

# COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™

## Shooters Handbook



Compiled and Edited for SASS

By

The Range Operations Committee

Version **21.8**

**February 1, 2016**

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# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Shooters Handbook

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### SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

The Single Action Shooting Society is an international organization created to preserve and promote the fast growing sport of Cowboy Action Shooting™. SASS endorses Regional matches conducted by affiliated clubs and annually produces END of TRAIL, the World Championship of Cowboy Action Shooting & Wild West Jubilee™.

Cowboy Action Shooting™ is a multifaceted amateur shooting sport in which contestants compete with firearms typical of those used in the taming of the Old West: single action revolvers; lever action rifles; and side by side double barreled, pre-1899 pump, or lever action shotguns. The shooting competition is staged in a unique, characterized, Old West style.

Contestants shoot in several one-to-four firearm stages (courses of fire) in which they engage steel and/or cardboard targets. Scoring is based on accuracy and speed.

The truly unique aspect of Cowboy Action Shooting™ is the requirement placed on authentic period or western screen dress. Each participant is required to adopt a shooting alias appropriate to a character or profession of the late 19th century, or a Hollywood western star, and develop a costume accordingly.

Your SASS shooting alias is exclusively yours. In the tradition of the Old West cattle brand registries, SASS prohibits one shooter duplicating another's alias. There is only one Tex, one Kid Curry, and one Loophole Pettifogger.

SASS affiliated clubs are required to respect the sanctity of SASS members' aliases and shooter numbers, using them in their articles for publication in *The Cowboy Chronicle* and giving them preference over local club members who are not SASS members and are using a duplicate alias.

American history buffs and serious shooters alike agree the use of vintage firearms, authentic costuming, unique targets, and fast action make Cowboy Action Shooting™ one of the most interesting of all shooting sports for both spectator and contestant.

This Handbook includes the specific rules, regulations, and general guidelines adopted by the Single Action Shooting Society. The SASS Range Operations Basic Course and SASS Range Officer Training Course offer an in-depth interpretation and further clarification of these rules along with applicable penalties. The very latest version of the Shooters Handbook can always be found on the SASS web site, [www.sassnet.com](http://www.sassnet.com). It is the intention and hope of SASS these requirements will serve to preserve and protect Cowboy Action Shooting™ from the gimmicky and technical gamesmanship that have had such a negative effect on other shooting disciplines. The founders of SASS believe END of TRAIL and club and annual matches are as much an opportunity for fun and fellowship as they are shooting competitions.

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### **SPIRIT OF THE GAME**

As the game of Cowboy Action Shooting™ has evolved, our members have developed and adopted an attitude towards their participation we call “The Spirit of the Game.” Competing in The Spirit of the Game means you fully participate in what the competition asks. You do not look for ways to create an advantage out of what is or is not stated as a rule or shooting procedure. Some folks would call The Spirit of the Game nothing more than good sportsmanship. Whatever you call it, if you don’t have it, Cowboy Action Shooting™ is not your game.

A “spirit of the game” infraction occurs when a competitor willfully or intentionally disregards the stage instructions in order to obtain a competitive advantage (i.e., taking the penalty would result in a lower score or faster time than following the instructions) and is not assessed simply because a competitor “makes a mistake.” In such a case, in addition to any penalties for misses, a 30-second failure to engage/Spirit of the Game penalty is assessed. Shooting ammunition that does not meet the power factor or minimum velocity is also a “spirit of the game” infraction. Two “spirit of the game” penalties within a match will result in a Match Disqualification.

### **SELECTING AN ALIAS**

Every SASS member is required to select a shooting alias representative of a character or profession from the Old West or the western film genre. Your alias may not in any way duplicate or easily be confused with any other member’s alias. SASS Headquarters is the final arbiter of whether an alias is acceptable or not.

These rules are enforced in accepting a new alias for SASS registry:

- It must be “printable” before a wide audience.
- No duplications are permitted.
- If it SOUNDS the same, it is the same.
- Adding “too,” “II,” etc. is not acceptable.
- “Ranger” could become “Texas Ranger” but not “The Ranger.” “John Henry Chisum” could be modified to “Jack Chisum” but not “John H. Chisum” or “Jon Henry Chisum.”
- Historical names may not be modified to make them different. “Wyatt Earp” and “Marshal Wyatt Earp” are considered the same.

The SASS Alias Registry changes daily. Telephone, fax, or email the SASS office to confirm the availability of your alias choice.

If an acceptable alias is not selected, the member’s SASS number will be used. All subsequent name changes are subject to a “name change fee.”

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### CLOTHING AND ACCOUTERMENTS

Cowboy Action Shooting™ is a combination of historical reenactment and Saturday morning at the matinee. Participants may choose the style of costume they wish to wear, but all clothing must be typical of the late 19th century, a B-western movie, or Western television series.

SASS puts a great deal of emphasis on costuming because it adds so much to the uniqueness of our game and helps create a festive, informal atmosphere that supports the friendly, fraternal feeling we encourage in our competitors.

All shooters must be in costume, and we encourage invited guests and family also to be costumed. Shooters must remain in costume at all match events: dinners, award ceremonies, dances, etcetera.

ALL clothing and equipment **MUST** be worn appropriately, how it was intended and how it would have been worn in the OLD WEST or as seen on B-Western movies and television.

### SASS FIREARMS COVENANTS

SASS Cowboy Action Shooting™ competitions are divided into three separate types of matches: main, team, and side matches. The rules regarding SASS approved firearms depend upon the type of competition in which you are participating.

Original and replicas may be used in competition provided they are in good, safe working order. In each of the respective sections, allowed modifications are listed. Just because a manufacturer designs a part or firearm for this sport or just because a firearm was available, does not necessarily mean it is legal for competition. **Only the modifications referenced here as allowed are approved. All others are *illegal*.** As any firearm related sport can be inherently dangerous, SASS does not recommend or suggest the modification of any firearm or the removal of any safety device. Participants in this sport accept responsibility for the use and/or modifications of their firearms and do not depend upon SASS or any of its affiliated clubs or members to make that judgment for them. Please consult with the firearm manufacturer prior to making any firearm modifications. Firearms must operate as intended by the original pre-1900 designs they depict. Firearms must function in a safe manner.

SASS recognizes the desire to enhance firearm performance. Firearm manufacturers, importers, gunsmiths, and the membership as a whole must use caution in any quest to develop mechanisms designed to enhance the operation of firearms for SASS Cowboy Action Shooting™. **Any firearm modification not referenced in this Handbook is *prohibited*.** Parties interested in having modifications, parts, or firearms considered for approval and inclusion in the SASS accepted modification text can request a **Firearms Modification Consideration** application from SASS. Written receipt of acceptance from SASS will be the **ONLY** source of approval. Unless referenced within these Covenants, any modifications, parts, or firearms used without this approval are **illegal**.

**A *stage disqualification* is issued for each stage in which a non-SASS legal firearm is used.**

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### ALL FIREARMS

- All firearms must be designed to fire by use of an impact mechanism such as required by centerfire primers, rimfire primers, or percussion caps. All other firing mechanisms are illegal.
- Internal modifications not referenced here that cannot be seen while the firearm is at rest (action closed) are allowed provided they do not affect the external operation or directly conflict with one of the modifications listed here.
- Modifying the firing, cocking, chambering, or levering mechanism in any way that changes the process from an entirely manual operation to any other style operation (e.g., blowback operation, gas operation, or recoil operation) is expressly prohibited.
- All firearms may be repaired and/or restored to their original condition.
- Replacement parts may be made from materials other than the original unless such material is specifically prohibited.
- All parts may be smoothed, reprofiled, polished, deburred, or replaced provided they are not prohibited in these Covenants.
- Slings are allowed on long guns. Lanyards are allowed on handguns.

### HAMMERS

- Hammers may be replaced or exchanged with hammers designed for the same frame size (e.g., small frame revolver hammers may not be installed on large frame revolvers or vice versa).
- Internal parts of the hammer may be changed (e.g., to allow for a half-cock notch on a revolver).
- Ruger Super Blackhawk/Montado style revolver hammers (i.e. lowered and widened hammers) are acceptable on both adjustable and fixed sight model revolvers.
- Hammer stops may be added.
- The hammer travel distance on any revolver may be adjusted.
- Rear sight notches cut into the revolver hammer may be widened.
- Hammer spur grooves may be recut.

### BARRELS

- Barrels or chambers may be rebored, lined, or sleeved to any of the approved calibers or gauges for that particular firearm provided industry safe limits are maintained.
- Original barrels may be replaced with new barrels of correct styles (e.g., round, octagon, half-round) for that type of firearm.
- Barrels may be shortened and/or crowned.
- Rifle barrels must maintain a length of at least 16 inches.
- Rifle barrels may be altered to accept mounting hardware for an alternative tube magazine configuration and capacity appropriate to the model of firearm being altered.
- Barrels may be altered to accept period style sights as described within the Sights Section.
- Shotgun barrels must maintain a length of at least 18 inches.
- Shotgun barrels may have internal choke tubes installed provided they do not extend beyond the muzzle.
- No heavy competition or “Bull Barrel” is allowed on revolver caliber firearms.

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- Barrels must be made of steel or iron only.
- Visible counter-weighting devices are not allowed.
- Compensating ports are not allowed.

### TRIGGERS AND TRIGGER GUARDS

- Triggers may be profiled.
- Trigger position may be adjusted.
- Trigger stops may be added.
- Shotgun trigger guards may be wrapped with leather or other natural material.
- Bending the trigger guard on side by sides so triggers are more exposed is not allowed.
- Trigger shoes are not allowed.

### STOCKS AND GRIPS

- The length or style of stock may be altered or replaced (e.g., a carbine style stock may be interchanged for a rifle stock and vice-versa).
- Checkering, carving, or laser engraving is allowed on fore-stocks, buttstocks, and revolver grips.
- A permanently fitted, non-adjustable, lace on, or slip on recoil pad is allowed on the buttstock of rifles and shotguns.
- Buttplates may be changed to a buttplate style that was generally available from the original manufacturer.
- A piece of leather or similar natural material may be attached to the buttplate or butt stock. This includes the “wrist”/grip portion of the buttstock.
- Grips or stocks of simulated or natural materials are acceptable provided they are not customized to constitute a “target” grip or stock. That is, they must be of the same basic shape as grips or stocks found on original firearms.
- Revolver grips must conform to the front and rear of the grip frame but may extend beyond the bottom surface.
- Contemporary rubber grips, modern target grips, grip tape, and the like are not allowed.
- A slide on leather cover to protect the offhand from barrel heat or as a repair is allowed on side by side, lever action, and single shot shotguns.
- Leather on a pump shotgun’s fore end or grip surface is not allowed.

### SIGHTS

#### ALL FIREARMS

- Sights must look like sights available during the cowboy era—bead, blade, simple post, or otherwise approved front sights (such as the XS Cowboy Express) made of materials such as steel, iron, ivory, faux ivory, brass, gold, pewter, copper, or silver are allowed.
- Colors other than those of the materials referenced above or any “fluorescent” materials may not be applied to either front or rear sights.
- Rear and front sights may be “blacked” painted, or plated in the colors of the previously listed materials. If blacking, paint, or plating is applied to a revolver front sight, it must cover the entire rear surface of the sight to give the appearance of a solid material.
- All rear sights may have their openings adjusted.



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- The front sight may be raised or lowered to bring point-of-aim and point-of-impact into alignment.
- The back of the front sight may be serrated.

### RIFLE

- Tang mounted rear sights may utilize changeable “peep” apertures and eyecups.
- No bolt or receiver mounted sight is permitted.
- Dovetails may be milled in the barrel for sight replacement.
- Beech style front sights and sight hoods are allowed.
- Front sights may include a bead or insert of steel, iron, ivory, faux ivory, brass, gold, pewter, copper, or silver. The bead or insert shall be the color of the material.
- Rear sights may utilize an insert of the same color as the rear sight to allow easy sight adjustment.
- Ramp style front sights are allowed if original to the firearm.
- Modern style click adjustable barrel or receiver sights are not allowed.

### REVOLVER – FIXED SIGHT MODELS

- Fixed sight revolvers may only use traditional style, barrel mounted, fixed metallic foresights of a simple blade, bead, or post configuration.
- A simple open notched rear sight cut into the frame, hammer, or latch mechanism is the only rear sight allowed.
- Ramp style front sights are not allowed.
- Beaded post front sights or inserts are not allowed.
- Allowed Exceptions: Original open-top cartridge revolvers, cap and ball revolvers, cartridge conversion revolvers, and their modern made replicas may have either a dovetail front or rear sight, and they must conform to the types commonly found on the originals. Barrel mounted rear sights are allowed on open-top revolvers. The Beretta “Laramie” rear latch with the adjustable rear sight may be replaced with the rear latch (with fixed sight) from the “Russian” Model to be allowed as a fixed sight model revolver. Any other revolver by whatever manufacturer or model that has either a dovetailed or screw adjustable front or rear sight, whether movable or adjustable, is an adjustable sight revolver.

### REVOLVER – ADJUSTABLE SIGHT MODELS

- Adjustable sight revolvers may have dovetailed or adjustable rear sights and/or dovetailed front sights.
- The rear of adjustable sight revolver front sights may be reshaped (such as rounded).
- Ramp style front sights are allowed if original to the firearm.
- Beaded post front sights or inserts are not allowed.
- Adjustable sight revolver REAR sights may be replaced with commonly available sights of the same size and type. Modern replacement target sights such as the Bomar and Millett type sights are not allowed.
- Rear sights may utilize an insert of the same color as the rear sight to allow easy sight adjustment.
- Adjustable sight revolver FRONT sights may not be undercut.

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### SHOTGUN

- Front sights may be bead or simple post types.

### COSMETIC EMBELLISHMENT

- Period style tacks, carving, engraving, checkering, inlays, and other such embellishments are allowed on stocks and grips provided they do not constitute any kind of radical or target type grip enhancement.
- Receiver, frame, grip frame, cylinder, or barrel engraving is permitted provided it does not constitute a grip enhancement.
- No portion of the grip frame may be checkered, stippled, serrated or otherwise modified to constitute a grip enhancement.
- A light bead blasted finish may be applied to the exterior of any SASS firearm.
- Metal surfaces may retain their natural color or be blued, browned, plated (such as nickel, gold, or silver), blacked, color case hardened, aged to a patina type finish, or jeweled.

### SCREWS

- Factory screws may be replaced with socket head cap or other type screws.

### FRAMES AND RECEIVERS

- Frames and receivers may be drilled and tapped (e.g., to accept approved type sights).
- Ruger Blackhawk and Ruger Old Army adjustable sight frames may be modified by removing the rear sight assembly, welding up the sight cutout, recontouring the frame top strap, and cutting a new sight notch to replicate Colt SAA or Vaquero frames. The ramp front sight must be replaced with a blade-type in order to be allowed as a fixed sight model revolver.
- Percussion revolvers may be converted to accommodate cartridge-firing mechanisms common to the period. They may also be modified by adding a narrow cap guard to the recoil shield and undercut the hammer (i.e., Manhattan modification). Reproduction percussion revolvers may have the frame contoured to approximate original type designs.
- The dimensions of the ejection port on a slide action shotgun may not be altered.

### LEVERS

- “John Wayne” style levers may be substituted on rifles for the standard factory lever.
- Levers may be wrapped or padded with leather or other natural material.
- Filler “blocks” or other such mechanisms designed to prevent all or drastically limit movement of the fingers within the lever loop are not allowed.
- With the exception of the “John Wayne” levers, any replacement lever must maintain the same basic contour and size as the original lever.
- The lever may be cut and welded provided the basic exterior contour and size is not changed.
- The exchange of an 1873 rifle lever with an 1866 rifle lever is allowed.
- All lever action rifles must have a lever travel distance of not less than 4-1/8 inches when measured as follows:

With the action closed measure three inches back from the back edge of the trigger at the point where it enters the frame. Mark this point on both the bottom of the buttstock and the lever

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opposite the buttstock mark. Open the lever to its maximum extension and measure the distance between the two marks.

*Exception: The Browning BL-22 in .22 caliber, is a legal rifle for the Buckaroo Category and is a legal rifle for .22 caliber rifle side matches.*

### FEED / LOADING MECHANISMS

- The carrier and/or lifter mechanisms in rifles may be lightened, welded, modified, or replaced.
- A “two-shot” drop type system for lever action shotguns may be added.
- Loading lever mechanisms on percussion revolvers may be removed or modified to accommodate barrel length changes.
- The seating mechanism on percussion revolvers may be removed or may be modified to adjust seating depth.

### FIRING PINS

- The length of the firing pin may be extended.
- The visible contour of the rear portion of firing pins or firing pin extensions may not be altered.
- Friction reducing devices such as roller bearings are not allowed on the rear portion of firing pins or firing pin extensions.

### RECOIL REDUCERS

- Internal recoil reducing devices may be added.

### REVOLVER EJECTOR RODS

- Colt style bullseye or crescent ejector rods may be installed.

### REVOLVER GRIP FRAMES

- Birdshead grip frames and grips may be installed on any SAA or its modern replicas.
- Grip frames may be replaced, “rounded,” or extended (e.g., the exchange of a Single Action Army grip frame with an 1860 Army grip frame and vice versa).
- Brass or aluminum grip frames are allowed.

### REVOLVER CYLINDER PINS

- The cylinder pin may be shortened.
- A screw may be used to secure the cylinder pin.

### REVOLVER CYLINDERS

- Centerfire and rimfire cylinders may have no less than five and no more than six chambers.
- The front of the cylinder may be beveled.
- Unfluted cylinders may be fluted.
- Lead in grooves may be cut or extended.
- The revolver may be altered to allow the cylinder to spin in either direction.
- Cylinders may be rebored, lined, or sleeved to any of the approved revolver calibers provided industry safe limits are maintained.
- Cylinders must be made of steel or iron only.

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### SHOTGUN BREAK ACTION

- Internal mechanisms to guarantee break action shotguns do not close accidentally may be added or modified.
- The open angle for break action shotguns may be increased.
- The top opening lever on break action shotguns may be bent (reprofiled) by no more than ½" from the center of the tang to the outside edge of the lever.

### RIFLE REQUIREMENTS

Rifles or carbines used in the main and team matches must be original or replicas of lever or slide action rifles manufactured during the period from approximately 1860 until 1899, incorporating a tubular magazine and exposed hammer. Rifles with box magazines may not be used. Certain shooting categories require a specific type of rifle and ammunition to be used. Please see the shooting categories for further information

### RIFLE CALIBERS

- Must be centerfire of at least .32 caliber and not larger than .45 caliber.
- Must be in a caliber commonly available in revolvers. Examples include, but are not limited to, .32-20, .32 Magnum, .357 Magnum, .38 Special, .38-40, .44-40, .44 Special, .44 Magnum, and .45 Colt. The only allowed exceptions are the .25-20 and .56-50. No rifle calibers such as .30-30 or .38-55 are allowed.
- Buckaroo/Buckarette Category competitors choosing to utilize .22 caliber firearms must use standard velocity .22 caliber rimfire ammunition only.

### REVOLVER REQUIREMENTS

Original single action revolvers manufactured prior to 1899, their approved replicas, and the SASS approved single action adjustable sight revolvers are the only revolvers approved for use in SASS main match competition. The rules relative to SASS approved revolvers depend upon the competition category in which one participates. Sights are a major factor for determining in which category a revolver may be used. Certain shooting categories require a specific type of revolver and ammunition be used. Please see the shooting categories for further information.

No more than two main match revolvers may be carried to the firing line.

### REVOLVER CALIBERS

- Must be centerfire calibers of at least .32 caliber and no larger than .45 caliber or percussion calibers of at least .36 caliber and no larger than .45 caliber.
- Must be in a caliber commonly available in revolvers. Examples include, but are not limited to, .32-20, .32 Magnum, .357 Magnum, .38 Special, .44 Magnum, .44-40, and .45 Colt.
- Standard velocity .22 caliber rimfire ammunition is allowed within the Buckaroo Category only.
- Although the .32 caliber revolvers and .36 caliber cap and ball revolvers are legal, they may not be powerful enough to handle all reactive targets.

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### SHOTGUN REQUIREMENTS

Any side-by-side or single shot shotgun typical of the period from approximately 1860 until 1899 with or without external hammers, having single or double triggers is allowed. Automatic ejectors are allowed on single shot break action, lever, and pump action shotguns ONLY. Side-by-side shotguns may not use automatic ejectors. Lever action, tubular feed, exposed hammer shotguns of the period are allowed, whether original or replicas. The only slide action shotgun allowed is the Model 1897 Winchester shotgun, whether original or replica. Certain shooting categories require a specific type of shotgun and ammunition to be used. Military configurations are not allowed (i.e., trench guns). Please see the shooting categories for additional regulations.

### SHOTGUN GAUGES

- Side-by-side, single shot, and lever action shotguns must be centerfire of at least 20 gauge and no larger than 10 gauge.
- Slide action shotguns must be centerfire of at least 16 gauge and no larger than 12 gauge.
- Side-by-side, single shot, and lever action centerfire shotguns in .410 **caliber and 28 or 32 gauge** are allowed within the Buckaroo Category only.

**ANY EXTERNAL MODIFICATION TO ANY FIREARM NOT SPECIFICALLY REFERENCED IN THIS HANDBOOK IS EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED!**

### OTHER APPROVED FIREARMS

The following additional firearms have been approved for use:

- Small frame Model P revolvers such as the Cimarron Firearms Lightning, Uberti Stallion, and Ruger Single Six .32 H & R Magnum
- Henry Big Boy Rifle (*not legal in Classic Cowboy/Cowgirl Categories*)
- US Firearms Omni Potent Revolver
- Marlin 1894 Tube Feed Rifle—.32 H&R Magnum
- Original or replica Nagant Single Action Revolver

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### HOLSTERS, CARTRIDGE BELTS, AND BANDOLEERS

- All handguns must be carried in a safe holster capable of retaining the firearm throughout a normal range of motion.
- Main match holsters must be located one on each side of the belly button and separated by at least the width of two fists at the belt.  
*(Note: Pocket pistol and Derringer holsters are not “main-match” holsters.)*
- Holsters may not depart from the vertical by more than 30 degrees when worn.
- Ammunition required for **loading/reloading** during the course of any stage must be carried on the shooter’s person in a bandoleer, cartridge/shotshell belt loop, pouch, holster, or pocket or be safely staged as required by stage instructions. Leather belt slide ammo loops are acceptable; however, shotgun shell slides may not be worn over shotgun loops on an ammo belt. Shotgun loops must be in a single row. Rifle and revolver ammunition may not be carried in a shotshell loop. No ammunition may be carried in the mouth, ears, nose, cleavage, or any other bodily orifice.
- Bandoleers, cartridge belts, and pouches must be of traditional design (e.g., bandoleers must be loose and not secured in any way to prevent movement). Modern drop pouches, combat style shotgun loops, wrist or forearm bandoleers, and such are not allowed. Pouches shall have a flap and must carry their contents loose, with no special provisions to organize the contents for rapid retrieval.
- Cartridge loops must not have a metal or plastic liner. However, the entire loop may be made of metal.
- Shotgun ammo loops may not accommodate more than two rounds per loop, and rifle/revolver ammo loops shall accommodate only one round per loop.
- Ammo belts must be worn so all ammo is positioned at or below the belly button.
- Shotgun ammo loops must conform to the shooters contour (i.e., not tilt out from the belt).
- Cartridge loops mounted on a firearm’s stock or forearm, are not allowed.

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### AMMUNITION

The minimum standard for center-fire ammunition used in all smokeless categories in all SASS matches State, Regional, National, International, and World Championship Competitions is not less than a minimum power factor of 60 and no velocity may be less than 400 fps. The maximum velocity standard for revolvers is 1000 fps. The maximum velocity standard for rifles is 1400 fps. Pocket pistols, derringers, and long-range rifles are exempt from the power factor and velocity requirements.

Power factors are simply calculated by multiplying the bullet weight times the velocity and then the resulting number is divided by 1000. Some examples are as follows:

100 gr bullet traveling at 600 fps has a power factor of 60:  $(100 \times 600) / 1000 = 60.00$

77 gr bullet traveling at 800 fps has a power factor of 61.6  $(77 \times 800) / 1000 = 61.60$

200 gr bullet traveling at 400 fps has a power factor of 80  $(200 \times 400) / 1000 = 80.00$

- Shooters may be held responsible for damage caused to a target or injury to personnel due to “bounce back” because of inappropriate ammunition. This major safety violation is grounds for “instant disqualification” and ejection from the match.
- Revolver and rifle ammunition may not be jacketed, semi-jacketed, plated, gas checked, or copper washed. It must be all lead. Molydisulfide, polymer coated bullets, or equivalents are acceptable.
- Revolver and rifle ammunition must be of “single projectile” design. “Multiple projectile” bullets are illegal.
- Ammunition with bullets recessed below the case mouth is disallowed.
- Throughout this manual, blackpowder means blackpowder, or a blackpowder substitute such as Pyrodex, 777, APP, or comparable propellants intended for muzzle loading firearms. Propellants containing nitrocellulose are **prohibited** as blackpowder substitutes.
- Any combination of smokeless and blackpowder (so called duplex loads) is **specifically prohibited** in ANY category. (e.g. Blackhorn 209)
- Shotgun shot size must be number 4 lead birdshot or smaller for all events (no steel or plated shot).
- Magnum and high velocity shotgun shell loads are not allowed.
- Shotgun shells shall not be sized down by the use of any die not manufactured for the specific gauge.
- Shotgun Shell shall not be scored (ringed) as to cause the shot-shell case, wad, and shot column to be shot from the firearm as one projectile.
- Pump and lever action shotguns are allowed to load no more than two live rounds at a time in the main match stages unless specified in the stage description. In team events, shotguns may be loaded to their maximum magazine capacity.
- All centerfire or rimfire ammunition must be designed to package the bullet, gunpowder, and primer into a single metallic case precisely made to fit the firing chamber of the firearm. The primer must be of the type that uses only a small charge of impact sensitive chemical that may be located at the center of the case head or at its rim. Electrically fired ammunition is illegal.



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### CATEGORIES

SASS recognizes shooting categories based upon age, gender, costuming, equipment, shooting style, and/or propellant. The age for a competitor is determined by their age on the first day the match starts. All SASS categories may be subdivided by gender (e.g. Lady Duelist, Lady Gunfighter, Lady 49'er, Lady Wrangler, etc.). Competitors may compete within any category for which they qualify. There are no men's categories.

The following standard should be applied for all style/costume categories when breaking them down by age: The **regulations for the base category will be applied first**; THEN the age limits.

#### AGE BASED

- May use any Main Match revolver.
- Revolvers may be shot in any SASS–legal shooting style, **except Gunfighter.**
- May use any SASS–legal main match shotgun and any legal main match rifle.
- May use any SASS–legal ammunition.
- Juniors are persons aged 16 and under. The category may be subdivided by age and gender. Suggested divisions are “Young Guns” aged 14 through 16 and “Buckaroos” 13 and under. Caution is urged in allowing competitors under age 14. Local laws, regulations, and insurance requirements may prevent matches from offering some age groups.
- Parental consent and supervision is required for all competitors under twenty-one years of age.
- “Buckaroos” must use revolvers, rifles, and shotguns meeting the external standards but may be chambered in .22 LR for revolvers and rifles and .410 **caliber and 28 or 32 gauge** shotguns. Standard velocity ammunition for these firearms must be used. Knockdown targets are not required to fall for Buckaroo Category shooters. A hit will be scored as long as the target is clearly hit. An alternate target **MUST** be provided for all aerial shotgun targets for Buckaroo category competitors.
- Buckaroo Category competitors choosing to use center-fire ammunition in handguns and/or rifles must meet all center-fire power factor and velocity requirements.
- Cowboy Category shooters are competitors of any age range.
- Wrangler Category shooters are competitors 36 years of age or greater.
- Forty-Niners are competitors 49 years of age or greater.
- Seniors are competitors 60 years of age or greater. Senior Duelist is a recognized Duelist Category. **See Duelist description for the equipment restrictions & shooting technique(s).**
- Silver Seniors are competitors 65 years of age or greater.
- Elder Statesmen/Grand Dames are competitors 70 years of age or greater.

#### DUELIST

- Any Main Match fixed sight model revolver.
- Only Duelist Style or Double Duelist Style may be used.
- “**Duelist Style**” is defined as shooting a revolver cocked and fired one handed, unsupported. The revolver, hand, or shooting arm may not be touched by the off hand except when resolving a malfunctioning revolver problem or when transferring the revolver from one hand to the other.



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- “**Double Duelist Style**” is defined as shooting a revolver cocked and fired one handed and unsupported, with each hand, that is, **one revolver** with the left hand and **the other revolver** with the right hand. The revolver, hand, or shooting arm may not be touched by the offhand except when resolving a malfunctioning revolver problem.
- At no time shall the competitor have two loaded revolvers in hand at once.
- May use any SASS–legal main match shotgun and any main match rifle.
- May use any SASS–legal ammunition.

## GUNFIGHTER

- Any Main Match fixed sight model revolver.
- Only Gunfighter Style or Double Duelist Style may be used.
- “**Gunfighter Style**” is defined as shooting with a revolver in each hand. Revolvers must be cocked and fired one handed, unsupported, one right-handed and the other left-handed. There is no set pattern as to how the revolvers are to be fired, but alternating revolvers is clearly the most efficient.

- The Gunfighter, Frontier Cartridge Gunfighter, and B-Western Categories are the only categories that allow two **loaded** revolvers “in hand” at the same time.

A competitor shooting Gunfighter Style in either Gunfighter or B-Western categories is **EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED** from utilizing a simultaneous “double cross draw” method of drawing or holstering revolvers. If Gunfighter-STYLE is used (*both loaded revolvers out at the same time*), the shooter **MUST** shoot the left-side revolver with the left hand and the right-side revolver with the right hand, regardless of how they are drawn from leather. Failure to comply will result in the progressive penalty for “*failure to adhere to the guidelines of the category...*”. *Cross draw IS ALLOWED by any competitor shooting “DOUBLE-DUELIST STYLE” in any category*

- When a stage calls for 10 revolver rounds in a single sequence or the use of only one revolver for the stage, the Gunfighter may draw both revolvers and engage the targets. The Gunfighter shall shoot the targets in exactly the same sequence as prescribed in the stage scenario. *A Gunfighter may utilize any sequence that might be available for user by any other shooting category. Stage instructions that specify separate revolvers such as “first pistol/second pistol”; “left revolver/right revolver”; or “with each handgun” are considered as “1st five shots/2nd five shots” when shooting GUNFIGHTER-STYLE.*
- Both revolvers may be cocked at the same time, but must be shot one at a time to facilitate scoring. A Gunfighter may not holster revolvers with the intent to engage another revolver sequence. Once cocked, all rounds must be expended prior to holstering unless the revolvers were drawn at the wrong time or a revolver/ammunition malfunction has occurred. Inadvertently leaving unfired rounds in a revolver is a miss unless the round is under the hammer, then it is a Stage Disqualification.
- Stage design may allow a competitor shooting Gunfighter Style to stage or restage revolvers between target sequences. If the stage scenario requires the use of another firearm between the revolver sequences or the shooter’s hands are otherwise constrained (e.g., rolling the dice between revolver sequences), the revolvers must be drawn and shot one at a time unless they can be safely staged rather than holstered. In this case, both revolvers may be employed at

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the same time for the first five rounds, safely restaged, and then employed at the same time again for the second five rounds.

- May use any SASS–legal main match shotgun and any legal main match rifle.
- May use any SASS–legal ammunition.
- Two holsters are required, one on each side.

### BLACKPOWDER CATEGORIES

It is expected the blackpowder competitor shall contend with smoke obscured targets. To ensure this, all shotgun, revolver, and rifle powder charges must produce smoke at least equivalent to a baseline load of 15 grains by volume (1 cc) of ffg blackpowder.

#### FRONTIER CARTRIDGE

- Any Main Match fixed sight model revolver.
- Revolvers may be shot two handed or one handed (duelist style).
- Must use blackpowder in all loads (rifle, revolver, and shotgun).
- Must use a side-by-side, single shot or lever action shotgun in the main match stages.
- Any SASS–legal pistol caliber rifle is acceptable.
- Frontier Cartridge Duelist is also recognized with all requirements being the same except the Duelist and Double Duelist shooting styles are used. See Duelist description for the required shooting technique(s).

#### FRONTIER CARTRIDGE GUNFIGHTER

- Any Main Match fixed sight model revolver.
- Only Gunfighter-style or Double Duelist-style may be used.
- Must use blackpowder in all loads (rifle, revolver, and shotgun).
- Must use a side-by-side, single shot, or lever-action shotgun in all main match stages.
- Any SASS–legal pistol caliber rifle is acceptable.
- See GUNFIGHTER category description for the required shooting technique(s) and holster restrictions.

NOTE: Frontier Cartridge competitors may use any SASS–legal firearms and propellants in team and side matches.

#### FRONTIERSMAN

- Any Main Match percussion revolver with non-adjustable sights (Note exceptions listed re: dovetailed sights). (Exception: The 1873 Uberti percussion revolver is not allowed.)
- Revolvers must be shot duelist or double duelist style. See Duelist description for required shooting technique.
- Must use blackpowder in all loads (rifle, revolver, and shotgun).
- Must use a side-by-side, single shot, or lever action shotgun in the main match stages.
- Any SASS–legal pistol caliber rifle is acceptable.

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### CLASSIC COWBOY/COWGIRL

- Any Main Match fixed sight model revolver.
- Revolvers must be shot duelist or double duelist style. See Duelist description for required shooting technique.
- Rifles: Any 1873 or earlier manufacture SASS–legal rifle or a replica thereof (e.g., 1866 Winchester, 1860 Henry, 1873 Winchester).
- Revolver and rifle calibers: .40 caliber or larger, **rimmed** cartridges. Examples include, but are not limited to, .38-40, .44 Special, .44 Russian, .44 Mag., .44-40, .45 Schofield, .45 Colt or .36 caliber or larger cap and ball.
- May use any SASS–legal ammunition as long as it adheres to the above caliber restrictions.
- Shotguns: SASS–legal external hammer double barrel, single shot, or lever actions. External-hammer double barrel shotguns must have manually functioning hammers. Faux hammers and hammers that are cocked internally are illegal.
- Costuming: Must choose at least five of the requirements listed below. All clothing items must be worn appropriately during all shooting events and awards ceremonies.
  - Chaps, Western spurs with spur straps, cuffs, tie or scarf worn loosely around the neck or with scarf slide, vest, pocket watch with full length chain, jacket, sleeve garters, knife (screw knives do NOT qualify), botas, leggings, braces; no straw or palm hats allowed.
- In addition to the above items, ladies may choose from the items listed below in order to compete within this category:
  - Period watch, split riding skirt, bustle, hoops, corset, Victorian style hat (straw allowed), period jewelry, period hair ornaments (e.g., feathers), snood, reticule (period handbag), period lace up shoes, camisole, bloomers, fishnet stockings, feather boa, cape.
- No Buscadero or drop holster rigs allowed (i.e., part of the grip must be above the belt on which the holster hangs).
- Boots are required and must be of traditional design with non-grip enhancing (i.e. “NO Lug”) soles. Moccasins are not allowed.
- Hats must be worn for the entire match.

### “B” WESTERN

- Any main match revolver.
- Revolvers may be shot in any SASS–legal shooting style, at the shooters’ discretion.
- Rifles: Any SASS–legal rifle of 1880 or later design or a replica thereof (e.g., Burgess, Lightning Rifle, 1892, 1894 Winchester or Marlin).
- May use any SASS–legal shotgun.
- May use any SASS–legal ammunition.
- Leather: Buscadero holster rigs or drop holster rigs. (All of the revolver(s) must be carried below the top of the gun belt.) All belt and holster rigs must be embellished (fancy stitching, conchos, spots, or tooling). **No shoulder rigs allowed.**
- Costuming: Shirts must be of the “B” Western style with snap buttons or any of the following: “Smiley Pockets,” embroidery, appliques, fringe, or different colored yokes. Shield shirts are also allowed if the shield/bib has piping or embroidery.

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- Pants must be jeans, ranch pants, or pants with flap over the rear pocket, keystone belt loops, and/or piping or fringe.
- Pants must be worn with a belt. Ladies may wear dresses, skirts, or split riding skirts. Suspenders are not allowed. Felt hats only, no straw, or palm leaf hats. Hats must be worn.
- Boots are required and must be of traditional design and embellished with fancy stitching, multi-color fancy design, conchos or spots. Soles must be non-grip enhancing (i.e., “NO Lug”) soles. Lace up boots and moccasins are not allowed.
- Western Spurs with spur straps are required for men.
- You must choose at least one or more of the following optional items: gloves or gauntlets, scarves with slides or tied around the neck or bolo tie, coat, vest, chaps or cuffs.
- All costumes are expected to be fancy and flashy. The “B” Western costuming must be worn during the entire match and awards ceremony with exception of evening formal occasions.

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### SIDE MATCHES

#### THE PLAINSMAN

This event requires two .36 caliber or larger Frontiersman Category style percussion revolvers, shot Duelist style.

- Must use a SASS–legal single-shot rifle firing a traditional blackpowder rifle or revolver caliber cartridge (e.g., not a .30-30). The rifle may have spring actuated ejectors if they are standard for that rifle. .38 Special is legal
- Must use a side by side or single shot shotgun, with or without exposed hammers, or a lever action shotgun.
- Must use blackpowder in all loads (rifle, revolver, and shotgun).

#### POCKET PISTOLS AND DERRINGERS

Pocket pistols and Derringers are popular for use in side matches and are occasionally introduced as an additional firearm in main match stages.

- A pocket pistol is a small frame, fixed sight, pre-1900 design revolver having a barrel length of four inches or less. Pocket pistols must be .31 caliber or larger. Model “P” Colts and clones and revolvers with swing out cylinders are specifically not allowed regardless of caliber, frame size, or barrel length. Pocket pistols may not be used as or converted to main match revolvers.
- A Derringer is defined as an external hammer, fixed sight, breech loading or percussion ignition, small frame pre-1900 design firearm having one to four barrels up to three and one-half inches long. Derringers must be .22 caliber or larger. The Remington style over/under barrel configuration and the Sharps four-barreled Pepperbox are typical SASS–legal Derringers.
- .22 Magnum ammunition is not allowed.

#### LONG RANGE (or PRECISION) RIFLE

SASS long range or precision rifle competition is different than main match rifle competition with more emphasis placed on precision shooting at longer ranges, with time being a secondary scoring factor. Scoring for these matches is determined by the number of hits, with either of two methods used to break ties. At the match director’s option, either total time used to shoot the required number of shots or a shoot-off may be used to break ties.

There are five categories in long range or precision rifle competition, plus one optional category:

- Lever action, revolver caliber
- Lever action, rifle caliber
- Single Shot
- Buffalo Single Shot
- Optical
- Open Category (may be used at the match director’s option to include those firearms not covered by other official Long Range Categories).

Blackpowder categories can be added to any or all of the basic categories at the option of the match director. Each category competes within itself.

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### BASIC RULES FOR THE LONG RANGE COMPETITIONS

- Front barrel sights may vary from simple blades to period hooded wind gauge designs using interchangeable sight inserts and having a spirit level mounted integral with the sight or sight base.
- Rear sights must either be open iron sights mounted on the barrel or original style tang or stock wrist mounted peep sights. Long range rear barrel mounted sights of the flip-up ladder type may use a peephole drilled through the sliding sight leaf. An example of this is the various ladder type sights used on the Springfield trapdoors.
- Bolt or receiver mounted sights are not allowed.
- “Rifle Caliber” competition rifles must use traditional, period, rimmed cartridges. No cartridge chambered for use in any SASS approved main match revolver or rifle may be used in the “Rifle Caliber” competition, except the .56-50. Thus, .30-30 (.30 WCF), .38-55 Marlin & Ballard, .43 Spanish, or .45-70 Government cartridges are legal, while a .375 Winchester, .444 Marlin, .32-20, or .44-40 are not legal. Shotguns using slugs are not allowed.
- Any propellant powder may be used (with the exception smokeless powder is not allowed in the Buffalo Single Shot competition).
- Regardless of category or caliber, bullets used in long range and precision rifle matches must be made of pure lead or lead alloy having a plain base, gas checked, or paper patched configuration.
- Range finders or any other devices for calculating distances or sight adjustments are not allowed. Their use constitutes a side match disqualification.

Lever Action Rifles used in long-range matches, whether revolver or rifle calibers, must be originals or replicas of rifles manufactured during the period from approximately 1860 until 1899. Lever or slide action, tubular feed, exposed hammer rifles or carbines are allowed, providing they are in safe working condition.

Single Shot and Buffalo Single Shot firearms must be originals or replicas of single shot rifles manufactured during the period from approximately 1860 until 1899. All rifles MUST have exposed hammers. The caliber and cartridge rules for the “Rifle Caliber” firearms noted above under basic rules also apply to Single Shot and Buffalo Single Shot rifles with the exception Buffalo Single Shot rifles must be .375" bore size or larger.

Buffalo Single Shot competition has further restrictions requiring original or replica rifles to be a design of US manufacture. Spring-loaded ejectors are also prohibited, except for Springfield Trapdoor Rifles.

The Optical Category firearms must meet the above restrictions with the following optical rules:

- No length or power limitation on the scope.
- Scope tube body to be ¾" or less in diameter and any ocular or objective lenses and adjusting or assembly rings to be less than 1" in diameter.
- No internal scope adjustments for windage or elevation.
- Mounts are to be of a traditional style of the period and contain the windage and elevation adjustments for the scope in either, or both, the front or rear mounts. No click adjustments in the mount. Either dove tail mounting or scope block mounting is allowed.

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- Original scope mounts of either the Cataract or Malcolm style or variations thereof or replicas or derivative scope mounts conform to the criteria of paragraph above.  
(Note: These rules are identical to the NRA BPCS Rules on optical sights.)

## SCORING AND TIMING

SASS matches are scored based upon elapsed shooting time and added penalty points for missed targets. Each stage is scored individually and, in most club matches, the total combined score for all stages fired is ranked for place of finish, either over all or by category.

At END of TRAIL, Winter Range, SASS Regionals, and at the discretion of each affiliated club, rank scoring is used. Rank scoring is recommended when all the stages in a match are not of approximately the same duration and degree of difficulty. The alternative to rank scoring is scoring based upon total time (total raw time plus penalties). Stage Point Scoring may also be used.

Overall winners, often including both the top male and top female competitors, are traditionally recognized at SASS matches. The “best score” for the main match stages determines the overall winner.

Rifle, revolver, and shotgun targets must be engaged with the appropriate type firearm. A “miss” is defined as the failure to hit the appropriate target type using the appropriate type firearm. Missed targets are scored as five-second additions to the competitor’s raw time for the stage (at annual matches and above).

Procedurals are unintentional “mistakes” where the competitor engages the stage in a manner other than the way it is supposed to be shot. Procedurals are scored as ten-second additions to the competitor’s raw time for the stage, no more than one per stage.

Minor safety infractions occurring during a course of fire that do not directly endanger persons result in a ten-second penalty being added to the shooter’s time per occurrence for that stage.

“Minor” safety infractions are occurrences such as leaving empty or live rounds in magazine or on the carrier of the long gun in which it was loaded or cocking a revolver before the muzzle reaches 45 degrees downrange.

Major safety infractions result in the shooter’s disqualification from the stage or the match. A second Stage Disqualification in the match shall result in a Match Disqualification. “Major” infractions include a dropped firearm, any discharge that impacts within ten-feet of any person (an impact within five-feet is a match disqualification), violation of the 170 degree safety rule, “sweeping” any person with the muzzle of a firearm, and similar acts that have high potential for personal injury.

In the event a competitor feels a range officer’s ruling is in error, the ruling may be politely and immediately appealed to the Range Master/Match Director. The Range Master/Match Director will consider the appeal on grounds of policy and rules interpretation only, and their decision is final. At major matches special protest juries comprised of Territorial Governors may be empanelled to aid the Range Master/Match Director in making a reasonable judgment.



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### FAILURE TO ENGAGE

A “failure to engage” occurs when a competitor willfully or intentionally disregards the stage instructions in order to obtain a competitive advantage and is not assessed simply because a competitor “makes a mistake.” A Failure to Engage applies only to **non-shooting** situations such as refusing to rope a steer, throw a stick of dynamite, or otherwise make an attempt to complete any other non-shooting procedure written within the stage instructions. In such a case, in addition to any penalties for misses, procedural, or minor safeties, a 30-second Failure to Engage penalty is assessed.

### RANGE OPERATIONS

Cowboy Action Shooting™ is not intended to be a precision shooting competition. Small targets and long distances take the “action” out of the game and make it more discouraging for newer shooters.

Both experienced and inexperienced shooters want hits on their targets. Some folks just hit (or miss) a little faster than others. Too many misses, or the perception the targets are too difficult to hit, discourage folks from continuing to play, especially the less proficient shooters.

Ask any experienced Cowboy Action Shooter, and she or he will tell you there is no such thing as a target too big or too close to miss!

A more detailed guide to match design is available in the SASS Match Directors Guide.

Metal and paper targets of generous size are used. Reactive targets such as pepper poppers and falling plates are used when practical to enhance shooter feedback and spectator appeal. Targets are set at close to medium range. There are no absolute rules, but we suggest the following distances, by firearm, if using a target approximately 16" X 16":

**Revolver – 7 to 10 yards**

**Shotgun – 8 to 16 yards**

**Rifle – 13 to 50 yards**

Derringer/Pocket Pistol – point blank to three yards, shooting paper, cardboard, or balloons only. It's too close to safely shoot steel.

To the extent possible, reactive targets are set to fall when squarely hit with no more than a standard .38 Special 158 gr. factory load.

SASS matches above the club level are “no alibi” matches. Once the first round goes down range, the competitor is committed to the stage and must finish the stage to the best of his or her ability. Reshoots/restarts are not awarded for ammunition or firearm malfunctions. However, if there is a range failure (failure of props, timer, or the range officers) beyond the competitor's control, a restart may be granted. On a reshoot/restart, the competitor starts over clean, carrying only accrued safety penalties forward. Restarts shall be allowed for a competitor to achieve a “clean” start up to the point at which the first round goes down range. Multiple restarts by the same shooter, that in the judgment of the R.O. are seen to be taking advantage, will not be entertained as they are not in the spirit of the game.

The role of the Range Officer is to safely assist the shooter through the course of fire. Coaching and constraining the shooter from unsafe acts are expected when appropriate, minimizing procedural and safety penalties whenever possible. Proper coaching or no coaching at all is not considered RO Interference and therefore will never be grounds for a reshoot.



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Failure to stage firearms or ammunition at the designated position(s)/location(s) is the fault of the competitor and scored as a procedural unless the competitor is able to correct the situation, unassisted, while in the process of completing the stage under time. The penalty for using "illegally acquired" ammunition (i.e., NOT carried to the line/staged **by the shooter** in an approved manner) is a PROCEDURAL. Any targets hit using that ammo are scored as MISSES. **NO adjustments will be made to the stage raw time.**

It is expected the Range Officers will be the responsible parties for observing and resolving all safety related matters occurring in the loading, unloading, and firing line areas. However, any shooter who observes a safety infraction not seen by the Range Officer(s) should call the infraction to a Range Officer's attention, at which time the matter will be resolved.

### STAGE CONVENTIONS

Stage Conventions, or standard range behaviors, are a list of practices every shooter is expected to know and follow on every stage. These stage conventions should be followed in all SASS matches unless otherwise directed in stage descriptions.

1. All knockdown shotgun targets may be reengaged until down.
2. All knockdown targets (shotgun, rifle, or revolver) must go down to count. Any knockdown target still standing once the shooter has engaged the next sequence of the stage will be counted as a miss.
3. All staged firearms shall have their barrels pointed safely down range. All long guns initially staged on a horizontal flat surface shall be staged lying flat where at least the rear of the trigger guard is on the staging area. All handguns initially staged on a horizontal flat surface must be staged with the entire handgun lying flat on the staging surface.
4. Staged shotguns shall be open and empty.
5. Shooters may not start a stage with ammunition in hand.
6. Long guns will be cleared and discarded with their barrels pointed safely down range. If the action of a long gun closes after being cleared, the shooter will, at the conclusion of the stage, show it to be clear to the TO. No person other than the competitor may handle the long gun prior to opening the action and showing the long gun to be clear. Appropriate penalties will be applied if the long gun is not clear.
7. Revolvers are returned to leather after the shooting string.
8. Revolvers are drawn and used in accordance with the shooter's category.
9. If no starting position is given, the shooter shall stand upright with revolvers holstered and hands at the side, not touching any firearm.
10. Cowboy port arms is defined as standing upright with the butt of the long gun at or below the waist of the shooter, the muzzle at or above the shoulder, and the long gun held with both hands.

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### SAFETY PRACTICES

#### FIRST, LAST, AND ALWAYS

Our sport, by its very nature, has the potential to be dangerous and a serious accident can occur. Every participant in a SASS match is expected to be a safety officer. Each shooter's first responsibility is for his or her own safe conduct, but all shooters are expected to remain alert for actions by others that are unsafe.

Any Range Officer or shooter may confront any participant about an observed unsafe situation, and it is expected the matter will quickly be corrected and not repeated. Any argument concerning the correction of a safety related matter can be expected to result in that shooter being ejected from the range.

Shooters shall adhere to the following safety rules:

1. Treat and respect every firearm at all times as if it were loaded.
2. Safe firearm handling is the shooter's responsibility. The 170-degree safety rule is in effect. Muzzle direction is important between, before, during, and after shooting a stage. A muzzle must not be allowed to "sweep" the other participants at any time. Long guns shall have their actions open with chambers and magazines empty and muzzles pointed in a safe direction when transported at a match. A holstered revolver (loaded or empty) with the hammer fully down on an empty chamber or expended case is considered safe and may not be interpreted as sweeping another shooter while safely secured in the holster. Failure to manage safe muzzle direction is grounds for disqualification from the stage, and for repeated offenses, from the match.
3. All firearms shall remain unloaded except when under the direct observation of a Range Officer on the firing line or in the loading area.
4. Six-guns are always loaded with only five rounds and the hammer lowered, fully down, and left resting on the empty chamber. "Five shooters" may load five rounds, but the hammer must rest on a dummy chamber, safety slot, or pin in the cylinder so the hammer does not rest on a live round/cap. If a particular stage requires a one shot reload, the sixth chamber of percussion revolvers may be charged at the bench and then capped "on the clock," either before the first round is fired or after the last round is fired. A complete reload for percussion revolver shooters is handled by staging a loaded, uncapped revolver down range or switching uncapped cylinders and capping on the clock.
5. No cocked revolver may ever leave a shooter's hand. (Stage Disqualification) This does NOT apply when loading or reloading on the firing line.
6. Revolvers are returned to leather (re-holstered) with hammer down on a spent case or empty chamber at the conclusion of the shooting string, unless the stage description specifically directs otherwise (e.g., "move to next position and set gun on table or prop"). A shooting string is defined as shots from one type of firearm prior to the next type of firearm engaged.
7. De-cocking may not be done to avoid a penalty if cocked at the wrong time, position or location once a round has gone down range. NO firearm may be de-cocked on the firing line except by pointing it down range and pulling the trigger or while under the direct supervision of the Timer Operator (TO). (This requires a positive indication/acknowledgement from the TO to the shooter). The penalty for de-cocking is a Stage Disqualification.

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8. Once a revolver is cocked, the round under the hammer must be expended in order for it to be returned to a safe condition. Once a rifle is cocked, either the round under the hammer must be expended or the action opened in order for the rifle to be returned to a safe condition. Shotgun shells may be removed, if necessary, without penalty in order to return the firearm to a safe condition.
9. If a firearm is shot out of sequence or from the wrong position or location, the shooter will be awarded a single procedural penalty. In this situation, if the shooter elects or is forced to miss an appropriate target due to unsafe angles or target availability, a round may be reloaded to avoid a miss penalty (the dreaded “Double Jeopardy” of a procedure and miss). This does not mean a shooter may reload a rifle or revolver at any other time to make up a miss. Unfired ejected rifle rounds may be replaced.
10. Inadvertently leaving unfired rounds in a revolver is a miss unless the round is under the hammer, then it is a Stage Disqualification.
11. Safe conditions of firearms for movement or leaving a shooters hand vary with each type of firearm. Please see the SASS Range Operations Basic Safety Course for a detailed description of what constitutes a safe firearm condition for movement.
12. A shooter with firearm in hand shall never be allowed to move with a live round under a cocked hammer. Movement is defined the same as “traveling” in basketball. Once the firearm is cocked, one foot must remain in place on the ground until the firearm is made safe. Shooting on the move is expressly disallowed. Penalty = Stage Disqualification.
13. A shooter shall not cock any revolver until the firearm is pointed safely down range. While on the firing line, any discharge of any firearm impacting within ten-feet of the shooter is unsafe and will result in disqualification from the stage or, if less than five feet, from the match. Any discharge away from the actual firing line shall result in a Match Disqualification.
14. A round over the berm is always a bad idea but is worse on some ranges than others. Local match regulations establish the appropriate penalty, up to and including a Match Disqualification.
15. Rifles may be staged down range from the shooter with the magazine loaded, action closed, hammer down and chamber empty.
16. Shotguns are always staged open with magazine and chambers empty and are loaded on the clock unless the stage begins with the shotgun in the shooter’s hands. Mule eared shotguns can be cocked at the beginning of a scenario, whether staged or in the shooter’s hands. Long guns are never staged with their muzzles on the ground.
17. Long guns will be cleared and discarded with their barrels pointed safely downrange. A 10-second minor safety penalty will be assessed if the firearm is not cleared. This condition may be corrected prior to the next round being fired. If the long gun is the last firearm used, it must be cleared prior to it leaving the shooters hand(s) at the unloading table. This does not apply to firearms shot out of sequence, made “safe,” and then restaged. If the action of a long gun closes after being cleared, the shooter will, at the conclusion of the stage, show it to be clear to the TO. Appropriate penalties will be applied if it is not clear. No one other than the competitor may handle the firearm in question. See RO-I for further clarification.
18. A live round left in the chamber of a long gun constitutes a stage disqualification. Any other rounds, live or empty, left anywhere in a long gun in which it was loaded is a ten-second

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- minor safety violation. Broken firearms still containing rounds do not warrant penalties, except for misses, so long as the malfunction is declared and the firearm made safe.
19. All shooters must demonstrate rudimentary familiarity and proficiency with the firearms being used. Shooters are expected to perform within their capabilities at all times. SASS matches are not the forums in which to learn basic firearms handling.
  20. SASS matches are not fast draw competitions. Any unsafe firearm handling in the course of a draw from the holster or any “fanning” will result in the shooter’s disqualification from that stage. “Slip-hammering” is not the same as fanning and is legal.
  21. Although cross draw and shoulder holsters are legal, they represent a significant safety concern. No holster may depart from the vertical by more than 30° when worn. Extreme care must be exercised when drawing a firearm from a cross draw or shoulder holster or returning the firearm to leather. The user must “twist” their body, if necessary, to ensure the muzzle never breaks the 170° safety rule during the process. (NOTE: The 170° safety rule means the muzzle of the firearm must always be straight down range +/- 85° in any direction. If a competitor “comes close” to breaking the 180° safety plane, the 170° safety rule has been violated and the competitor is at fault.
  22. The restrictions against breaking the downrange 180° angle apply to ALL HOLSTERS and METHODS of DRAW/REHOLSTER. This allowance applies to ALL types/styles of holsters, from canted double strong side to cross draw, to shoulder/Huckleberry rigs.
  23. The muzzle of a revolver may be oriented into the straight down 180° as it clears leather; but MUST then go immediately into the DOWNRANGE 170° (and vice versa on the return)
  24. It is also necessary to note that during the course of fire, the shooter must be given the ability to draw and holster revolvers from approved/legal holsters and the ability to retrieve and return vertically staged double-barreled shotguns without penalty. Any firearm that breaks the 170° safety rule will result in a Stage Disqualification
  25. Movement is not allowed with a loaded, cocked firearm. Movement is defined by the basketball “traveling” rule. Whenever a shooter has a loaded, cocked firearm in hand, at least one foot must remain in place on the ground. 1st violation will result in a Stage Disqualification; 2nd violation will result in a Match Disqualification. This includes leaving the loading table with a cocked, loaded firearm. Shooting on the move is expressly disallowed. Penalty = Stage Disqualification.
  26. A dropped unloaded firearm on the firing line (from the loading table to the unloading table) results in the shooter’s disqualification from the stage. A dropped loaded firearm results in a match disqualification. A shooter may not pick up a dropped firearm. The Range Officer will recover the firearm, examine it, clear it, and return it to the shooter. ***This does NOT apply to holstered revolvers that remain “in leather” in event of an equipment failure (e.g. broken belt buckle) causing the gun/ammo belt to fall. Shooter may safely recover a fallen gun/ammo belt and continue finishing the stage without penalty; or wait until finishing the stage for retrieval.***
  27. Ammunition dropped by a shooter in the course of reloading any firearm during a stage or “ejected” from any firearm may be retrieved and replaced, or, alternatively must be replaced from the shooter’s person or other area as allowed by stage description. If the round is not fired it is counted the same as a missed shot.
  28. The unloading officer or Range Officer MUST inspect all firearms before they leave the shooting stage. All rifles and pump or lever action shotguns must have their action cycled

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for the inspecting official. All revolvers, whether used or not in the stage, must also be inspected.

29. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the range area for all shooters, guests, range officers, and others, until shooting is done for the day. No shooter may consume any alcoholic beverage until he or she has completed all of their shooting for the day and stored their firearms.
30. No shooter may ingest any substance that will affect his or her ability to participate with a maximum state of awareness and in a completely safe manner. Both prescription and non-prescription pharmaceuticals that may cause drowsiness or any other physical or mental impairment must be avoided.
31. Hearing protection is highly recommended and eye protection is mandatory in and around the shooting areas. While small, period glasses look great, full protection, high impact glasses are strongly recommended. Such protection is recommended for everyone when in the range area, and eye protection is mandatory for spectators when within direct line of sight of steel targets.
32. All loading and unloading shall be conducted only in the designated areas.
33. NOTE: Percussion revolver shooters must exercise care to ensure they maintain safe muzzle direction during loading and have fired or cleared all capped chambers prior to leaving the unloading area. It is not permissible to seat percussion caps on a revolver's nipple using the revolver's hammer. Percussion revolvers may only be capped at the loading area or on the firing line.
34. Dry firing at the loading table is not allowed and results in a stage disqualification. Dry firing is allowed only at designated safe areas. Dry firing is defined as the act of bringing the firearm into a shooting position, cocking the hammer, and pulling the trigger as if to cause the firearm to fire normally.
35. Only registered competitors may wear firearms.
36. If a competitor has a firearm malfunction that cannot be cleared during the course of fire, the shooter may not leave the firing line until the firearm has been cleared. A Match Disqualification will be awarded to the shooter if they leave the firing line with the malfunctioning firearm unless under the direct supervision of a Match Official.
37. Failure to stage firearms or ammunition at the designated position(s) or location(s) is the fault of the competitor and scored as a **procedural** unless the competitor is able to correct the situation, unassisted, while in the process of completing the stage under time.

Failure to bring enough ammo to the line to complete the stage is NOT a procedural. (scored the same as misses for any un-fired rounds). The **procedural** in this case would only apply to ammo (like firearms) when not correctly staged on the line (e.g. on/in a prop), and not corrected by the shooter unassisted, on the clock.

A shooter **MAY NOT** leave the line once the stage has begun to retrieve ammo or firearms until all firearms brought to the line are verified as clear. Penalty for violation is a **Stage Disqualification**.

The penalty for using "illegally acquired" ammunition (i.e. NOT carried to the line/staged by the shooter in an approved manner) will be a PROCEDURAL. Any targets hit using that ammo will be scored **the same** as MISSES. NO adjustments will be made to the stage raw time.

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38. Competitors shall unload each of their firearms at the designated unloading area and have them visually inspected to make sure all chambers empty. Rifles and shotguns must be cycled to verify their magazines are empty. All revolvers taken to the firing line must be checked, whether or not they were used, and only two main match revolvers may be taken to the line.
39. Competitors arriving at the designated loading area with uncleared firearms after completing a stage within the same day will be assessed a Stage Disqualification penalty on the previously completed stage.
40. Competitors shall not leave the designated loading area with a loaded firearm unless they are proceeding to the stage as the next competitor to begin the stage.
41. Interpersonal Conflicts **WILL NOT** be tolerated.

## OUTLAWED

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

- Modern shooting gloves.
- Short sleeve shirts (Male competitors only)
- Short sleeve tee shirts, long sleeve tee shirts, and tank tops for all competitors.  
Long sleeved Henley type shirts with buttons are acceptable.
- Modern feathered cowboy hats (Shady Bradys).  
Straw hats of traditional design (e.g., Stetson, Bailey, sombreros,) are acceptable.
- Designer jeans
- Ball caps
- All types of athletic shoes or combat boots, no matter the material from which they are constructed.
- Nylon, plastic, or Velcro accouterments.
- The displaying of manufacturer's, sponsor's, or team logos on apparel.  
Manufacturer's labels on such apparel or equipment are acceptable.

SASS wants our participants to be safe, have fun, develop their competitive shooting skills, and enjoy the rich traditions of the Old West. We ask you join us in the friendly spirit of competition and preservation of our heritage.

## SASS MOUNTED SHOOTING

SASS Mounted Shooting is a special event where experienced riders traverse a course of fire in the shortest period of time shooting balloons with match supplied .45 caliber blanks. Please see the SASS Mounted Shooters Handbook for additional information.

## SASS WILD BUNCH™ ACTION SHOOTING

SASS Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting is a separate shooting discipline within SASS. Although similar in many respects, it is not "Cowboy Action with a 1911!" Wild Bunch™ is a three-gun action competition using the 1911, a .40+ caliber rifle, and a Model '97 or Model '12 shotgun. Please see the SASS Wild Bunch™ Handbook for additional information.

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**SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY**

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