

# COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™

## SHOOTER'S HANDBOOK



Version 23.2

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# **SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY**

## **Shooter's Handbook**

### **Forward**

This revised and updated version of the SASS Shooter's Handbook contains sections and appendices that were moved from the RO-I course materials in order to have a single document covering the primary rules, regulations, conventions, and procedures.

It is also intended to be a supplemental reference to the Range Officer Courses.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Shooter's Handbook

### SECTION 1 – SASS & COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™

The Single Action Shooting Society® is an international membership organization formed in 1987 to preserve and promote the sport of Cowboy Action Shooting™. SASS serves as the governing and sanctioning body of the sport, promulgating the rules to ensure safety and consistency in Cowboy Action Shooting™ competitions worldwide. SASS sanctions championship matches including State, Regional, Divisional, National, and the World Championship — all held annually across the nation and internationally.

#### JOINING SASS

Membership in SASS means different things to different people, and the reasonings behind each individual varies greatly. While there may be a simple, single reason to joining for some, most point to a combination of both tangible and intangible benefits that comprise the true value of their membership. SASS is one of the few shooting organizations that actively supports family participation and camaraderie above competition. SASS members are the very best folks you're likely to meet ... anywhere.

A membership in SASS ensures the organization can continue to provide a codified set of rules and regulations for the sport, provide exemplary member services, and remain vital to the longevity of Cowboy Action Shooting™ as the internationally recognized sport we participate in today.

#### SASS MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Registered SASS number, alias, and badge.
- Travel, rental car, and hotel discounts.
- Prescription discount plan.
- Entry to SASS Sanctioned shooting events.
- Subscription to *The Cowboy Chronicle*.
- Full access to the SASS Wire Forum.
- Exclusive member pricing on merchandise.

#### SELECTING A SASS ALIAS

Your SASS Alias is exclusively yours. Every SASS member is required to select an alias that closely represents a character or profession from the Old West or western film genre. In the tradition of the Old West cattle brand registries, your alias may not in any way duplicate or be easily confused with any other member's alias. SASS Headquarters provides final approval of all aliases.

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

General rules and guidelines for alias acceptance into the SASS registry:

- The alias must be "printable" before a wide audience (family friendly!).
- No duplications are permitted.
- If it SOUNDS the same, it is the same.
- Adding "II", "2", or "Too" is not accepted.

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- "Ranger" could become "Texas Ranger," but not "The Ranger". "John Henry Chisum" could be modified to "Jack Chisum," but not "Jon Henry Chisum."
- Historical names may not be modified to make them different. "Wyatt Earp" and "Marshal Wyatt Earp" are considered the same.

The SASS Alias registry changes daily. Please reach out to SASS Headquarters to confirm the availability of your alias choice.

## COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™

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

Contestants shoot in several four firearm stages (courses of fire) in which they engage steel targets in a specifically designed scenario and shooting sequence.

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

## CLOTHING & ACCOUTREMENTS

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

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

All shooters must be in costume, and we encourage invited guests and family also to be costumed. Shooters must remain in costume at all match events, including dinners, award ceremonies, dances, and other SASS related activities.

All clothing and equipment must be worn appropriately and how it was intended, or how it would have been in the Old West or as seen on B-Western movies and television.

Specific requirements for costuming lie within the costuming shooting categories; please refer to the shooting category section for a list of requirements.

## EYE & EAR PROTECTION

Hearing protection is highly recommended and eye protection is mandatory in and around the shooting areas. While small, period glasses may look great, full protection/high impact glasses are strongly recommended. Such protection is *recommended* for everyone when in the range area, however eye protection is *mandatory* for spectators when within direct line of sight of steel targets.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Shooter's Handbook

### HOLSTERS, CARTRIDGE BELTS, & BANDOLEERS

#### Holsters

- All handguns must be carried in a safe holster capable of retaining the firearm throughout a normal range of motion.
- Main match holsters must be located one on each side of the belly button and separated by at least the width of two fists at the belt. (Note: Pocket pistol and derringer holsters are not "main match" holsters)
- Holsters may not depart from the vertical by more than 30° when worn.
- Although cross draw and shoulder holsters are legal, extreme care must be exercised when drawing a firearm from a cross draw or shoulder holster or retuning the firearm to leather. The user must "twist" their body, *if necessary*, to ensure the muzzle never breaks the 170° safety rule during the process.
- When drawing a revolver, the muzzle may be oriented into the straight down (180°) as it clears leather; but must then go immediately into the downrange 170° (and vice versa on the return). These restrictions against breaking the downrange 180° angle apply to all holsters and methods of draw/re-holster. This allowance applies to all types/styles of holsters, from canted double strong side to cross draw, to shoulder/Huckleberry rigs.
- During the course of fire, the shooter must be given the ability to draw and holster revolvers from approved/legal holsters and the ability to retrieve and return vertically staged double-barreled shotguns without penalty.
- Any firearm that breaks the 170° safety rule will result in a Stage Disqualification.

#### Cartridge Belts, Bandoleers, and Pouches

- Bandoleers, cartridge belts, and pouches must be of traditional design (e.g., bandoleers must be loose and not secured in any way to prevent movement). Modern drop pouches, combat style shotgun loops, wrist or forearm bandoleers, and such are not allowed.
- Pouches shall have a flap and must carry their contents loose, with no special provisions to organize the contents for rapid retrieval.
- Cartridge loops must not have a metal or plastic liner. However, the entire loop may be made of metal.

#### Ammunition Belts and Loops

- Ammunition required for loading/reloading during the course of any stage must be carried on the shooter's person, in a bandoleer, cartridge/shot shell belt loop, pouch, holster, pocket, or be safely staged as required by stage instructions.
- Use of ammo from cartridge loops mounted on a firearm's stock or forearm is not allowed.
- No ammunition may be carried in the mouth, ears, nose, cleavage, or any other bodily orifice.
- Leather belt slide ammo loops are acceptable; however, shotgun shell slides may not be worn over shotgun loops on an ammo belt.
- Ammunition belts must be worn so all ammo is positioned at or below the belly button.



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- Shotgun ammo loops may not accommodate more than two rounds per loop, and rifle/revolver ammo loops shall accommodate only one round per loop.
- Shotgun Ammo loops must conform to the shooters contour (i.e., not tilt out from the belt).
- Shotgun loops must be in a single row.
- Rifle/Revolver loops cannot be affixed to shotgun loops.

**Note:** Any ammo carried to the firing line in an illegal/unapproved manner that is actually **used** for stage reloads falls under the "Use of illegally acquired ammunition" penalties.

## OUTLAWED ITEMS

SASS wants our participants to be safe, have fun, develop their competitive shooting skills, and enjoy the rich traditions of the Old West. We ask you join us in the friendly spirit of competition and preservation of our heritage. The use or presence of any of the listed outlawed items will result in a Stage Disqualification penalty.

- Modern shooting gloves
- Short sleeve shirts (male competitors only)
- Short sleeve tee shirts, long sleeve tee shirts, and tank tops for all competitors. (Long sleeve Henley type shirts with buttons are acceptable.)
- Modern feathered cowboy hats (Shady Bradys)  
Straw hats of traditional design are acceptable (e.g., Stetson, Baily, Sombreros, etc.)
- Designer jeans are not allowed. Designer jeans include modern jeans that have slogans or logos embroidered, silk screened, and such, saying things like "PINK" or "BABY." Jeans with fancy or flashy adornments are acceptable.
- Ball caps.
- All types of athletic shoes or combat boots, no matter the material from which they are constructed.
- Nylon, plastic, or Velcro accouterments.
- The displaying of any manufacturer's, sponsor's, or team logos on apparel. (Manufacturer's labels on such apparel or equipment are acceptable)

## SASS AFFILIATED CLUBS

SASS Affiliated Clubs are the backbone of SASS and the sport of Cowboy Action Shooting™. SASS Clubs are numerous — located in every state in the nation as well as 15 foreign countries. These clubs are your local resource and facilitator of monthly and annual matches for Cowboy Action Shooting™. SASS Clubs foster the organized growth of the sport in a manner consistent with all SASS rules and regulations. SASS Affiliation ensures no matter where your travels take you, you know exactly what to expect in terms of safety and consistency in enjoying the sport. Finding a local SASS Club near you is the first step in your journey of exploring Cowboy Action Shooting™. You'll meet amazing people, receive a warm welcome, and all the advice for which a new member and shooter could ask! To find a local club near you and to review their monthly shooting schedules, please visit our website at [www.sassnet.com](http://www.sassnet.com).

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Shooter's Handbook

### SECTION 2 – SHOOTING CATEGORIES

SASS recognizes shooting categories based upon age, gender, costuming, equipment, shooting style, and/or propellant. The age for a competitor is determined by their age on the first day the match starts. All SASS categories may be subdivided by gender to establish categories for ladies. There are no men's categories. Competitors may compete within any category for which they qualify. Each category has a set of standard regulations the competitor must follow in order to "stay in category" during the match.

#### OPEN AGE CATEGORIES

Open age categories have no age parameters and carry the following guidelines:

- May use any main match revolver.
- Revolvers may be shot in any SASS legal shooting style – EXCEPT Gunfighter.
- May use any SASS legal main match shotgun and any legal main match rifle.
- May use any SASS legal ammunition.

Open age categories:

- Cowboy — any age.
- Cowgirl — any age.

#### AGE BASED CATEGORIES

Age based categories are offered to allow all participants to compete amongst their peers. Age based categories carry the following guidelines:

- May use any main match revolver.
- Revolvers may be shot in any SASS legal shooting style – EXCEPT Gunfighter.
- May use any SASS legal main match shotgun and any legal main match rifle.
- May use any SASS legal ammunition.

Age based categories:

- Buckaroo/Buckarettte: 13 and under.
  - o Buckaroo/Buckarettte competitors must use revolvers, rifles, and shotguns meeting the external standards but may be chambered in .22 LR for revolvers and rifles and .410 caliber, 28 ,or 32 gauge shotguns.
  - o Standard velocity ammunition for these firearms must be used.
  - o Knockdown targets are not required to fall for Buckaroo category shooters. A hit will be scored as long as the target is clearly hit.
  - o An alternate target must be provided for all aerial shotgun targets for Buckaroo category competitors.
  - o Buckaroo category competitors choosing to use center-fire ammunition in handguns and/or rifles must meet all center-fire power factor and velocity requirements.
  - o Caution is urged in allowing competitors under 14. Local laws, regulations, and insurance requirements may prevent matches from offering some age groups.
- Junior Boy/Junior Girl: 16 and under.
- Wrangler/Lady Wrangler: Age 36 and up.

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## Shooter's Handbook

- Forty-Niner/Lady Forty-Niner: Age 49 and up.
- Senior/Lady Senior: Age 60 and up.
- Silver Senior/Lady Silver Senior: Age 65 and up.
- Elder Statesman/Grand Dame: Age 70 and up.
- Cattle Baron/Cattle Baroness: Age 75 and up.
- El Patron/La Patrona: Age 80 and up.

**NOTE: Parental consent and supervision is required for all competitors under 21 years of age.**

## SHOOTING STYLE CATEGORIES

Shooting Style categories allow participants to compete with others utilizing the same shooting style (e.g., shooting revolvers one-handed instead of two-handed). In addition, every shooting style can also be subdivided by gender, age, and propellant depending on demand and sanctioning category mandates. Failure to comply with the rules for any shooting style category will result in the progressive penalty for "Failure to adhere to the guidelines of the shooting category" (see penalties section).

### Duelist Style

- Duelist – Duelist style is defined as shooting a revolver cocked and fired one-handed and unsupported. The revolver, hand, or shooting arm may not be touched by the offhand except when resolving a malfunctioning revolver problem or when transferring the revolver from one hand to the other.
- Duelists may shoot one revolver right handed and one revolver left handed in what is commonly referred to as "Double Duelist". Double Duelist is NOT a standalone shooting category.
- Duelist Rules:
  - o Any main match, fixed sight model revolver may be used.
  - o Any SASS legal main match shotgun and legal main match rifle may be used.
  - o Any SASS legal ammunition may be used.
  - o Only duelist style or double duelist style may be used.
  - o At no time shall the competitor have two **loaded** revolvers in hand at once.
  - o Cross-draw holsters are allowed by any competitor shooting Duelist/Double Duelist style in any category.

### Gunfighter Style

- Gunfighter style is defined as shooting with a revolver in each hand. Revolvers must be cocked and fired one handed, unsupported, one right-handed and the other left-handed. There is no set pattern as to how the revolvers are to be fired, but alternating revolvers is clearly the most efficient.
- Gunfighter Rules:
  - o Any main match fixed sight revolver may be used.
  - o Only Gunfighter style or Double Duelist style may be used.
  - o Any SASS legal main match shotgun and legal main match rifle may be used.
  - o Any SASS legal ammunition may be used.
  - o Two holsters are required, one on each side.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Shooter's Handbook

- Gunfighter style category competitors are allowed two loaded revolvers “in hand” at the same time.
- Gunfighter style competitors are prohibited from utilizing a simultaneous “double cross draw” method of drawing or holstering revolvers.
- Gunfighter style competitors must shoot FIVE rounds with each hand – regardless of how they are drawn from leather.
- The revolvers must never be held in an unsafe manner (e.g., one revolver behind the other)
- When a stage calls for 10 revolver rounds in a single sequence or the use of only one revolver for the stage, the Gunfighter may draw both revolvers and engage the targets. The Gunfighter shall shoot the targets in exactly the same sequence as prescribed in the stage scenario.
- A Gunfighter may utilize any sequence that is available for use by any other shooting category.
- Stage instructions that specify separate revolvers such as “first pistol/second pistol,” “left revolver/right revolver,” or “with each handgun” are interpreted as “1<sup>st</sup> five shots/2<sup>nd</sup> five shots” when shooting Gunfighter style.
- Both revolvers may be cocked at the same time but must be shot one at a time to facilitate scoring.
- A Gunfighter may not holster revolvers with the intent to engage another revolver sequence.
- Stage design may allow a competitor shooting Gunfighter style to stage or restage revolvers between target sequences. If the shooter's hands are otherwise constrained (e.g., rolling the dice between revolver sequences), the revolvers must be drawn and shot one at a time (double duelist) unless they can be safely staged rather than holstered. In this case, both revolvers may be employed at the same time for the first five rounds, safely restaged, and then employed at the same time again for the second five rounds.

## COSTUME CATEGORIES

### Classic Cowboy/Classic Cowgirl Category

Classic Cowboy/Classic Cowgirl category carries rules and guidelines for both costuming and firearm/caliber usage.

#### Firearm Rules:

- Any main match fixed sight revolver may be used.
- Revolvers must be shot Duelist or Double Duelist style. See Duelist description for required shooting technique.
- Rifles: Any 1873 or earlier manufacture SASS legal rifle or a replica thereof (e.g., 1866 Winchester, 1860 Henry, 1873 Winchester).
- Revolver and Rifle Calibers: .40 caliber or larger, **rimmed** cartridges. Examples include, but are not limited to, .38-40, .44 Special, .44 Russian, .44 Mag., .44-40, .45 Schofield, .45 Colt, or .36 caliber or larger cap and ball.

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- May use any SASS legal ammunition as long as it adheres to the above caliber restrictions.
- Shotguns: SASS legal external hammer double barrel, single shot, or lever actions. External-hammer double barrel shotguns must have manually functioning hammers. Faux hammers and hammers that are cocked internally are illegal.

### Costuming Rules:

- Must choose at least five of the requirements listed below, and all clothing items must be worn appropriately during all shooting events and awards ceremonies.
  - o Chaps, western spurs with rowels and spur straps, cuffs, tie or scarf worn loosely around the neck or with scarf slide, vest, pocket watch with full length chain, jacket, sleeve garters, knife (screw knives do NOT qualify), botas, leggings, or braces.
  - o No Straw or Palm hats allowed.
- In addition to the above items, ladies may choose from the items listed below in order to compete within this category: Period watch, split riding skirt, bustle, hoops, corset, Victorian style hat (straw allowed), period jewelry, period hair ornaments (e.g., feathers), snood, reticule (period handbag), period lace up shoes, camisole, bloomers, fishnet stockings, feather boa, or cape.
- No Buscadero or drop holster rigs allowed (i.e., part of the grip must be above the belt on which the holster hangs).
- Boots are required and must be of traditional design with non-grip enhancing (i.e., NO "Lug") soles.
- Moccasins are not allowed.
- Hats must be worn for the entire match.

### B-Western/Lady B-Western Category

B-Western shooting category carries rules and guidelines for both costuming/leather and firearm usage.

### Firearm Rules:

- Any main match revolver may be used.
- Revolvers may be shot in **any** SASS legal shooting style, at the shooters discretion.
- Rifles: Any SASS legal rifle of 1880 or later design or a replica thereof (e.g., Burgess, Lightning Rifle, 1892, 1894 Winchester or Marlin).
- Any SASS legal shotgun may be used.
- Any SASS legal ammunition may be used.

### Leather Rules:

- Buscadero holster rigs or drop holster rigs are required. All revolvers must be carried below the top of the gun belt.
- All belt and holster rigs must be embellished (fancy stitching, Conchos, spots, or tooling).
- No shoulder rigs allowed.

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### Costuming Rules:

- Shirts must be of the “B-Western” style with snap buttons or any of the following: “Smiley Pockets,” embroidery, appliques, fringe, or different colored yokes.
- Shield shirts are allowed if the shield/bib has piping or embroidery.
- Pants must be jeans, ranch pants, or pants with flap over the rear pocket, keystone belt loops, and/or piping or fringe.
- Pants must be worn with a belt.
- Ladies may wear dresses, skirts, or split riding skirts.
- Pants suspenders are not allowed.
- Hats must be worn and must be felt hats only. No straw or palm leaf hats allowed.
- Boots are required and must be of traditional design and embellished with fancy stitching, multi-color fancy design, Conchos, or spots. Soles must be non-grip enhancing (i.e., NO Lug soles). Lace up boots and Moccasins are not allowed.
- Western spurs with rowels and spur straps are required for men.
- You must choose at least one or more of the following optional items: gloves or gauntlets, scarves with slides or tied around the neck or bolo tie, coat, vest, chaps, or cuffs.
- Costumes that depict leading role characters in B-Western movies are allowed as long as the costume is complete with all accessories, but the costuming must still adhere to the boot, leather, spur, hat, and firearm requirements. John Wayne, spaghetti western, and townspeople characters are not acceptable.
- All costumes are expected to be fancy and flashy. The “B-Western” costuming must be worn during the entire match and awards ceremony with the exception of evening formal occasions.

## BLACKPOWDER SHOOTING CATEGORIES

Blackpowder category contestants are expected to understand they will contend with smoke obscured targets. To ensure this, all shotgun, revolver, and rifle powder charges must produce smoke at least equivalent to a baseline load of 15 grains by volume (1 cc) of blackpowder (see Blackpowder – Testing section for additional requirements).

### Frontier Cartridge Category/Categories

Frontier Cartridge can be subdivided to specific style (e.g., Frontier Cartridge Duelist, Frontier Cartridge Gunfighter), by gender (e.g., Lady Frontier Cartridge Duelist, etc.) and further by Age (e.g., Senior Lady Frontier Cartridge Duelist, etc.) depending upon demand and sanctioning category mandates.

Categories include:

- Frontier Cartridge.
- Frontier Cartridge Duelist.
- Frontier Cartridge Gunfighter.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Shooter's Handbook

### Frontier Cartridge Rules:

- Any main match fixed sight model revolver
- Revolvers may be shot two handed or one handed (Duelist style) in Frontier Cartridge category but only one handed in Frontier Cartridge Duelist category. (See Duelist style description for parameters.)
- If shooting Frontier Cartridge Gunfighter, only Gunfighter-style or Double Duelist style may be used. (See Gunfighter style description for parameters.)
- Must use blackpowder in all loads (rifle, revolver, and shotgun)
- Must use a side-by-side, single shot, or lever action shotgun in the main match stages.
- Any SASS legal pistol caliber rifle is acceptable.
- Frontier Cartridge competitors may use any SASS legal firearms and propellants in team and side matches.

### Frontiersman Category

#### Frontiersman Rules:

- Any main match percussion revolver with fixed sights.
- Revolvers must be shot Duelist or Double Duelist style. See Duelist description for required shooting technique.
- Must use blackpowder in all loads (rifle, revolver, and shotgun).
- Must use a side-by-side, single shot, or lever action shotgun in the main match stages.
- Any SASS legal pistol caliber rifle is acceptable.

#### Exceptions:

- See "Sights" section of this handbook regarding "dovetail sights"
- The 1873 Uberti percussion revolver is not allowed.

## CATEGORY MATRIX

Above the "Base Categories" listed in this handbook, the local club monthly match and club annual match level, all SASS recognized shooting categories may be offered by subdividing by all factors; including age, gender, shooting style, and propellant. When breaking down all style/costume categories, the regulations for the base category is to be applied first, then the age limits. A full listing of all possible shooting category combinations is unavailable. The breakdown examples below serve to provide a glimpse into the various possibilities:

- Gunfighter → Lady Senior Gunfighter → Lady Senior Frontier Cartridge Gunfighter.
- Duelist → Lady Duelist → Lady Senior Duelist → Lady Silver Senior Duelist.

## MINIMUM ENTRANT CATEGORY MANDATES

In the interest of ensuring and promoting a true competitive environment at the SASS Sanctioned Championship level of competition (State, Regional, Divisional, National, and World Championships), all possible category breakdowns may be offered, however, categories above the base categories will only be honored if they meet the minimum entry mandates decreed by SASS and the Championship agreements. Ladies' categories must have a minimum of three entrants and open categories must have a minimum of seven entrants in order to be honored at the SASS Championship level.

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Exceptions to the category mandate include Buckaroo/Buckarett, Junior, Elder Statesman/Grand Dame, Cattle Baron/Cattle Baroness, and El Patron/La Patrona.

If an offered category does not meet the minimum mandates, the entrant(s) will be entered into the next category down as the categories collapse toward the base categories until the minimum mandate is fulfilled.

\*Shooting categories offered at any match are ultimately at the discretion of the Match Officials to ensure the success and viability of each match individually.



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### SECTION 3 – PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

#### SPIRIT OF THE GAME

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

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

#### PARTICIPANT CONDUCT

##### Safety

Our sport, by its very nature, has the potential to be dangerous and a serious accident may occur. Every participant in a SASS match is expected to be a safety officer. Each shooter's first responsibility is for his or her own safe conduct. All shooters are expected to remain alert for actions by others that are unsafe. Any Range Officer or shooter may confront any participant about an observed, unsafe situation. It is expected the matter will quickly be corrected and not repeated. Any argument concerning the correction of a safety related matter will result in that shooter being ejected from the range. Please refer to the Safety Rules section of this handbook for all Safety Rules. Participants must also:

- Treat and respect every firearm as if it were loaded.
- Safe firearm handling is the shooters responsibility. Refer to the Safety section for all firearm handling safety rules.
- All shooters must demonstrate rudimentary familiarity and proficiency with the firearms being used. Shooters are expected to perform within their capabilities at all times.
- SASS matches are not the forums in which to learn basic firearms handling.
- Movement is not allowed with a loaded round under the hammer of any firearm. Movement is defined by the basketball “traveling” rule. Whenever a shooter has a loaded round under the hammer of a firearm in hand, at least one foot must remain in place on the ground. The first violation will result in a Stage Disqualification penalty. The second violation will result in a Match Disqualification penalty assessment. It is also not allowed to leave the loading table with a cocked, loaded firearm. Note: Shuffling the feet to maintain balance

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or adjust the shooting stance is allowed as long as the shooter does not actually change location.

- "Shooting on the move" or "step shooting" is expressly disallowed. See rules for the safe condition of firearms for movement.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the range area for all shooters, guests, range officers, and others, until all shooting is done for the day. No shooter may consume any alcoholic beverage until he or she has completed all of their shooting for the day and stored their firearms.
- No shooter may ingest any substance that will affect his or her ability to participate with a maximum state of awareness and in a completely safe manner. Both prescription and non-prescription pharmaceuticals that may cause drowsiness or any other physical or mental impairment must be avoided.

### Personal

In addition to the safety rules mentioned above, participants are expected to follow these rules of conduct:

- The Shooter must obey all range commands given by the Chief Range Officer/Timer Operator.
- Once a shooter is committed to the stage (when the first round actually leaves the barrel) the shooter must remain on the stage until it is completed and the shooter has moved to the unloading area to clear all firearms.
- Any shooter, guest, or match official who uses foul language, is disrespectful, offensive, rude, or becomes belligerent or threatening in any manner will be disqualified from the event and, at the discretion of the Match Director, may be required to leave the property.
- Interpersonal conflicts will not be tolerated.
- Good Sportsmanship best defines "The Spirit of the Game." Be a good sport. Have fun.

### Failure to Engage

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

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### SECTION 4 – RANGE OPERATIONS & SAFETY RULES

“Conventions” refer to standard range behaviors and rules that every shooter is expected to know and follow at all times. ALL SASS Safety conventions are not negotiable and shall never be overruled by match design or shooting course descriptions. Stage Conventions are standard default rules unless otherwise directed by stage design/description (e.g., knockdown targets must go down to count).

#### STAGE CONVENTIONS

The following stage conventions (stage defaults) **should be followed in all SASS matches**, unless otherwise directed in the stage descriptions.

- All shotgun knockdown targets may be reengaged until down.
- All knockdown targets (shotgun, rifle, or revolver) must go down to count.
  - o Any knockdown target still standing once the shooter has engaged the next sequence of the stage will be counted as a miss.
  - o **EXCEPTION:** For Buckaroo/Buckarette shooters knockdown targets do not have to go down to count.
- If no starting position is given, the shooter shall stand **upright** with revolvers holstered, hands at the sides, and not touching any firearm. (SASS default).
- Cowboy port-arms is defined as standing upright with the butt of the long gun at or below the waist of the shooter, the muzzle at or above the shoulder, and the long gun held with both hands.
- In the event a target fails or is downed, the shooter should “shoot where it was.” For safety reasons a target on the ground should never be engaged.
- In the case of a suspected squib, the CRO/TO will instruct the shooter to make the firearm safe and continue with the next firearm. If the barrel is later determined to be clear, the shooter will receive a reshoot.

#### FIREARM CONVENTIONS

##### Safety & Handling Conventions – Revolvers

- Six-gun revolvers are always loaded with only five rounds and the hammer lowered and resting on the empty chamber.
- Five-shooter revolvers may load five rounds, but the hammer must rest on a dummy chamber or safety slot/pin in the cylinder to avoid the hammer resting on a live round/cap.
- If a particular stage requires a one shot reload, the sixth chamber of percussion revolvers may be charged at the bench and then capped “on the clock” either before the first round is fired or after the last round is fired. A complete reload for percussion revolver shooters is handled by staging a loaded, uncapped revolver down range or switching uncapped cylinders and capping on the clock.
- Percussion revolvers must only be capped at the loading table or while on the course of fire. The cap over a nipple must never be seated using the percussion revolver's own hammer. The Chief Range Officer/Timer Operator (CRO/TO) shall require any misfires to be cleared on the firing line by either recapping and firing that chamber, or by uncapping the misfired chamber.

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- A cocked revolver may never leave a shooter's hand, including from one hand to the other. This does not apply when loading or reloading on the firing line.
- Cowboy Action Shooting is NOT a fast-draw competition. Any unsafe handling in the course of a draw from the holster or any "fanning" to shoot a revolver is strictly forbidden. Slip-hammering is not the same as fanning and is legal.
- Revolvers are drawn and used in accordance with the shooter's category.
- Revolvers are returned to leather (re-holstered in a safe condition) at the conclusion of the shooting string, unless the stage description specifically directs otherwise (e.g., "move to the next position and set gun on table or prop"). A shooting string is defined as shots from one type of firearm prior to the next type of firearm engaged.
- No firearm may be de-cocked on the firing line to avoid a penalty if cocked at the wrong time, position or location once a round has gone downrange. Once a revolver is cocked, the round must be expended (shot). However, if a round has not gone downrange, **and under the direction and supervision** of the CRO/TO, the revolver may be decocked. This requires a positive indication/acknowledgement from the TO for the shooter to do so. (See also "Double Jeopardy" avoidance in Safety & Handling Conventions – All Firearms)
- When drawing a Revolver from its holster, the revolver may not be cocked until it is pointed safely downrange (at a 45° angle downrange).

Leaving unfired rounds in a revolver is a Miss penalty. However, if a live round is under the hammer, a Stage Disqualification penalty is assessed.

### Safe Conditions During a Course of Fire – Revolvers

Revolvers are considered SAFE for movement (in hand, while holstering, or while moving through a stage) and SAFE to leave the shooter's hand in the following conditions ONLY:

- Hammer fully down on an empty chamber.
- Hammer fully down on an expended round. A revolver may not be originally staged in this condition, but may be restaged in this condition.
- GUNFIGHTER shooting style considerations: When shooting Gunfighter style, a gunfighter may not holster revolvers with the intent to engage another sequence. (See Gunfighter Rules).

### Safety & Handling Conventions – Rifles

- Rifles may be staged with the magazine loaded, action closed, hammer fully down on the empty chamber (NOT the safety notch), with the muzzle pointing in a safe direction (adheres to the 170° rule).
- The muzzle is never initially staged on the ground.
- Rifles will be cleared and discarded with their barrels pointing in a safe direction. If the action of a rifle closes after being cleared, the shooter will, at the conclusion of the stage, show it to be clear to the CRO/TO. No person other than the competitor may handle the long gun prior to opening the action and showing it to be clear.
- If the rifle is the last firearm used (**NOT** recommended), it must be cleared prior to it leaving the shooter's hand(s) at the unloading area. (This does not apply to firearms shot out of sequence, made safe, and then restaged for further use.)

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- Once a rifle is cocked, either the round under the hammer must be expended (shot) or the action opened in order for the rifle to be returned to a safe condition.
- Unfired, ejected rifle rounds may be replaced (reloaded) on the clock.

### Safe Conditions During a Course of Fire – Rifles

A rifle is considered SAFE to leave the shooter's hands in the following condition only:

- Empty.
- Hammer fully down on an empty chamber or spent round, action closed (restaged for further use).

A rifle is considered SAFE for movement (in hand, while moving through a stage) in the following condition only:

- Hammer fully down on an empty chamber or expended round, action closed.
- Action open, round on carrier or in chamber.

### Safety & Handling Conventions – Shotguns

- Shotguns are always staged open and empty and are loaded on the clock unless the stage begins with the shotgun in the shooter's hands.
- Mule eared shotguns can be cocked at the beginning of a scenario, whether staged or in the shooters hands.
- Shotgun targets may be re-engaged until down, unless otherwise specified by the stage description.
- Shotgun shells may be removed without penalty to return the firearm to a safe condition.
- Shotguns will be cleared and discarded with their barrels pointing in a safe direction. If the action closes after being cleared, the shooter will, at the conclusion of the stage, show it to be clear to the CRO/TO. No person other than the competitor may handle the gun prior to opening the action and showing it to be clear.

### Safe Conditions During a Course of Fire – Shotguns

A shotgun is considered SAFE to leave the shooter's hands in the following condition only:

- Empty.

A shotgun is considered SAFE for movement (in hand, while moving through a stage) in the following condition only:

- Action open, round in chamber or on carrier.
- Hammer(s) fully down on an empty chamber(s) or expended round(s), action closed.

### Safety & Handling Conventions – All Firearms

- All staged firearms must have their barrels pointed in a safe direction.
- All long guns initially staged on a horizontal surface shall be staged lying flat where at least the rear of the trigger guard is on the staging area.
- All handguns initially staged on a horizontal flat surface must be staged with the entire handgun on the staging surface.

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- All firearms will remain unloaded except while under direct observation of a designated person on the firing line or in the designated loading and unloading areas.
- The muzzles of all long guns must be maintained in a safe direction at all times (generally “up” and slightly downrange).
- As long as the shooter has contact with the firearm, it is considered in their control.
- If a shooter trips and falls during the course of fire, provided no safety rules have been violated, the shooter will be allowed to regroup and continue the course of fire.
- Any unloaded firearm dropped during a stage will result in a Stage Disqualification penalty assessment. This does not apply to holstered revolvers that remain “in leather” in the event of an equipment failure (e.g., broken belt buckle) causing the gun belt or ammo belt to fall. Shooter may safely recover a fallen gun/ammo belt and continue finishing the stage without penalty or wait until finishing the stage for retrieval.
- Any loaded firearm dropped during a stage will result in a Match Disqualification penalty assessment.
  - A shooter should not be allowed to pick up a dropped firearm. The CRO/TO should recover the firearm, examine it, clear it (if necessary), return it to the shooter, and assess the appropriate penalty.
  - This does not apply to holstered revolvers that remain “in leather” in the event of an equipment failure (e.g., broken belt buckle) causing the gun belt or ammo belt to fall. Shooter may safely recover a fallen gun/ammo belt and continue finishing the stage without penalty, or wait until finishing the stage for retrieval.
- If a firearm is shot out of sequence or from the wrong position or location, the shooter will be assessed a single procedural penalty. In this situation, if the shooter elects or is forced to miss an appropriate target due to unsafe angles or target availability, a round may be reloaded to avoid a miss penalty assessment (the dreaded “Double Jeopardy” of a procedural and a miss). This does not mean a shooter may reload a rifle or revolver at any other time to make up a miss.
- If a competitor has a firearm malfunction that cannot be cleared during the course of fire, the shooter may not leave the firing line until the firearm has been cleared. A Match Disqualification penalty will be assessed to the shooter if they leave the firing line with the malfunctioning firearm unless under the direct supervision of a Match official.
- Long guns will be emptied and discarded with their barrels pointed safely downrange. This condition may be corrected on the clock, prior to the next round being fired. If the long gun is not discarded empty prior to the next firearm being fired, only the shooter may return to open and/or clear the firearm at the end of the stage under the observation of the CRO/TO. Should an empty casing/hull be ejected or found in the action or chamber, or a live round on the carrier of an open action, a Minor Safety Violation (MSV) will be assessed. However, if the action is opened and a live/unfired round is ejected, a Stage DQ (SDQ) will be assessed for a long gun with a “live round under a cocked hammer having left the shooter’s

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hands". In this case, there is no opportunity to correct this condition before firing the next firearm, as the penalty takes effect upon leaving the shooter's hands.

- If the long gun is the last firearm used, it must be cleared prior to it leaving the shooter's hand(s) at the unloading area.
- This does not apply to firearms shot out of sequence, made safe, and then restaged.

## SAFETY

### The Magnificent Seven

- 1- Always treat every firearm as if it is loaded.
- 2- Never let the muzzle of a firearm break the 170° rule.
- 3- Be sure of your target and what is beyond.
- 4- Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire.
- 5- Firearms remain unloaded outside of the normal course of fire — loading area to unloading area.
- 6- Treat all firearms with respect.
- 7- Speak Up.

### The 170° Rule

The 170° rule means the muzzle of a firearm must always be straight down range (+/- 85° in any direction). Muzzle direction and muzzle control is important between, before, during, and after shooting a stage. The 170° rule is the backbone of all safe firearm handling and is always in effect.

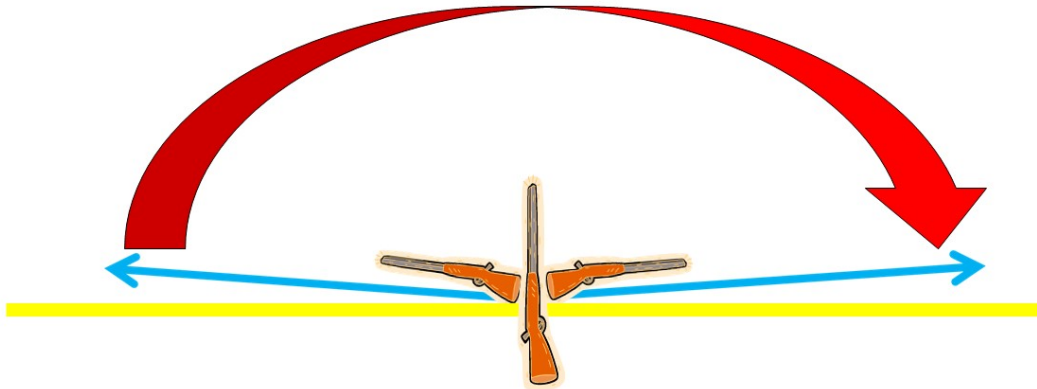
- A muzzle must not be allowed to "sweep" the other participants at any time.
- Long guns shall have their actions open with chambers and magazines empty and muzzles pointed in a safe direction when transported at a match.
- A holstered revolver (loaded or empty) with the hammer fully down on an empty chamber or expended case is considered safe and may not be interpreted as sweeping another shooter while safely secured in the holster.
- Failure to manage safe muzzle direction is grounds for a Stage Disqualification penalty assessment, and for repeat offenses, a Match Disqualification penalty.

**NOTE:** An obvious exception to this rule exists, where the shooter is given the ability to draw and holster revolvers from approved, legal holsters without penalty. Further exception is given when retrieving and returning vertically staged double barrel shotguns without penalty

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### The 170° Rule



170° rule means that the muzzle of firearm must always be straight down range +/- 85° in any direction

### **Safety Officers/Chief Range Officers – CRO (Timer Operator – TO)**

The role of the Chief Range Officer/Timer Operator (CRO/TO) is to safely assist the shooter through the course of fire. Coaching and constraining the shooter from unsafe acts are expected when appropriate, minimizing procedural and safety penalties whenever possible. **Proper coaching or no coaching at all is NOT considered RO interference and will never be grounds for a reshoot.**

It is expected the Chief Range Officer will be the responsible party for observing and resolving all safety related matters occurring in the loading, unloading, and firing line areas. However, as all shooters are considered Safety Officers, any shooter who observes a safety infraction not witnessed by the CRO should call the infraction to a CRO's attention, at which time the matter will be resolved.

### **Range Commands**

Standard Range Commands are the most efficient way to run a shooting line and are used in almost every established shooting sport. As a matter of safety, all shooters are required to obey all range commands given by the CRO/TO. For a more in-depth understanding of range commands, schedule your SASS RO 1 Course today.

### **IMPORTANT COMMON RANGE COMMANDS**

- **“Cease Fire” or “STOP!”** – The command called out by the CRO/TO or any witnessing Range Officer/Match Official at any time an unsafe condition develops. The shooter must stop shooting and stop moving immediately. Willful failure to comply to a Cease Fire or Stop command given by, and while under the control of the CRO/TO will result in a Match Disqualification penalty assessment.



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- **“Muzzle!”** – This command quickly and efficiently warns the shooter their muzzle is getting close to the 170° and should be pointed in a safe direction (back down range).
- **“Down Range”** – This command is announced prior to anyone proceeding down range for any reason], including to reset or repair targets. When a “Down Range” command is announced, all participants at both the loading and unloading areas should cease firearm loading/unloading. Common practice is to raise hands in the air as a visual confirmation that no firearms are being handled while someone is down range.

### SASS Range Safety Courses – RO-I & RO-II

For a more in-depth understanding and discussion of all SASS Practices, including Range Operations, Match Roles, Rules, Procedures, and Penalties, SASS encourages ALL shooters to schedule and attend at a minimum the SASS RO-I Course early in their Cowboy Action Shooting™ journey. Additionally, you will learn the fundamentals for all match positions that serve a critical function in the fair, efficient, and SAFE execution of a match. SASS RO Classes are presented by SASS certified Instructors and can be scheduled through your local club(s).

## MATCH PROCEDURES & STANDARDS

### Range Operations

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

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

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

While a more detailed guide to match design and administration is available in the official SASS Match Directors Guide, there are no absolute rules when it comes to target placement.

- Steel (and paper) targets of generous size are used.
- Reactive targets such as pepper poppers and falling plates are used when practical to enhance shooter feedback and spectator appeal.
- Targets are set at close to medium range. While there are no absolute rules, the following are distance recommendations by firearm, if using a target size of approximately 16"x16":
  - o Revolver targets: 7 to 10 yards.
  - o Shotgun targets: 8 to 16 yards.
  - o Rifle targets: 13 to 50 yards.
  - o Derringer/Pocket Pistol – point blank to 3 yards **when shooting paper, cardboard, or balloons only**. It's too close to safely shoot steel.

As the sport of Cowboy Action Shooting™ continues to evolve, Match Directors™ across the world react to and serve shooting scenarios and target placement in response to their shooters

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demands and enjoyment of the match. As such, most club and matches are using much closer target placement than the above example, increasing the “fun factor” for their shooters.

If closer than recommended target distances are used, the target faces must be appropriately angled toward the ground in order to eliminate most “splash back” due to the proximity of targets. The condition of the steel/target faces must also be considered, in that target faces should have no dimpling or damage, and should be flat (not convex or concave).

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

### No Alibi/Reshoots/Restarts

SASS matches above the club level are “no alibi” matches. Once the first round goes down range, the competitor is committed to the stage and must finish the stage to the best of his or her ability.

- Reshoots are not awarded for ammunition or firearm malfunctions. However, if there is a range failure (failure of props, failure of the timer, or Range Officer interference) beyond the competitor's control, a reshoot may be granted.
- On a reshoot, the competitor starts over clean, carrying only accrued safety penalties forward.
- Restarts shall be allowed for a competitor to achieve a “clean” start, before the first round goes down range. Multiple restarts by the same shooter, that in the judgment of the CRO/TO are seen to be “taking advantage,” will not be entertained as they are not in the Spirit of the Game.

### Match Roles & Match Terms

This section is a very basic, summarized listing and definition of Match roles, Match Officials, and terms. For a more in-depth understanding regarding all match roles and the crucial function they serve at any match, please attend a SASS RO 1 Course.

- **Posse** – A group of shooters scheduled to shoot through all stages together during the course of a match.
- **Match Director** – is in charge of the overall match and is required to ensure qualified officials are in place in all competition areas. The Match Director is typically the stage writer/designer of the match and has the authority to override an “RO-assisted” MSV penalty for a reshoot.
- **Range Master** – is in charge of and oversees all stages and ensures qualified officials are in place on all stages. He or she reviews all stages and ensures they are designed and constructed to operate in a safe manner for both competitors and officials.
- **Posse Marshal/Deputy Posse Marshal** – is in charge of a posse and is required to ensure all posse positions are manned to safely and efficiently run the posse through each course of fire, ensuring all rules and regulations are followed.
- **Chief Range Officer/Timer Operator (CRO/TO)** – is the Chief Range Officer (CRO) for the stage and is in charge of the firing line as long as he/she is running the timer, and has the primary objective to safely assist the shooter through the course of fire.
- **Spotters/Counters** – have the responsibility to count shots and misses and to verify targets were engaged in the correct order for the required number of shots.

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A minimum of three spotters are required – majority 2/3 breaks any ties in regards to misses.

- **Scorekeeper** – records the times and penalties appropriately for each contestant on the provided score sheets for each stage.
- **Loading Table Officer** – is responsible for visually checking to ensure all firearms are loaded with only the correct number of rounds, verify no round is ever under the firing pin of any firearm, and all loaded firearms' hammers are fully down on an empty chamber.
- **Unloading Table Officer** – is responsible for visually checking to ensure all firearms are unloaded (clear) at the completion of the shooting stage.

### Penalties Overview

There are five types of Penalties in SASS matches: 5-second penalties, 10-second penalties, Stage Disqualification penalties, Match Disqualification penalties, and Failure to Engage/Spirit of the Game penalties. For a more in-depth understanding of all penalties, please attend a SASS RO 1 Course.

#### 5-SECOND PENALTIES

Misses are 5-Second penalties. Revolver, rifle, and shotgun targets must be engaged with the appropriate type of firearm. A MISS is defined as the failure to hit the appropriate target type using the appropriate type of firearm and includes:

- Each missed target.
- Each unfired round.
- Inadvertently left rounds in a revolver are misses, unless there is an unfired round under the hammer, in which case it is a Stage DQ.
- Each target hit with an incorrect firearm – either intentionally or by mistake.
- Each target hit with illegally acquired ammunition.

#### 10-SECOND PENALTIES

10-second penalties include “Procedural” (P) penalties and Minor Safety Violations (MSV). Procedural errors are simple, unintentional mistakes made as a result of “brain fade” or confusion, where the competitor engages the stage in a way other than how it was intended. Procedural penalties cannot exceed one per stage. Minor Safety Violations (MSV) are lesser safety infractions that do not directly endanger persons.

##### **Procedural (P) infractions include:**

- Failure to attempt to fire a firearm, engage a prop, or perform a stage maneuver.
- Shooting targets in the wrong order.
- Engaging the stage in the wrong order.
- Use of illegally acquired ammunition.
- Not returning revolvers to leather (unless otherwise specified).
- First offense in the same match for “shooting out of category.”

##### **Minor Safety Violation (MSV) infractions include:**

- Leaving empty or live round(s) in a magazine, action, or carrier of the long gun in which it was loaded.
- Open, empty long guns that slip and fall – but do not break the 170° safety rule or sweep anyone.

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- Cocking a revolver before it reaches 45° down range.

### STAGE DISQUALIFICATION PENALTY (SDQ)

A Stage Disqualification (SDQ or “Stage DQ”) is generally a safety violation of a more serious nature, and means the competitor’s time and performance on the course of fire is disqualified as a result of the violating action by the shooter.

- Shooting on the move (continuous, fluid movement while engaging targets).
- Any dropped unloaded firearm on the firing line.
- Long guns that slip, fall, and break the 170°.
- Violation of the 170° Safety Rule/Failure to maintain appropriate muzzle control.
- Any discharge that hits the ground or non-expendable stage prop 5 – 10 feet from the shooter.
- Returning a revolver to leather with the hammer not fully down on a spent round or empty chamber.
- A cocked revolver leaving the shooters hand.
- A live round left in the chamber of a long gun.
- Second offense, in the same match, for “shooting out of category.”
- Changing location/moving with a live round under a cocked hammer or firearm with the hammer down on a live round.
- Changing location with a long gun with the action closed and the hammer cocked.
- Unsafe firearm handling.
- Loading at other than the designated loading position or firing line.
- Use of an illegal or illegally modified firearm.
- Holstering or staging a revolver with the hammer down on a live round.
- Sweeping anyone with an unloaded firearm.
- Failure to adhere to loading and unloading procedures.
- Leaving the firing line once the stage has begun for any reason.
- Dry firing at the loading or unloading areas.
- De-cocking a revolver, rifle, or hammered shotgun *without* positive direction to do so from the CRO/TO.

### MATCH DISQUALIFICATION PENALTIES (MDQ)

A Match Disqualification (MDQ or “Match DQ”) penalty is of the most serious in nature, and means the shooter puts his/her firearms away and is done shooting for the duration of the match.

- Two accumulated Spirit of the Game assessments.
- Two accumulated SDQ penalties (even on the same stage). \*This does not apply to a single action that carries multiple penalties (e.g. breaking the 170° with an unloaded firearm AND simultaneously sweeping someone).
- Belligerent attitude or unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Willful failure to comply with a “Cease Fire” or “Stop” command given by, and while under the positive control of the CRO/TO.
- Shooting under the influence of alcohol, prescription drugs, or any substance or medication that may impair the shooter’s physical or mental abilities.
- A shooter leaving the firing line with an un-cleared, malfunctioning firearm unless under the direct supervision of a Match Official.

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- Shooting illegal ammunition (e.g., Ammo which exceeds the max velocities, and ringed or necked shotgun shells. This does not include ammo that does not meet the power factor).
- Dropping a loaded firearm.
- Any discharge that hits the ground or stage prop less than five feet from the shooter.
- Any discharge at the loading or unloading areas.
- Any discharge that is deemed unsafe.
- Sweeping anyone with a loaded firearm.
- Third offense, in the same match, for "shooting out of category."
- Interpersonal conflicts.

### *FAILURE TO ENGAGE/SPIRIT OF THE GAME*

A Failure to Engage or a Spirit of the Game infraction carries a 30 second penalty. The accumulation of two Failure to Engage/Spirit of the Game penalties in the same match results in a Match Disqualification Penalty.

- Willfully shooting a stage other than the way it was intended in order to gain a competitive advantage (Spirit of the Game).
- Shooting ammunition that does not meet the power factor or minimum velocity. The penalty is applied for each stage a competitor is checked and their ammunition is found to not meet the power factor or minimum velocity (Spirit of the Game).
- Willfully refusing to make an attempt to complete any non-shooting procedure written within the stage instructions (Failure to Engage).

### *ASSESSING PENALTIES AND PROTESTS*

During the course of fire, a shooter may on occasion incur penalties which need to be assessed. The immediate authority on the stage to that end is the Chief Range Officer/Timer Operator (CRO/TO), assisted by the input of the spotters. The scope of assessing penalties includes safety violations, procedural errors, appropriate completion of stage activities, illegal firearms and equipment, appropriate ammunition, appropriate dress, and other category specific requirements such as the adequate production of smoke in the blackpowder categories. The CRO/TO may unilaterally assign penalties for safety violations and procedural errors when they have clearly occurred (this does not include assessing misses). Assessing misses is purely in the purview of the spotters.

In the event a competitor feels a CRO/TO's ruling is in error or has been unfairly assessed, and the firearms have been made safe and unloaded, the ruling may be **politely** and **calmly** appealed, initially to the CRO/TO and/or Posse Marshal, and **only by the competitor** involved. The discussion should be taken off the firing line so as not to incur any delays in the shooting flow, **involving only those officials** on the line at that time and the shooter (the shooter, CRO/TO and spotters). The CRO/TO must remain completely objective, consider the facts and evidence as it is, and must be prepared to discuss the details addressing any questions the shooter may have. Recorded video/audio or photographic data will never be allowed to be presented as evidence in either regard. Remember: The benefit of any doubt always goes to the shooter. Competitors are typically required to register their appeal or protest **prior to leaving the stage** or bay where the event in question took place.

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If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the shooter by the CRO/TO and /or Posse Marshal, and they wish to take the matter further, they may then elevate their appeal to the Range Master. The Range Master will objectively and without bias consider the appeal on grounds of policy and rules interpretation only, and should conduct their own investigation by interviewing those persons directly involved in the matter (CRO/TO, Spotters and the Shooter). For issues involving illegal equipment and/or firearms, illegal modifications, questionable ammunition, illegal clothing or dress, a direct inspection must be made, including if necessary, following the procedure for assessing power factor/smoke production.

If the matter is still not resolved to the satisfaction of the shooter by the Range Master, and they wish to take the matter further, they may then elevate their appeal to the Match Director (MD). The MD will conduct their own review as per the above procedure using the same guidelines. **The MD's decision is final.**

At the discretion of the MD, a special protest jury comprised of three Territorial Governors (TGs) not from the shooter's home state, may be empaneled to aid the MD in making a reasonable judgment. The process for convening a jury of experienced and knowledgeable TGs who are not familiar with the matter may require that the shooter pay a "protest fee" and complete a "protest form." Once the fee is paid and appropriate documentation is collected by the MD, the jury will be convened. A thorough investigation of the facts should take place in the same objective and unbiased manner. Should the outcome of the protest be in favor of the shooter, the fee will be refunded. In this case the MD will act purely as an administrator of the process.

### Scoring

SASS matches are scored based upon elapsed shooting time (Total Time Scoring), plus penalty points for missed targets, procedural errors and various other rules infractions. Each stage is scored individually, and the total combined raw time score plus any penalties incurred for all stages is used to determine place of finish, either by category, overall, or both.

When using Total Time scoring, a maximum allowed time for each stage is to be calculated prior to the match, and is used as the Stage Disqualification score (SDQ) and maximum stage score.

The maximum time allowed for a stage is the total of all available targets/miss penalties plus 30 seconds.

(Example: 5 seconds each for all available targets (10 rifle, 10 pistol, 4 shotgun = 24 targets x 5 seconds = 120 seconds. Add 30 seconds for a maximum score of 150 seconds).

The score for a SDQ is the maximum allowed time for that stage, as per the above description for calculating maximum allowed time. The score for a DNF (not finishing a stage) is the same as a Stage Disqualification penalty — the maximum allowed time for that stage. The score for a Match Disqualification Penalty (MDQ) is "NO SCORE." A MDQ results in the removal of the contestant from all score sheets; thus, removal from the match entirely. Two SDQ/DNFs (or one of each) in the same match results in a MDQ.

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

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### AMMUNITION COVENANTS

#### Power Factors

The minimum standard for center-fire ammunition used in all smokeless categories in all SASS matches, including State, Regional, National, International, and World Championship competitions is not less than a minimum power factor of 60 and no velocity may be less than 400 fps.

The **maximum velocities** are **1000 fps for revolvers and 1400 fps for rifles**. Ammunition that exceeds these velocities is considered illegal (this does not include ammunition that does not meet the power factor). Pocket pistols, derringers, and long-range rifles are exempt from the power factor and velocity requirements.

Power factors can be calculated by multiplying the bullet weight (in grains) x the velocity (in feet per second) and then the resulting number divided by 1000. Examples:

- 100 gr bullet traveling at 600 fps has a power factor of 60:  $(100 \times 600) / 1000 = 60.00$
- 77 gr bullet traveling at 800 fps has a power factor of 61.6:  $(77 \times 800) / 1000 = 61.6$
- 200 gr bullet traveling at 400 fps has a power factor of 80:  $(200 \times 400) / 1000 = 80.00$

#### Power Factor / Blackpowder Smoke – Testing

The Range Master or Match Director may, at their sole discretion, require the testing of any ammunition suspected of not meeting SASS ammunition specifications at any time during the match. If a competitor's smokeless ammunition is being checked for power factor, they will be asked to provide five rounds from each suspect firearm, already loaded at the loading table. From the five rounds, one round will have the bullet pulled and weighed. The other four rounds will be fired across a chronograph using the competitor's firearm to record velocity data. The muzzle should be raised to at least 80 degrees into the vertical before each shot is fired. The competitor may not choose the firearm to be tested, all firearms regardless of caliber are subject to testing at any time.

If the average velocity of the four rounds meets or exceeds the calculated power factor of 60 AND the minimum velocity of 400 fps, the loads will be considered legal. If the loads do not meet the 60 power factor OR the minimum velocity of 400 fps, the competitor will be assessed a 30 second Spirit of the Game (SOG) penalty for the last stage completed. Any subsequent stages completed with the illegal ammunition will result in the SOG penalty being assessed for those stages. Two SOG penalties will result in a Match DQ.

Testing of blackpowder rounds for the production of adequate smoke will also be conducted in a similar matter as described above. Rounds should be obtained from the shooter's loaded firearms while at the loading table. The rounds should be fired in comparison to test rounds made using the following load data:

- Standard .38 Special case.
- 1 cc GOEX 2F powder.
- Federal Standard primer.
- 145 grain bullet lubed with SPG.
- Powder lightly compressed with a medium roll crimp.

Failure of the shooter's rounds to produce the same level of smoke as the standard rounds will result in a penalty for not adhering to the category requirements. The first offence will

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be assessed as a procedural penalty, the second offence in the same match a Stage DQ, and the third offence in the same match a Match DQ.

### Ammunition Requirements

Shooters may be held responsible for damage caused to a target or injury to personnel due to “bounce back/splatter” because of inappropriate and/or illegal ammunition. This major safety violation is grounds for instant disqualification and ejection from the match (MDQ).

#### REVOLVER AND RIFLE AMMUNITION

- May not be jacketed, semi-jacketed, plated, or gas checked. It must be all lead. Moly-Disulfide, polymer coated bullets, or equivalents are acceptable.
- Must be of “single projectile” design. “Multiple projectile” bullets are illegal.
- Ammunition with bullets recessed below the case mouth is not allowed.
- All center-fire or rim-fire ammunition must be designed to package the bullet, gunpowder, and primer into a single metallic case precisely made to fit the firing chamber of the firearm. The primer must be of the type that uses only a small charge of impact sensitive chemical that may be located at the center of the case head or at its rim.
- Electrically fired ammunition is illegal.

#### SHOTGUN AMMUNITION

- Shotgun size must be number 4 lead birdshot or smaller for all events (no steel or plated shot).
- Magnum and high velocity shotgun shells are not allowed.
- Shotgun shells shall not be sized down (necked) by the use of any die not manufactured for the specific gauge.
- Shotgun shell shall not be scored (ringed) as to cause the shot-shell case, wad, and shot column to be shot from the firearm as one projectile.
- Pump and lever action shotguns are allowed to load no more than two live rounds at a time in the main match stages unless specified in the stage description. In team events, shotguns may be loaded to their maximum magazine capacity.

#### BLACKPOWDER AMMUNITION

- Throughout this handbook, blackpowder means blackpowder, or a blackpowder substitute such as Pyrodex, 777, APP, or comparable propellants intended for muzzle loading firearms. Propellants containing nitrocellulose are **prohibited** as blackpowder substitutes.

Any combination of smokeless and blackpowder (so called duplex loads) is specifically **prohibited** in ANY category. (e.g., Blackhorn 209). Through testing of various loads, it has been determined that 1cc of blackpowder, in either a .32, .38, .44 or .45 caliber case, all produce approximately the same amount of smoke (see Blackpowder – Testing section for additional requirements). Before deciding on any reduced loads, a competitor should test them to ensure they meet the base line standards.

### Ammunition Conventions

- Shooters may not start a stage with ammunition in hand(s).
- Any ammunition dropped by a shooter in the course of reloading any firearm during a stage or ejected from any firearm *may be retrieved and replaced*, or



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alternatively, must be replaced from the shooters person or other area as allowed by stage description.

- Dropped rounds or rounds safely placed onto a prop from their original loading area may be recovered and used. In any case of recovery of a dropped or safely placed round must be performed carefully as to not create a loss of muzzle control.
- Illegally acquired ammunition is any ammunition not carried to the line and/or staged by the shooter in an approved manner.
- Failure to bring enough ammunition to the line to complete a stage is scored the same as misses for any un-fired rounds.
- A shooter may not leave the line once the stage has begun to retrieve ammo or firearms until all firearms brought to the line are verified as clear. The penalty for this violation is a Stage Disqualification.
- Inadvertently leaving unfired rounds in a revolver is a miss. (Unless the round is under the hammer, then the penalty is a Stage Disqualification).
- A live round left in the chamber of a long gun carries a Stage Disqualification penalty.
- A live round left in the magazine or on the carrier, as well as an empty round left in the chamber, magazine, or on the carrier of the firearm in which it was loaded, results in a Minor Safety Violation.
- Malfunctioning firearms still containing rounds will not warrant penalties so long as the malfunction is declared and the firearm is made safe.

### Uncontrolled Discharge

Uncontrolled discharge (also known as “Accidental Discharge/AD”) is defined as any discharge of a firearm that was not controlled or intended by the shooter, either by accidental discharge or by shooting a round in an unsafe manner (e.g., over the berm).

- A round over the berm carries varying penalties. Site specific match & range rules establish the penalty, up to and possibly including a Match Disqualification.
- Uncontrolled discharges have penalties:
  - o Within 5 – 10 feet from the shooter while on the stage: Stage Disqualification.
  - o Less than five feet from the shooter while on the stage, any discharge at the loading or unloading areas, any discharge off the firing line, or any discharge that is deemed unsafe result in a Match Disqualification.
- Match Directors have the latitude to place props so that shooters must negotiate them. In doing so, Match Directors may declare props as expendable (shootable) without penalty.

### Loading and Unloading Area Conventions

Shooting stages/areas at all SASS matches provide a loading and unloading area in proximity to the firing line. The primary responsibility for loading and unloading firearms always rests with the competitor. Shooters should always know the condition of their firearms and should never depend upon the Loading and Unloading officers to ensure their firearms are correctly loaded or unloaded.

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- All loading and unloading shall be conducted only in the designated areas.
- The competitor may never blame the Loading or Unloading Officer for an incorrectly loaded firearm or a firearm not unloaded. At no time will this claim be grounds for dismissal of penalties.
- All firearms will remain unloaded except while under the direct observation of a designated person on the firing line or in the designated loading and unloading areas.
- Any competitor's failure to adhere to loading and unloading procedures will result in a penalty of a Stage Disqualification.
- Leaving the unloading table without clearing all firearms will result in the penalty being assessed on the stage where the infraction was committed. Competitors arriving at the designated loading area with uncleared firearms after completing a stage **within the same day** will be assessed a Stage Disqualification penalty on the previously completed stage.
- Competitors shall not leave the designated loading area with a loaded firearm unless they are proceeding to the stage as the next competitor to begin the stage.
- Percussion revolver shooters must exercise care to ensure they maintain safe muzzle direction during loading and have fired or cleared all capped chambers prior to leaving the unloading area. It is not permissible to seat percussion caps on a revolver's nipple using the revolver's hammer. Percussion revolvers may only be capped at the loading area or on the firing line.
- Dry firing at the loading table is not allowed and results in a stage disqualification. Dry firing is allowed only at designated safe areas. Dry firing is defined as the act of bringing the firearm into a shooting position, cocking the hammer, and pulling the trigger as if to cause the firearm to fire normally.
- Competitors shall unload each of their firearms at the designated unloading area and have them visually inspected to make sure all chambers are empty. Rifles and shotguns must be cycled to verify their magazines are empty. All firearms taken to the firing line must be checked, whether or not they were used. Only two main match revolvers may be taken to the line.

### Lead Precautions

An often overlooked aspect of shooter safety is exposure to lead. Lead exposure concerns are not limited to the Reloading process. Shooters handle lead ammunition while loading their firearms and may be exposed to lead dust in the air on or near the firing line. Over time, lead exposure can result in lead levels that are higher than most Doctors recommend.

Simple precautions can help lessen and/or eliminate high lead levels. After shooting, handling ammunition, or reloading, you should always wash your hands thoroughly, especially prior to eating or smoking. Hand wipes will help at the range where water may be sparse. There are specialized wipes and hand soaps designed to clean lead from the skin.

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### SECTION 5 – SIDE MATCHES

#### THE PLAINSMAN

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

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

#### POCKET PISTOLS AND DERRINGERS

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

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

#### LONG RANGE (OR PRECISION) RIFLE

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

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

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

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

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### Basic Rules for the Long Range Competitions

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

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

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

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

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

- No length or power limitation on the scope.
- Scope tube body to be 3/4" or less in diameter and any ocular or objective lenses and adjusting or assembly rings to be less than 1" in diameter.
- No internal scope adjustments for windage or elevation.
- Mounts are to be of a traditional style of the period and contain the windage and elevation adjustments for the scope in either, or both, the front or rear mounts.

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No click adjustments in the mount. Either dove tail mounting or scope block mounting is allowed.

- Original scope mounts of either the Cataract or Malcolm style or variations thereof or replicas or derivative scope mounts conform to the criteria of paragraph above.

(Note: these rules are identical to the NRA BPCS Rules on optical sights).

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### SECTION 6 – FIREARM COVENANTS

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

Original and replicas may be used in competition provided they are in good, safe working order. In each of the respective sections, allowed modifications are listed. Just because a manufacturer designs a part or firearm for this sport or just because a firearm is available, does not necessarily mean it is legal for competition. Only the modifications referenced here as allowed are approved. All others are illegal.

As any firearm related sport can be inherently dangerous, SASS does not recommend or suggest the modification of any firearm or the removal of any safety device. Participants in this sport accept responsibility for the use and/or modifications of their firearms and do not depend upon SASS or any of its affiliated clubs or members to make that judgement for them. Please consult with the firearm manufacturer prior to making any firearm modifications. Firearms must operate as intended by the original pre-1900 designs they depict. Firearms must function in a safe manner.

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

The use of a non-SASS legal firearm results in a Stage Disqualification (SDQ) for each stage the illegal firearm is used. Penalties for illegal equipment/items and firearms are not awarded in arrears, but should be corrected before the competitor shoots the next stage.

#### ALL FIREARMS

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

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- All parts may be smoothed, re-profiled, polished, de-burred, or replaced provided they are not prohibited in these Covenants.
- Slings are allowed on long guns. Lanyards are allowed on handguns.

### Hammers

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

### Barrels

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

### Triggers and Trigger Guards

- Triggers may be profiled.
- Trigger position may be adjusted.
- Trigger stops may be added.
- Shotgun trigger guards may be wrapped with leather or other natural material.

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- Bending the trigger guard on side by sides so triggers are more exposed is not allowed.
- Trigger shoes are not allowed.

### Stocks and Grips

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

### SIGHTS

#### All Firearms

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



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### Rifle Sights

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

### Revolver – Fixed Sight Models

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

### Revolver – Adjustable Sight Models

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

### Shotgun Sights

- Front sights may be bead or simple post types.

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### COSMETIC EMBELLISHMENT

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

### SCREWS

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

### FRAMES AND RECEIVERS

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

### LEVERS

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

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the back edge of the trigger at the point where it enters the frame. Mark this point on both the bottom of the buttstock and the lever opposite the buttstock mark. Open the lever to its maximum extension and measure the distance between the two marks.

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

### FEED / LOADING MECHANISMS

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

### FIRING PINS

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

### RECOIL REDUCERS

- Internal recoil reducing devices may be added.

### REVOLVERS

#### Revolver Requirements

Original single action revolvers manufactured prior to 1899, their approved replicas, and the SASS approved single action adjustable sight revolvers are the only revolvers approved for use in SASS main match competition. The rules relative to SASS approved revolvers depend upon the competition category in which one participates. Sights are a major factor for determining in which category a revolver may be used. Certain shooting categories require a specific type of revolver and ammunition be used. Please see the shooting categories for further information. No more than two main match revolvers may be carried to the firing line.

#### Revolver Calibers

- Must be centerfire calibers of at least .32 caliber and no larger than .45 caliber or percussion calibers of at least .36 caliber and no larger than .45 caliber.
- Must be in a caliber commonly available in revolvers. Examples include, but are not limited to, .32-20, .32 Magnum, .357 Magnum, .38 Special, .44 Magnum, .44-40, and .45 Colt.

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- Standard velocity .22 caliber, rim-fire ammunition is allowed within the Buckaroo Category only.
- Although the .32 caliber revolvers and .36 caliber cap and ball revolvers are legal, they may not be powerful enough to handle all reactive targets.

### Revolver Ejector Rods

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

### Revolver Grip Frames

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

### Revolver Cylinder Pins

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

### Revolver Cylinders

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

## SHOTGUNS

### Shotgun Requirements

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

### Shotgun Gauges

- Side-by-side, single shot, and lever action shotguns must be centerfire of at least 20 gauge and no larger the 10 gauge.

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

### Shotgun Break Action

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

## RIFLES

### Rifle Requirements

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

### Rifle Calibers

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

## OTHER APPROVED FIREARMS

The following additional firearms have been approved for use:

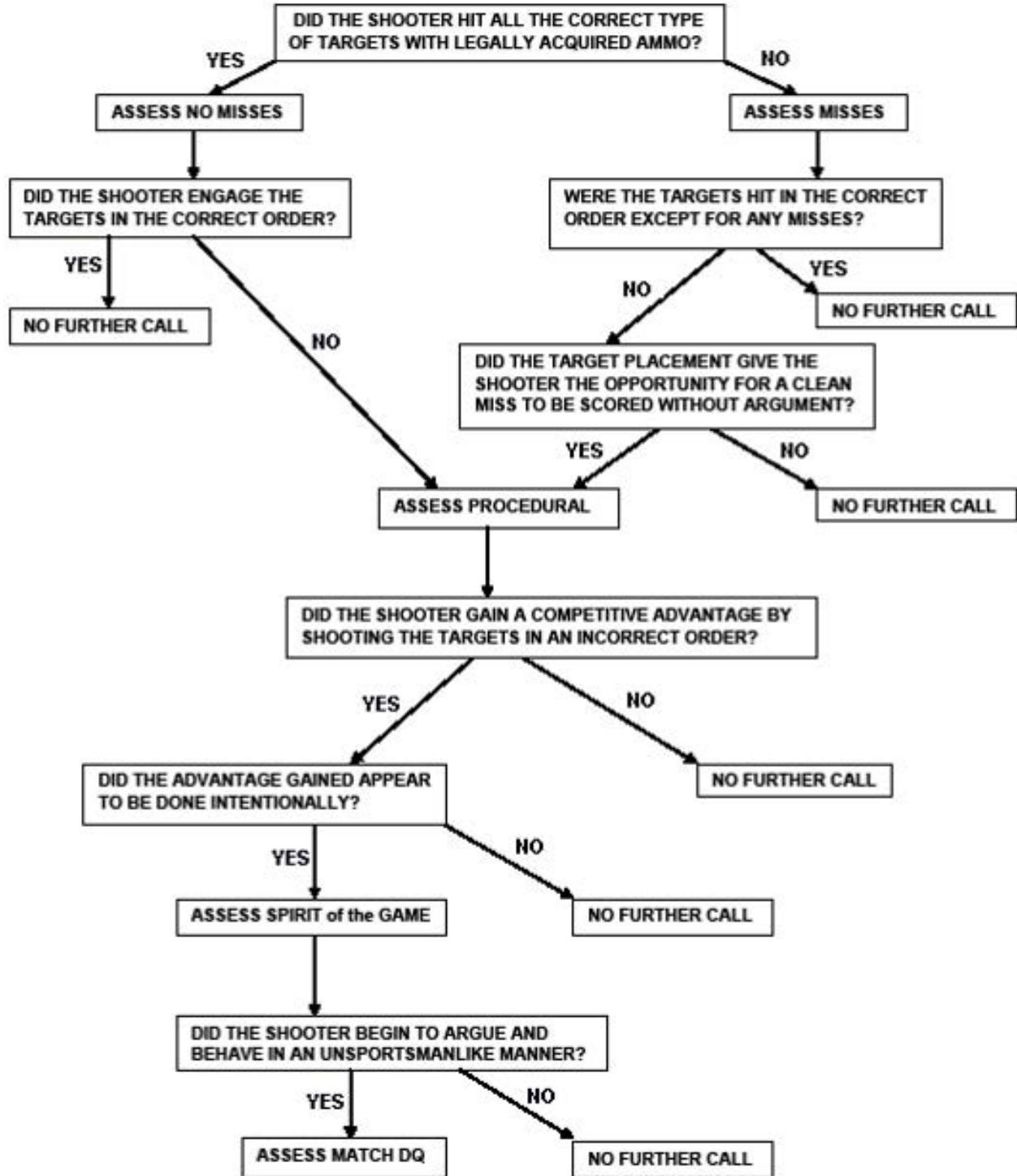
- Small frame Model P revolvers such as the Cimarron Firearms Lightning, Uberti Stallion, and Ruger Single Six .32 H & R Magnum
- Henry Big Boy Rifle (not legal in Classic Cowboy/Cowgirl Categories)
- US Firearms Omni Potent Revolver
- Marlin 1894 Tube Feed Rifle—.32 H&R Magnum
- Original or replica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

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

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SECTION 7 – MISS FLOW CHART




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### SECTION 8 – RO POCKET CARD

 <b>Pocket RO Card (Current as of January 2019)</b> “MSV”= Minor Safety Violation “SDQ”= Stage Disqualification “MDQ” = Match Disqualification	M	S	M
	S	D	D
V	Q	Q	Q
Empty or live round in magazine or carrier of the long gun in which it was loaded after the next firearm is fired, or if last firearm, put down on the unloading table.	✓		
Empty long guns that slip and fall but don't break 170 or sweep anyone	✓		
Cocking a revolver before it reaches 45 degrees downrange	✓		
Leaving the line once the stage has begun to retrieve ammo or firearms before all firearms brought to the line are verified as clear		✓	
Leaving the stage anytime between when the first and last shots have been fired on the stage		✓	
Leaving the firing line after stage has begun before all firearms have been verified as clear		✓	
Loading at other than designated location		✓	
Discarding a long gun containing a live round in the chamber (once it leaves the shooter's hands)		✓	
Holstering or staging revolver with hammer cocked (not fully down) or down (on a live round)		✓	
Dropped firearm (unloaded/empty)		✓	
Discharge impacting 5-10 feet from shooter, while on the line		✓	
Cocked revolver leaving shooter's hand		✓	
Changing location or leaving the designated loading area with a cocked gun/gun w/hammer down on live round		✓	
Unsafe gun handling (fanning, etc.)		✓	
Use of illegal or illegally-modified firearm		✓	
Dry firing at the loading table		✓	
Arriving at the designated loading area with uncleared firearms after completing a stage within the same day (assessed on the previously completed stage)		✓	
Violation of 170 rule (without sweeping anyone)		✓	
Sweeping anyone with unloaded firearm		✓	

 <b>Pocket RO Card (Current as of January 2019)</b> “MSV”= Minor Safety Violation “SDQ”= Stage Disqualification “MDQ” = Match Disqualification	M	S	M
	S	D	D
V	Q	Q	Q
De-cocking to avoid a penalty if cocked at the wrong time, position or location		✓	
Not adhering to loading or unloading procedures		✓	
Shooting on the move (shooting multiple shots during continuous movement)		✓	
Use or presence of outlawed/illegal items.		✓	
Dropped gun (loaded)			✓
Discharge impacting within 5 feet from shooter, while on the line or any discharge away from the firing line. Any discharge in the loading or unloading areas.			✓
Sweeping anyone with loaded firearm			✓
Willful failure to comply with a "cease fire" or "Stop" command given by, and while under the positive control of, the CRO/TO			✓
Any two (2) stage DQ penalties or 2 F.T.E./S.O.G.'s during the course of a match			✓
Belligerent attitude/unsportsmanlike conduct			✓
Shooting under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or impairing medications			✓
Leaving the firing line with a malfunctioning firearm unless under direct supervision of a match official			✓
Shooting out of category. e.g., Not wearing the correct items in Classic Cowboy or not making enough smoke in B/P Categories 1 <sup>st</sup> violation is a procedure, 2 <sup>nd</sup> violation is SDQ, 3 <sup>rd</sup> violation is MDQ.	P	2	3

Procedural: Unintentional errors caused by confusion or mistakes. 10 seconds; no more than one procedural penalty may be assessed per stage

Failure to Engage/Spirit of the Game: Willfully shooting a stage other than the way it was intended in order to gain a competitive advantage, not meeting the Ammunition Power Factor or willfully disregarding a non-shooting procedure. 30 seconds

Reshoots are granted for failure of props/match equipment; Range Officer impeding shooter progress; or timer failure.

Failure of shooter equipment or firearms may be granted at the discretion of the Match Director (except at annual or state/regional championships and above). Only safety penalties carry over. Restarts shall be allowed for a competitor to achieve a “clean” start, up to the point at which the first round goes down range. Multiple restarts by the same shooter, that in the judgment of the R.O. are seen to be taking advantage, will not be entertained as they are not in the spirit of the game.

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### SECTION 9 – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**170° Safety Rule** - means the muzzle of the firearm must always be pointed down range +/- 85 degrees in any direction.

**Action Closed (lever & pump action long guns)** – BOLT in “full battery” ( e.g., unable to further close by manipulation of the lever or pump mechanism).

**Action Closed – (SxS & single-shot firearms)** functional firearm that requires manipulation of the opening mechanism (e.g., top/side lever/button) to open the action.

**Action Open (lever & pump action long guns)** – BOLT not closed completely.

**Action Open– (SxS & single-shot firearms)** – functional firearm that opens without manipulation of the release mechanism (e.g., top/side lever/button)

**Apparel** – Articles of clothing including: shirts, pants, dresses, vests, jackets, coats, dusters, chaps/chinks, leggings, boots, and hats. Not to include: Gun leather, ammo belts, garters/arm bands, wrist cuffs, or bandanas.

**Adjustable sight style revolver** – a revolver with dovetailed or adjustable rear sights and/or dovetailed front sights. Ramp style front sights are allowed if original to the firearm.

**Basketball traveling rule** – aka movement with a firearm. Once the firearm is cocked, one foot must remain in place on the ground until the firearm is made safe. This means, on revolvers, you may move, restage, or re-holster when the hammer is down on an empty chamber or expended case. You may move with a rifle or shotgun when the action is open or hammer(s) down on an empty chamber(s) or an expended case(s).

**Chief Range Officer/Timer Operator (CRO/TO)** – the terms are interchangeable, and is the chief range officer for the stage at that time, being in charge of all activities on the stage while in possession of the timing device.

**Cleared** – no live or empty cases in or on the chamber, magazine, action, or carrier.

**Cocked** – hammer not fully down (full, half-cock or safety notch).

**Committed** – the point at which a firearm would have to be made safe to leave the shooter's hand, and the point when the shooter is required to continue with the course of fire.

**Commonly available** – obtainable by anyone given ordinary circumstances with ordinary means.

**Convention** – Conventions refer to standard range behaviors, rules, and expectations.

**Course of fire** – from the beep of the timer once the shooter has signified “ready” to last shot fired.

**Double Duelist shooting style** – revolvers cocked and fired one handed and unsupported, five shots with each hand. The revolver, hand, or shooting arm may not be touched by the offhand except when resolving a malfunctioning revolver problem.

**Down range** – 180 degrees from the shooter toward the targets of a stage.



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**Dropped firearm** – a firearm that has left the shooter's control and comes to rest at a location or position other than where it was intended.

**Dry firing** – the act of bringing an unloaded firearm into a shooting position, cocking the hammer, and pulling the trigger as if to cause the gun to fire normally.

**Duelist shooting style** – a revolver cocked and fired one handed, unsupported. The revolver, hand, or shooting arm may not be touched by the off-hand except when resolving a malfunctioning revolver problem or when transferring the revolver from one hand to the other.

**Engaged** – attempting to fire a round at the target.

**Equipment** – any non-apparel item taken to the firing line.

**Failure to engage** – willfully or intentionally disregarding the stage instructions in order to obtain a competitive advantage and is not simply because a competitor “makes a mistake.” Applies only to non-shooting situations such as refusing to rope a steer, throw a stick of dynamite, or otherwise make an attempt to complete any other non-shooting procedure written within the stage instructions.

**Firing line** – from first firearm placed on the loading table until all firearms are confirmed as cleared at the unloading table.

**Fixed Sight style revolver** – barrel mounted, fixed metallic foresights of a simple blade, bead, or post configuration combined with a simple open notched rear sight cut into the frame, hammer, or latch mechanism. (Note exceptions for conversion revolvers).

**Free Style** – shooter has the option of shooting Two-handed style or Duelist style.

**Gun Stoppage** – a stoppage is an unintentional interruption in the operational cycle of the gun. Stoppages can typically be cleared quickly, returning the gun back to operational condition.

**Gunfighter shooting style** – shooting a revolver in each hand. Revolvers must be cocked and fired one handed, unsupported, one right handed and the other left handed. There is no set pattern as to how the revolvers are to be fired

**Hammer down** – hammer fully down at its final resting position.

**Illegally acquired ammunition** – ammo NOT carried to the line or staged **by the shooter** in an approved manner.

**Illegal Ammunition** – ammunition that exceeds the maximum velocities (revolver 1000fps and rifle 1400 fps) or does not meet the Ammunition Covenants in this handbook. (Excludes ammunition that does not meet power factor)

**Loaded Firearm** – Any firearm with unfired round(s) in the action/chamber/magazine.

**Location** – a physical point on a stage (e.g., “behind the door....”)

**Logo** – distinctive graphic design, stylized name, unique symbol, or other device for identifying an organization. This includes those of **SASS**, individual clubs/ranges, match commemorative and those of any subgroups within the Cowboy Action Shooting community. **Exceptions:** Badges, pins, belt buckles, scarf slides, military unit/rank insignia of a standard size.

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- Major Safety Violation** – a safety infraction that has a high potential for personal injury.
- Malfunction** – Failure of a gun or ammunition to function as designed or fire satisfactorily.
- Minor Safety Violation** – handling or firing a gun in a manner that is unsafe but does not directly endanger persons.
- Miss** – a failure to hit the appropriate target type using the appropriate firearm type. For further explanation of how to assess a miss, see “Miss Flow Chart” in this document. (See also “**5-Second Penalties**” section of the ***PENALTY OVERVIEW***)
- Position** – the posture and stance of the shooter (e.g., “the shooter starts with hands touching hat ...”).
- Power factor** – Bullet weight (in grains) times the velocity (in feet per second); divided by 1000. The minimum standard in all SASS matches for smokeless categories is not less than 60 and no velocity less than 400 fps. Maximum velocity for revolvers is 1000 fps. Maximum velocity for rifles is 1400 fps.
- Procedural** – an unintentional action where the competitor does not follow the Stage instructions, can include actions/omissions other than firing a round (e.g., failure to adhere to category requirements).
- Progressive Penalty** – Procedural for the first infraction, Stage Disqualification for the second infraction, Match Disqualification for the third infraction. Example: failure to adhere to category requirements.
- Reshoot** – score recorded, the competitor starts over clean, carrying accrued safety penalties. Both scores turned in.
- Restart** – no recorded score, shooter is given a clean restart.
- Revolver in hand** – when the muzzle of the revolver clears the mouth of the holster, or breaks contact with a prop where it was staged.
- Shooting out of category** – failure to adhere to category-specific requirements/restrictions.
- Shooting string** – shots from one type of firearm prior to use of the next type of firearm engaged.
- Stage** – synonymous with “Course of Fire” from the beep of the timer once the shooter has signified “ready” to the last shot fired.
- Two handed shooting style** – aka “Traditional,” or shooter holds a single revolver with two hands.
- Up range** – 180 degrees from the shooter away from the targets of a stage.

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