

Missoula Speed Steel Rulebook

Revised 4/24/2024

Overview: *(See the complete rulebook below for full details.)*

New Competitor Orientation: Before their first Speed Steel match, every competitor who has not completed four or more matches in a similar discipline (such as USPSA/IPSC, Steel Challenge, IDPA) must attend the free 1-hour orientation before the match, which will familiarize them with the basic rules, range commands, and procedures for action shooting sports.

Cold Range: All guns must arrive and remain unloaded, including an empty magazine well, except at the direction of the Range Officer. Chamber flags optional.

Handling & Transport: All guns will be transported to and around the range in a case or holster, and may not be removed from the case or holster behind the firing line, or under any other circumstances except at the direction of the Range Officer or in a marked Safety Area.

Safe Handling: Shooters will follow the 3 cardinal rules of Gun Safety:

1. Treat all guns as if they're always loaded.
2. Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction.
3. Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until you're ready to shoot.

Shooters will also adhere to the "180 Rule" by keeping the muzzle pointed forward of the firing line at all times. Accidental or negligent discharges result in disqualification.

Eye & Ear Protection: Eye protection is required for everyone on the range, including spectators. Ear protection is required at or near the firing line when shooting is in progress.

Range Commands: The shooter must be familiar with and follow all range commands, such as "Make ready", "Stop", "Prepare for your next string", "Unload and show clear", "Slide/bolt forward, hammer down, and case/holster". These are covered in the orientation.

Ready Position: The ready position for all firearms is loaded, in the shooting position, but pointed at an indicated point on the ground, about 10-12 feet forward of the shooting position ("low ready"). Rifles start shouldered. All manual safety mechanisms must be engaged and double/single-action decockers activated.

Shooting Procedure: On a start signal, shoot all steel targets (typically 5) as quickly as possible. Time from start signal to last shot is recorded. Extra shots may be fired, but (*hint*) it takes longer to make up a miss than to hit on the first try. There may be stage-specific procedures, such as a "stop plate" that must be hit last, or a specified target order.

Reloads, movement, and special procedures: This match *does not* require the shooter to holster or draw a loaded handgun, move under time, reload under time, shoot with only one

hand, shoot from non-standing shooting positions, or any other special procedures. We just shoot.

Scoring: Your time is your score. Your time on each stage is typically the sum of the best 3 out of 4 attempts at that stage, or “strings”. Penalties are assessed by adding time, such as 5 seconds for a missed target, 3 seconds for procedural penalties such as shooting the targets in the wrong order, and 5 seconds for “failure to engage” (not attempting to shoot at a target).

Divisions: There are 3 binary variables, making for 8 total possible divisions:

- Centerfire or Rimfire
- Pistol or Rifle (*regarding rifles, see “Ammo Limitations”*)
- Open or Limited

For example, you might compete in the “open rimfire rifle” division, or the “limited centerfire pistol” division. For the match, “rifles” are guns that are shouldered while shooting, regardless of any legal definitions. Competitors will use the same equipment through the entire match, except with approval of the Match Director due to a mechanical problem.

Open & Limited: “Open” guns have optics such as red dots, or muzzle devices such as compensators, muzzle brakes, or suppressors. “Limited” guns have none of these features.

Multiple Divisions: You may register in either one or two divisions, allowing you to shoot up to two different guns.

Ammo Limitations: No steel-core, tracer, or incendiary ammo is allowed at the range during the Speed Steel match (steel casings are OK). Projectiles must travel under 1600fps and be greater than .354 (8.99mm) diameter. So, calibers like .223/5.56, 7.62x39, etc. are not permitted. See the complete rulebook for lists of pre-approved calibers. In general, .22LR, 9mm, .45 ACP, .40 S&W, .38 Special, .380 ACP, .45 Colt, and .38 Super have no limitations.

Categories: Awards and special recognition are available in the following “categories”:

- Pre-teen (<13 yrs. old) & Junior (13-17 yrs. old)
- Senior (>59 yrs. old) & Super senior (>69 yrs. old)
- Lady
- Cowboy (revolver/lever-action)
- Novice
- Theme

Novice Shooters: Novice shooters have attended fewer than 3 Speed Steel competitions and fewer than 4 organized competitions in similar disciplines. Novices receive special benefits, including being allowed to retire after 2 strings if they need to load magazines, and being allowed to shoot an extra string if they have sufficient ammo and can learn something from another string. (Same number of strings will be scored as for any other competitor).

Sportsmanship: Our awards are ribbons - there are no prizes other than pride and glory. Competitors will respect the less formal nature of this match, be excellent to one another, have fun, and be safe.

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Safety Rules

Cold Range

The match is operated under “cold range” rules. This means that, despite being *treated* as if they *were* loaded at all times, all firearms must remain unloaded at all times during the match. This includes the condition of firearms before the shooter has registered, or during post-match activities at the range.

“Unloaded” means the firearm has an empty chamber, and an empty magazine well, empty attached magazine, or empty cylinder, as applicable; and in general, that no ammunition is touching the firearm or anything attached to it. Note that a firearm with an empty chamber and an empty magazine inserted in its magazine well *does not qualify* as fully unloaded under this definition.

Violations of the Cold Range rule will result in immediate disqualification.

These and all further safety restrictions on “firearms” apply to all firearms used in the competition, as well as any other firearms carried visibly by competitors or spectators. The terms “firearm” and “gun” may be used interchangeably in these rules, as relevant.

Firearm Condition

Firearms must arrive at the match, and may be transported around the range during the match, in one of the following conditions:

- In a case that fully covers the entire firearm
- For handguns: in a holster which fully covers the trigger and trigger guard
- For rifles: in a scabbard which covers the entire rifle except the end of the buttstock, and which is always transported in a generally downward-pointing direction.

Notwithstanding any rules of the host range, firearms may not be transported around the range outside of a case, even with the muzzle pointed up and the action open. This match requires cases as a general rule.

The Match Director may grant an exemption to the requirement for a case, or may assist the shooter with finding appropriate encasement, if:

- The shooter notifies the Match Director of their lack of a case or holster immediately upon arriving at the match, and before removing the firearm from whatever contains it, such as a vehicle; and
- The firearm is unloaded.

Firearms which cannot be made to comply with one of these conditions may not be used in the match or transported around the match bays. Any change to the condition of the encasement of the firearm during the match which results in it not complying with the above conditions or any stipulation made by the Match Director will result in a disqualification.

Chamber flags are not required. Case direction marking is not required (but is encouraged). If a competitor opens a case to find a firearm which is pointed behind the firing line, they will not be disqualified if they immediately close the case before proceeding. If a competitor touches the firearm in any way in this uprange-pointed condition, they will be disqualified. The case should be closed before being manipulated to point the firearm downrange. Cases are not required to be free of ammunition.

Handling Firearms

Handling firearms is only permitted in specific instances; all other handling of firearms is strictly prohibited, and will result in a disqualification. “Handling” includes removing a firearm from a holster or opening the compartment of the case which contains the firearm. If there’s something in the firearm-containing compartment of the case that the shooter would like to access, they must do so in one of the approved circumstances for handling firearms.

The following circumstances are the **only** circumstances under which a firearm may be handled by any competitor or spectator:

- At the firing line, and at the direction of the range officer
 - This does not include at the firing line but without direction from the range officer. Both conditions must be met.
- In a designated and marked Safety Area
 - All posted rules of the host range must be followed in the safety area.
 - Ammunition may not be handled in the safety area. Handling ammunition in the safety area will result in disqualification.
 - Muzzle direction in the safety area, whether marked or not, must be generally perpendicular to the backstop, as if at a firing line, with the exception of guns which have been disassembled to the point that the barrel is physically removed from the bolt or slide.
- At a range bay directly adjacent to the match, and which is not in use by range members, for the purpose of function testing equipment or coaching a novice participant.
 - Competitors who are not members of the host range must be brief in their use of the neighboring bay, and always yield to regular members who would like to access the bay.

It is specifically (and redundantly) prohibited to handle any firearms on a match bay behind the firing line, even if they’re pointed in a direction deemed safe to the violator. Any handling of

firearms outside of the circumstances described above will result in immediate disqualification from the match.

It is permissible to remove a handgun contained in a holster that covers a trigger guard from a larger bag, such as a range bag, outside of the circumstances described above, for the purpose of mounting it on a belt, and it may be dismounted from a belt in placed back into the bag as well, while remaining in its holster. However, the handgun must be unloaded, must remain pointed in a respectful direction such that it does not point at any other person while being handled, and must remain fully encased in the holster. It's acceptable to use a Safety Area for this purpose, but not required.

Safety Equipment

Eye protection is required at all times for all match participants, including spectators, between the commencement of any shooting at the match and the last shooter's last string.

Ear protection is required within 50 feet of the firing line when shooting is in progress, unless the firearm being fired is suppressed or has been specifically exempted from this requirement by the Match Director.

Safe Handling at the Firing Line

Before the Range Officer has given the "Make Ready" command, the shooter may not handle firearms. Handling other equipment, such as magazines, is permitted.

After the Range Officer has given the "Make Ready" command, and before they have given the "Range is Clear" command, the shooter is permitted to handle the firearm for which they are currently shooting their strings. They may not handle other firearms.

The shooter must comply with the cardinal rules of gun safety:

- Treat all guns as if they're always loaded.
- Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction.
- Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until you're ready to shoot.

Specifically, the shooter may not allow the muzzle to point at, sweep, or cross any part of any person or animal on the range, including their own body. Any violation of this rule will result in immediate disqualification.

The following will be grounds for immediate disqualification:

- Any accidental discharge (see below)
- Pointing a firearm "uprange" (behind the firing line - see below)
- Pointing the firearm at a person or the shooter's own body at any time (see below)
- Dropping a firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, while in the process of shooting
- Leaving the firing line with a loaded firearm, or loading or placing a detachable magazine into their firearm at any time other than at the Range Officer's direction

- Retrieving a dropped firearm. Dropped firearms must always be retrieved by a Range Officer who will, after checking or clearing the firearm, return it to the competitor for clearing and holstering or casing. Dropping an unloaded firearm or causing it to fall outside of a course of fire is not an infraction; however, a competitor who retrieves a dropped firearm while unsupervised will receive a match disqualification.

Accidental Discharge

The following are considered accidental discharges, and will result in immediate disqualification:

- Any shot fired while loading, unloading, reloading, or lowering the hammer.
 - This includes any shot fired after the “If clear, hammer down, holster” command has been issued, except where a shot is deliberately fired to clear the gun under RO supervision.
- Any shot fired during remedial action in the case of a malfunction.
- Any shot fired outside of a timed string, except if directed by the Range Officer.
- Any shot fired into the holster or into the ground within 10 feet of the competitor.
- Any shot fired which travels over a backstop or berm in any direction.

The Firing Line

In addition to the general rules of gun safety, the shooter must keep the muzzle pointed at a point forward of the firearm relative to the downrange direction at all times - this is sometimes referred to as the “180 Rule”. That is, an imaginary line (the “Firing Line”) passes through the firearm, and runs parallel to the bay’s backstop, and perpendicular to the general downrange shooting direction. If the muzzle points behind the firing line at any time while being handled, it will result in immediate disqualification.

Trigger Discipline

In accordance with the cardinal rules of gun safety, the shooter must keep their trigger finger outside the trigger guard when not shooting or dry firing. Dry firing one time following the Make Ready command is permitted, and is required for some firearm types as part of clearing the range.

If a shooter briefly allows their trigger finger to dip into the trigger guard at a time when they’re not intending to pull the trigger, such as during loading, reloading, unloading, or clearing a malfunction, they will not be immediately disqualified if the following conditions are met:

- The shooter immediately rectifies the error by removing their finger, either before being reminded by the Range Officer, or immediately after being reminded.
- The firearm is pointed downrange - specifically, the firearm is pointed above (not at) the start position aimpoint, below the backstop, and within the target array laterally.
- Putting their finger in the trigger guard doesn’t create any additional safety hazard in this instance, per the discretion of the Range Officer.
 - For example, if the firearm is pointed downrange but the muzzle is directly in front of a metal ammo can when the instance occurs, the Range Officer may deem this to create an additional safety hazard.

If this rule is violated and the above conditions are not met, the Range Officer may elect to disqualify the shooter, or instruct the shooter to find the Match Director and explain the situation.

A shooter who has received a series of warnings from the Range Officer regarding their trigger discipline and does not demonstrate behavior change will be disqualified.

Match Rules in Effect from Setup to Teardown

All rules in this Rulebook go into effect as soon as any setup activities begin, before the match briefings; and they apply to all bays that will be used for the match activities until the last target is put away. No match participants may handle any firearms on the bays that will be, are being, or have just been used for the match without a Range Officer present to direct their activities, or handle firearms in any other ways violate the rules in this Rulebook between the beginning and end of the match as defined here (setup to teardown, fully inclusive).

Shooters are encouraged to use the Safety Areas (without handling ammunition or loaded magazines in the safety areas), or to visit adjacent bays which are unused for the match if they would like to perform test-firing of a firearm, as discussed above in the section titled "Handling Firearms".

Stage Procedures

Range Commands

The Range Officer will direct the competitor using the following commands, or near-equivalent verbiage meant to communicate the same steps:

- **"Make ready"** - Under the direct supervision of the Range Officer, the competitor must face down range and prepare their firearm. The competitor must then assume the start position. At this point, the Range Officer will proceed. This command signifies the start of the course of fire.
 - The "make ready" command signifies the start of the competitor's attempt at the stage. Once the "make ready" command has been given, the competitor must not move away from the firing line location without the prior approval, and under the direct supervision, of the Range Officer.
 - The competitor will have a maximum of one minute after the "Make Ready" command to prepare for the string. Sight pictures may be taken during the "Make Ready" process and while preparing for the next string.
 - Any discharge at this point, unless directed by the range officer, is considered an Accidental Discharge and will result in immediate disqualification.
 - After the "Make Ready" Command has been given, no competitor or spectator may move forward of the firing line.
- **"Are you ready?"** - The lack of any negative response from the competitor indicates that they fully understand the requirements of the stage and are ready to proceed. If the competitor is not ready at the "Are you ready?" command, they must clearly

communicate this to the Range Officer. For each subsequent string after the first, the Range Officer shall proceed from this command, once the competitor has assumed the start position.

- **“Stand by”** - This command should be followed by the start signal within 1 to 4 seconds.
- **Start signal** - At the audible start signal, the competitor may begin their attempt at the stage. If a competitor fails to react to the audible start signal for any reason, the Range Officer will confirm that the competitor is ready to attempt the course of fire, and will resume the range commands from “Are You Ready?”
- **“Prepare for your next string”** - After the completion of a string, if the competitor has not yet completed the required number of strings, they may be instructed to prepare for the next string. At this time, the competitor may reload if necessary, and must then assume the start position.
- **“Stop”** - Any Range Officer or the Match Director may issue this command at any time. The competitor must immediately cease firing, stop moving except for removing their finger from the trigger guard, and wait for further instructions.
- **“If you are finished, unload and show clear”** (or **“Unload and show clear”** if Stop is used) - After the completion of the final string, the Range Officer will issue this command. If the competitor has finished shooting, they must completely unload it and present it for inspection by the Range Officer with the muzzle pointed down range and their finger outside the trigger guard.
 - Semi-automatic firearms must be presented with magazine removed; slide or bolt locked or held open, and chamber empty. Revolvers must be presented with the cylinder swung out and empty. Lever-action rifles must be rotated such that the Range Officer is able to observe both an empty chamber and a magazine follower, if present. For any other action type, the shooter will follow specific directions from the Range Officer.
- **“If clear, hammer down, holster”** (handguns), or **“If clear, hammer down, case”** (rifle), or **“If clear, cylinder closed, holster”** (revolvers) -.After issuance of this command, the competitor is prohibited from firing. While continuing to point the firearm safely downrange, the competitor must perform a final safety check of the firearm as follows:
 - Centerfire semi-auto handgun: release the slide and pull the trigger (without touching the hammer or de-cocker, if any), and holster or case.
 - Rimfire Pistol: show clear and holster or case. (The trigger need not be pulled.)
 - Rimfire Rifle: show clear and case. (The trigger need not be pulled.)
 - Centerfire rifle: show clear, close the bolt, pull the trigger, and case.
 - Revolver: close the empty cylinder (without touching the hammer, if any).
 - Lever-action rifle: close the bolt, pull the trigger, and case.

If, during clearing the firearm, the cartridge fails to extract or eject, once the time has been recorded and with approval of the Range Officer, the last cartridge may be fired directly into the backstop at a point within the target array without penalty. After the cartridge has been fired, the Range Officer will resume the commands from “If clear, hammer down...” as appropriate for the firearm.

If the gun proves to be clear, the competitor must holster or case/bag their firearm. If the gun does not prove to be clear, the Range Officer will resume from the command "Stop", followed by "Unload and show clear". Once the gun has proven to be clear, the competitor will be disqualified for the accidental discharge.

- **"Range is clear"** - This declaration signifies the end of the stage. Once the declaration is made, officials and competitors may move forward for any necessary maintenance activities.
 - No shooter may leave the firing line position until the firearm has been unloaded, inspected and cleared by the Range Officer, and the "Range is Clear" command has been given. The firearm will be holstered or cased before the shooter moves away from the firing line position.

Firearm Shooting Sequence

The shooter may elect to shoot multiple entry firearms back-to-back, or allow another competitor to shoot between their attempts at the stage with the different firearms.

Plate Painting

It is not guaranteed that plates will have fresh paint on them when a shooter begins shooting. Plates should only be painted as time and materials allow - unlike other steel shooting sports, we are required to shoot the plates as they are. If it doesn't slow down the shooters in the following squad, plates may be painted occasionally, but not for every shooter.

Ready Condition

The ready condition of the firearm will be loaded, with a round chambered, with any extant manual safeties engaged or decockers operated, and with the competitor's finger outside the trigger guard, even if de-activation of the safety requires the competitor's finger to enter the trigger guard.

The ready condition for any competitor who has not sought accommodation for a disability will be standing or sitting less than 2 feet behind whatever firing line delineator exists on the range (such as a table or line on the ground), facing downrange, with the muzzle pointed directly at the start position marker on the bay. If a start position marker is not present, the muzzle may be pointed at the ground 10-14 feet in front of the firing line. For rifles, the stock should be against the shooter's shoulder.

A competitor not in the proper start position prior to the start signal will be required to assume the correct start position by the Range Officer.

Procedural penalties

"Creeping": If the shooter is moving prior to the start signal, the Range Officer should stop the shooter and have them resume the start position. In the event that the Range Officer cannot

stop the shooter prior to the start signal, or in any case if the shooter is in motion at the time of the start signal, they will incur a 3-second penalty. (Note that the best penalty to use is a “procedural”, but that the scorekeeper may need to select a different penalty type to most closely approximate a 3-second penalty if the procedural penalty for that stage is set for a different value. If no 3-second penalties exist for that stage, a 2-second penalty may be substituted.)

“Foot Faults”: We don’t use specific “foot fault” boxes. However, a shooter who starts the stage or fires any shot while more than 2 feet from the designated firing line delineator will be assessed a 3-second penalty for each round fired. If the shooter has moved to a position which created a safety hazard, they should be stopped. If the shooter shoots from a position which is causing a safety hazard, they will be disqualified.

Designated Targets: Certain courses will have targets that will be shot in a designated order. Unless otherwise specified in the stage description, each hit which violates any target order requirements of the stage will incur a 3-second procedural penalty.

Procedural Errors: A competitor whose actions are in violation of specified stage procedures is considered to have committed a procedural error. Procedural errors will result in a 3-second penalty for each occurrence, unless otherwise specified in the stage description. There is no double jeopardy - that is, if a round is fired which would generate multiple penalties at once, only one penalty will be assessed per round fired.

Coaching

Any competitor may request for the scorekeeper or one other competitor to call out “Miss” if they have fired a round but not hit a target. Any coaching may be provided to any competitor in the Novice category by anyone present at the match - there are no restrictions for the coaching of Novices. Competitors who are not able or willing to comply is the coaching guidelines here will be referred to the Match Director.

Range and Equipment Issues

A competitor who is unable to complete a course of fire due to range equipment failure must be required to reshoot the course of fire after corrective actions have been taken. It is acceptable for the shooter to only shoot enough strings to replace any that were missing or in which the range equipment malfunctioned.

The competitor must not interfere with the range surface, natural foliage, constructions, props, or other range equipment (including targets, target stands, and shooting boxes) at any time. Violations may incur one procedural penalty per occurrence at the discretion of the Range Officer. However, a competitor is allowed to move stone, sand, or other loose material at the starting position for the purposes of achieving level and stable footing.

Scoring

Speed Steel scoring is simple: The shooter's time is their score, and a lower score is better. Sometimes, time is added to the score as a penalty. Most stages require the shooter to shoot the stage multiple times, with the slowest time thrown out of the score (and the other times added together to get the stage score). The total of a competitor's stage times is their match time (unless a stage is specifically exempted from the match total in its description).

In addition to the sum of times described above, a parallel scoring representation will also be tabulated, called "points". Points are earned as follows: The shooter earns 1 point for completing each stage safely, and earns one additional point for each other competitor whose best times sum on that stage is greater than their own. This tabulation can be accomplished both across the match overall, as well as within divisions.

Misses

Any target that has not been hit during the string (and before the stop plate is hit, if there is a stop plate) will be scored as a miss. Each miss results in a 5-second penalty.

Any target that the shooter doesn't attempt to shoot will be assessed an additional 5-second penalty as a "Failure to Engage". These will stack on top of misses, so make sure you shoot every target. Targets only engaged after the stop plate (if present) is hit will not count as a Failure to Engage, but will still count as a miss.

At the end of each string, the shooter must be informed of any penalties, including procedural penalties (below).

If a stop plate is present and isn't hit, the string time will be recorded as the maximum string time (before procedural penalties).

Scoring Judgements

Hits are scored using the Score Keeper's best ability to discern hits auditorily (the sound of the bullet strike on the target), and visually (motion on the target from being hit, a change in the bullet mark pattern on its face, etc.). Unlike other steel shooting sports, we make no guarantee that the shooter will shoot plates with fresh paint on them.

If the Score Keeper is in doubt, they will seek the concurrence of the Range Officer. If the Range Officer disagrees with the Score Keeper on the score as expressed to the shooter, they must either come to agreement, or throw out that string and allow the shooter to shoot another string.

Maximum Time

The maximum time for an individual string, including miss penalties, is 40 seconds. Procedural penalties are added even if the maximum time is reached, up to 60 seconds.

Stage Design and Communication

Stage Layout

Targets will be placed at distances between 8 and 50 yards from the firing line, except for official Steel Challenge courses, which may call for targets at 7 yards. Placement at or beyond 10 yards is preferred.

Targets will appear at various heights in the match. Targets will be placed at heights that don't pose a safety hazard. Targets should be placed such that the bottom of any plate is 12 inches away from any stand that will be in the bullet splatter zone; and targets should be placed such that, if a miss went 12 inches over the top of the plate fired from a height of 4 feet off the ground, it wouldn't pose a safety hazard by overshooting the backstop.

Stage Procedures

All stages will be designed such that the shooter shoots from only one shooting box in any given string. Stages may have multiple shooting boxes, but may not require movement under time. Moving between shooting boxes during a string is prohibited.

Other prohibited stage design elements include mandatory reloads, required one-handed shooting, switching hands, or start positions facing any direction other than directly downrange.

Stage diagrams may not be provided for some stages, but a stage description will always be provided. Stages will be shot as they appear on the range, even if they deviate from a printed diagram or description, unless they have been inadvertently changed during the match, in which case they should be restored to their original condition to the best ability of the participants, under the supervision of a Range Officer.

Divisions, Categories, and Equipment

Divisions

A competitor's entry division will be defined by each of three binary categories:

- Limited vs. Open
- Rimfire vs. Centerfire
- Pistol vs. Rifle

Therefore, the available divisions are as follows:

- Limited rimfire pistol
- Limited rimfire rifle
- Limited centerfire pistol
- Limited centerfire rifle
- Open rimfire pistol

- Open rimfire rifle
- Open centerfire pistol
- Open centerfire rifle

Definitions:

- **Open** - The firearm has either of the following features attached:
 - Optical or electronic sights, such as red dots, reflex sights, scopes, lasers
 - Muzzle gas handling devices, such as compensators, brakes, or suppressors
- **Limited** - A firearm without any “Open” features.
- **Rifle** - A firearm that is fired with a rearward extension against the shoulder.
 - Some firearms that are categorized as “pistols” under the law may qualify as “rifles” for the purpose of the match.
- **Rimfire** - A firearm that fires .22LR or a shorter .22 caliber cartridge.
 - Due to the velocity restrictions (below), .17 caliber cartridges are not eligible for the match.
 - No powderless cartridges are allowed.
- **Centerfire** - A firearm which strikes the cartridge in the center of the case head in order to ignite the priming compound.

Cartridge Safety Restrictions

Any ammunition deemed unsafe or likely to damage the targets is prohibited and will be removed from use.

Absolutely no steel core or steel jacketed ammunition may be used in the match, nor on the person or in the equipment bags or containers of any competitor. All competitors should be prepared at any time for any Range Officer or the Match Director to test their projectiles with a magnet to confirm there is no steel core. Possession of steel core ammunition on the range at the match will result in disqualification.

Tracer and incendiary ammunition is also prohibited.

Steel *cased* ammunition is acceptable. Any competitor who is unsure whether their ammunition contains a steel core should confirm before the match that their projectile is not attracted by a magnet at all.

The following two restrictions govern calibers which may be used in centerfire divisions:

- **Velocity** - The projectile must exit the barrel under 1600 feet per second.
- **Diameter** - The projectile must be greater than .354 inches (8.99mm) in diameter.

“Rimfire” means .22LR. .22 Magnum may only be used in pistol divisions, and using 40gr. or heavier bullets. Other rimfire cartridges are prohibited.

The velocity restriction will not be lifted for any reason by the Match Director, and competitors should be prepared to shoot up to 5 rounds of ammunition over a chronograph if necessary to establish the velocity of their ammunition. The Match Director may grant exemptions to the diameter restriction for projectiles between .354 and .299 inches in diameter which travel under 1200fps. Any competitor who seeks a diameter exemption must notify the Match Director before the match, and may be asked to meet certain other requirements, such as providing a working chronograph for the purpose of testing the projectile velocity; and must come prepared for the Match Director to select up to 5 rounds of ammunition at random out of their ammunition containers for the purpose of velocity testing, each of which must meet the velocity requirement.

Minimum energy or “power factor” restrictions are not used for this match.

Specific Caliber Listings

Prohibited Calibers (cannot meet either velocity or diameter requirement):

- .223 Remington/5.56x45mm NATO
- .30 Carbine
- .30-30 Winchester
- 7.62x39mm Soviet
- 5.45x39mm Soviet
- Any rifle calibers “bigger” than any of the above
- .17 HMR/other .17 calibers

Pre-approved calibers for all firearms (with industry-standard bullet weights):

- .22 LR
- .380ACP
- 9x18mm Makarov
- 9mm Luger
- .38 Special
- .40 S&W
- .41 Magnum
- .44 Special
- .45 ACP
- .45 Long Colt

Pre-approved for pistols only (should be tested for rifles):

- .357 Sig
- .38 Super
- 10mm Auto

(.357 Magnum, .44 Magnum, .45/70 Gov’t, and similar calibers may meet the velocity requirements, but the energy will cause premature target wear.)

Special lightweight bullet loads (e.g. 75gr. 9mm) which exceed 1600fps may not be used, even if loaded in a caliber listed above as pre-approved.

Categories

Competitors may register in special “categories” which relate to performance. Because the categories are meant to relate to performance aspects of the shooter or their firearms, categories used at other matches such as “Law Enforcement” and “Military” are not employed here. The categories are as follows:

- Pre-teen (<13 yrs old)
- Junior (13-17 yrs old)
- Senior (>= 60 yrs old)
- Super senior (>= 70 yrs old)
- Lady
- Cowboy (revolver, lever-action, or revolver carbine; costumes not scored.)
- Novice
- Theme

The categories do not alter the match scoring, but allow for *de facto* bracketing within categories (i.e. fastest lady shooter, fastest senior, fastest cowboy etc.) Aside from within the set of age-related categories, the categories are not mutually exclusive - that is, one can register as a “novice junior lady cowboy”. Category registrations are at the discretion and on the honor of the competitor.

Novice Category Details and Requirements

Novices are defined as competitors who have finished fewer than 4 matches of another organized discipline (such as Steel Challenge, USPSA/IPSC, IDPA, etc.), and who have also finished fewer than 3 matches in this match series. Registering as a novice comes with certain benefits and rules exceptions, as well as certain requirements.

Special Novice Rules

- Novice competitors may elect to split up their strings into two groups in order to load magazines while another shooter shoots the stage.
 - Novice competitors who elect to break up their strings must notify the Score Keeper in advance of the “make ready” command, and will be placed back into the order for their later strings at the whim of the Score Keeper.
- Novice competitors may elect to shoot an extra string (e.g. 5 strings when 3 are counted for score), thereby throwing away two strings.
 - Novice competitors who elect to shoot an extra string must notify the Score Keeper and Range Officer in advance of the “gun is clear...” command. Once the gun has been declared clear by the Range Officer, the Novice shooter loses the ability to request an additional string.
 - Novice competitors who use their extra string election should keep a close eye on their ammunition supply, because they will be adding significantly to their total round count.
- Novice shooters may receive live coaching from anyone without restriction.

- Other shooters may only receive specified coaching (the calling of misses) from a designated person.

Novice Requirements

- In their first match of this series, all novices are required to attend the pre-match orientation period, which will last about an hour.
 - All Novice competitors must have attended this orientation at some point prior to registration, but only once - i.e., a Novice registering for their 3rd and final “Novice” match is not required to attend the orientation.
 - Novices attending the orientation are encouraged to bring at least 10 extra rounds of ammunition, in case there’s time for them to practice shooting a stage during the orientation. Note that there may not be time for this.
- Novices may be asked to wear an insignia, such as a ribbon pinned to their sleeve or hat, to distinguish themselves to the Range Officer and as a reminder that certain rule exceptions (listed above) apply to them.

Themes

A theme may be announced by the Match Director in advance of the match. The specific rules for the theme will be included in the announcement, as well as the signup form.

Multiple Entries

The Match Director may announce in advance of the match the number of entries each competitor may make. For example, a competitor may be able to make 2 entries.

Multiple entries must be in different Divisions, except for entries in the same division where one is a Theme entry and one is not. For example, a competitor could register to shoot “limited centerfire pistol” and “open rimfire rifle” if the maximum number of entries were 2 or more; or a competitor could register to shoot “open centerfire pistol” as a theme entry and “open centerfire pistol” as a non-theme entry.

If a competitor is disqualified, they are disqualified from all divisions with all of their entries for that match.

Changing Equipment

A competitor may change equipment during the match, so long as the equipment still matches the Division and Theme status of their initial equipment and registration. If a shooter is unable to complete the match with the equipment they started with due to a mechanical problem with the gun or physical problem with the competitor, they may change to a different gun. In this case, their registration for that entry must be changed to whichever Division typically results in faster times between the two equipment setups, per the Match Director’s discretion. (For example, if a competitor began shooting a limited centerfire pistol and must switch to an open rimfire pistol, the Match Director would most likely assign that entry to the open rimfire pistol Division, despite any previous scores earned with the limited centerfire pistol.) However, the

competitor may not switch to a gun that they have registered in another entry unless they have 4 or fewer strings remaining to complete the entire match. Any change of equipment that does not meet these guidelines and does not have without approval from the Match Director will result in disqualification.

Ammunition Carriers

Each competitor is expected to come to the firing line ready to shoot, with an appropriate amount of ammunition in an appropriate number of magazines or speed-loaders or other loading devices (or as much as their equipment will allow). Match delays caused by, for example, excessive time spent loading magazines while on the firing line may be referred to the Match Director for guidance.

A competitor may have an assistant to help them in reloading between strings, if needed. Should they not be prepared, and it would cause a severe delay while they prepare, the Range Officer may move them down in the shooting order until they are prepared.

Any other competitor or spectator may reload magazines on behalf of the competitor completing the course of fire if the competitor doesn't have enough magazines to complete the stage without loading magazines.

Magazine carriers may be placed anywhere on the belt, regardless of division. For all divisions, magazines may be placed on top of the barrel or table available at the shooting box. Magazines need not be transported in a magazine pouch.

Adaptive Shooters

Competitors with injuries or physical disabilities that inhibit their performance in the match may request accommodation by the Match Director. Accommodations may not include relaxing any safety standards. However, certain accommodations are available, such as:

- Allowing an adaptive shooter to shoot from a position directly beside the firing line location (i.e. next to the table)
- Allowing an adaptive shooter to break up their strings in order to allow physical recovery
- Allowing an adaptive shooter to lean or rest on a piece of range equipment
- A competitor unable to fully execute a special procedure for a specific stage due to incapacity or injury may, prior to making their attempt at the course of fire, request that the Match Director apply a penalty (typically 3 seconds per string) in lieu of the stated course requirement.

The Match Director's decision regarding the safety and suitability of such accommodations will be final. Adaptive shooters are encouraged to seek accommodations as needed.

Equipment modifications

Should a competitor's equipment malfunction, the current string of fire will be scored, the range shall be cleared, and the competitor will be allowed to retire for repair or replacement of the equipment. The Range Officer will proceed with the next competitor. The same procedure will apply in the case of squib loads or if a Range Officer has declared a firearm unsafe.

In any event that a firearm cannot be unloaded due to a broken or failed mechanism, the competitor will notify the Range Officer. Under no circumstances will a competitor leave the firing line with a loaded firearm without the in-person inspection and approval of the Match Director.

In the event that a Range Officer terminates a string due to a suspicion that a competitor has an unsafe firearm (e.g. a firearm that is doubling), or unsafe ammunition (e.g. a "squib" load), the Range Officer will take whatever steps deemed necessary to return both the competitor and the range to a safe condition.

Match Administration

Disqualification

Competitors who have been disqualified may not shoot during the remainder of the event, and forfeit any fees they paid to enter the match. Completed match scores will still be logged alongside all other competitors, but may not be tabulated if the competitor did not complete all strings on all stages in the match. For example, if a competitor shoots a complete score in Open Rimfire Rifle and then disqualifies while shooting Limited Centerfire Pistol, that competitor's Rifle score still stands.

However, in the case that a competitor is shooting multiple firearm entries in the match, a disqualification is for the *competitor*, not the *firearm*, and the competitor may not compete any further with either firearm.

Disqualification does not equal a social rejection from the match - disqualification is done to help promote safe behavior, and not to ostracize the competitor. Unless the Match Director asks the disqualified competitor to leave the range, they are welcome to stay at the match as a spectator, and for any post-match activities; and are also welcome to leave the range while the match is in progress if they choose. However, a disqualified shooter may not handle firearms in any post-match activities.

Conditional Disqualification ("Yellow Card")

Unlike matches that exist under the umbrella of a national organization, the top priorities of Speed Steel are first safety, followed by learning. In some cases, simply disqualifying a competitor from the match is the safest option. In other cases, the ethos of our match dictates that an immediate opportunity to learn to avoid a mistake is the best way to support the safety of

the match as a whole and into the future. Therefore, at the discretion of the Range Officer or the Match Director, a conditional disqualification, referred to as a “Yellow Card”, may be issued.

A Conditional Disqualification may only be issued one time to a competitor in a given match - it's a one-time last chance - and may only be issued in a case in which no exorbitantly dangerous situation was created due to the safety infraction, per the discretion of the Range Officer (recognizing that all safety infractions are full safety infractions, but some objectively create more dangerous situations than others). The issuance of a Conditional Disqualification means that the competitor is currently disqualified, but may rejoin the match after having met the stipulations of the Conditional Disqualification to the satisfaction of the Range Officer who issued the Conditional Disqualification, or of the Match Director.

The standard stipulations of a Conditional Disqualification must be issued by the Range Officer as stated below, unless approval from the Match Director is obtained for a deviation from the standard stipulations. The standard stipulations are as follows: The disqualified competitor, after having stopped shooting and the range having been safety cleared, must locate at least 2 competitors in the Novice category (or, if there are fewer than 2 Novice category competitors at the entire match, then all Novices present and the requisite number of other competitors to bring the total to 2), and to explain to these competitors, either individually or together:

- What went wrong
- What danger is presented by this error
- How the competitor, and others, can avoid the same problem in the future

Once these actions have been performed, the disqualified competitor will report back to the Range Officer or Match Director who issued the Conditional Disqualification. That official is authorized, but not required, to check in with the other competitors to whom the disqualified competitor made the explanation to confirm that it was a satisfactory explanation. If the issuing official is satisfied with the completion of the stipulations, they may remove the Conditional Disqualification and allow the formerly disqualified competitor to finish any remaining strings at that stage, as well as the rest of the match.

The Range Officer and Match Director are under absolutely no obligation to issue a Conditional Disqualification in any circumstance, and always have full authority and discretion to disqualify any competitor immediately for any safety rule violation, without an opportunity for the competitor to take corrective action. Range Officers are encouraged not to issue Conditional Disqualifications to persons who argue about the disqualification, act in an unsportsmanlike or belligerent fashion, speak in a way so as to reject the validity of any safety rules, or in any other way make the process of issuing the disqualification onerous for the Range Officer. For example, a competitor who objects by saying, “Well, it’s no big deal to point a gun at your own hand in a gun store,” or “But I’m really sure the gun was unloaded,” should not be given the benefit of a conditional disqualification. Regardless, the Range Officer still maintains full discretion to issue a conditional disqualification, but only for a first-time safety violation for that competitor.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

A shooter who is discovered or thought to have used any substance before or during the match which impairs the shooter's ability to shoot safely, at the discretion of any Range Officer or the Match Director, will be asked to leave the range (in addition to being disqualified from the match).

The use of disrespectful and belligerent language or gestures towards match officials will result in a disqualification, and the competitor may be asked to leave the range.

Competitors will be disqualified from the match for conduct which a Range Officer or the Match Director deems to be unsportsmanlike. Examples of unsportsmanlike conduct include cheating, dishonesty, obfuscation of safety violations, failing to comply with the reasonable directions of a Range Officer or the Match Director, or any behavior likely to bring the sport into disrepute. The Match Director must be notified as soon as possible upon the disqualification of a competitor for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Other persons may be expelled from the range for conduct which a Range Officer or the Match Director deems to be unacceptable. Examples of unacceptable conduct include failing to comply with the reasonable directions of a Range Officer or the Match Director, interference with the operation of a course of fire or a competitor's shooting, and any other behavior likely to bring the sport into disrepute.

A competitor who is deemed by a Range Officer to have intentionally removed or caused the loss of eye or hearing protection in order to gain a competitive advantage will be stopped, and accept the maximum time for that string on the first occurrence, and disqualified on any future occurrence.

Arbitration

A competitor who wishes to appeal a disqualification or other penalty must find the Match Director and discuss the matter at the Match Director's convenience. However, the Range Officer's ruling on whether an observed action occurred shall be considered factual in issues of fact, such as accidental discharges, violating the Firing Line, hitting or missing a target, etc.

In the case of disqualification, even if the issue is raised to the Match Director for arbitration, any match fees paid will be non-refundable.

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