

ALASKA SCTP-YESS  
BASIC COMPETITION AND SHOOTING  
LOGISTICS, PROTOCOL AND ETIQUETTE

It is always exciting and encouraging to see new athletes in our clay target sports program, and to watch them experience their first competition is a joy. Sometimes, however, it becomes quite apparent that new athletes have not been taught some things that, though seemingly small and inconsequential, can have an enormous impact on the team, the event and the program as a whole.

Coaches teach shooters basic terminology of the sport. Some of these terms include very basic logistics, such as the difference between a "field" and a "station" or terms common to the sport, such as "discipline," "National Governing Body," "walkthrough," and "round." Never assume new athletes know what you mean when you say: "Report to Trap 2 at 11:30." New shooting families are often left in the dark and are clueless about what all these terms mean and how they relate to their athlete's expectations and performance.

That being said, let's go over some terminology and logistics all Varsity athletes must know in order to start out well at our events.

"MC = MUZZLE CONTROL" Gun safety at all times! No excuse! Whether the gun is broken open or not, ALWAYS control your muzzle!

"FIELD" refers to a shooting field where a specific discipline (i.e. trap, skeet, 5-stand) is shot. There are five trap fields at Birchwood, numbered from left to right facing the fields, 1-5. There are four skeet/trap combo fields next, which are consecutively designated as Skeet A, B, C, and D. There are three 5-stand fields at the end, the first two being 5-Stand 1 and 5-Stand 2, with 5-Stand 3 on the hill to the right. The Walkthrough and Bunker fields are beyond the 5-Stand fields.

"STATION" or "POST" refers to the box or place in which an athlete will stand to shoot their sequence of targets. There are five stations in trap, eight stations in skeet, and five stations in 5-Stand. There may be from 10 to as many as 16 or even 18 stations in a sporting clays walkthrough course.

"ROUND" is generally a 25-Bird game, and in competitions there are usually two or more rounds in an event. A 100-Bird competition in Trap will be four rounds of 25 birds. A 100-Bird competition in Double Trap will be two rounds of 50 birds, as one round is 25 opportunities to shoot at two birds thrown simultaneously.

"WALKTHROUGH" refers to a Sporting Clays game that is generally held in a field without specific boundaries, in which the athlete will walk from station to station, shooting a variety of target sizes, speeds, and presentations to complete, typically, a 100-Bird competition over 12-15 stations.

"EYES AND EARS" refers to eye and ear protection, which are mandatory at all times on any shooting field, and in the Walkthrough for all guests as well.

CHECK-IN TIME refers to the time you need to report to the registration or scoring desk prior to flight. Usually this is 30-60 minutes prior to flight time.

"FLIGHT SCHEDULE" will be posted and shows the time and the field an athlete is scheduled to compete on. "FLIGHT" or "FLIGHT TIME" is the time you are to be on the field, at your designated station, ready to begin

competition. This means you will have all the ammo required to complete the designated round(s) at that field plus a few spares just in case, eyes and ears, and are ready to shoot.

“ON DECK” means you are at your assigned field ready to step on as soon as the previous squad has completed their round and has left the field. Most of our competitions require a squad to be on deck at least 10 min prior to scheduled flight.

“SQUAD” refers to the (typically) five athletes who are competing on a specific field in a specific event. There are six athletes in International or Olympic-style competition squads in trap and skeet. Know your squad number!

“SQUAD CAPTAIN” or “SQUAD LEADER” is the athlete that is the first listed athlete on the scoresheet and begins at Station 1 or Post 1, in Trap or Skeet, or the first Station the squad shoots in a Walkthrough. You will be responsible for ensuring everyone is ready at their post, the trapper is ready, then you will call for the Show-Me bird(s). Typically, the Squad Leader will be the one who initials the scoresheets at the end of each round.

“SHOW-ME” BIRD OR PAIR are generally the first bird(s) from the first station on the first round so the athletes may observe the angle, speed and trajectory of the targets. Sometimes you may be allowed a Show-Me target on every new field.

“HOA” is High Overall, which is usually awarded in championships with multiple optional games and disciplines and is the total of all scores for all the events, without regard to division. This is the highest possible award for individuals and teams.

“HAA” is High All Around, which usually means the athlete with the highest score in a division or concurrent (sub-division, such as gender or age), and is the sum of scores usually comprising the main event. There may be a “Runner-Up” in this category as well.

“SUB-GAUGE” events are typically events limited to 20 ga or lower shotguns, and possibly even pumps or side-by-sides.

#### AMMO:

“Gauge” is, simply put, the “size” of the shotgun you are shooting.

“Shot” is recorded as both the weight and the size of the bb’s in the shell.

“Dram” is most easily described as the amount of powder in the shell.

“FPS” is “Feet Per Second” and is the speed, or velocity, of the shot.

2 ¾” is the length of the shell that is standard for competition shooting.

20 gauge shells can vary in shot size but are pretty standardized in shot weight.

12 gauge vary in shot size & weight, dram, and fps.

You should not need more than 1 oz SHOT WEIGHT, and never more than 1 1/8 shot!

SHOT SIZE is typically 7 ½ or 8 shot. We recommend 7 ½ in the winter. There are more bb’s in an 8 shot shell.

We do not recommend 3 Dram or higher shells. Higher drams = stronger recoil.

FPS is very important, because here’s where you can have a problem in trap: The speed of shotshells is regulated in trap, and at some shooting facilities! Know the rules. We will be randomly checking ammo on the fields during competitions!

Shells longer than 2 ¾” are not permitted for our competitions.

## BASIC FIELD ETIQUETTE

**PICK UP** after yourself and keep our club clean. Not just inside the clubhouse, but the grounds and the fields. This goes for guests as well. Don't leave your belongings and trash laying around.

**PICK UP** empty hulls following every practice. Every athlete is expected to help clean the fields!

**RESPECT** all coaching staff, facility staff, fellow athletes and guests.

**RESPECT and PROPERLY MAINTAIN** all equipment and shotguns, whether yours or borrowed.

**BE ON TIME!** Respect the other members of your squad by being on time and ready to shoot. Respect the Shoot Administrators by checking in on time at least 30 minutes prior to Flight, or the time designated by the Shoot Administrator, and respect your coach and fellow teammates by being reliable, dependable and **ON TIME!**

**BE PREPARED!** And focus on why you are here. Don't dilly-dally, horse around or play with cell phones. Be certain you have all you need to shoot your round at that field, and step into your assigned station (trap or 5-stand) or in your position in line at station 1 (skeet) quickly and efficiently, focused and ready to give your best effort.

**BE PURPOSEFUL!** I tell my more experienced kids this at practice. Focus on the target. Have your mental game on. Did you miss? Let it go! Focus only on the target in front of you – be purposeful! Think about your targets, not anyone else's. Be mindful of Process, not outcome.

**DON'T BE A DISTRACTION!** Either on the field, on deck or as an observer, don't talk above a whisper, horseplay, or otherwise call attention to yourself or others. Respect other shooters who are trying to focus on their game. **Do not talk to other competitors on the field during a game unless it is a critical issue.** They are trying to stay focused and conversation has no place on the competition field. Save it for after the round is completed.

**BE EFFICIENT.** When it is your turn to shoot, do so in a timely manner, without unnecessary gestures or fumbling around. You only have SECONDS to complete your sequence of shots!

**NEVER HOPSCOTCH OR SKIP AN ASSIGNED SEQUENCE OF FIELDS OR STATIONS!** If the order of shooting is Field B, C, D and A, then shoot them in that order. If you are shooting a Sporting Clays Walkthrough and you start at Station 6, don't stop along the way to shoot 4 or 5 and don't skip Station 8 because there is no one on 9 and "we'll just go back to 8 when we're done at 9." This may be grounds for disqualification of the squad! You may only skip a field with the approval of Shoot Management or Club Management. Skipping a field or station often leads to bottlenecks, confusion, frustrated officials, trappers and coaches and generally creates chaos. Just go with the flow. Be patient if you need to wait your turn.

If you have missed a field and Shoot Management has agreed to allow you to shoot the missed round, you must shoot it at the time and place agreed upon. If you are late, or have not checked in, you will forfeit the targets not shot!

**DO NOT LEAVE THE FIELD OF PLAY,** either between rounds or during a round in progress. By that I mean, if you are shooting four rounds of trap, and there is a wait to shoot your third round, don't run off to the clubhouse or go sit in a vehicle where you cannot see when the squad on the field has completed their round and your squad is now standing on the field wondering where you went. This causes bottleneck, messes with other squad members' "game," is irresponsible and disrespectful to trappers and officials. If you leave a field or the squad during the round in progress without permission from the Referee you may find yourself disqualified from that round and receive a zero, regardless of your score at the time you walked off!

BE HONEST. Is it a gun malfunction? Or is it an athlete error? If you leave the safety on, don't put the shell in the proper chamber, don't load two shells when required at a station, "trap" the trigger – these are all athlete errors and result in a LOST bird. If you have a gun that is not operating correctly, at least try to borrow a gun that is. Chronic gun malfunctions are very distracting to fellow squad members, take up far too much time, and can create serious bottleneck and flight schedule issues.

SHOW SPORTSMANSHIP AND GOOD STEWARDSHIP. NEVER fling or throw spent shells or display anger in any way on the field. Take a deep breath! Stay focused. In most youth organizations spent shells thrown in anger are grounds for disqualification! In the same vein, if there is a box or bucket for spent shells in front of you and you are manually removing your shells throw them in the bucket or the shell pouch in the back of your shooting vest, not on the ground.

NO SWEARING, SHOUTING, THROWING SPENT SHELLS, OR OTHER SIGNS OF BEING OUT-OF-CONTROL!

Lack of self-control: throwing shells, swearing, negative comments when others are trying to focus on their targets, physical actions that are a distraction and hamper other athletes' performance and mental game will not be tolerated and could result in removal from the field and disqualification from the event! No one should know that you lost a target based on your body language, emotions or reactions. Controlling your response will help your mental game. Focus on the present, not the past.

Speaking of Sportsmanship...INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THE MEMBERS OF YOUR SQUAD. Shake hands. This is good to do while on deck waiting to step on the field. During the event, do not draw attention to another competitor's lost target, and do not comment on your own, either. When you have completed competition or all the rounds with your squad, shake hands again, thanking them for the pleasure of shooting with them and expressing a "good luck!" or "nice shooting!" or even "you're doing well, keep it up!"

At the awards ceremony, ALWAYS shake the hands of those on the podium. Whether you are in First, Second or Third, congratulate the other winners whether they initiate the courtesy or not. The same courtesy applies following completion of an event or shootoff. Congratulate the other athlete(s) and shake their hand.

SMILE! The podium is not the place to show your disappointment in your performance! The bottom line is did you have fun? Did you learn something? Do you know what you need to work on?

Teaching and practicing these courtesies will make for a much happier and successful experience on the field! Remember that our primary goal is to use the shooting sports as a means of teaching these young people to become responsible, considerate, and respectful individuals, experiencing not only this great sport, but the camaraderie that goes along with it.