BEST PRACTICES MANUAL

Always refer to the Handbook for official program rules. http://bit.ly/SCTPhandbook

i. FORWARD

SCTP designed this manual to serve as a reference and guide for shooting sports teams, coaches, volunteers, and athletes. Because the sport is ever evolving, the program will strive to continually update and revise this manual and address topics as they arise.

Please note: Some of the material contained herein is opinion and/or based on the consensus expressed by active coaches and participants. Teams are encouraged to carefully consider their team's needs and dynamics before adopting any optional policies or practices.

The mission of SCTP is to provide a fun, safe, and educational environment for youth to explore the shotgun sports and outdoor opportunities. By engaging youth in SCTP, the program hopes athletes are recruited into an outdoor lifestyle for a lifetime.

We welcome feedback and content suggestions for the purpose of making this manual more comprehensive and useful. Please contact SCTP National staff with your comments.

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Scholastic Clay Target Program
165 Bay Ridge Lane
Burlington, WI 53105
Phone: 262-939-6664
www.sssfonline.com

WHY JOIN THE SCTP?

The SCTP is a **National** Youth Clay Target Shooting Program focused on "Team"! There is no room for the win at all cost attitude. Much like football, baseball, basketball and track, we help build school/club teams and conferences across the country and have been doing this since 2001 when it started under the National Shooting Sports Foundation!
The SSSF or Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation now implements this program, the largest and longest acting youth shooting program in the world!

Currently, the SCTP has over 20,000 athletes/coaches across the country participating in our program encompassing 47 states. Our teams are led by certified coaches and we carry a 10-million-dollar Liability policy on ALL our members! There is a reason that Industry partners with the SCTP, come check us out!

Please see below a partial listing of the opportunities we offer our teams, athletes and coaches!

- ✓ **$10,000,000 Liability Policy that can include your school and gun club as an "also insured" at no additional cost! Our policy is through Sportsman's Insurance Agency, the leader in this industry!**
- ✓ **COMPLETE Background checks! The SCTP does a comprehensive background check on every coach!**
- ✓ **Coach Training…. many of the SCTP coaches are certified Level I NRA/USAS/CMP Shotgun Coaches**
- ✓ **Virtual and Face-to-Face Competitions available throughout the entire shooting year. (no extra cost)**
- ✓ **Shooting year runs from September 1st through August 31st. Athletes are $25, Coaches are $35.**
- ✓ **Athletes from 4th & 5th grade through college can participate in our program.**
- ✓ **State, Regional and 3 National Championships in both American and International disciplines.**
- ✓ **Competitions in Trap, Skeet, Sporting Clays, International Skeet, Bunker Trap and Olympic Doubles.**
- ✓ **The SCTP is the "official" youth shooting program to Team USA and USA Shooting.**
- ✓ **Junior Olympic Development Camps (JODC's)…. Athletes stay right at the Olympic Training Center!**
- ✓ **Team savings accounts with the Midway USA Foundation….and Endowment funds that we deposit.**
- ✓ **Raffle, New Team Start-Up packages and Banquet packages are available from us helping teams raise funds! The SCTP also administers a "National Raffle" to help teams raise funds for no charge!**
- ✓ **Industry sponsored "special" gun and ammo prices for SCTP teams and athletes.**
- ✓ **A comprehensive scoring/registration program available to all coaches & teams at no charge!**
- ✓ **Your team's very own website included with registration in the SCTP!**
- ✓ **The SCTP gives out over $100,000 a year in college scholarships to SCTP athletes graduating from high school. Since 2013, the SCTP has given out over $550,000**
- ✓ **Prizes! Last year alone the SCTP gave out over 35 guns at our national championships in Ohio!**
- ✓ **SCTP "All State Team" recognition and competition at our National Championships!**
- ✓ **SCTP International Team placement opportunities. 15 members lead by Coach Terri DeWitt**
- ✓ **2-year college division for college programs along with virtual shooting opportunities!**
- ✓ **College day at our National Championships in July…. come meet college coaches and discuss scholarship opportunities for your athletes continuing education after high school!**
- ✓ **And much, much more…. Check out our sponsors, we think that will tell you all you need to know!**

You can be part of any and all other youth programs, the SCTP does not discriminate!
We hope that you and your school or club team will consider being part of the largest youth clay target program in the world, the Scholastic Clay Target Program! SCTP is where it's at www.sssfonline.org

I. INTRODUCTION

The Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) was established in 2001 with the goal of providing youth opportunities to participate in shooting sports activities and competitions with their peers. SCTP, which operates the program, designed it to teach safe firearm handling, responsibility, leadership, and teamwork, and to promote healthy competition. The SCTP is a National Youth Clay Target Shooting Program focused on "Team"! There is no room for the win at all cost attitude. Much like football, baseball, basketball and track, we help build school/club teams and conferences across the country and have been doing this since 2001 when it started under the National Shooting Sports Foundation with the support of firearms and ammunition manufacturers and industry across the country! The SSSF or Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation now implements this program, the largest youth shooting program in the world!

Since its inception, SCTP has proudly achieved those goals and is able to continue to grow the program. The program has been touted in national magazines and on television shows. Many athletes and coaches have been invited to attend the Junior Olympic Development Camp in Colorado Springs. These achievements are just the tip of the iceberg.

The shooting sports and SCTP are always evolving. As such, the program seeks to continually improve the SCTP experience for coaches, athletes, volunteers, and supporters—including the gun clubs that make the program possible. In that vein, the idea and desire for this manual was conceived.

This manual was designed to be a reference and guide for all SCTP participants. It is not a set of rules or bylaws; those are established in the http://bit.ly/SCTPhandbook. The recommendations contained herein are meant to improve the overall SCTP experience while equipping teams with the tools they need to be successful.

As such, this manual is fluid in that it will be subject to continued revision and development as better techniques and methods become available. To ensure this manual remains updated and useful, the program encourages program participants to submit suggestions for content updates and development and to share their best practices with others.

This manual aims to be a comprehensive resource—and many topics are covered, ranging from safety to team and event organization to managing parent and athlete expectations and attitudes. Because a diverse group of contributors—including teams, world class athletes, coaches, and manuals from governing bodies—were consulted in the process of developing this manual, the SCTP believes the recommendations within are both sound and practical. That said, many suggestions are based on opinion and experiences of the individual contributors as well as team needs, and dynamics should influence any practices and policies used.

Lastly, the SCTP hopes this manual serves as a means by which we can thank all coaches, parents, athletes, gun clubs, and volunteers who have invested in SCTP. Because of the time and dedication of all participants and supporters, the program has achieved great success. We hope this manual serves to perpetuate that success and empowers new SCTP participants with the tools necessary to achieve the potential of every athlete, coach, and team.

II. SAFETY

The number one goal of SCTP is to provide a safe environment for all SCTP participants, free from accidents or injuries. Therefore, the program requires strict adherence to the rules and regulations. All SCTP participants and volunteers have a responsibility to maintain program safety standards. If you see any unsafe behavior or activity, address the person displaying the behavior and let the head coach know immediately.
Due to their level of time commitment, coaches, in particular, are responsible for ensuring SCTP participants **always** practice safe behavior and are required to intervene at any time they are aware of unsafe behavior.

As part of any athlete's regular training and practices, coaches should ensure safety measures and training are incorporated. This training should include—but is not limited to—general firearm handling and safety; ensuring athletes know the specifications of their firearm, including maintenance needs; reinforcing targets and athletes' understanding of their targets; studies regarding appropriate ammunition; and lessons regarding clearing a misfire, squib loads, and others. At all times, safe behaviors. The Ten Commandments of Firearm Safety (Exhibit A) should be observed. Additionally, safety-training entails protecting the body from both immediate and long-term health effects and practices to minimize those effects, such as wearing ear and eye protection, must be observed. These issues should be addressed at each practice every year, for every athlete.

It is important to remember that the current political climate is such that shooting sports are highly scrutinized. Reinforcing and practicing safety will ensure the sport is able to continue.

All coaches have the authority, responsibility, and expectation to put an immediate stop to any unsafe action, in any setting—practices, competitions, and other events—at any time, and regarding any athlete, to include instances when firing must be stopped on the firing line. For this reason, SCTP always requires a coach to be on the field.

When it becomes necessary for a coach to intervene, it is best to do so in a calm and effective manner, turning the safety hazard into a teachable moment for the team. Coaches are encouraged to ask questions, such as:

- Why did I stop the shoot?
- What did you see that was not safe?
- How could this situation have been improved?

When possible, it is important to acknowledge the positive, for example, "Yes, you had a misfire, but you had your barrel downrange, ensuring no one was hurt."

It is in these moments that coaches have the most profound opportunity to influence athletes.

When it becomes necessary for a coach to correct an athlete on another team, the coach is encouraged to do so in a positive and appropriate matter. The coach correcting the behavior should then speak with the athlete's coach to ensure the concern is properly addressed.

Coaches should never delay in correcting unsafe behavior, regardless of when, where, or how the behavior occurs or who is responsible for that behavior.

Parents, volunteers, fellow athletes, and spectators are also expected to immediately report unsafe behavior to a coach.

In addition to basic safety, SCTP has special rules designed to better protect athletes. All SCTP participants should be aware of these rules, which are outlined in http://bit.ly/SCTPhandbook Section 8: Rules. Please read all rules in full and note the following:

- Toe pads, closed-toe and heel footwear: To protect athletes and spectators, toe pads are forbidden, and athletes must wear closed-toe and heel, well-fitting shoes.
- Muzzle control: Muzzles control is imperative—when not on station, firearm muzzles should be pointing straight up or down, with breach open.
- Use of mechanical safety: Mechanical safeties shall be engaged according to the rules of the discipline, outlined here.

To view the complete rules, refer to the http://bit.ly/SCTPhandbook

The SCTP aims to teach all athletes safe habits and practices in a safe environment. It will enforce the rules of the sport and organization accordingly. Coaches are encouraged to build opportunities for athletes to engage their safety during practice.

III. STARTING A TEAM

This section of the manual will address the process and offer tips to make starting a new team smoother. The SCTP encourages perseverance as coaches, parents, and athletes alike navigate the challenges of starting a new team and begin engaging others in an outdoor lifestyle.

To start a team, a head coach must be identified.

- School-based teams typically form when a group of interested parents works with a school administrator.
- Club and other teams form when a group of interested parents search out a and select their own head coach.

SHOT

1. Login to the SHOT System to create your new team and register your first coach.
2. Create (new teams) or update (returning teams) your information on the SHOT System. See video tutorial for more information.
3. Additional coaches / volunteers must be added through an invitation process in the SHOT System. Please watch our video tutorial on how to add a new coach or volunteer to your team.
4. Pay your $35 registration fee for each volunteer. Fees can be paid online through the SHOT system individually or in bulk.
5. Ensure your background check is current (a new check is required every two years) by logging into the SHOT system to verify the last date approved.
6. Take the Positive Coaching Alliance Double Goal Coaches Course if you have not done so previously. There is no cost for the course when using the SSSF-provided voucher code. Volunteers must take this course only one time.

   Requirement for registration of all athletes are as follows:
7. Complete and return the athlete consent/waiver form for SCTP for each athlete. Head coaches must keep a copy of the signed form and return the original to the program office listed on the form.
8. Complete *and retain* the Sportsmanship Contract form for SCTP for each athlete.
9. Complete *and retain* the Medical Consent form for SCTP for each athlete.
10. Update the athlete information pages in the SHOT system. Ensure all contact information is correct and update the School Class and Classification information for each athlete.
11. Pay the $25 athlete registration fee for each athlete. Fees can be paid online through the SHOT system individually or in bulk.
12. Join and/or renew memberships with the National Governing Bodies (NGB) for skeet (NSSA), sporting clays (NSCA) and / or trap (ATA). NGB membership is a requirement to participate in SCTP state, regional and national championship events. PLEASE join or renew through the SHOT system as a portion of the membership fees sold through the SHOT system are retained for the SCTP Scholarship Program.

Forming a Nonprofit

When a team decides to form an organization to serve as a sponsoring entity, it is advised that the team work with an attorney and a certified public accountant during the formation and incorporation process. Often, these nonprofits take shape as a shooting club board. SCTP strongly recommends that your group contact an attorney and certified public accountant prior to establishing a nonprofit. While the following list enumerates known steps to the process, it may not be exhaustive. Further, SCTP does not provide legal or financial advice.

Steps to creating a nonprofit or shooting club board:

1. Develop a list of interested individuals.
2. Create an organization name
    A. Go to https://tnbear.tn.gov/Ecommerce/FilingSearch.aspx to check name availability.
3. Designate officers
    A. President
    B. Vice President
    C. Treasurer
    D. Secretary
    E. Other officers as desired (e.g. 2nd VP, Historian)
    F. Board members (limit to 10-12 members).
4. Set up a post office box.
5. File for an employer identification number (EIN): IRS Form SS-4.
6. Set up a bank account.
7. File for charter with Secretary of State: SS-4418.
8. File returned SS-4418 with county registrar of deeds.
9. Create bylaws (see Appendix A: Sample of Bylaws).
10. Apply for certificate of authority: SS-4432.
11. File for sales tax exemption with the state revenue office: Form 1306901.
12. File for 501(c)(3) status with the IRS: IRS Form 1023.
    A. Complete an application as an athletic support organization providing facilities: IRS Publication 557, Section 3, Introduction, bullet 7.
13. File IRS 990 annually.

IV. HEAD AND ASSISTANT COACHES

SCTP encourages a low youth-to-adult ratio to ensure safety and maximize instructional opportunities for athletes. Every team must have **ONE** head coach and may have as many assistant coaches as desired.

Coaches play a complex but rewarding role. The essential functions of a coach are to:

- Ensure safety, including
    - Safe firearm handling
    - Safe use and storage of firearms
- Teach mechanical skills
    - Fundamentals of shotgun shooting
    - Discipline-specific shotgun sport skills
    - Advance the athletes' skills
- Promote philosophical growth and fundamentals of good sportsmanship
    - Cultivate a positive atmosphere
    - Promote high self-esteem, confidence, and mental skills training
    - Encourage individual and team effort
    - Foster positive and fun competition
    - Encourage learning life skills
    - Ensure athletes are excelling in the classroom and exceeding minimum requirements set by SCTP
- Manage team dynamics
    - Effectively delegate and manage coaches, volunteers, and supporters
    - Ensure all necessary forms and registration documents are on file
    - Ensure all team athletes, parents, and volunteers comply with SCTP policies and procedures and Code of Conduct.
    - Liaise between the team and SCTP

At least ONE coach on the team is encouraged to take the NRA Level 1 coaches' class (or other additional coach credential; ie: NSCA or NSSA Level 1, etc), be 21 years old, pass a background check, be registered and in good standing with SCTP, and meet all other requirements of a credentialed coach.

Coaching staff structure and hierarchy differs by team. Some teams assign coaches to specific squads, age groups, or disciplines. For larger teams, it may be advantageous to assign coaches to specific disciplines. This allows the coach to specialize in a discipline, and it allows athletes to get in-depth instruction. Likewise, assigning coaches to specific squads allows coaches and athletes to more intimately learn one another's style, strengths, and weaknesses. It also facilitates troubleshooting issues related to form and mental and physical barriers. Assigning coaches to specific age groups works well when the coaches tend to be more effective with athletes of a particular age; the same could be said for assigning coaches based on skill level.

Regardless of the coaching structure, safety is paramount. There must be a coach on every field during practice. Further, coaches must always follow the "two-deep" rule, which states that there must be two adults, 21 years of age or older, present when working with athletes (see page 11 for more information). A minor athlete and coach (or another adult) shall never be alone together.

As athletes progress through different skill levels, they will require coaches with different skill sets. Athletes typically fall into three main categories:

- A beginner athlete requires guidance and prompting from the coach in order to perform.
- An intermediate athlete can perform with minimal prompting from a coach.
- An advanced athlete only needs a coach for support, advice, and development of a growth mindset.

SCTP's goal is to take young individuals who have never held a firearm and transform them into shooting sports athletes. Some athletes will grow to excel and become very accomplished. Other athletes will simply enjoy breaking targets. There will be athletes across that spectrum. It is imperative for coaches to feel comfortable supporting and mentoring all of these athletes.

Coaches must have a positive attitude toward safety and skill development, as well as physical, social, and psychological development of their athletes. Coaches do this by providing supervised range time, organizing competitions, and taking athletes to competitions.

Coaches are the face of the team and SCTP to athletes, parents, sponsors, and the local community, which is why coaches must sign the SCTP Code of Conduct http://bit.ly/SCTPhandbook. Coaches are expected to behave in a professional manner to include their dress, attitude, language, and conduct. They should always strive to create positive interactions that foster patience when working with athletes. While an athlete's ability may exceed that of their coach, the coach can continue to foster skill development and refinement.

Head Coach Functions

Ideally, multiple assistant coaches, an administrative coordinator, and parent committee will support head coaches. This structure allows the head coach to focus on developing the team's athletes and coaching staff while ensuring administrative compliance. In addition to direct coaching, head coaches are responsible for formatting the practice schedule, creating an effective coaching hierarchy and plan, and determining the squad rosters.

Even though head coaches should delegate responsibilities to assistant coaches, administrative coordinators, and parent committees, it is still their ultimate responsibility to ensure all athletes and coaching staff are safe as well as knowledgeable of and in compliance with all http://bit.ly/SCTPhandbook and competition rules.

At the beginning of the season, it is best practice for coaches to set team and individual athlete goals for the season providing direction for the team.

Two-Deep Rule

Coaches are not to work alone with athletes. This is to protect the coach and athletes. When working individually with an athlete, there should always be a second adult, 21 years of age or older, present. This should be another coach or an adult volunteer, or the athlete's parent or guardian. When communicating with a youth electronically (email, text, etc.), SCTP coaches and adult volunteers shall include at least one additional adult (21 years of age or older) in the conversation.

Note: Coaches should verify email addresses to ensure they belong to an adult, not a youth.

In all interactions, it is important to remember all SCTP staff, coaches, volunteers, and supporters should strive to create a fun, safe atmosphere that leaves lasting, positive lessons and memories for these youth.

V. TEAM ADMINISTRATOR AND PARENT COMMITTEE

Coaching athletes is challenging work. Running a team in addition to that makes a coach's job even more difficult. The best coaches delegate administrative and logistical tasks to volunteers and parents.

One of the most successful approaches to creating a well-run team is to build a parent committee. These robust parent groups can make decisions about uniforms, fundraising, team events, and other logistics.

From the parent committee, recruit a team administrator, who will work in partnership with the head coach to ensure all paperwork is collected and submitted, athletes are registered, bills are paid, and event registrations are completed.

Below is a list of suggested parent committee roles. Individuals may serve in multiple roles and the team determines how those roles are assigned. Contributors to the committee are responsible for identifying and preparing their replacement. This begins when the position is assumed—the parent or volunteer can begin taking notes regarding the functions of the position and suggestions for future planning. Remember, these are volunteer positions and turnover should be expected.

Parent Committee Roles

- **Team Administrator:** The team administrator works with the head coach and the SCTP staff to manage team administrative tasks. They are the chairperson for the parent committee and serve as the day-to-day contact between the team and SCTP.
- **Vice President:** Serves as the team administrator, when s/he is not available. Acts as the team administrator in training.
- **Treasurer:** This may be a shared role responsible for ensuring timely payment of all team expenses and dues. For a school-based team, this individual may work with the school bookkeeper to reconcile accounts and ensure payment but may not actually submit payment. The treasurer should maintain financial records and provide regular financial reports to the team and parent committee.
- **Secretary:** The team secretary takes notes at all team meetings and maintains records for reference and posterity.
- **Communications Volunteer:** This volunteer ensures timely and relevant communication reaches team members, parents, and supporters. This individual will work closely with the head coach and team administrator. The communications volunteer may communicate practice and competition schedules, SCTP announcements, hunt announcements, registration processes and deadlines, practice requirements, event locations, etc. The volunteer shall not have one-to-one communication with any athlete but shall adhere to the two-deep rule (see page 14). This volunteer may use communication apps, such as TeamSnap, to facilitate team communication. More information about team communication can be found in Section VI of this manual.
- **Event Coordinator:** The SCTP season consists of a series of small events ranging from practices to competitions. The event coordinator works with the team administrator and head coach to ensure event logistics are efficiently managed.

- **Recruitment Coordinator(s):** The lifeblood of SCTP is athlete, coaches, and volunteers. Once a team forms, the next step should be recruiting for the replacement of the existing coaches and athletes. This is not a one time a year event. Recruiting happens year-round. Develop a volunteer or group of

volunteers to concentrate on recruitment so if coach/volunteer needs to be replaced, a new person is ready in the wings.

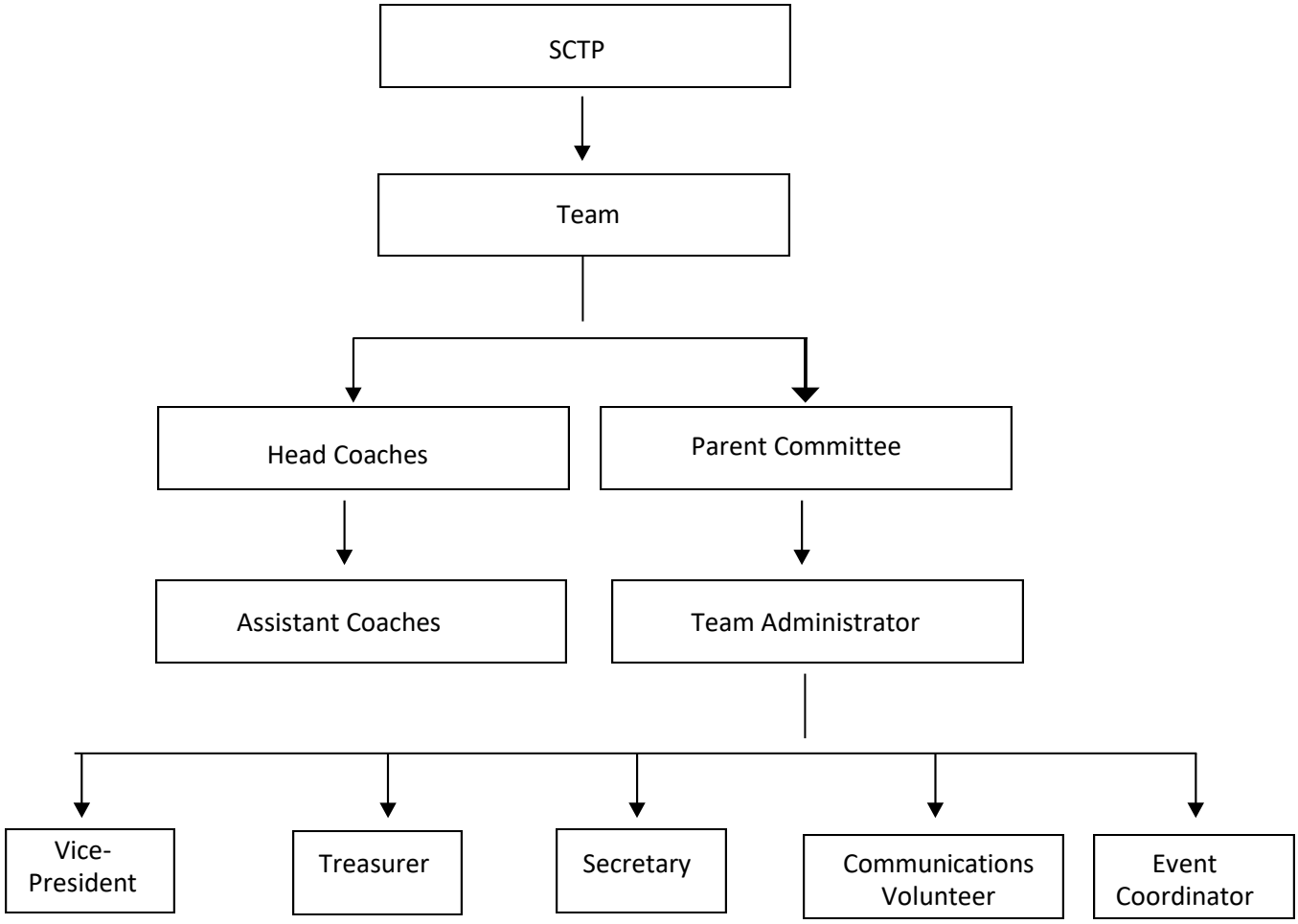
- **Athlete Recruitment:** There are several natural entry points for athletes: 5th Grade, 6th Grade, and 9th Grade. Athletes can enter the program at any age, but these are the grades where we see the most new athletes. The Athlete Recruitment person can help promote the program and contact new leads that may show up after the season and before the new season starts. They need to keep a running list of Hunter Education classes in the area.

- **Coach Recruitment:** As soon as a new coach starts, they should be looking for their replacement. A coordinator should know the needs of the coaching staff and maintain a list of potential coaches. The coordinator should also work with the potential coaches to ensure they have the proper training credentials and are learning from the existing coaches. The coordinator can help the other coaches evaluate candidates for taking over leadership roles.

- **Volunteer Recruitment:** Much like coach recruitment, it is good to be training new parents to take over. A volunteer coordinator should document the volunteer roles and be recruiting new people.

Below you will find a sample SCTP team coaching and administrative hierarchy chart that has proved to be helpful to successful teams.

SCTP Team Coaching and Administrative Structure



VI. PARENTS

Even if a parent is not on the parent committee, they are still an integral part of the team. As such, it is important to engage parents, effectively communicate with them, and ensure all parents adhere to the Parent Code of Conduct.

Parent Involvement

For an athlete to successfully compete in SCTP, parents must be willing to make a large commitment to their athlete and the team. This commitment is an obligation of both time and financial resources. Further, the most successful athletes often have parents who contribute to the parent committee. When parents volunteer their time, they help create a supportive and beneficial environment for the athlete.

Parents are strongly encouraged to reach out to coaches to fill team needs. Likewise, coaches are encouraged to engage parents as volunteers, sometimes creatively constructing opportunities for individuals who may not have the opportunity to attend events regularly. This collaboration and involvement benefits both the team and individual athletes.

Parent Code of Conduct

Even though parents are not active SCTP participants, they shall conduct themselves in a professional and sportsmanlike manner. Parents' behavior directly reflects on the individual, athlete, team, and program. Parents must be particularly vigilant during competition to respect their athlete and others. Parents are encouraged to show enthusiasm and praise with a soft clap. Out of respect for all athletes, yelling and raucous celebration will not be tolerated. To read the entire Code of Conduct, please refer to the http://bit.ly/SCTPhandbook

Issues with Parents

Because SCTP depends on parent involvement, it is not uncommon for issues with parents to arise, including conflicts between parents, parents and athletes, and parents and coaches. While there is no magic solution for these interactions, coaches can often diffuse the issue, especially if addressed early. Often, conflict is resolved when the parties are encouraged to have an open and respectful dialog. In many situations, one or more parties may feel as if they have been slighted. By letting them voice their concerns, an agreement or understanding can be reached. For more guidance regarding parent interactions, refer to Section XXV of this manual.

"Please remember, a coach's job is to coach, a parent's job is to parent. When keeping these philosophies in mind, the team will function as a whole…."

VII. TEAM COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is critical to maintaining cohesive team dynamics and support. As recommended in Section V, it is advisable for each team to have a dedicated communications volunteer. Team members and parents should have access to an updated team calendar that lists practice and event details.

Teams are encouraged to adopt a communication style and method that works best for the team. This may include using multiple methods of communication or providing duplicate messages via various media. Some communication tools and recommendations are:

- Team emails
    - Maintain an updated list of all athletes, parents, and coaches, and send team emails on a regular schedule.
- Group texts
    - Texts are often a more effective means of reaching team members on short notice.
- Google groups
- Facebook
- Shutterfly group
- TeamSnap
- GroupMe

Remember, communication extends beyond relaying practice and event schedules. An effective means of communication facilitates open and transparent communication about a variety of team logistics, including squading, team and season goals, finances, and other team decisions.

SCTP encourages two-way communication, which allows athletes the opportunity to express interest in other disciplines, encourages questions, aids volunteer recruitment, and helps manage team dynamics.

Two-Deep Policy for Electronic Communications

All communication with athletes must adhere to the two-deep rule, which states that there must be at least two adults, 21 years of age or older, included on any communication that involves a minor. When possible, one of those two adults should be the parent or guardian of the athlete.

VIII. RECRUITMENT

Recruiting new athletes can be a challenge for any team. A common and effective recruitment practice is word-of-mouth as athletes invite their friends to try a sport they enjoy.

School-Based Teams

School-based teams have a captive recruitment audience. To effectively recruit, the team should work with the school administration to release announcements at the school. Teams should take advantage of club and activity days where teams have the opportunity to openly present their organization and recruit. The team is encouraged to use school media, including the newsletter, website, calendar, social media, marquee, etc., to advertise. The key is to present the information in as many places as the school will allow. Posts should include team contact and meeting information.

Club Teams

Club teams have their own set of recruiting advantages and challenges. While there is a larger pool of potential athletes, it may be hard to get in front of them. Churches, recreational sports leagues, bowling alleys, and any place that kids gather are good places to recruit. Coaches can advertise at local firearm and sporting goods stores, gun clubs, and other organizations with links to the sport.

For 4-H and Scout teams, there are built in communication pathways similar to those offered by schools. These may include newsletters, social media, and websites. A coach can work with the group to get their recruiting materials included in these media.

When advertising, it is important to emphasize that youth of any athletic ability can compete in shooting sports.

Team success is always an effective recruitment tool. Reaching out to local media to announce team success can draw athletes. Be sure to include contact information with any article or press release.

When teams fundraise through local businesses, the businesses usually want to be recognized. That recognition can help with recruiting. Posting a team picture or flyer at the business may draw in new team members.

Try Out Day

For either type of team, having a try out day is a great recruiting tool. This is not a try out in the sense that athletes must qualify for the team; rather this is an opportunity for athletes to try out the sport to determine their interest. With proper planning, coordination of many volunteers, and supervision, this can be a very fun and effective event. *Try out days should only occur if the team can provide a one-to-one instructor-to-participant ratio for the event*. This is for both safety and effective recruitment. Two-deep and hold harmless waiver policies apply to these try out days to protect potential athletes and the team.

To organize a try out day:

1. Work with the team's practice location to schedule the range for the event.
2. Advertise the location, date, and time to potential recruits.
3. Schedule volunteers and coaches for the event.

    a. Often, the team sponsor and/or local gun club will help advertise and staff the event with volunteers.
4. Require participants to sign all necessary waivers.
    a. Athlete Consent Waiver form
5. Collect contact information to follow up with potential recruits.
    a. Be sure to follow up on any unanswered questions or with promised information and materials.
6. Have fun!

IX. SEASON

The SCTP season—or "target year"—runs from September 1 through August 31. Regardless of when an athlete registers in that period, everything begins fresh on September 1. The following information is applicable to all teams, regardless of season start date.

Teams opting to start their season in February, should hold team meetings beginning around Thanksgiving. This will give time to collect forms and fees before the winter holidays.

General Season Calendar

The following are approximate dates for season planning purposes.

- September 1: Season and registration begins
- Second Saturday in July: National SCTP Championships in Marengo, OH

It is advisable to schedule practices and competitions around these dates. SCTP requires all athletes to shoot at 6 practices before attending the state championships. Local and Regional competition targets can be counted toward the 6 practices quota. At a minimum, practices should be scheduled with a goal of meeting this quota by the completion of regional championships. Initial team meetings should occur at least one month to six weeks prior to the first practices.

Many SCTP teams begin practice in early February, depending on weather conditions. Teams are encouraged to practice in adverse but safe conditions as competitions will continue in rainy and windy conditions. Obstacles and adverse conditions can develop athlete skill, as they must learn to adapt. Remember the goal of practice should be to build athletes, not simply endure target practice. Coaches are encouraged to use their best judgement regarding running and canceling practice due to adverse and other conditions. Adverse conditions can be used as another opportunity for teaching athletes about gun care and cleaning.

Even though most events are completed by the end of July, teams are permitted to practice together until the **end of the season, which is August 31**.

All teams and athletes must be registered with SCTP prior to practicing on or after September 1. Fall practice opportunities provide athletes with chances to shoot for fun and keep skills sharpened and are strongly encouraged. It is recommended fall practice and events be voluntary to avoid athlete, parent, volunteer, and coach burnout.

X. SEASON ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

In most cases, at the first team meeting of the year, there will be a mix of returning and new team parents. Treat everyone in the room as if they are a brand-new parent and review all policies and procedures accordingly.

For new teams, it is important to give a clear picture of the season and set expectations. In both cases, be prepared to answer questions. Coaches, athletes, and parents should discuss proposed practice and competition schedules and agree to a commitment that is fair to the entire team. It is difficult and unfair to coaches and teammates for individual athletes to withdraw from competitions at the last moment.

At the first team meeting, the following topics should be discussed, and applicable forms distributed:

- Coach expectations for athletes
- Practice schedule
    - Dates, location, and times
    - Number of targets planned
- Competition schedule
    - Dates, location, and times
    - Projected fees (use previous season +$5 for estimates)
- Fees
    - Amount due
    - Payment schedule
- Forms (these may be collected at subsequent meetings)
    - Athlete contact and other information
        - Name
        - Address
        - Phone number
        - Email address
        - T-shirt size
        - Birthdate
        - Gender
        - Grade level & HS Graduation Year
        - NGB numbers
        - Parent names
        - Parent addresses
        - Parent phone numbers
        - Parent email addresses
    - Athlete waivers for gun club, competitions, etc.
    - National SCTP Forms
        - Athlete consent and waiver
        - Athlete sportsmanship contract
        - Athlete medical consent

XI. SEASON BUDGET

When compiling a budget, approach the budget as a reflection of the team's goals. If a team desires to compete at a high level, the budget must reflect that, with line items for additional practice, competition, and equipment.

Before building a budget, plan the season: practice, competitions, equipment needs, etc. This will guide the budget process. Practice costs should include practice space rental, targets, and ammunition. Even when targets are not shot, they must still be paid if they are called for show or training purposes. Generally, the team should budget for increased target and shell expenses as competitions approach.

The sample budget (Exhibit B) is a starting point for teams. It lays out the cost per athlete for the season and includes several optional fees. This budget is not all-inclusive but can serve as a guide for building any team's budget.

SCTP Registration

All athletes must be registered with SCTP to practice with a SCTP team. The registration fee covers insurance; administrative costs such as background checks, coaching classes, and other program expenses; and provides funds for new team and equipment grants.

SCTP's goal is to provide a safe, ethical, instructional environment to get youth involved in the shotgun shooting sports. To accomplish this goal, SCTP makes available funding opportunities, to include supplies and/or credits toward supply purchases, for new teams and ranges, events for athletes, and academic recognition. The registration fee helps SCTP provide these benefits and expand its reach across the country.

National Governing Bodies (NGB)

There are four NGBs that control the rules of each of the shooting disciplines: The Amateur Trapshooting Association (ATA), the National Skeet Shooting Association (NSSA), the National Sporting Clays Association (NSCA), and USA Shooting (USAS). All athletes should review and be familiar with the rules set forth by the appropriate NGB of the discipline(s) that they shoot. These rules cover items such as how the sport is played, flow of the sport, what to do in the case of ammunition, target, or firearm malfunctions, and other important regulations that affect the play.

State and National Championship participation membership is required for disciplines in which athletes participate (e.g., trap - ATA, skeet - NSSA, sporting clays - NSCA). Athletes who wish to join an NGB must pay dues each year. If the NGB dues are not paid, the NGB bills the gun club at which the member submitted scores.

NGBs offer additional opportunities to compete, but NGBs classify athletes based on their ability. Ability is determined by the athlete's average score. Only scores from a registered NGB event are counted towards an athlete's average for that NGB. SCTP does not use NGB averages to classify athletes, but SCTP can submit scores to be registered for events that are governed by an NGB. For scores at the SCTP State and National Championships to be counted towards an NGB average, athletes must be current members of that NGB.

Collecting Athlete and Team Fees

Generally, the team administrator, or coach when no administrator is available, collects fees. Teams have two options for collecting and paying range fees and purchasing supplies; those include pooling team fees to pay collectively or individual athletes may pay for their own dues and supplies, such as ammunition, targets, etc.

There are advantages to teams playing collectively. Often, teams can take advantage of bulk purchasing discounts. Additionally, when a team administrator purchases all supplies and targets, it ensures athletes have all that they need at each practice. In this case, the coach, administrator, or a designated volunteer is in charge of storing and transporting the ammunition and other equipment.

Most teams practice at an established gun club. Typically, the teams and gun clubs establish various agreements to pay for targets. Arrangements may include:

1. The team collects target fees at the beginning of the season. As the season progresses, the coach records the number of targets used at each practice and pays the gun club monthly.
2. The team pays the gun club for a number of targets up front and then has a punch card or similar accounting method to record the targets used during practice. When the team runs out of prepaid targets, the coach pays by the practice or purchases another block of targets.
3. Each athlete pays the gun club directly, either up front or by the practice.

Athletes and teams must be good stewards and ensure their gun club is paid promptly.

Teams that do not practice at local gun clubs must purchase targets during the season. Targets can be purchased at local sporting goods stores, such as Academy Sports + Outdoors, or large shooting supply stores, such as Scheels and Gander Outdoors. We recommend all monies be collected in full prior to purchasing targets or other supplies. This will ensure all purchases fall within the budget, are properly accounted for, and expenses are equitably shared.

Because costs add up and can be significant for an athlete's family, it is important to confirm and establish costs at the beginning of the season. If possible, offer payment plans or staggered payment due dates according to the needs of both the team and athletes.

It is imperative to keep team financial records updated, accurate, and transparent. Open accounting and a transparent approach to the finances will spare the treasurer and team conflicts. For more information about financial transparency, refer to Section XXV.

XII. REGISTERING TEAM FOR THE SEASON

Each year, it is important for head coaches to update their own profile as well as the team information on www.sssfonline.org To do this, coaches should:

1. Log on to www.sssfonline.organd update contact information.
2. If a new head coach, click on the "Head Coach and Team Registration" button at the top of the page. Sign up as the new head coach.
    A. Contact the program manager, who will
        i. Connect the new head coach to the existing team.
        ii. Approve the new coach.
        iii. Send background check information to the coach and review when results are returned.
        iv. Send credentials to the coach and unlock the team account.
3. Invite all assistant coaches and adult volunteers. Ask them to input their information. If assistants and volunteers are returning, the head coach should request usernames and passwords from the program manager to avoid duplicate entries.
4. Access the "Teams" button and select "Add and Manage Athletes."
5. Update information for each athlete. Add new athletes to the system (same page).
    A. Capture grade level, t-shirt size, and shooting level.
    B. Verify addresses. IMPORTANT! If necessary, verify with the program manager.
6. Return to team listing page. Select the listing by unpaid. Review and pay fees.
    A. If paying by check, mail the check listing with the checks.
    B. If paying with credit card, follow the online process.
7. Make copies and organize all required forms in a portable file. Coaches are responsible for having these forms at all team events and competitions. Ensure all forms are updated annually.
    A. Team Memorandum of Understanding
    B. Coach and Volunteer Roster
    C. Adult Volunteer registration form
    D. Athlete Consent Waiver form
8. Mail the Athlete Consent Waiver form to the SCTP National Office listed on the forms

If there are any questions about registration, coaches should contact SCTP staff at 262.206.4634 or 262.716.9452.

XIII. FUNDRAISING

Team fundraising efforts are typically centered on acquiring grant funds or soliciting direct donations and sponsorships. This section lists commonly used fundraising methods. Head coaches and parent committees should select the fundraising methods that are right for the team.

Grants

The two most commonly applied for grants supporting shooting teams are the Friends of the NRA and Midway USA Endowment grants.

- **Friends of the NRA:** Friends of the NRA is a nonprofit organization set up to support the shooting sports. Every year, local groups hold a Friends of the NRA event and raise funds. Those funds are entrusted to the national Friends of the NRA. The national organization then designates a portion of those funds for states to use as they see fit. Each state has a fund committee that awards grants and products to local applicants. Funds are disbursed by the national organization.

  To apply for a Friends of the NRA grant, head coaches can visit FriendsofNRA.org and follow the links to the application. Typically, grant applications must be submitted by January 30 each year, awards are announced in February, and funds are disbursed in March. Teams applying for a Friends of the NRA grant are asked to complete season registration prior to applying. The Friends of the NRA confirms athlete counts with SCTP before awarding grants.

- **MidwayUSA Foundation:** MidwayUSA Foundation is a repository of endowments for teams. Funds are placed into these endowments from direct donations from teams or as prizes from select events. MidwayUSA Foundation holds and administers these endowments. Twice a year, June 15 and December 15, teams may submit a grant request for up to five percent of the funds in the endowment. For more information, head coaches can visit MidwayUSAFoundation.org. As the team account grows, do the endowments; they are great long-term funding options.

Soliciting Direct Donations and Sponsorships

The majority of funds raised by a team are acquired by direct ask methods. The key to any good fundraising event is to become familiar with the sponsor and local community in order to tap into their interests.

- **Sponsor Shirt:** One effective fundraising method is to collect sponsorships in exchange for logo advertisement on either a team competition or leisure shirt. The type of shirt, logo size, colors, and other details should be outlined in the sponsorship agreement. Often, sponsors will hang signage or team pictures in their place of business to display their community support.

- **Bake Sale/Concessions Event:** Many teams will conduct a bake sale or work a concession stand at a community event. Often, organizations will donate the proceeds and/or make a flat donation to the team for working a concession stand. These opportunities can be labor intensive and require a team commitment.

- **Fundraising Sales:** There are for-profit companies and vendors that offer fundraisers featuring their popular products, such as Krispy Kreme, Little Lambs cookie dough, butter braids, produce, etc. Teams take orders for items and collect money, and the company either returns a portion of the proceeds back to the team or provides the product for sale at wholesale pricing to the team.

  Midway USA offers fundraising products free of charge to teams, with an agreed upon letter of intent. Typically, the proceeds are divided according to the fundraising agreement, with a portion disbursed to the team and a portion deposited in the team endowment. This is another fundraiser that requires many volunteers and should be a team project.

- **Car Wash:** Many teams host a car wash. Asking for donations rather than charging a flat fee may yield more returns.

- **Clay Target Event:** Holding a clay target event for the community is also an effective fundraiser. These events serve multiple purposes: raising awareness, fundraising, and recruiting new athletes and volunteers.

- **Raffle:** The SCTP National Office hosts a national raffle each year. Teams only need to request tickets and then follow directions for the raffle.

- **Crowdfunding:** GoFundMe and social media requests for donations can be useful methods of raising money and expanding the fundraising audience.

XIV. UNIFORMS

Uniforms vary from team to team and help build team unity and pride. Uniforms may include shirts, caps, and shooting vests. Uniform options should extend to coaches and volunteers as well. One such company is Shirts and Logos out of Milwaukee, WI – a portion of proceeds get sent back to the SCTP National organization and is included in the SCTP Scholarship program.

Teams and sponsors typically determine uniform regulations. SCTP does not mandate uniform requirements; however, clothing must comply with the Code of Conduct in Section 9 of the http://bit.ly/SCTPhandbook

XV. THE CLAY TARGET DISCIPLINES

SCTP has three main competition disciplines—trap, skeet, and sporting clays. Even though all three involve similar equipment, they vary significantly in target presentation and station layout. This section discusses the differences between the three main American events.

American Trap (Singles)

The trap house for American singles is located 16 yards in front of the five shooting posts arranged in an arc (see Figure 1). The house itself sits about 2 ½ feet above ground and has one machine that oscillates horizontally. The athlete that starts on post one (far left of the field), is designated the squad leader. The squad leader always calls for their target first regardless of what post they are on. Once the squad leader has shot their first target, the athlete on Post 2 will call for their target. The progression will continue until the Post 5 athlete shoots their target; after which, the squad leader will shoot their next target. After all athletes have shot five shells, the athletes will rotate posts to their right. (i.e., The athlete on Post 5 will rotate to Post 1 by walking behind the other athletes.) This will continue until all athletes have shot 25 shells.

During the round, the machine randomly oscillates horizontally and throws targets at angles up to 17 degrees right or left of center. It is important to note that legal targets can be up to 27 degrees right or left of center. The targets are released manually or by using a voice-activated mechanism when the athlete calls for the target. A match usually consists of 100 targets, and participants are allowed one shell for singles. The Amateur Trapshooting Association (ATA) regulates American trap singles.

Figure 1: Trap Field

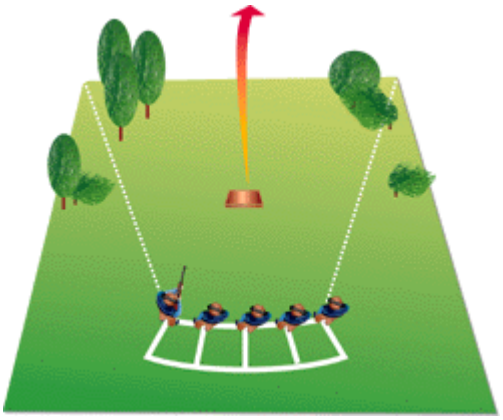


Image Credit: Clay Shooting Magazine

American Skeet

In American skeet, targets are released from a high and a low house. The targets either come out of each house individually, or one target from each will be released at the same time for a pair. There are eight shooting stations for a skeet field (see Figure 2). Station 1 starts below the high house, and the stations move counterclockwise around the field with station eight positioned halfway between the high and low house. Unlike trap, skeet targets do not vary in direction. The machines are set in place and do not oscillate. Targets are released manually within one second of the athlete calling for the target.

Figure 2: Skeet Field

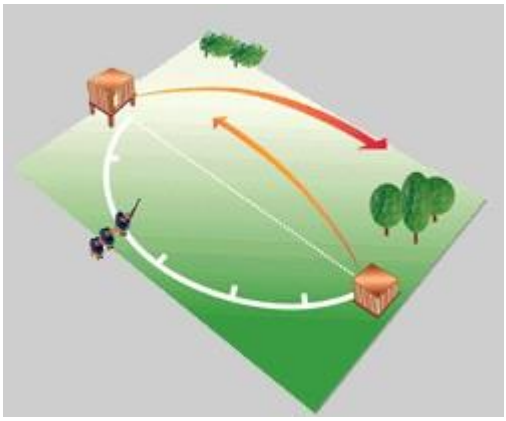


Image credit: Clay Shooting Magazine

Skeet targets are shot in a particular order. The order is listed below in Table 1. Each "X" denotes a target. Only one target is shot at a time from the high and low house, but two targets are shot in the pair category. Athletes will only shoot pairs from Stations 1, 2, 6, and 7. It is important to remember that the high house target must be shot first when shooting a pair from Stations 1 and 2. The low house target is shot first when shooting a pair from Stations 6 and 7. You will notice from Figure 5 that there are only 24 targets, but a round of skeet consists of 25 targets. The last target is called the option. The option is shot by repeating the first missed target of that round. If no targets have been missed after the 24 targets, the athlete must shoot their option at the low house target on Station 8. Prior to 1971, athletes were allowed to pick their last target if they had not missed during the round, hence the name "option."

Table 1

Station	High House	Low House	Pair
1	X	X	X (High-Low)
2	X	X	X (High-Low)
3	X	X	
4	X	X	
5	X	X	
6	X	X	X (Low-High)
7	X	X	X (Low-High)
8	X	X	

In American skeet, the athletes' firearms can be mounted prior to calling for the target. Athletes are permitted to load one or two shells for singles unless only one target is to be shot. Athletes should be expected to call for their target within 10 seconds of the moment they step on the station. Failure to do so could result in warnings and/or penalties from the referee.

A match of skeet consists of 100 targets in each gauge. The National Skeet Shooters Association (NSSA) regulates American skeet.

Sporting Clays

Sporting clays is the discipline that most simulates hunting live game. The course and target trajectories are designed to resemble the flush or flight of game. Target presentations are achieved by using a specific type of target and the position of the launcher. Sporting clays—sometimes referred to as "golf with a shotgun"—has various station set-ups. When squads shoot sporting clays together, usually as two teams of three athletes, the athletes will all shoot at one station before moving on to the next. Also, athletes choose their choke tubes for each station, just as a golfer chooses a club for each shot. Athletes must know how to interpret a target, so they know how to break it.

A sporting clays course may consist of 10 to 18 stations for a 100-target match, and targets may be thrown in multiple ways, such as:

- Singles: One target from the designated launcher is thrown.
- Simultaneous Pair: Two targets are launched simultaneously from two different launchers.
- Following Pair: Two targets are launched from the same launcher as quickly as the machine can cycle.
- Report Pair: The second target is launched from the second machine at the firing of the first shot.
-

Sporting clays, unlike the other disciplines, has multiple types of targets. Common target types include regular domed, midi-domed, mini-domed, rabbit, battue, and the rocket. Not only are there different types of targets, but there are different flight paths these targets can take. The common paths are incoming, outgoing, crossing, quartering, passing, rising, and falling. Because of all the variations, sporting clays is considered by many to be the most difficult of the three main disciplines. The National Sporting Clays Association (NSCA) regulates American sporting clays.

Figure 3: Sporting Clay Trajectories

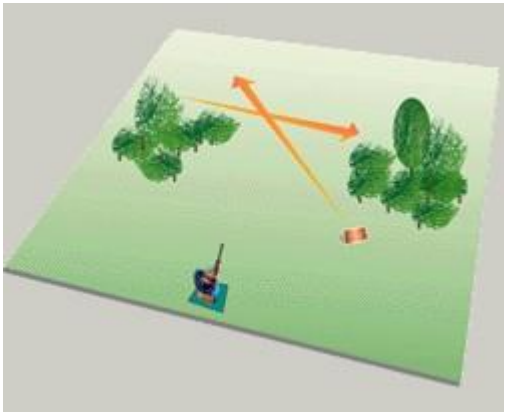
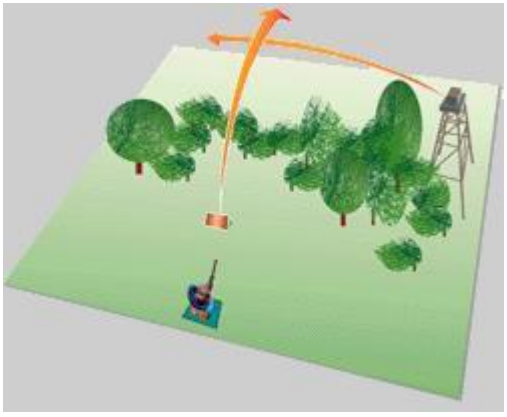


Image credit: Clay Shooting Magazine

Figure 4: Sporting Clay Trajectories



XVI. AMMUNITION

Ammunition and targets are the most used items in shotgun sports. Athletes will use four boxes of shells and 100 targets in a typical practice. A **box** of shells contains 25 shot shells, or **rounds**. A **flat** of shells holds 10 boxes of shells.

Note: A **round** is a single shot shell, i.e., a round of ammunition. A round is also a competition sequence. For example, each round of skeet and trap consists of 25 targets. Four rounds are shot in a competition.

When purchasing ammunition for clay target shooting, there are standard sizes and weights (shot charge) of shot and drams of powder. Approved shot sizes are 7 ½, 8, or 9; shot charges are ⅞ oz., 1 oz., or 1 ⅛ oz.; and power weights are typically 2 ¾ drams, 3 drams, or MAX drams. The combination of shot size, weight, and dram determine the speed of the shot (measured in feet per second or FPS), which may be regulated by the national governing body.

NGB Rules for Ammunition

Athletes competing in multiple disciplines may find that shot size 8 meets all of their needs.

Trap (Singles)

For trap, the ATA regulates maximum speeds. See the chart below.

ATA Shot Charge Speed Maximums

Shot Charge	Maximum FPS
1 ⅛ oz.	1,290
1 oz.	1,325
⅞ oz.	1,350

Standard ammunition: 12 gauge; 1 ⅛ ounce of shot; 1,145-1,200 feet per second; 7 ½ or 8 size shot.
For lighter recoil:

- 12 gauge; 1 ounce of shot; 1,150-1,200 feet per second; 7 ½ or 8 size shot.
- 20 gauge; ⅞ ounce of shot; 1,200 feet per second; 7 ½ or 8 size shot.

American Skeet

Typically, shot size 9 is reserved for skeet.
Standard ammunition:

- 12 gauge; 1 ⅛ ounce of shot; 1,145-1,200 feet per second; 8 or 9 size shot.
- 12 gauge; 1 ounce of shot; 1,150-1,200 feet per second; 8 or 9 size shot.
- 20 gauge; ⅞ ounce of shot; 1,200 feet per second; 8 or 9 size shot.

Sporting Clays

Standard ammunition:

- 12 gauge; 1 ⅛ ounce of shot; 1,200-1,300 feet per second; 7 ½ or 8 size shot.
- 12 gauge; 1 ounce of shot; 1,200-1,350 feet per second; 7 ½ or 8 size shot.

For international disciples, USA Shooting, the NGB for the international shooting sports, allows a maximum shot charge of 24.5 grams or ~7/8 oz.

XVII. ATHLETE EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

Athletes need various equipment and supplies to participate on a team. Some are common items that may be purchased at a local sporting goods store, such as Scheels or Gander Outdoors. As with most sports, athlete build, preference, and budget may be factors that influence the type and cost of equipment.

The checklist below, some of these supplies are available at our online store https://sssfonline.org/sssf-store/

Basic Equipment List

- Shotgun
- Chokes (see Figure 5 for a listing of standard chokes and their shot patterns)
    - Improved cylinder
    - Modified
    - Skeet (x2 if shooting over/under)
    - Several other custom chokes
- Choke wrench
- Safety glasses (If prescription glasses are worn when shooting, those meet this requirement.)
- Hearing protection, either ear plugs or muffs
    - Noise reduction rating of at least 25 dB
    - If using foam earplugs, proper insertion is essential.
- Ammunition
- Range bag
- Shooting towel
- Either a Shooting vest or a Shooting Pouch
- Cap
- Firearm cleaning supplies
    - Bore snake
    - Cleaning rod
    - Oil
    - Extra rags
    - Cleaning pad
- Case
- Shotgun rest (foam pad to rest the firearm on while waiting at station)
- Custom tools or spare parts for your shotgun
- Water bottle
- SCTP journal
    - May be purchased from SCTP
    - Provided to individuals who attend advanced coaches' training.

See ammunition recommendations in Section XV: Ammunition.

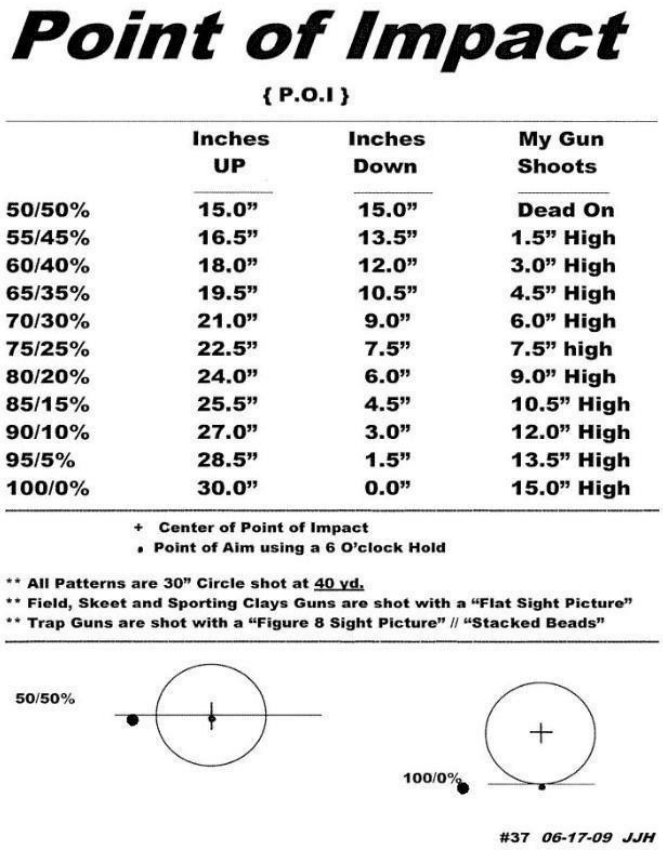
How to Choose Clay Target Firearms

Choosing the right clay target firearm is important and needs to be done correctly. An athlete's shooting habits and stature are factors when deciding on the best firearm. Additional considerations for choosing a firearm are listed below.

1. Point of Impact (POI): POI is the relationship between the center of a shotgun pattern and a correct point of aim on the shotgun. Point of impact and point of aim are closely related. One must use the correct point of aim to determine the POI of your shotgun. Most skeet and sporting firearms shoot 50/50 percent and trap firearms go from 70/30 to 120 percent high. See Figure 6.
2. Length of barrel: The athlete's comfort level is a determining factor for barrel length. The most common lengths for skeet are 28- and 30-inch barrels; for sporting clays, 30-, 32- and even 34-inch barrels; and trap, 32-inch over and under barrels and 34-inch single barrels. The shorter the barrel length, the whippier the firearm will feel. Longer barrels require the athlete to push more for stability. Shot begins to spread as soon as it leaves the barrel of the firearm, so typically, younger athletes will require a shorter barrel.
3. Choosing a stock: There are three common stocks on shotguns. Sporting-, trap- and Monte Carlo-style stocks. The type of firearm will determine the stock.
4. Firearm fit: When a firearm is properly fit, the athlete's dominant eye should look straight down the barrel, with the mid bead and far bead stacked. Adjustable combs and butt plates are added to firearms so fit is fine-tuned to the athlete.

Length of pull: Length of pull is the distance from the trigger to the back plate of the firearm. The length of pull should be adjusted to the athlete with the help of a proper firearm fitter. Most firearms come with a factory pull of 13 ½ inches.

Figure 5: Point of Impact



Point of Impact

{ P.O.I }

	Inches UP	Inches Down	My Gun Shoots
50/50%	15.0"	15.0"	Dead On
55/45%	16.5"	13.5"	1.5" High
60/40%	18.0"	12.0"	3.0" High
65/35%	19.5"	10.5"	4.5" High
70/30%	21.0"	9.0"	6.0" High
75/25%	22.5"	7.5"	7.5" high
80/20%	24.0"	6.0"	9.0" High
85/15%	25.5"	4.5"	10.5" High
90/10%	27.0"	3.0"	12.0" High
95/5%	28.5"	1.5"	13.5" High
100/0%	30.0"	0.0"	15.0" High

+ Center of Point of Impact
• Point of Aim using a 6 O'clock Hold

** All Patterns are 30" Circle shot at 40 yd.
** Field, Skeet and Sporting Clays Guns are shot with a "Flat Sight Picture"
** Trap Guns are shot with a "Figure 8 Sight Picture" // "Stacked Beads"

50/50%

100/0%

#37 06-17-09 JJH

Image credit: Browning.com

How to Choose a Choke

A choke is the portion at the end of the barrel that constricts the shot. Most newer shotguns come with interchangeable chokes and different thread patterns on the inside of the barrel. These interchangeable chokes screw into the end of the barrel. Older shotguns may have fixed chokes that cannot be changed and are labeled on the barrel.

The choice of choke depends on the athlete's ability and the proximity of the target.

American Trap (Singles)

- Most shotguns come with five factory choke tubes specific to the firearm. However, there are aftermarket choke tubes available.
- Choose improved cylinder, light modified, modified, improved modified, or full.
- Choke recommendations depend on skill level. New athletes should start with a more open choke and gradually get tighter as they improve.

American Skeet

- Most shotguns come with five factory choke tubes specific to the firearm. However, there are aftermarket choke tubes available.

- Choose diffusion, cylinder, or skeet chokes.

Sporting Clays

- Most shotguns come with five factory choke tubes specific to the firearm. However, there are aftermarket choke tubes available.
- Use multiple chokes depending on the presentation of the target.
- Choose: skeet, improved cylinder, light modified, modified, improved modified, or full.
- The athlete does have the option to change chokes at every station in sporting clays.

Figure 6: Effect of Choke

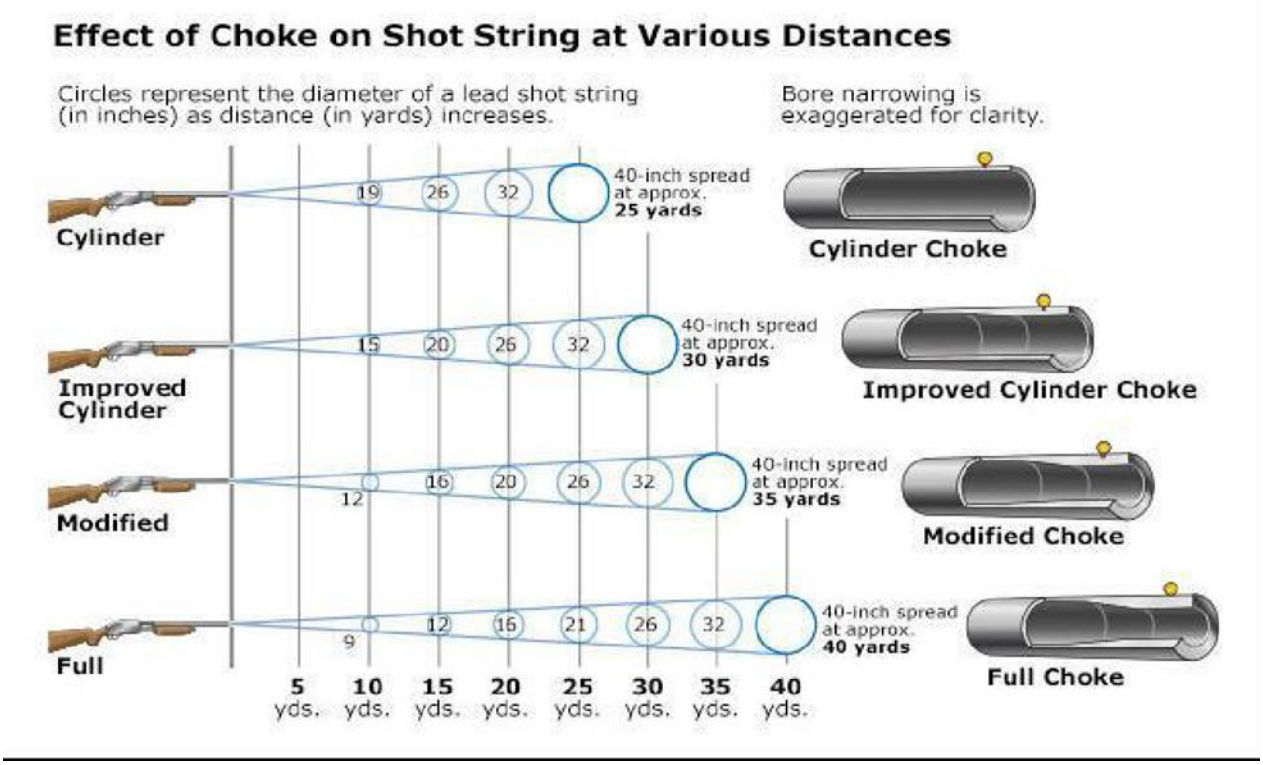


Image credit: Kalkomey Hunter Ed Muzzleloader Study Guide

XVIII. PRACTICE

Practice must be a balance of fundamentals and endurance. Athletes should gradually be conditioned to shoot 100 or more targets in a competition. As athletes tire, their form and foot position tend to deteriorate. Thus, coaches must develop effective practice schedules designed to improve stamina, form, and accuracy.

A vital part of cultivating enthusiasm for the sport is incorporating team building and fun, innovative activities into the practice schedule. Fun activities may include anything that breaks up the monotony of practice, including activities that may not be shotgun related. Additionally, cookouts during or after practices are great team building exercises and present opportunities to engage athletes and parents.

Beginner Practice

When working with a new athlete, the best place to start is with the fundamentals, which foster future skill development.

- Introduction: Introducing an athlete to the shooting sports is typically as simple as having a conversation, which should:
    - Ensure athlete understands their firearm and how they will be using it.
    - Teaches athlete the fundamentals of cleaning and maintaining their firearm.
    - Instructs an athlete to approach the firing line correctly and what to do once there.
    - Be tailored to the athlete's experience and skill level.

- Eye dominance: Before beginning practice, it is imperative to determine an athlete's eye dominance--left, right, or center. Eye and hand dominance are not necessarily indicative of each other. Once eye dominance is known, the athletes should consider practicing with whichever hand follows their dominant eye.. If they are center eye dominant or do not wish to switch hands, vision adjustments must be coached.
    - To determine eye dominance, we suggest this common and easy exercise.
        - Cut a nickel-sized hole from the center of a 6-in x 6-in card.
        - While holding the card in both hands at waist level, have the athlete pick an object that is approximately 30 yards away to focus on.
        - While focusing on the object and keeping arms extended, the athlete should raise the card with both hands until they find the object in the hole of the card.
        - Once the athlete finds the object, they should bring the card towards their face slowly until it touches their nose. The athlete will naturally move the hole to their dominant eye.
    - In the event central dominance is suspected, the quick-point test may reveal a subtle dominance.
        - Have the athlete stand approximately 10 feet away and square their body to the evaluator.
        - With a fully extended arm and finger, ask the athlete to point the index finger of their dominant hand toward the evaluator's dominant eye.
        - Ask the athlete to repeat the above step using the other hand.
        - Alternate hands, switching tempo.
            - If there is a slight shift of the hand toward the opposite eye, there might be some unilateral eye dominance.
            - If the athlete's pointer finger is persistently lining up with one eye, that is typically the dominant eye.

        - If the pointed finger aligns with the bridge of the nose, the athlete may be experiencing central eye dominance.

    - Eye dominancy can also change with age, so if an experienced athlete begins struggling to see targets check to see if their eye dominancy has changed. In the event it has, suggest the shooter do exercises to help force dominancy back into their correct eye.

- Foot position: Feet are the foundation of a good stance. They should be approximately shoulder-width apart and slightly angled, at about 30 degrees. When swinging the firearm, the heels should remain planted and not lift up or roll from side to side.

- Stance: An athlete's stance should be such that the body can move smoothly in any direction, without unnecessary tension. The forward knee (opposite of the trigger hand) should be bent slightly; the other knee remains straight. Above the waist, the athlete should have an aggressive stance characterized by leaning slightly over their forward knee. Athletes' weight should be distributed between their knees, with 60 percent of their weight on their front foot and the remaining 40 percent on their back foot. This allows the athlete to pivot at the waist instead of swinging the firearm with their arms.

- Mount: A good mount is characterized by bringing the firearm up to the athlete's dominant eye and then placing the butt plate in the athlete's shoulder pocket. This is done by positioning the firearm's barrel parallel to the ground and raising it up vertically until the stock comes in line with the athlete's cheek. Once in this position, athletes should bring the butt stock to their shoulder pocket. The movement should resemble a reverse piston action. This technique allows the athlete to bring the firearm to the proper level instead of dropping their head to the level of the firearm. Once mounted, the elbow of the athlete's dominant hand should not be higher than 90 degrees.

- Fit**:** Fitting a firearm to a beginner athlete can be tricky; most do not start with a firearm that is easily adjustable to their form and stature. However, knowing the fundamentals of fit may help an athlete achieve greater initial success. Shotguns were not designed to be aimed; they were made to be pointed. As one naturally points their finger, an individual also naturally points a shotgun. Because of this, a shotgun should fit the athlete. When an athlete properly mounts their shotgun, the beads on the barrel should align just underneath the pupil. This ensures the shotgun is being pointed at the same spot that the eye is seeing. Aftermarket parts, such as adjustable butt plates and stick-on pads, can be used to adjust fit for those without adjustable firearms. Athletes with an adjustable shotgun are encouraged to see a specialist to ensure the best fit.

- Body position: the path of the target determines an athlete's body position. Following the target's path is not enough to maintain proper leads and follow through. Rather, coaches should work with athletes to determine their natural point of aim (NPA). The NPA is where the firearm naturally points when the athlete properly mounts their firearm. When determining body position in relation to a target's path, the athlete's NPA should be where they want to break the target, allowing the athlete to have a smooth swing and good follow-through. This ensures the athlete's muscles do not start to tense through the swing and cause the athlete to slow down.

- Following a moving target: Before ever mounting a firearm, athletes should practice following a target. To do this, ask the athletes to point to where they would hold the firearm, call for the target, follow it,

and call, “BANG!” where they would shoot it. Once athletes are comfortable with their hand, they can switch to following the target with their firearm, following the same procedure. For safety, the firearm should be unloaded with the chamber open if possible.

- Breaking the first target: When preparing an athlete for breaking their first target, it is important the coach walk the athlete through the process, step-by-step. We recommend:
    - The coach stands next to the athlete and holds ammunition.
    - The coach gives one round to the athlete and helps them close the chamber.
    - Then the athlete will call, follow, and attempt to break the target. Hit or miss, the coach talks with the athlete about the shot.
    - Once the athlete breaks a few targets, allow for rest.

  Generally, we recommend starting athletes on easy targets first to avoid frustration. To encourage broken targets, some also start athletes on the low house target from Station 7 (skeet) or a straightaway target (trap) with the athlete positioned behind the trap house.

  Alternatively, some coaches prefer to start new athletes on harder targets. Their philosophy is that once an athlete starts breaking these targets, others will be easier. These coaches may start an athlete shooting crossing targets from Station 4 on a skeet field then progress to other targets.

- Knowledge of firearm: When working with new athletes, coaches should make sure the athletes have a solid knowledge of their firearm, including how the gun works, where the safety is, and how to disassemble and reassemble the firearm. At the end of the first practice, coaches are encouraged to sit with athletes and talk them through the process of cleaning the firearm. Coaches should emphasize that regularly cleaning the firearm is essential to ensuring proper firearm maintenance, safety, and longevity.

These fundamentals may fill the first practice(s). Remember, the primary goal for beginner athletes is to focus on **safety** and form, NOT breaking the target.

Discipline-Focused Initial Exercise

+American Trap (Singles) Initial

Exercises

1. Choose five athletes and send them to the trap line, leaving firearms in the rack.
2. Have each athlete call and follow targets just as if they were shooting a real round.
3. After each station has "shot" a couple of targets, the coach should call "rotate" and have all athletes shift as they normally would. Repeat until the athletes have simulated a complete round.
4. Have the squad leader call "safety on" or "safety off" as they begin and finish the station.
5. Have athletes return to the trap line with their firearms. Repeat the above procedure, this time with athletes following targets with their firearms. After a couple targets, the coach can give one round at a time to athletes and allow them to shoot a target at each station. (Having several coaches assist with this activity will help the momentum.) Complete simulating the entire round.
6. Once the coach feels that athletes will perform the same with ammunition, the coach can send them to the line to shoot a full round of trap.
7. Remember to be vigilant about athlete stamina and break this process into several practices, if necessary.

American Skeet Initial Exercises

1. With a group of no more than six athletes, proceed to the skeet field. Much like the trap procedure above, have athletes rotate through each station following targets.
2. Once all athletes have walked through the skeet game, begin working on single targets, station by station.
3. Once the athletes are comfortable executing the singles exercise, use the same procedure with doubles.
4. After athletes have become familiar with the flow of skeet, regular practice should begin with working on specific stations and end with a full round to keep the pace of the game in mind.
5. Remember, safeties should always be "on" when athletes enter and leave the station.

Sporting Clays Initial Exercises

1. Athletes may be introduced to sporting clays at any time and doing so may build athlete confidence.
2. Like trap and skeet, for any new target presentation, athletes should first practice following the target with their finger, then with their shotgun.
3. Remember, safeties should always be "on" when athletes enter and leave the station.

Training vs. Practice

Practices should be a blend of training and traditional practice. Training sessions develop and build the skills needed for competitions. Practice simulates competitions. New athletes will benefit from more training-focused practices initially.

Training is not limited to new athletes. Rather, training is a process by which athletes and teams develop new skills. Even professional athletes have room for training in their regimen. Practice is applying those skills to develop proficiency. It is often heard among clay target athletes that athletes "need to lose targets to gain targets." This ideology is important to keep in mind during training—skill development may not immediately result in the best score performance. Nevertheless, in the long run, proper skill development should enhance the athlete's overall performance and experience. In this section, we will discuss some training techniques used by USA Shooting. These techniques are meant as a starting point for coaches to develop custom plans for their teams.

There are two components to training: daily training and training days. Daily training consists of exercises that can and should be performed every day. Training days are incorporated into the overall practice plan and consist of a training-heavy, on field, practice session.

Daily Training

Daily training should consist of easy-to-complete exercises that athletes can accomplish each day. Suggested daily training exercises are listed below. Note: Some of these exercises require the use of firearms. Athletes should always make sure the firearm is unloaded and they are aware of their surroundings.

- Gun mount: Athletes should be encouraged to complete a prescribed number of quality mounts daily. (The key to successfully completing these training exercises is to first instruct athletes in the proper technique of mounting the firearm so they know good form.) During the mount exercise, athletes should also move their eyes to a soft focus as if they are actually calling for a target.

- Soft focus is the practice of not focusing one's eyes on any particular object. This allows the athlete to pick-up the target quicker, rather than simply seeing a blur as the target flies by. A method for practicing soft focus is to create a 10x10 grid with random numbers between one and 100 in each grid square. Numbers should not be repeated. Using this grid, ask the athlete to maintain a soft focus. Then, challenge the athlete to find numbers on the grid as a coach, training partner, or electronic device calls them. Athletes should strive for both speed and accuracy. This exercise helps athletes move between a soft and hard focus. While this is a valuable exercise, it is important not to overdo this one; eye muscles are like any other muscle in the body and can become strained from overuse.

- Visualization/Imagery: Athletes benefit from practicing visualization/imagery exercises each day. Such exercises may include vividly visualizing themselves shooting a perfect round in their discipline. This can be done multiple times throughout the day and anywhere, since it does not require any equipment. Proper visualization exercises are detailed and vivid. They should include all steps the athlete takes—from approaching the field to loading the firearm, calling for the target, seeing the target break, the follow-through, and so on. The exercise should continue for every target in a round of 25, and every target should be a hit. No misses in the visualization process. Many times, top athletes will use this method to warm-up before competition rounds since it is very difficult to get practice rounds in on the day of competition.

- Reading: Athletes should be encouraged to read publications that can propel their mental or physical game forward. Sports psychology books can be very beneficial. A list of suggested reading is in Section XXIII of this manual. Because some athletes may be reluctant to read, it may be helpful to assign reasonable amounts of reading between practices. Coaches are also encouraged to make recommendations specific to the athletes' needs, whether those are rooted in form and mechanics, competition, or mental game.

To effectively incorporate training in the practice regimen, it is suggested that the athletes journal each day about their training exercises. Journaling helps focus training, and the journal itself shows a progression of improvement, serves as a means of communication between the coach and athlete, and may even help athletes substantiate their experience when applying to collegiate teams and for scholarships.

Training Days

Training days are a component of the regular practice schedule where teams are out on the field, shooting targets. These practice sessions should include a mix of shooting full rounds and working on specific targets.

Training days may be thematic and may focus on a specific training technique. For example, on a visualization day, athletes may be asked to visualize breaking a target before calling for it; alternatively, on a reading day, athletes may be asked to put into practice or share with teammates something from their reading.
Training days are meant to improve performance by building skill, developing muscle memory, and even subconscious thought to improve competition performance.

Training days should be guided by goals and sectioned into appropriate practice exercises. Goals should be reasonable and attainable yet push an athlete to improve. Only when an athlete accomplishes their goal in one part of the day's practice should they move on to the next. For example, if an athlete begins practice on the trap

field, their goal should be met before moving to the skeet field on that day. Occasionally, goals are not met and athletes do not progress to the next exercise that day. This is all right. Challenges like these help develop the athlete's performance abilities. On the next training day, the athlete should move on to that day's theme.

The training day sections are determined by the coach and depend on skill level and overarching goals. Coaches are encouraged to be creative with training section plans and tailor them to the team's needs. Remember every practice should have a clear objective, beyond shooting rounds for score.

One popular training exercise is to have athletes shoot targets between stations. For example, if an athlete struggles to shoot at Station 5, have that athlete shoot at station 4.5, halfway between Stations 4 and 5, gradually changing the athlete's perspective on the target. Anytime an exercise requires nonstandard use of a field, consult with the range manager first.

A training day is marked with a set number of shells per athlete. If athletes hit their shell limit before they meet their section goal, they stop shooting. The next day, they will begin fresh with a new training theme. This prevents athlete burnout and fatigue, and the development of bad habits.

As always, athletes are encouraged to journal, even after group training sessions. Athletes should note targets that were frequently missed or hit and any personal bests accomplished that day. When possible, it is good practice to shoot a full round for scoring purposes on these training days. These scores should be recorded in both the athletes' and coaches' journals, and can be used to chart progress.

Practicing for Competition

Practice is the athletes' opportunity to polish skills developed in training. Practice rounds should be built into training days. For the purpose of this discussion though, practice days will be separate from training days. Practice days are when athletes shoot full rounds of 100 targets. These days are great for simulating competition.

We know some athletes are hesitant to change their habits and worry doing so will affect their performance and team or squad position. However, having both training and practice days allow athletes to work on all aspects of the sport. Training days enhance athlete performance without the worry of missing the number one squad, and practice day scores can still be used for that purpose. The practice schedule should clearly delineate practice days versus training days, so athletes know when their scores will be considered for squadding. Not only does this set clear expectations for the athletes, but it also develops competition skills as athletes experience a bit of the competition pressure on practice days. Scrimmages—either on the same field or virtually—with rival teams also serve this purpose.

At the end of practice, coaches should ask athletes to journal details of practice, including scores, conditions of the day, struggles and successes, and hold points for that particular field. This information is instrumental to adapting training and practice schedules and tracking progress.

Note: Not all practice days must be used to determine squadding. Coaches should determine their team's needs and develop appropriate training and practice schedules accordingly.

Sample Training and Practice Schedule

Below are sample season training schedules for trap and skeet, which can be tailored to match the teams' season duration and needs.

Each session should begin with a safety brief and end on a positive note. Use this time to cultivate mentors among the more experienced athletes.

Remember, the goal of training and practice is to prepare the athlete to be fundamentally sound and develop their abilities. Push athletes to build stamina but do not over-tire them. Adjust sessions accordingly.

In practice sessions, include a competition style round to develop flow and the dynamics of shooting as a group. It is not necessary to keep score nor do athletes need to know how they compare until at least session 10.

Session 0: Discuss season expectations, parent involvement, and **safety.** Have athletes set goals for the season. Discuss daily training exercises and athlete journals. Teach athletes how to handle gun malfunctions.

Session 1: Fundamentals (See Initial Exercises - 1 shell at a time)

Session 2: Enhanced fundamentals

Session 3:

- Trap: Competition 25. Review individual stations, particularly those that were challenging.
- Skeet: Shoot a full round to understand flow. Concentrate on individual stations. Shoot more shells on a specific station to ensure athletes fully understand it.

Session 4:

- Trap: Focus on Stations 1 and 5.
- Skeet: Focus on Stations 1 and 7.
- Both: End with competition 25.

Session 5:

- Trap: Focus on Stations 2 and 4.
- Skeet: Focus on Stations 2 and 6.
- Both: End with competition 25.

Session 6:

- Trap: Focus on Station 3.
- Skeet: Focus on Station 3, 5, and then 4.
- Both: End with competition 25.

Session 7:

- Trap: Focus on volume; try to shoot 75-100 targets per practice.
- Skeet: Focus on high house targets from all stations including 8. End with competition 50.

Session 8:

- Trap: Focus on volume; try to shoot 75-100 targets per practice.
- Skeet: Focus on low house targets from all stations including 8. End with competition 50.

Session 9:
- Trap: Focus on volume; try to shoot 100-125 targets per practice.
- Skeet: Focus on just station 8. End with competition 50.

Session 10:
- Trap: Focus on volume; try to shoot 100-125 targets per practice.
- Skeet: Focus on doubles from stations 3,4, and 5. End with competition 75.

Session 11:
- Trap: Focus on volume; try to shoot 100-125 targets per practice.
- Skeet: Focus on volume; try to shoot 100-125 targets per practice. Practice doubles on 3, 4, and 5 to prepare for shoot-offs.
- Introduce sporting clays or 5-stand to give athletes an understanding of moving stations and target pairings. This may be used as a fun day as a break from other disciplines.

Session 12:
- Trap: Focus on volume; try to shoot 125-150 targets per practice.
- Skeet: Focus on volume; try to shoot 125-150 targets per practice. Practice doubles on 3, 4, and 5, to prepare for shoot-offs.

"Remember coaches, keep practices fun, end each practice on a good/positive note and your athletes will look forward to the next practice session!"

Coaches are encouraged to share their successful practice and training tips and schedules. Please submit all ideas to the SCTP staff for consideration and addition to this manual.

XIV. TEAM CONSIDERATIONS

Teams have a lot of flexibility to structure their season in the best interest of the team. Listed below are considerations for structuring teams and their activities. These considerations are posed as questions to facilitate a discussion between coaches, the parent committee, and athletes.

1. **How many competitions should the team/athletes participate in?**
   Competitions provide a great training opportunity and provide insight to the athlete's performance and standing. But competition is not a substitute for training. Athletes should attend enough competitions to feel comfortable but not so many that practice time is adversely affected or severely limited.

2. **What type of competitions should the team/athletes participate in?**
   This may depend on the shooting discipline. Teams are encouraged to remain active and attend local events when possible. Local competitions for every discipline may not be available, but teams can always informally challenge neighboring teams or have in-team scrimmages.

3. **Should athletes join the national governing bodies (NGBs)? Should they participate in NGB competitions?**
   NGBs base their classification on athlete skill, not age. They are not, by nature, team-oriented. Joining the NGBs is an additional expense. That said, athletes who plan to attend their State and National SCTP Championships are required to join their discipline specific NGB. For everyone else, it is optional. All Skeet and Sporting Clays target sat SCTP State Team Championships will be registered with the appropriate NGB. Targets cannot be registered retroactively. In a few circumstances there may be the option to shoot non-registered targets, please contact the national staff or specifics. I.e., when states require a "state membership fee". Membership with an NGB has multiple benefits, such as additional competition and training opportunities—including those outside of the athlete's age-peer groups—and bolstered shooting resumes, which are helpful for those interested in competing on a collegiate SCTP team. We encourage athletes to join and support the NGBs for the shooting disciplines in which they participate.

4. **Should the team/athletes attend the national championships?**
   All teams are encouraged to attend their national championships. Regardless of how well the athletes shoot. The National Championships offer many more opportunities to "learn" about the sport, talk with Industry professionals and meet other coaches, teams and athletes!

5. **When and how should practices be scheduled?**
   Generally, it takes an hour to work with five trap or six skeet/sporting clays athletes. After an hour, athletes' attention spans and stamina begin to decline. As the season progresses, the number of targets athletes are able to shoot in an hour will increase.

   Several factors will determine the best days and times for practice. In all cases, weekday practices should be scheduled with enough time for athletes to dismiss from school, return home to retrieve their firearms and gear, and get to the range. General considerations for scheduling practice include:
   a. Best days for the team to practice.
   b. Time needed to transition from school to the range.
   c. Gun club availability.
   d. Athlete participation in other extracurricular activities.

e. Sunset and seasonal weather conditions.

6. How much should we practice?

Perfect practice makes perfect. The goal of practice is to get in as much productive practice as possible. Avoid overworking the athletes, as they will resort to bad form and habits. As the season progresses, practice lengths may increase. Remember, practice should be utilized for working on problems or issues the athletes may be having. Reinforcing fundamentals is key in all practices, keeping score is not!

7. How should athletes be placed on a squad for squad awards?

In short, this varies by team, and sometimes, squad. We recommend focusing on developing athletes' shooting ability, even if it means their average scores may decrease. Squad starting positions have different responsibilities and simply ranking by score may not put the best athlete in their most useful position.

Some coaches choose to apply scores from certain practice days to determine squadding. This gives athletes a taste of the pressure they may experience during competition.

Ultimately, squadding is at the discretion of the head coach. That said, the squadding process should be transparent and shared with parents and athletes.

8. What disciplines should the team/athletes shoot?

Choice of discipline(s) may be based on a variety of factors, including the coaches' knowledge and comfort level coaching each discipline and/or the willingness and ability to learn about each, facility availability, team interest, etc. The goal of SCTP is to expose athletes to all of the shotgun sports while giving them the opportunity to excel and have fun.

Note: Individuals can compete in additional disciplines regardless of team participation.

9. Should athletes receive outside coaching?

Coaches have varying degrees of expertise, but all have limited time and ability to foster athletes' individual needs. It may be appropriate for athletes to seek out private coaching or training. When contracted directly by the athlete, private coaching falls entirely outside the auspices of the program. Athletes should never be forced to hire a private coach nor should contracting one be seen as a measure of the team coaches' competence.

When the team officially contracts private coaches, the private coaches must conform to the SCTP policies and procedures. Please contact the program manager with questions regarding outside coaching policies.

All athletes receiving private coaching should communicate that to the head coach. Athletes should be treated equitably and never be retaliated against for receiving private coaching.

XX. SCORING

Coaches should ensure athletes and parents are familiar with the scoring system for their discipline(s). Not only does this give athletes a better understanding of the sport, but it also empowers them to contest scores, especially in the instance when a scorekeeper registers a broken target as unbroken.

To understand scoring, it is imperative that participants understand terms of the sport. Common terms include:

- Bird: A clay target. This term comes from the fact that modern shooting sports derived from shooting live birds; it is also why clay targets are referred to as "clay pigeons."
- Dead bird or dead: A clay target broken by the athlete's shot and from which a visible piece of the target breaks off. Athletes earn one point for every dead target annotated by the scorekeeper.
- Lost bird or lost: The athlete's shot did not cause a visible piece to break off the target. The athlete is not awarded points for lost birds.

For the remainder of this section, the terms "dead" and "lost" will be used to refer to broken and unbroken targets respectively, and the term "bird" will be used interchangeably with target.

During competition, an athlete may protest a lost target if they believe they saw a visible piece break off. **The protest must come from the athlete who shot at the target.** Coaches/Parents may not contest the scorekeepers target annotation on behalf of their athlete. Thus, it is imperative that the coach instruct athletes in the process of contesting lost targets.

Note: The scorekeeper ultimately determines whether a target is lost or dead. Even if multiple teammates contest the target annotation, the scorekeeper does not have to change it.

When a scorekeeper calls a dead bird lost, the athlete who shot the target should immediately raise their hand to state the target was, in fact, broken. A squad mate of the athlete can also contest the ruling. If a squad mate saw the target break, they should also confirm that with the scorekeeper. At this point, the scorekeeper may mark the target as dead. To do this, the scorekeeper will mark the box on the score sheet with an "X" instead of a slash (the typical annotation used for broken targets). The scorekeeper should not erase the zero, which is used to record lost targets; rather the "X" is marked over the zero, and the scorekeeper will initial next to the "X." This is important as it denotes to the individual confirming the scoresheet that there was a contested ruling *and* that the target is now considered dead.

Note: Athletes are responsible for ensuring their score is correct before leaving the shooting station; once athletes leave the station, targets are final and cannot be contested. At the end of each round, athletes should make it a habit to sign their score sheet before leaving the field. This is the responsibility of the athlete. Usually scorekeepers will let the coach photograph the scoresheet before it is turned in.

In addition to general scoring information, it is good practice to familiarize athletes with scoring sheets for each discipline, which are downloadable from White Flyers' website, http://whiteflyer.com/scoresheets/. To familiarize athletes with the process, have them score during practice for another squad. To test athletes, have the scorekeeper intentionally call a dead target lost to see if the athlete shooting will take the correct steps to contest the ruling. Because the contesting procedure only arises during competitions, it is a good idea to practice it before competition.

XXI. PERFORMANCE

Journaling

Journaling is a tool to assist intermediate and advanced athletes reach optimal performance. Journaling extends training beyond the fundamentals to continual skill development. Journals can be used for problem solving, performance evaluations, score keeping, goal tracking, scheduling, etc.

Journaling allows athletes to track their progress; identify positive and negative issues and habits; improve training and technique retention (humans lose about half of what we learn in a 24-hour period); and develop a positive and competitive growth mindset. Journals are also useful for recording field specifics such as hold points, so the athlete can refer back to their notes before competing at a facility. Further, colleges often like to see an athlete's journal before extending scholarships.

Coaches should also keep journals. The coach's journal is different from the athletes'. Coaches should record practice and training schedules (including specifics for each athlete). This allows the coach to individualize instruction, track progress, and troubleshoot issues. For instance, if an athlete's performance declines, the coach may be able to reference the journal to identify patterns or concerns and thereby address any issues that may arise. If scores drastically decrease for an athlete, it is always good to go back to the basics before trying to fine-tune the specifics of the issue. Remember, with young athletes, their bodies are constantly changing, and so their firearm fit and form can change in a short period.

SCTP branded journals are available for purchase from the SCTP.

Goal Setting

Goal setting is important for athletes, coaches, and teams as a whole. If written and organized properly, goals motivate and map a clear path forward. There are two types of goals: stretch goals and action goals. If you think about goals in terms of a road trip, the stretch goal is the destination whereas the action goals are the milestones one must reach to get to the destination.

For both stretch and action goals, we recommend creating SMART goals:
Specific
Measurable
Adjustable
Realistic
Time-oriented

Stretch goals are aptly named—these are the big goals meant to stretch the athlete. For example, an athlete may set the following goal: "I will shoot a 95 out of 100 average in trap by September 1."

Once the stretch goal has been set, the action goals should be crafted. Action goals are designed to keep the individual on track to reach the stretch goal. As such these, should be a series of smaller, more manageable goals. In the case of the example above, action goals may include:

- I will practice at least twice a week from now until September 1.
- I will increase my average by two targets every two weeks from now until September 1.

If crafted well, the action goals should culminate in achieving the stretch goal.

Goals should be written down and referenced daily, both to note progress and motivate the individual toward achieving the goals. Furthermore, goals should be written in the affirmative, with phrases such as “I am,” “We will,” etc. Affirmative goals encourage a positive, growth mindset.

Goals should be shared with parents, coaches, and/or teammates. Doing so adds accountability to the process, and some athletes may need this to put the goals into action. A good support network is necessary for the goal setter to reach their goals. The practice of setting stretch and action goals can scale from the individual athlete to the entire team. Goals need to be adjusted accordingly. A sample goal-journal page is below. Notice that the action goals are under the stretch goal to visually represent that they are components of the stretch goal.

Goals

Stretch Goal: I will shoot a 95 out of 100 average in trap by September 1.

Action Goal: I will practice at least twice a week from now until September 1.

Action Goal: I will increase my average out of 100 by 2 targets every 2 weeks from now until September 1.

Action Goal: From now until September 1, I will read at least two chapters of a training book per week.

Notes: … … …

Mental Training Routine

Once an athlete has advanced past the physical aspect of shooting, the game primarily becomes a mental one. The mental component to shooting sports is what separates top athletes from the rest of the pack. For an athlete to advance to the highest level, they must also master the mental game. To accomplish this, an athlete must develop and strictly adhere to a mental training routine.

The first part of a successful mental training routine is understanding the two parts of the brain, the conscious and subconscious. The conscious part of the brain deals with common sense, wisdom, intellect, learning, and problem solving. This is also the part of the brain that causes many athletes to never advance to the elite level. The subconscious part of the brain houses our survival instinct and is responsible for automatic responses. To effectively compete, it is important that the subconscious be trained. If done correctly, an athlete learns and practices with their conscious mind until it becomes part of their subconscious, or simply muscle memory. In competition that muscle memory will take over and elevate an athlete’s performance.

One of the most important components of a mental routine is developing hard focus. Hard focus is when an athlete looks at a target with enough focus to see the detail of the target. When using a hard focus, an athlete will really see the target before firing. This requires mental discipline and practice. After each shot, an athlete should ask and honestly evaluate: “Did I really see that target?” After a full round of 100 targets, athletes’ eyes may feel strained from hard focus on the target.

Pre-Shot Routine: The next step of establishing a mental routine is for athletes to develop their pre-shot routine. This is how athletes hone their focus before calling for a target. Pre-shot routines will differ from person-to-person, but all should be characterized by the following components:

- Controlled by the athlete
- Relatively short, so the athlete can remember it under pressure
- Contain key words or phrases that trigger focus
- Include detailed target visualization

Shot Routine: The last step of establishing a mental routine is to develop a shot routine. The shot routine will follow the pre-shot routine and be used when the athlete is ready to shoot. Athletes will use this time to remind themselves to use hard focus—to look at a specific spot on the target. This routine will encompass the athlete's last conscious thought before shooting the target, and should be characterized by the following:

- Be short and to the point
- Contain specific words triggering necessary actions
- Visualization of the front edge of the target before calling "pull"

After the shot routine is complete, the subconscious mind should take over; this is the moment when all of the athlete's training comes into play. If the training was effective, the athlete will rely on muscle memory to break the targets.

XXII. SUGGESTED READING

The following is a list of books and articles recommended for athletes and coaches by various elite athletes, coaches, and Olympian and SCTP National Team Head Coach, Terri DeWitt. This is not an all-inclusive list, but it is a good place to start.

- *The Inner Game of Golf* by W. Timothy Gallwey
- *In Pursuit of Excellence* by Terry Orlick
- *Advance Competition Shotgunning* by Michael Ray Forehand
- *An Insight to Sports: Featuring Trapshooting and Golf* by Dr. Wayne F. Martin
- *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale
- *You Can If You Think You Can* by Norman Vincent Peale
- *With Winning in Mind* by Lanny Bassham
- *See to Play* Michael A. Peters, O.D.
- *The Complete Book of Shotgunning Games* by Tom Migdalski
- *Successful Coaching* by Rainer Martens
- *Talent Code* by Daniel Coyle
- *Mind vs. Target* by Bob Palmer
- *Break 'Em All - The Complete Guide to Fixing Clay Target Shooting Problems* by BJ McDaniel and Mark Taylor
- *Perception, Cognition, and Decision Training: The Quiet Eye in Action* by Joan N. Vickers
- *New Trap Shooter Primer* by Rob Mathis
- *Beyond the Target* by Daniel L. Schindler
- *To the Target* by Daniel L. Schindler
- *Take Your Best Shot* by Daniel L. Schindler
- "Are you Fundamentally Sound?" by John Mullins

XXIII. HOSTING A COMPETITION

Teams are encouraged to participate in local, regional, state, national and virtual competitions. Local competitions offer athletes the opportunity to see how they perform under pressure and to develop their competitive spirit. Wins can boost team morale before going to the larger regional and state competitions, and losses can be catalysts to motivate athletes to practice harder.

Local competitions require some logistical work. The SCTP encourages teams to host events, including virtual competitions, this section serves as an event and logistical planning guide. The accompanying spreadsheet (Exhibit C) is a helpful tool and will help calculate venue capacity, scheduling, costs and profits, and other information.
Please follow the directions closely when inputting data.

Holding a Local Competition

1. **Determine the number of participants for the event.** The first step to planning a local competition is to determine the participant capacity of the venue. Use the Exhibit C calculator to help determine capacity. Open the file, choose the discipline tab (i.e., Trap Calculator), and input data.
2. **Determine the start and end times for the shooting day.** Consider these factors when determining timing for the competition:
    a. **Discipline(s) of the shoot.** The length of flight times vary by discipline. Trap takes approximately one hour and 15 minutes for an average squad to shoot, skeet takes two hours, and sporting clays takes three hours.
        i. Include time to reset the field and/or refill the stations.
    b. **Position of the sun.** Depending on the orientation of the fields, certain times of the day may be problematic as athletes may before forced to shoot into the sun. Account for this when scheduling to ensure athletes are not impacted.
    c. **How will ties be broken?** Shoot-offs and count-backs are commonly used to break ties. If planning shoot-offs, they should be scheduled early enough to allow for completion before light or noise restrictions go into effect.
3. **Determine the number of fields you need.** Once shooting hours are determined, the number of flights can be calculated. To determine the number of available fields, consider:
    a. Which shooting discipline(s) is offered?
    b. How many fields/stations are available?
    c. How many groups of athletes can shoot at one time? Trap is shot in a squad of five. Skeet and sporting clays are shot in three-man squads with two squads shooting together.
    d. Should you have a practice field? Practice fields can be profitable, but they may be challenging to run. All competitors must have equitable practice opportunity.
    e. What happens if there is a machine malfunction?
        i. Is there a mechanic on site?
        ii. How long will the field be down?
        iii. Should you have a “break down” field available?
            1. For trap and skeet: It is generally advisable to have a spare field, which may serve as a practice field until needed.
            2. Sporting clays: Depending on the type of malfunction, the station may have to be canceled. In that case, all competitors would receive a perfect score on the station, including those athletes who shot before the malfunction.

4. **Determine the number of athletes.** To determine the number of groups that can compete each day, multiply the number of flight times by the number of fields. To determine the athlete capacity forthe competition, multiply the number of athletes per group by the number of groups.
   For example: 3 flights x 5 fields = 15 groups
   15 groups x 5 athletes per group = 60 athletes can compete
5. **Determine event costs and registration fees.** Using the Exhibit C calculator, calculate the cost per athlete and determine adequate registration fees. To do this, add all costs, including facility fees, target costs, and additional equipment, logistics, and support fees. Divide the sum by the number of possible athletes. Target registration fees are listed separately and can be adjusted as needed.

   Note: Do not publish registration fees until the event has been fully planned and all expenses determined.

Event Rules

All competitions should follow SCTP policies, procedures, and rules as well as the appropriate national governing body (NGB) rules set forth for the discipline(s) offered.

Planning the Event

Once the number of athletes has been determined, it is time to plan the event. During event planning, additional costs may arise that will influence the registration fees. It is best to wait until the event is completely planned before publishing any fees.

Staffing is an integral aspect of event planning. To determine staffing needs, consider:

- How many regular or core staff are needed on a regular day? How does your event affect staffing needs?
- Who will keep score on the field?
- Who will pull the targets?
- Who will load the target machines?
- Who will check in athletes?
- Who will set up score sheets?
- Who will record scores and calculate winners?
- Who will pick up excess trash during the day?
- What is the emergency procedure for the range? How is it communicated to participants?
- Will an EMT be on site?
- Who will be responsible for range safety?
- Are squad line directors available to keep the fields moving?
- What is the plan for inclement weather? Who makes the call?
- Are volunteers available to cover any of the extra staffing needs?

The club may already have staff for some of these roles, but additional staff will likely be needed on the day of the event. Use the spreadsheet to calculate labor costs.

Logistical issues must be addressed well in advance of the event to ensure the day flows well, and the event is safe and accessible. Considerations may include:

- Parking
- Restroom facilities
- Food and concessions
- Golf cart rentals (if necessary)
- Event program
- Handicap accessibility

Supplies, contractors, and other equipment costs must be factored in. Below is a list of commonly needed items.

- Score sheets
- Scorer chairs with covers
- Clipboards
- Pencils
- Water

It may be advantageous to offer these additional items and vendors.

- Food vendors
- Ammunition sales
- Eye and hearing protection sales

Scores and Awards

An effective scoring system must be in place for the event. Once the athletes have competed, scores must be recorded and calculated. If the event is a SCTP competition, scores can be entered into SHOT. SHOT is a scoring software solution that SCTP is currently using for all competitions. Otherwise, prior to the event a spreadsheet should be formulated to tabulate squad and team awards, and rank individual awards, or the Exhibit C spreadsheet found at the end of this manual can be used or adapted for use at fundraising shoots.

All score sheets should be verified before entering them into the chosen system. Score reports should be posted before the awards presentation to safeguard against typographical errors, such as incorrect scores or athletes listed in the wrong division.

Awards are gratifying and all athletes enjoy receiving them. However, participation awards are not necessary. See Exhibit C for a recommended awards list, broken into age classification. The list can be used for any shooting discipline. Awards can be purchased for a minimal fee by calling SCTP National Office.

Depending on the size of the event, there may not be many participants in each category. Adjust the awards as necessary but be sure to let the teams know what awards are planned. It may be necessary to close registration at least a week before the event to order trophies and/or medals and to confirm participant numbers. If there are few competitors, consider limiting the awards using these guidelines:

- 1st place: Minimum of three participants
- 2nd place: Minimum of five participants
- 3rd place: Minimum of six participants

If awards are trimmed, it is best practice to inform participants prior to the competition.

Publicizing the Competition and Event Registration

Once event logistics are confirmed, it is necessary to publicize the competition. Create a flyer with the date, times, location, and sign-up information. Forward the flyer to area teams and the SCTP office. The SCTP office will add the event to the calendar, which is located on the program www.sssfonline.org.

A minimum two-week registration window is necessary. Registration should close in enough time to build and distribute the schedule at least five days before the competition. Schedule templates are in the Exhibit C spreadsheet.

When scheduling athletes, squads comprised of members from the same team should be grouped together, when possible. Stacking squads from the same team on one field is ideal, but it may be necessary to spread them to an adjacent field.

Fundraising Opportunities

Hosting a competition is a great fundraising opportunity for teams. Consider the following options to maximize funds:

- Corporate team entry fees
- Individual entry fees
- Sponsorships
- Additional games (5-stand, last competitor standing, long bird, etc.)
- Raffle
- Silent auction
- Bake sale

Day of the Event

Begin the event with a safety briefing and instructions for the day. It may be necessary to post and/or repeat instructions for athlete reference and to facilitate the process for teams checking in late.

During the morning instructions, provide an itinerary for the event. Include on the itinerary estimated times for anticipated shoot-offs and award presentations. Also, discuss grounds keeping, such as trash disposal and hull removal.

During the safety briefing, review The Ten Commandments of Firearm Safety (Exhibit A) and all emergency procedures, including those that are event and venue specific. Remind athletes that eye and ear protection is required, firearms should always be pointed down range and in a safe direction when not on the field, and firearms should be unloaded and safeties engaged until the athlete is on the line and ready to shoot.

All attendees should be reminded to stay hydrated and take appropriate precautions to protect themselves against the elements, illness, and injury.

And, remind everyone to have fun!

XXIV. COMMON ISSUES

Coaches will face many challenges during their career; most will not be unique to shooting sports. This section outlines commonly faced challenges and options for addressing them.

Favoritism

Coaches are charged with fairly and equitably instructing all athletes on a team, regardless of their skill level. It is not uncommon for coaches to gravitate toward high performing athletes, regardless of whether that skill derives from hard work or natural ability. When this happens, favoritism may result and may destroy the team. Coaches may be inclined to spend more time with star athletes to further develop the athlete's skill. This is advantageous for the exceptional athlete, but it results in less coaching time for others. It is a coach's duty to instruct all athletes on a team.

Furthermore, coaches must interact equitably with all team parents. While it may be easy to develop closer relationships with the parents of advanced athletes, it is important all parents feel welcome and encouraged to engage.

Spectator Behavior

Often, some of the most undesirable behaviors in youth sports derive from the parents and other spectators. Sometimes inappropriate or dramatic spectator behavior is the result of one's perception that their athlete is being treated unfairly. Coaches are advised to calmly and privately address spectator concerns and diffuse the situation as soon as possible.

When a coach needs assistance diffusing situations involving spectators, the coach may need to elevate the issue to the team's administrator. At that time, team administration should work discreetly to address any concerns. Additional information regarding parent behavior is in Section VI of this manual and in the Parent Code of Conduct in the http://bit.ly/SCTPhandbook.

Outside Coaching

Just as in other sports, private instruction services have become commonplace in the shooting sports. These services can be very helpful to athletes wishing to progress to the next level of competition, and athletes should not be discouraged from exercising this option. Likewise, contracting a private instructor is not a critique of the coach's ability, and the coach should not interpret it as such. While it is important that the team coach offer the same quality and amount of instruction to each athlete, outside instruction may change the team coach's focus.

When an athlete receives outside coaching, it is advisable for all parties to discuss this arrangement initially and regularly after the private instructional sessions. These discussions should review the goals of the outside instructor and any specifics regarding athlete technique, practices, and methods of practice. The objective of these discussions is such that the team coach can support the athlete and avoid contradicting the private instructor. Keep the focus on the athlete and their development and **maintain clear and consistent communication.**

While outside coaches may offer more advanced skill, concepts, and/or individualized attention, they are not a substitute for the team coach. Frequently, the team coach is the key to identifying and managing mental barriers and building good sportsmanship and team dynamics.

It is important for participants to review and understand SCTP and SCTP's official policy on outside coaching. Refer to the http://bit.ly/SCTPhandbook or Appendix B of this manual.

Lack of Communication

Lack of, or poor, communication is at the crux of nearly all problems a coach will encounter. While communication issues may arise from any one supporter or participants, coaches who are not effective communicators are unlikely to be accomplished coaches.

Lack of effective communication causes problems that could otherwise be avoided, but once they have occurred, may be difficult to resolve. The rule of thumb when it comes to communication is that it is nearly impossible to over communicate—especially if that communication is planned and well executed.

A good communication practice is to form a communication schedule, which may be as simple as planning and sending a weekly communication to the team. Frequency of communication varies by team, but it is advisable to follow a realistic and manageable schedule. Doing so sets up a reliable pattern and expectation and will ultimately serve to bolster team unity and preparedness.

Another best communication practice is to document all communication that goes out, the method by which it was distributed, who was on the distribution list, and any notes about the communication.

Financial Misunderstandings

Every team should strive to ensure their finances are straightforward and transparent. Financial misunderstandings may create distrust and fissures between members of the team, parents, coaches, and other supporters.

Best practices include sharing the sample budget with team members, parents, and others at the beginning of the season, immediately and openly communicating changes (and justifications for those changes) to the budget and presenting regular treasurer reports. It is also advisable to review budgets prior to and after major competitions, as these events tend to incur major expenditures.

Finally, teams should be wary of contracting services from parent- or coach-owned businesses, as doing so can appear to be a conflict of interest. When it is necessary to do so, it is imperative all stakeholders be part of the conversation and properly informed of the arrangement.

How to Squad

Coaches typically have specific squadding methods. Squadding may vary by event, athlete performance, and other factors. A best practice is for coaches to pre-establish standards required for an athlete to be in the top squad, the second squad, and so on (e.g., a trap coach may establish that to start on the top team squad, the athlete needs to consistently shoot 98/100 targets).

That said, at the beginning of the season, it is advisable for coaches to clearly explain their squadding process to the team, and document everything used to determine squads, including scores, which practice rounds count toward squadding, number of practices attended, and anything else that the coach may consider. This documentation can be used to justify squadding decisions. These practices minimize the potential for future conflict and dissent among the team.

Athletes Not on the Correct Team

Coaches are responsible for verifying with SCTP staff the addresses and team eligibility for all athletes. Athletes are assigned to teams based on their school and address. For more detailed information about team assignment, refer to the http://bit.ly/SCTPhandbook.

XXV. ETIQUETTE

Just like any other sport, SCTP expects all participants to exercise good sportsmanship and appropriate, ethical conduct.

Athletes

Athletes shall behave in a sportsmanlike manner at all times and shall avoid distracting other athletes during competition. Distractions include, but are not limited to, making unnecessary movements and having outbursts of emotion, positive or negative. The athletes are expected to pick up their field when they are done, including collecting and disposing of their hulls if the gun club does not claim the shells that fall on the ground.

NOTE: Due to safety concerns and out of respect for the gun range staff, participants should not engage in hat shooting during events. While this is a fun reward for athletes, it is better done at the team's home range and in a safe and controlled setting.

Coaches and Parents

Coaches and parents are also expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner. This is especially important because their actions may affect the performance of any competing athlete. Courteous supporters will not disturb other athletes with loud and boisterous vocalizations, applause, or other behaviors, whether celebratory or otherwise, while athletes are competing. Light clapping when an athlete finishes is acceptable.

XXV. GLOSSARY

ATA: Amateur Trapshooting Association. Governing body for American-style trapshooting.

Bird: A term that is used interchangeably with target.

Butt plate: The rear of the firearm that rests against the athlete's shoulder while in a firing position.

Cast: Measured as the degree to which the stock is bent to the right or left of center of the rib.

Choke: The portion at the end of the barrel that constricts the shot.

Comb: The top of the stock that fits against the athlete's cheek.

Convergence: When eyes focus down and in or move towards each other.

Cross-dominance: When an athlete's dominant eye is opposite of their dominant hand.

Crossing target: A target with a flight path that is nearly at a right angle to the athlete.

Dead: The term used by scorekeepers to note a target that had a visible piece break off.

Divergence: When eyes focus up and out or move away from each other.

Dominant eye: The eye that controls the direction the athlete is looking when both eyes are open.

Dram: A measure of the powder charge in the shell.

Drop: The distance from the rib to the top line of the stock at the comb and the heel.

Eye hold area: The area in which an athlete places their vision when calling for a target.

Following pair: Two targets that are released from the same launcher as quickly as possible. No report of the gun is necessary.

Forearm: The part of the stock that fits under the barrel.

Hard focus: The practice of looking at something to see detail. The opposite of soft focus.

Hold point: Where an athlete points their firearm at the moment they call for the target.

Junior Olympics (JO): State Junior Olympic Championships/USA Shooting Junior Olympic State Championship. Held according to USA Shooting timing and rules.

Length of pull: The distance from the middle of the trigger to the middle of the butt plate.

Lost: The term used by scorekeepers to denote a target that did not have a visible piece break off the target.

Low mount: A position in which the shotgun is not pre-mounted to the athlete's shoulder. The shotgun is usually held with the toe of the stock at elbow height. This is required for international skeet.

National governing bodies (NGB): The controlling bodies of the shooting disciplines in which SCTP participates.

NSCA: National Sporting Clays Association. Governing body of American-style sporting clays shooting.

NSSA: National Skeet Shooting Association. Governing body of American-style skeet shooting.

Passing target: A target with a flight path that comes from behind the athlete and passes overhead.

Pitch: The angle of the buttstock in relation to the plane of the barrel(s).

Point of impact (POI): Place where the shot is delivered in relation to the athlete's perceived point of aim. It is usually expressed as a ratio, such as 60/40. This fraction means 60 percent of the shot is above the perceived point of aim, and 40 percent is below.

Pull!: The command that is usually used by athletes to call for a target.

Quartering target: A target with a flight path that is at any angle except a right angle to the athlete.

Range safety officer (RSO): Official that completed the NRA Range Safety Officer training and is responsible for ensuring range safety for the designated event.

Report of the gun: When a gun has fired.

Report pair: Two targets with the second target being thrown after the report of the gun.

Round: This term may refer to a unit of ammunition, such as one shot shell. It can also be used to refer to the full 25 shots fired during trap and skeet before a new box of shells is needed.

SCTP: Scholastic Clay Target Program. Shotgun shooting portion of the Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation.

Shot pattern: The concentration of shots measured by/in a circle at a given range.

Sight picture: Term used to describe an athlete's perceived visual relationship between the target and the muzzle or bead at the time the trigger is pulled.

Simultaneous (true) pair: Two targets that are released at the same time from two different launchers.

S.M.A.R.T .: An acronym used to guide goal creation, meaning Specific, Measurable, Adjustable, Realistic, and Time-oriented.

Soft focus: The practice of not letting the eyes focus on anything specific within the sight picture.

Squib load: Firearm malfunction where the shot or wad does not exit the barrel when fired.

SSSF: Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation. Governing body of National SCTP.

Stock: The part of the shotgun that is held by the athlete. It is comprised of the butt plate, comb, and forearm.

Stretch goal: A goal that requires extending oneself to the limit for the goal to be realized.

Target year: The year in which SCTP operates, September 1 - August 31.

SCTP: Scholastic Clay Target Program.

USA Shooting: USAS. US governing body of international-style trap and skeet shooting.

XXVI. SUBMITTING MATERIAL

This manual is a living document and is meant to be a resource by which the SCTP community can share best practices and experiences with each other. We welcome your suggestions for inclusion in this manual and are open to feedback about how it can be revised to best serve you.

To submit content or feedback, email the SCTP staff with subject line, "Best Practice Submission." Explain to us how your method benefits your team and how it has worked for you. After review, staff will determine whether to revise the manual. When shared practices are incorporated in this manual, the contributor and their team will be listed in the contributor's section (Section ii).

We look forward to your valuable suggestions!

EXHIBIT A: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF FIREARM SAFETY

1. Treat every firearm with the same respect due a loaded firearm.
2. Control the direction of your firearm muzzle.
3. Be sure of your target and what is beyond it.
4. Be sure the barrel and action are clear of obstructions.
5. Keep your finger outside of the trigger guard until you are ready to shoot.
6. Unload firearms when not in use.
7. Never point a firearm at anything you do not intend to shoot.
8. Never shoot a bullet at a flat, hard surface or water.
9. Store firearms and ammunition separately.
10. Do not use alcoholic beverages or other mood-altering drugs before or while shooting

EXHIBIT B: SAMPLE BUDGET

Practice Costs

$$ for Targets (25)	$$ for Shells	$$ per round
5	6	$11.00

Practice Schedule	# of Targets	$$ for Practice
February		
Week 1	25	$11.00
Week 2	50	$22.00
Week 3	50	$22.00
Week 4	50	$22.00
March		
Week 1	75	$33.00
Week 2	75	$33.00
Week 3	100	$44.00
Week 4	100	$44.00
Local Competition	100	49.00*
April		
Week 1	100	$44.00
Week 2	100	$44.00
Week 3	100	$44.00
Week 4	100	$44.00
Local Competition	100	49.00*
May		
Week 1	100	$44.00
Week 2	125	$55.00
Week 3	125	$55.00
Week 4	125	$55.00
Local Competition	100	49.00*
Regional Championships	100	54.00*
June		
Week 1	150	$66.00
Week 2	150	$66.00
State Championships	100	74.00*
Total		**$1,023.00**

Team Costs

National SCTP Reg	$25.00
ATA Registration**	$12.00
NSCA/NSSA Registration**	$10.00
Eye Protection	$15.00
Ear Protection	$20.00
Cap	$12.00
T-Shirt	$10.00
Vest	$75.00
Shooting Pouch	$40.00
Magnetic Gun Rest	$10.00
Other	$20.00
Total	**$249.00**
Season Total	**$1,272.00**

*Registration Fee + Ammunition

**Optional Fees

EXHIBIT C: SHOOT CALCULATOR AND SCHEDULE

Athlete Calculator				Cost Calculator	
Start Time (First shot of first squad):	8:00			Normal cost per 25 targets	$5.00
End Time (Last shot of last squad):	19:00			Daily Fee for registered targets	$6.00
Duration for a squad to shoot (in minutes)	120			Additional labor costs	$1,000.00
				Trophy Costs	$500.00
Number of Fields:	8				
Number of flights	**5.5**			Cost Per Athlete (un-registered targets)	**$25.68**
Number of Athletes you can Invite:	**264**			Cost Per Athlete (registered targets)	**$31.68**

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE OF BYLAWS

Sample Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation Bylaws

The name of the organization is Sample. The organization has not been formed for the making of any profit, or personal financial gain. The assets and income of the organization shall not be distributable to, or benefit the trustees, directors, or officers or other individuals. The assets and income shall only be used to promote corporate purposes as described below. Nothing contained herein, however, shall be deemed to prohibit the payment of reasonable compensation to employees and independent contractors for services provided for the benefit of the organization. This organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from federal income tax. The organization shall net endorse, contribute to, work for, or otherwise support (or oppose) a candidate for public office. The organization is organized exclusively for purposes subsequent to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Article I
Meetings

Section 1. Annual Meeting. An annual meeting sha1l be held once each calendar year for the purpose of electing directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting. The annual meeting shall be held at the time and place designated by the
Board of Directors from time to time.

Section 2. Special Meetings. Special meetings must be requested by the President of the Board of Directors.

Section 3. Notice. Written notice of all meetings shall be provided under this section or as otherwise required by law. The Notice shall state the place, date, and hour of meeting, and if for a special meeting, the purpose of the meeting. Such notice shall be mailed to all directors of record at the address shown on the corporate books, at least 10 days prior to the meeting. Such notice shall be deemed effective when deposited in ordinary United States mail, properly addressed, with postage prepaid.

Section 4. Place of Meeting. Meetings shall be held at the organization's principal place of business unless otherwise stated in the notice. ·

Section 5. Quorum. A majority of the directors shall constitute at quorum at a meeting. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the directors may adjourn the meeting to another time without further notice. If a quorum is represented at an adjourned meeting, any business may be transacted that might have been transacted at the meeting as originally scheduled. The directors present at a meeting represented by a quorum may continue to transact business until adjournment, even if the withdrawal of some directors' results in representation of less than a quorum.

Section 6. Informal Action. Any action required to be taken, or which may be taken, at a meeting, may be taken without a meeting and without prior notice if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, is signed by the directors with respect to the subject matter of the vote.

Article II
Directors

Section 1. Number of Directors. The organization shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of nine directors.

Section 2. Election and Term of Office. The directors shall be elected at the annual meeting. Each director shall serve a term of three years, or until a successor has been elected and qualified.

Section 3. Quorum. A majority of directors shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4. Adverse Interest. In the determination of a quorum of the directors, or in voting, the disclosed adverse interest of a director shall not disqualify the director or invalidate his or her vote.

Section 5. Regular Meeting. The Board of Directors shall meet immediately after the election for the purpose of electing its new officers, appointing new committee chairpersons and for transacting such other business as may be deemed, appropriate. The Board of Directors may provide, by resolution, for additional meetings without notice other than the notice provided by the resolution.

Section 6. Special Meeting. Special meetings may be requested by the President, Secretary, or any two directors by providing five days written notice by ordinary United States mail, effective when mailed. Minutes of the meeting shall be sent to the Board of Directors within two weeks after the meeting.

Section 7. Procedures. The vote of a majority of the directors present at a properly called meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Directors, unless the vote of a greater number is required by law or by these by-laws for a particular resolution. A director of the organization who is present at a meeting of the Board of Directors at which action on any corporate matter is taken shall be presumed to have assented to the action taken unless their dissent shall be entered in the minutes of the meeting. The Board shall keep written minutes of its proceedings in its permanent records.

Section 8. Informal Action. Any action required to be taken at a meeting of directors, or any action which may be taken at a meeting of directors of a committee of directors, may be taken
without a meeting if a consent in writing setting forth the action so taken, is signed by all of the directors or all of the members of the committee of directors, as the case may be.

Section 9. Removals and Vacancies. A director shall be subject to removal, with or without cause, at a meeting called for that purpose. Any vacancy that occurs on the Board of Directors, whether by death, resignation, removal or any other cause, may be filled by the remaining directors. A director elected to fill a vacancy shall serve the remaining term of his or her predecessor, or until a successor has been elected and qualified.

Section 10. Committees. To the extent permitted by law, the Board of Directors may appoint
from its members a committee or committees, temporary or permanent, and designate the duties, powers and authorities of such committees.

Article III
Officers

Section 1. Number of Officers. The officers of the organization shall be a President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. Two or more offices may be held by one person; however the offices of President and Secretary cannot be held concurrently by the same person.

a. President. The President shall be the chief executive officer and shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and its Executive Committee, if such a committee is created by the Board.

b. Secretary. The Secretary shall give notice of all meetings of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee, shall keep an accurate list of the directors, and shall have the authority to certify any records, or copies of- records, as the official records of the organization. The Secretary shall maintain the minutes of the Board of Directors' meetings and all committee meetings.

c. Treasurer. The Treasurer, shall be responsible for conducting the financial affairs of the organization as directed and authorized by the Board of Directors and Executive Committee, if any, and shall make

reports of corporate finances as required, but no less often than at each meeting of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee.

Section 2. Election and Term of Office. The officers shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors at the first meeting of the Board of Directors, immediately following the annual meeting.
Each officer shall serve a one year term until a successor has been elected and qualified.

Section 3. Removal or Vacancy. The Board of Directors shall have the power to remove an officer or agent of the organization. Any vacancy that occurs for any reason may be filled by the Board of Directors.

Article IV
Corporate Seal, Execution Of Instruments

The organization shall not have a corporate seal. All instruments that are executed on behalf of the organization which are acknowledged and which affect an interest in real estate shall be executed by the President and the Secretary or Treasurer. All other instruments executed by the organization, including a release of mortgage or lien, may be executed by the President and Secretary. Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this section, any written instrument may be executed by any officer(s) or agent(s) that are specifically designated by resolution of the Board of Directors.

Article V
Amendment To Bylaws

The bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed by the Board of Directors by a majority of a quorum vote at any regular or special meeting. The text of the proposed change shall be distributed to all board members at least 10 days before the meeting.

Article VI
Indemnification

Any director or officer who is involved in litigation by reason of his or her position as a director or officer of this organization shall be indemnified and held harmless by the organization to the fullest extent authorized by law as it now exists or may subsequently be amended (but, in the case of any such amendment, only to the extent that such amendment permits the organization to provide broader indemnification rights).

Article VII
Dissolution

The organization may be dissolved only with the authorization of its Board of Directors given at a special meeting called for that purpose, and with the subsequent approval by no less than two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members. In the event of the dissolution of the organization, the assets shall be applied and distributed as follows:

a. All liabilities and obligations shall be paid, satisfied and discharged, or adequate provision shall be made therefore.

b. Assets not held upon a condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance to any other organization or individual shall be distributed, transferred, or conveyed, in trust or otherwise, to charitable and educational organization, organized under Section 50l(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, of a similar or like nature to this organization, as determined by the Board of Directors.

Certification

The undersigned certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the bylaws of the above named organization, duly adopted by the initial Board of Directors on Month, day, year.

_____

President

_____

Secretary

APPENDIX B: OUTSIDE COACHING POLICY

What is Outside Coaching?
SCTP program defines outside coaching as coaching of a SCTP participant by a coach who is not part of a SCTP team, is not credentialed and/or registered with SCTP, and who provides instruction and coaching apart from SCTP practices, shooting competitions, and other SCTP events. Typically, outside coaches provide coaching for a fee and often provide these services as part of a business venture.

SCTP's Policy about Outside Coaching
SCTP believes that outside coaching is the sole purview and responsibility of the parents or guardians of the SCTP athlete, and therefore is viewed by SCTP as outside of the purview of the program and is not regulated by SCTP or its volunteers.

Because outside coaches and outside coaching are "outside" the purview of SCTP, SCTP claims no authority over outside coaching, nor do we vet, vouch, support, or endorse outside coaches.

Additionally, because SCTP recognizes that outside coaching is not part of the SCTP program, any negative action or punishment taken by a SCTP coach or volunteer towards a SCTP participant, as a result of their seeking outside coaching, is strictly prohibited. Outside coaching is a private matter between the parent/guardian and the youth in their care.

Should a SCTP team wish to engage an outside coach to assist in coaching their team's athletes, SCTP requires that such an "outside" coach pass a background check that is administered by SCTP.

Any person who engages in coaching or shooting instruction at any SCTP activity must be credentialed by, be registered with, and in good standing with SCTP.

It is important to understand that for all SCTP activities (i.e., practices, shooting competitions, and events, etc.), credentialed and registered SCTP coaches have the authority to structure, organize, and run their respective SCTP teams, practices, shooting competitions, and other events as they see fit, given that these are conducted within the confines of SCTP, Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation, and other governing body rules, and codes we support and endorse. This means that coaches can prevent outside coaches from attending and participating in SCTP team practices, shooting competitions, and events.

SCTP does not maintain a list of endorsed or approved outside shooting coaches, and we do not and will not provide approval or endorsement of any outside shooting instructor or coach if asked. The responsibility of vetting outside coaching and coaches, like the act of using them itself, lay with the parent or guardian of the SCTP athlete and is not a part of the SCTP program.

Find this Outside Coaching policy in Section IX of the http://bit.ly/SCTPhandbook

Thank You

Tennessee Wildlife Federation has compiled this manual with information and knowledge of different individuals, organizations, and governing bodies. We would like to thank them and express our appreciation for their wisdom, experience, and willingness to share with others.

Cumberland County Claybusters

Terri DeWitt

Dan Carlisle

The works of BJ McDaniel

Gamaliel Shooting Supplies

Rob Mathis

USA Shooting

Tennessee Wildlife Federation leads the conservation, sound management and wise use of Tennessee's great outdoors. Since 1946, the Federation has spearheaded the development of the state's wildlife policy, advanced landmark legislation on air and water quality and other conservation initiatives, helped restore numerous species, and introduced thousands of kids to the great outdoors.

Tennessee Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP), which governs student-athlete shotgun shooting sports in the state, is run by Tennessee Wildlife Federation. Tennessee SCTP is one of the largest and most successful youth shooting programs in the nation and works to recruit athletes into an outdoor lifestyle for a lifetime. The program is designed to offer athletes multiple avenues to continued competition, including Junior Olympics and Nationals. Since 2005, Tennessee SCTP athletes have won more than 150 national titles.

For more information, visit tnwf.org

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