must return to open it.

9. Long guns must be staged in, near or at the positions indicated, vertically or horizontally, unless stage description indicates otherwise. Long guns staged horizontally on bales, boxes or counter tops must have at least the rear of the trigger guard over the horizontal surface. Revolvers must have the entire firearm over the horizontal surface. All stage conventions apply.

10. Round/Casing left on carrier - last firearm used on stage is a long gun: Once the shooter arrives at the unloading table and releases control of their long guns, a live round, empty casing or shotgun hull left on the carrier or magazine will incur a minor safety penalty.

11. Unloading / Loading on the move: Firearms may be loaded and unloaded on the move as per SASS rules regarding “safe for movement”.

12. Unloading Officer: All unloading tables will have an unloading officer designated to clear all firearms before each shooter leaves the unloading table. This may be the previous shooter or a posse member as designated by the Posse Marshal.

13. Dry Firing: There will be no dry firing (the act of raising the firearm to a firing position, pointing, cocking and pulling the trigger, so as to fire it) at the LOADING tables.

14. Transporting long guns: Long guns will be transported to and from the firing line, empty with actions open, muzzles vertical. Long guns with soft cases or “socks” that are visible in guns carts must also have actions open.

15. Re-Shoots: will only be given for timer malfunctions, RO interference or prop/timer malfunctions, once the first round has left the barrel.

16. Re-Starts: Bad or fumbled starts may be re-initiated provided no rounds have left the barrel. This may only be allowed if the shooter can complete the re-start immediately keeping the delay to a minimum. Technical issues with firearms at the start should be addressed at the unloading table to as not to cause delays on the firing line. Multiple re-starts for the same shooter on multiple stages will not be entertained by the RO.

17. Saying lines: Shooters must make a good faith effort to say initiating line correctly, but no penalty will be incurred for incorrect lines.

18. Pistols: Pistols shall start from, and be returned to, leather (holstered) at the beginning and end of the pistol string, unless the stage description states otherwise.

19. “Down Range” procedures: are necessary only in shooting bays with more than one stage. If movement down range is required, ‘Down Range’ will be called by the RO. When the shooter has finished the stage and moved to the unloading table, and shooters at the unloading and loading tables have stepped back from the tables down range movement may commence. No gun handling or activity at the tables shall be conducted while posse is down range. When all movement down range has ceased, the RO shall announce that the line is hot and shooting can be continued. Down Ranges on single stage bays shall be conducted by the RO for that posse, flags are not required.

20. Cease Fires: If a cease fire is called, all engaging shooters must cease fire immediately and make firearms safe, move to the unloading table, and ground all firearms.

21. Spotting: Spotters must position themselves so as to clearly see the targets being engaged, and move if necessary. Spotters **MUST SEE A MISS**, and any doubt will be given to the shooter. To remind all shooters once again:

- a. If you **THINK IT HIT**, you must score a **HIT**
- b. If you **THINK IT MISSED**, you **MUST** score a **HIT**
- c. If you see it **HIT**, then you score a **HIT**
- d. **ONLY IF** you clearly **SEE IT MISS**, then you call a **MISS**

Spotters are reminded that spotting is an extremely important job in operation of a posse, and that some targets do not “ring” when hit as most do. Therefore, the absence of sound does not necessarily indicate the target has been missed. Spotters must **SEE A MISS**; anything less than that, or if the spotter has any doubt in their mind, **they must call a HIT**.

22. Scoring and Awards: Scoring will be in accordance with SASS Rules. However, **a shooter must complete all scored main match stages to be eligible for a main match award.** In the unlikely event of severe, inclement weather or any other conditions which may adversely affect the safety of the match, the RO will determine the appropriate course of action. Errors in scoring must be brought to the attention of the score keeper as soon as possible. The deadline for addressing these errors is prior to leaving the unloading table.

23. Disputes or appeals shall, whenever possible, be handled on the posse by the Posse Marshal. The chain of authority for further disputes or protests shall be the “on duty” Match Range Officers. The next and final authority shall be the Range Master /Match Director or his deputy. The RM/MD, may at his discretion, form a committee of 3 Territorial Governors and proceed per SASS rules. Disputes or appeals must be registered with the Posse Marshal **before the posse leaves the stage** where the issue or incident occurred. The dispute shall be heard and processed as soon as practically possible by match officials. Any disputes or protests brought to the Posse Marshal or any match officials after this time will NOT be entertained.

24. Show courtesy to the posse and other shooters: Posse members should not crowd the shooters or if there is more than one posse ahead, the posse should not move into the stage area until vacated by the previous posse.

25. Malfunctioning/Jammed Firearms: Firearms that cannot be cleared and made safe **MUST** remain on the bay/unloading table. Loaded firearms are NOT to be transported away from the stage without direct, match official supervision.

26. Interpersonal conflicts / rude or inappropriate behavior: Any other behavior than that of a true cowboy / cowgirl will not, under any circumstances, be tolerated. In the unlikely event that any shooter demonstrates such behavior they will be ejected from the match immediately and without question and possibly ejection from the range.

27. Handguns are to be kept holstered except when on the firing line, at the loading/unloading tables, in a safety area, or at the shooter’s vehicle.

28. ALL competitors & spectators are required to wear eye and hearing protection.

29. Safety First.....BUT please do have fun!

The following acts are considered UNSAFE GUN HANDLING and are subject to MDQ/SDQ penalties:

- 1. A dropped gun** on the firing line (from the loading table until guns are cleared at the unloading table). The shooter will NOT pick up a dropped gun. A Range Officer will recover it, examine it, clear it and return it to the shooter
- 2. Any discharge** striking anything within 10 feet of the shooter; any discharge at the loading or unloading areas; or any other discharge that is deemed unsafe. (Exception for *.expendable props*. If specified)
- 3. Violation of the 170° safety rule**/Failure to manage appropriate muzzle control. (Please practice safe muzzle control at all times, especially with cross-draw holsters at the loading / unloading table)
- 4. Returning a revolver** to leather with the hammer not **fully down** on a spent round or empty chamber.
- 5. A cocked** revolver leaving the shooter’s hand
- 6. An unfired round** left in the **chamber** of a long gun.

7. **Changing location** with a cocked hammer, a live round under a cocked hammer or a gun with the hammer down on a live round.
8. Failure to comply with **loading and unloading** procedures.
9. Use of an illegal or illegally modified firearm. Any use of illegal items.
10. Holstering or staging a revolver with the hammer down on a **live round**.
11. **SWEEPING anyone AT ANY TIME** with the muzzle of **any** firearm.
12. **Dry firing** at the loading / unloading table. (Dry firing **is** allowed at designated safe areas.)
13. **De-cocking** a revolver, rifle or hammered shotgun with a live round under the hammer or while Not Under the direct supervision of the TO. "Under the direct supervision" requires the TOs acknowledgement in an instructive or affirmative manner. In other words there must be a positive indication to the shooter that the TO is giving his approval for the shooters action.
14. Any other unsafe gun handling such as fanning.

Dropped or ejected ammo is considered dead and will not be recovered until the shooter completes the course of fire. Staged ammo dropped back to where it was staged or ammo safely placed on a prop by the shooter is NOT considered dead.

The use of Drugs or Alcohol will not be tolerated this range. Interpersonal conflicts, belligerent behavior and/or unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for **MATCH DISQUALIFICATION** and possible ejection from the range.

PENALTY OVERVIEW

5-SECOND PENALTIES

Rifle, revolver, and shotgun targets must be engaged with the appropriate type of firearm.

A miss is defined as the failure to hit the appropriate target type using the appropriate type firearm.

- . Each missed target.
- . Each unfired round.
- . Each target hit with an incorrect firearm, either intentionally or by mistake.

To help understand this concept, a *MISS FLOW CHART*. is found in Appendix C. of the ROI manual. **A MISS CANNOT CAUSE A PROCEDURAL!**

10- SECOND PENALTIES

Procedural Penalties

Any unintentional procedural errors caused by .brain fade., confusion, ignorance, or mistakes (not to exceed one for any given stage).

- . Failure to attempt to fire a firearm.
- . Failure to attempt a prop or stage maneuver.
- . Shooting targets in an order other than as required by stage description.
- . Engaging the stage (firearms, targets, or maneuvers) in an order other than as required by stage description.

- . Failure to adhere to the guidelines of the category in which you are competing.
- . Firing any firearm from a position other than as required by stage description.

Minor Safety Penalties

- . Not leaving a long gun action open
- . Leaving empty or live rounds in magazine or carrier of the long gun in which it was loaded.
- . Loading more than the correct number of rounds in a firearm excluding the Rifle.
- . Not returning revolvers to leather unless otherwise specified.
- . Carefully placed open, empty long guns that slip and fall (do not break 170° safety rule or sweep anyone).
- . Retrieving a dropped .dead. round.

Accommodations are always allowed for those unable to comply with specific stage procedures due to physical limitations with no procedural penalties assessed.

STAGE DISQUALIFICATION

- . Any dropped unloaded gun on the firing line (between the loading table and the unloading table).
- . Carelessly placed long guns that slip and fall (whether or not they break the 170° safety rule.)
- . A discharge striking anything five to ten feet from the shooter. *Note: Exception under item 12 Appendix A*
- . Violation of the 170° safety rule/ Failure to manage appropriate muzzle control.
- . Returning a revolver to leather with hammer not fully down on spent round or empty cylinder.
- . A cocked revolver leaving the shooter.s hand.
- . A live round left in the chamber of a long gun.
- . Second offence, in the same match, for failure to adhere to the guidelines of the category in which the shooter is competing.
- . Changing location with a live round under a cocked hammer or a gun with the hammer down on a live round.
- . Unsafe firearm handling, such as fanning.
- . Loading at other than the designated loading position or firing line.
- . Use of an illegal or illegally modified firearm.
- . Use of illegal items.
- . Holstering or staging a revolver with the hammer down on a live round.
- . Sweeping anyone with an unloaded firearm.
- . Failure to adhere to loading and unloading procedures.
- . Dry firing at the loading table.
- . De-cocking a revolver, rifle or hammered shotgun with a live round under the hammer.

MATCH DISQUALIFICATION

- . Two accumulated Stage Disqualifications or Two Spirit of the Game assessments.
- . Belligerent attitude / Un-sportsman-like conduct.
- . Shooting under the influence of alcohol, prescription, or other medication that may impair the shooter's physical or mental abilities.

- . Shooting illegal ammunition. This includes ammunition that exceeds the maximum velocity and shotgun shells that have been bottle-neck resized or ringed.
This does not include ammunition that does not meet the power factor.
- . Dropping a loaded firearm.
- . Any discharge that hits the ground or stage prop less than five feet from the shooter, any discharge at the loading or unloading areas, or discharge that is deemed unsafe. *Note: Exception under item 12 Appendix A*
- . Sweeping anyone with a loaded firearm.
- . Third offence, in the same match, for failure to adhere to the guidelines of the category in which the shooter is competing.
- . Interpersonal conflicts.

FAILURE TO ENGAGE/SPIRIT OF THE GAME

30-Second Penalty

- . Willfully shooting a stage other than the way it was intended in order to gain a competitive advantage.
 - . Shooting ammunition that does not meet the power factor or minimum velocity. The penalty is applied for each stage a competitor is checked and their ammunition is found not to meet the power factor or minimum velocity.
- Note: Two Spirit of the Game penalties will result in a Match Disqualification.

ILLEGAL ITEMS

The following are examples of SASS .illegal. items.

The current version of the SASS Handbook should always be used as an additional reference for illegal items.

The use or presence of any outlawed item is a **Stage Disqualification**.

- . Shotgun belts not worn just above the pistol belt or touching the belly button.
- . Holsters departing from the vertical by more than 30 degrees when worn
- . Two main match revolvers worn on the same side of the body
- . Loading during the stage from bandoleers that are tied down in any manner
- . Modern shooting gloves
- . Short sleeve shirts (Male competitors only)
- . Short sleeved tee shirts, long sleeved tee shirts, and tank tops for all competitors. (Long sleeved Henley type shirts with buttons are allowed.)
- . Modern feathered cowboy hats
- . Designer jeans
- . Ball caps
- . Tennis, running, jogging, aerobic or other modern athletic shoes, combat boots
- . Clothing displaying manufacturer.s or sponsor.s logos.
- . Nylon, plastic, or Velcro accouterments.
- . Wearing a shotgun slide on a shotgun belt.

4. How a Match is run.

A. Show up and unload Gear: Every match starts out with shooters arriving early in order to unload their gear, and sign up at the North Range scoring building, typically from 8:30 - 9:45, with a Mandatory Safety Meeting attended by ALL SHOOTERS at 10:00. If you miss the meeting you may NOT shoot the Match. We encourage everyone to also show up early and help set up stages if possible. Nobody is paid to be here. We all have to pitch-in when we can and help out.

B. Sign in and Register: During the sign up process you will register and indicate which category you will be shooting in and pay the entry fees (typically \$15.00 per shooter, not to exceed \$25 for an entire family).

C. Posse up: Some shooting matches may require that the number of shooters be broken down into a POSSE of equal numbers, and a Posse Marshal will have a clip board with POSSE names by alias. This Posse will be the one you shoot with the entire match. A Mentor/s will answer any questions you have and make sure you have all the guns you need that day. A shooter will need two revolvers, a rifle and a shotgun, plus 50 rounds of pistol and 50 of rifle ammo, and 25+ rounds of shotgun shells. (This is the minimum amount. Always bring more just in case you might need them.)

D. Saddle up! : The Mandatory Safety Meeting will be held at 12:45 at the Posse starting bays determined, any announcements read, and final questions asked. Your Posse will then proceed to the appropriate bay / stage and the stage description read, and shooting will begin!

5. Misc. information.

A. Parking: Parking is along the bays at the West of the range and is a first come first served basis. If you park from bay 1 down to the 3rd or 4th bays, you'll have LESS distance to push your gun cart, or tote your gear.

B. Mentors: An experienced and friendly shooter will be happy to assist you during your day to ensure a SAFE & HAPPY shoot.

C. Awards Ceremony: Immediately following the match typically we have an awards ceremony where certificate are handed out at the range.

E. Shooters Handbook: We also encourage you to read the SASS Shooters Handbook. You can download a free copy from the SASS website. <http://www.sassnet.com/Shooters-Handbook-001A.php> If you have ANY questions or problems feel free to ask any club member. We were ALL new shooters at one time, and we believe in treating you the same way we were treated, in a warm and friendly manner. **That's The Cowboy Way!**

Most of all, be safe and have FUN !!