

# Match Guidelines

The information contained in this section has been gathered from experienced Airgun Field Target Match Directors and shooting participants. The intent is to provide guidance to AAFTA Member Clubs when holding a Regional or National Airgun Field Target Match.

## Getting Started

If your club wishes to hold a Regional or National Airgun Field Target Match, there are several things you should consider.

- A. Does your club have enough members who are willing to give their time to prepare and run the match properly?
- B. Are your Facilities adequate?
- C. Does your club have the financial support necessary for the match?
- D. Does your club have enough targets suitable for the match?
- E. Has the match date been approved by AAFTA and is the weather in your area acceptable on that date?

Having answered these questions positively, your next step is to select a Match Director. The Match Director is responsible for seeing that the match is run according to the AAFTA Rules and insuring fair play for all participants.

## Match Planning

1. **Duties:** Predetermine each club member's duties regarding the match. That includes preparation before, during and after the match.
2. **Schedule:** Contact AAFTA to schedule an open date on the AAFTA Calendar (consider weather, holidays, school, vacations, and range conditions).
3. **Layout:** Decide the number of shots and the course layout.
4. **Food:** Determine what food services will be offered. This will be determined by how much money is available, or how far it is to the nearest store/restaurant, etc. Water should be available to all participants.
5. **Restrooms:** Restrooms must be provided for men and women.

6. **Accessories:** Some form of seating should be available for shooters and spectators, taking into consideration rain or shade. Scorecards, clipboards, name tags and pencils should be provided. Whistles or walkie-talkies to call Marshals are highly desirable.
7. **Scoreboard:** A scoreboard visible to contestants and spectators should be provided.
8. **Awards:** All awards will be presented at the conclusion of the match.
9. **Tie-Breaker:** Pre-plan a tie-breaker system for the match.
10. **Announcement:** A mailer or invitation should be prepared well in advance of the match. The invitation should include:
  - A. Dates and times of the match and practice hours.
  - B. Location of the range, with directions or a map.
  - C. Host Organization with contacts and phone numbers.
  - D. Awards, Divisions and Classes
  - E. Entry fees and deadlines for registration (with registration limits).
  - F. Information on food and drinks.
  - G. Safety information, sanctioning, and sponsors.
  - H. Lodging (with addresses and/or directions) including rates and phone numbers.
  - I. Air tank availability and/or an air tank rental company name with an address and phone number.
  - J. Patches, shirts, hats or pins for sale.
  - K. Any equipment restrictions or special notices.
  - L. Copies of pertinent shooting rules.
11. **Promotion:** The AAFTA webmaster will post match registration and information. However, it is the club's responsibility to provide promotional material to the AAFTA webmaster in a form suitable for posting, such as HTML, PDF, or DOC files. The club should also provide detailed match information to all registering shooters by email or US Postal Service, in advance of the match.
12. **Time Management:** Shooting times should be planned to allow all shooters enough time to finish the match. Take into consideration the number of shooters, number of lanes, and number of shots at each target (remember, two shots at one target takes less time than one shot at two targets).
13. **Shooter's Meeting:** A shooters meeting should be held prior to each match. Allow from 10 to 20 minutes for each meeting.

14. **Marshals:** Arrange for Marshals well in advance and get a firm commitment from each person. The number of Marshals you will need depends on the geography of your course. If you have the course laid out over a large area, you will need more Marshals. Train your Marshals well in advance so they can perform properly and be an asset rather than a liability.
15. **Results:** Send in the match results and a descriptive story to the AAFTA webmaster as soon as possible following the match. In addition to names and scores by classes, include a description of rifles, scopes and pellets used by the competitors.

***A well-run match is a well-planned match... Make a plan... then work your plan!***

## **Course Preparation**

1. **Layout:** Each course should be laid out using the available terrain. To lay-out a safe course, remember that a "cone of fire" should be developed to direct all shooting away from competitors and into a safe direction. Things to take into consideration when laying-out a course:
  - A. A lane should never cross another lane, and a course should never cross another course. These are good safety precautions.
  - B. Shooting locations (i.e. "shooting pads") should be on a plane that allows safety for all.
  - C. If you will be using tree targets, cut your lanes with the trees in mind for the targets.
  - D. Make sure that resetting strings can be run back to the firing line without tangling in briars, etc.
  - E. Lanes should not be so close to other lanes that safety or ease of movement of shooters is impeded.
2. **Shooting Pads:** Shooting Pads should be sloped or drained so that no water accumulates. Pea gravel helps drain water and is acceptable to most competitors. Pads should be reasonably level so that a competitor can safely take a shot.
3. **Lane Markers:** Lane Markers are used to identify where the shooter must take the shot. Two lane markers shall be used for each shooting pad. The gun barrel shall be between the markers with the shooters torso behind the markers when addressing the

lane. These markers can be made of wood, steel, or other material and should signify the lane number.

- 4. Hit-zone Visibility:** Target hit-zones should be clearly visible from the shooters pad with no obstruction in the flight of the pellet. Remember both short and tall shooters when clearing the lane. When trimming the lanes, look for even the thinnest weeds, grass, or vines.

***A well laid-out and properly prepared course eliminates problems at match time!***

## **Targets**

- 1. Type:** Both commercial and "home-made" targets that can be used in matches. Any target that is reliable and capable of withstanding repeated 20 fpe pellet strikes can be used.

Targets should be tested at close range (less than a yard) with both high power (18 fpe or higher) and low power (5fpe or lower) airguns. Targets should fall when hit with both high and low power shots in the hit-zone, and not fall with high power shots on the faceplate.

Since pellet energy decreases with distance, targets placed at longer distances should trip with minimal power hits on the hit-zone (4 fpe), while targets placed at closer distances may trip with slightly higher minimal power on the hit-zone (6 fpe).

***The quickest way to ruin a match is to have a target that does not work properly!***

- 2. Hit-zone size and distance:** Hit-zones sizes can range from 3/8" to 2". Smaller hit-zones are generally used in lesser numbers at closer distances. Care should be taken when placing targets at close distances since pellets can ricochet or bounce back! When setting a course, shooter proficiency should be taken into consideration.
- 3. Course Difficulty:** It is recommended that the course difficulty be designed in the range of 28-33T without light or wind conditions, and with a standard deviation between 6 and 10.
- 4. Target strings and rubber bands:** It has been found that a good quality braided Dacron line (50-80 Lb. test) will not stretch and will last longer under ultraviolet rays than Nylon or Polypropylene. This line is used for offshore fishing and is extremely durable, but it is rather expensive. It is recommended that Nylon not be used since it stretches and makes the target

hard to reset. A simple fishing swivel, 10-12 inches in front of the target, keeps the lines from becoming twisted and makes them easier to wind up after the match. A short, braided steel fishing leader used through the target hole will keep the line from fraying on the metal target. Rubber bands or short bungee cords attached to the target and to the line with a little slack will curtail string snags which prevent target knock-downs.

**Note:** *Competition Kite string is made from the same braided Dacron line, so check kite suppliers for better deals. If the braided Dacron line is too expensive, use only enough for the target placement distance (e.g. 25 Yards, 40 Yards, or 55 Yards).*

- 5. Target Installation:** Prior to installing any target on the course, it is important that all targets be lubricated and checked for proper operation. Targets should be securely attached to the ground or other objects so that they are stable and will not be disturbed by pellet hits or by pulls on the reset line. Targets placed directly on the ground require that any ground cover (leaves, sticks, pine needles, etc.) be removed that might interfere with proper operation.

Using a spirit-level is recommended to ensure targets are properly leveled.

It is strongly recommended to have spare targets of various kill zone sizes readily available during a match, in case any target breaks or malfunctions and needs to be replaced.

- 6. Target Painting:** Since Field Target shooting is a fun sport as well as a challenging sport, detailed painting of the targets makes them more enjoyable for all competitors. Flat Black targets don't excite anyone! A little art work goes a long way in creating realism! Hit paddles should be given a base coat of white paint then day glow orange should be applied over that. Of course, all hit paddles should be repainted between matches. An alternate solution for hit-zone visibility is to use tape on the back side of the face plate. In any case, the hit-zone should contrast with the faceplate.
- 7. Target Placement:** Placement relies on the imagination of the course designers with the following guidelines:
  - A. All participants should share equal visibility of the entire hit-zone.
  - B. All competitors should have the same opportunity to shoot in the same shooting position.

- C. When placing a target in a lane, a spotter should be in a shooting position to give detailed instructions to the person setting the target. This way the spotter can make sure short and tall, as well as left and right-handed shooters have the same advantage. Binoculars or a scope will allow the spotter to see if any obstructions exist. Lane markers should be adjusted to afford the shooter the ability to get a clear shot on all targets in the lane.
- D. All targets should be set from a predetermined plan.
- E. When setting targets, the shooting sequence should be determined (e.g., shoot the nearest target, then the farthest target).
- F. When two or more targets are in one lane, care should be taken to make sure that the string from a target does not interfere with the string of any other target.
- G. If the course has a tendency to have standing water or rain, make sure targets are not under water if it rains on match day.
- H. Make sure that the Marshals can get to the targets during the match. Have ladders available for tree targets if necessary.
- I. Make sure that targets in one lane cannot be confused with targets in another lane.

***Target preparation, maintenance, painting and planned target placement are essential to a successful match!***

- 8. Target Malfunctions:** Targets can fail to operate properly during a match. When they do fail, the failure needs to be addressed as quickly as possible.
- A. If a reset string breaks or a target has an obvious mechanical failure where proper target operation is affected, a Marshal should be called immediately to address the problem.
  - B. Some targets can malfunction periodically where it will work for some shooters but not others. If a shooter feels that a target failed to fall with a good hit on the paddle then the shooter may protest the target by marking a "P" on the score card for that target and call a Marshal to the lane to explain the protest.
  - C. If the failure is the result of a sudden mechanical or anchoring/mounting issue, it may be repaired or replaced and the affected shooters may reshoot the target.

- D. If the failure is due to a mechanical or anchoring/mounting issue that occurs over the course of the match and there is no way to determine how many shooters may have been adversely affected by the failure, then the target should be removed from the match.
  - E. If the failure is found after the match, the target should be removed from the match.
- 9. Target Protests:** Target protests may be resolved during or after the match at the Marshals discretion based on the protests being lodged on a given target.
- A. If a protested target fails to fall for the next two shooters after the initial protest, the Marshal should examine the target immediately and address any issues.
  - B. If a protested target appears to continue to have issues, the Marshal may decide to examine the target during the match. If an issue is found it should be addressed immediately. If the target appears to be working properly, the Marshal should inform the Match Director of the target protest and the target should be tested further at the end of the match.
  - C. If a target is checked after the match and the target is working properly, the protests are disallowed.

- 10. Repairing, Replacing, and Removing Targets:** On all target issues the Marshal and/or Match Director will decide if the target should be repaired, replaced, or removed from the match and which, if any, shooters will reshoot the target.
- A. If a target is replaced during a match, it should be replaced with a target of the same size kill zone. If another target of the same size kill zone is not available, then the target should be removed from the match.
  - B. If a target is removed from the match all shooters scores should be adjusted to reflect the target's removal. The traditional method for adjusting scores is to mark shots for the removed target as hits for all shooters.

## **Practice Area (Range)**

A safe practice area should be provided for the competitors the day before the match and just prior to each match. This practice area should have the following:

1. At least 55 yards of clear safe shooting area.
2. A suitable dry area from which to sit and shoot.
3. Some form of target holders for the competitors to use.
4. Yardage markers each 5 yards from 10 yards to 55 yards.
5. Gun Racks.
6. A designated area for SCUBA/air tanks.
7. A designated and marked "Firing Line".
8. A range safety officer on the firing line at all times when shooting is taking place. The range safety officer should have complete control at all times.
9. Rest rooms.
10. Spinners, practice field targets, bench rests, and chronographs add to a good practice area!
11. **Children should not be allowed near the firing line and must be supervised by a parent or guardian at all times!**
12. **No pets should be allowed in the practice area!**
13. **During practice or during a match, all AAFTA Safety Rules must be enforced.**

## **Chronograph Testing**

The hosting venue should provide a Chronograph station so that shooters may check the Energy Level compliance of their guns prior to the start of the match. The Match Director reserves the right to chronograph guns before, during, or after the match. The following is the recommended procedure for Chronograph testing:

1. The shooter arrives at the designated Chronograph station and hands the Marshal 3 pellets, along with his/her scorecard marked with the make and weight of the pellets.
2. The Marshal inspects the pellets, and may optionally weigh one or more of the pellets on a calibrated scale.
3. The Marshal hands one of the pellets back to the shooter, and instructs him/her to take a shot across the Chronograph.
4. The shooter gets up to 3 attempts to record a passing shot.
5. The Marshal records the final reading in the shooter's scorecard, and signs the card.

## **Squadding**

It is customary to squad shooters in groups of 2 or 3, depending on the number of shooters attending the match.

1. For a multi-course match, such as a Regional or National match, shooters in each class should be on the same course to the extent possible. If it is not possible to squad all shooters in a given class on the same course, the lowest ranking shooters in that class should be moved to a different course.
2. In all but the final round it is customary to squad shooters of different rankings or skill levels. For example: a top shooter, an intermediate shooter, and a novice shooter in a 3-person squad.
3. In the final round it is customary to squad shooters with those that they are directly competing with, based on scores from previous rounds.
4. For a Regional or National match, it is recommended not squadding together shooters from the same club, if it is possible.

## **Shooter's Meeting**

The Match Director should hold a Shooter's Meeting prior to each match to discuss information pertinent to the match. This is an opportunity to welcome contestants and introduce Marshals, Scorekeepers, and other workers. This meeting should be from 10-20 minutes in length and include the following:

1. Special club rules and procedures.
2. Explanation of scoring and score-cards. The score-card should track the course layout.
3. Point out where facilities are located, including shooting lanes.
4. Number of shots per target and the order of shooting; i.e., left-to-right or near-to-far.
5. Number of lanes, and targets per lane.
6. Where to turn in score-cards.
7. Inform shooters about squad and starting lane assignment.
8. In-depth discussion of the AAFTA Safety Rules, with an introduction of the Marshals and any discussion of time limits.

## **Class System**

In a major match such as the Nationals, it is suggested that Lady, Senior and Junior Classes be established encompassing relevant shooters from all divisions, to ensure there are sufficient awards to satisfy the number of registered shooters. Other Classes can be created by the match committees as the situation dictates.

**It is very important to note that all shooters are competing for the placement awards of their respective division (Open, WFTF, or Hunter), and also for awards in any extra Classes they may have be entered, such as Lady, Senior, Junior, etc.**

## **Awards Presentation**

- A. Each Class of the three AAFTA Divisions should have at least a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place award if there are sufficient entrants.
- B. As noted in [Consolidating Division/Classes](#), consolidation of shooters into larger classes or divisions is acceptable.
- C. It is not recommended to have a separate match winner and then 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> place awards. Instead, it is recommended that there be one 1<sup>st</sup> place, or champion award, for each Class of the three Divisions followed by 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, etc.
- D. All awards should be presented immediately following the final match. A suggested method of presenting the awards is to present the lowest place award for each Division and Class available at the match first, then the next lowest place award for each Division and Class, and so on up to the 1<sup>st</sup> place/Champion award in each Class.
- E. It is suggested that awards should be displayed during the Award Presentation. Pictures for publications should be taken by the host club and identified for the press.