

COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™

Range Officer Training Course (Level II)



Compiled and Edited
by
The Wild Bunch and Friends

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COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™

SASS Range Officer Training Course

Acknowledgments

The design and production of this course has evolved from the national implementation of the SASS Range Operations Basic Safety Course. This course is the culmination of many dedicated SASS member's collaborative efforts. Shooters at all SASS matches will benefit greatly from the increased safety awareness level stressed in this course. This document may be copied by any SASS designated instructor for use in the SASS Range Officer training program.

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Version I

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SASS Range Officer Training Course

Training Course Administration

REGISTRATION

Students interested in taking the SASS Range Officer Training Course require the following:

- Must be a SASS Member.
- Must have completed SASS Range Operations Basic Safety Course.
- Must have competed in Cowboy Action Shooting™ matches for a minimum period of six months.

Students are required to register with the SASS Range Officer Instructor at least 10 days prior to the class by submitting the Range Officer Training Registration Form. Each registration must be submitted to SASS at least seven days prior to the class for SASS membership and Range Operations Safety Course status verification.

SASS Range Officer Instructors are required to verify minimum length of time the student has been an active Cowboy Action Shooter.

TRAINING FEES

The SASS Range Officer Training Course is \$25, and students must pay on the day of the class. Advance registration payments are not required.

OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION OF COMPLETION

Upon receipt of registration fees, completed test, and trainer confirmation, SASS will issue an official certification of completion and pin directly to the member. As of December 7, 2003, this course is required for a person to hold the position of Territorial Governor for a SASS affiliated club.

Course Material and Facilities

Part I of the SASS Range Officer Training Course requires a classroom setting. The classroom includes seating and writing areas for all students. SASS Range Officer Instructors will supply all course materials. Pencils and other writing tools are recommended.

Part II is the practical field-training portion of the course. This is accomplished at an outdoor shooting range where match conditions can be simulated. The practical field-training portion of the course consists of real-time situations and incidents that can occur in a Cowboy Action Shooting™ Match and will require the use of props, targets, loading and unloading tables, firearms, ammunition, and empty shells. Examples of damaged targets, props, firearms with external modifications, appropriate and inappropriate clothing, leather, and other items are provided to make the appropriate points

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SASS Range Officer Training

The SASS Range Officer Training Course's objective is to eliminate personal injury during a Cowboy Action Shooting™ match. It is designed to strengthen the integrity of SASS' Cowboy Action Shooting™ safety record. The SASS Range Officer Training Course is a risk management program for SASS Cowboy Action Shooting™ matches. This course material is designed to help clarify and interpret the SASS **Shooter's Handbook**.

This course requires the student to have a thorough working knowledge of the **most current version of the** SASS Shooter's Handbook and Range Operations Basic Safety Course and is not intended to be a teaching course of rules and regulations for conducting a match.

The SASS Range Officer Training Course is a four-hour course designed to train SASS Range Officers.

Utilizing a classroom environment and written test followed by practical field training in a controlled environment, the student will be trained in the required areas of safety and shepherding a shooter safely through a shooting stage. The course will expand on the premise of the Range Operations Basic Safety Course.

Upon completion of this course, a SASS Certified Range Officer will be knowledgeable of all aspects necessary to safely assist a shooter through a course of fire, provide necessary guidance and injury assistance in the event of an accident, and be able to enforce the rules and regulations in accordance with the SASS Shooter's Handbook.

Before the Match

Prior to each and every match, a briefing shall be conducted by the club's match director, range master, or designated club official with all Range Officers and posse marshals. The briefing shall encompass the following areas:

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PLAN

A plan to assist any injured shooter or spectator must be in place in the event of an emergency. Each Range Officer shall be informed of the event's emergency procedures. These procedures shall also be posted or published to facilitate a timely response. These plans shall include how to obtain emergency medical assistance, the location of first aid equipment, and the name of the assigned Medical Information Officer. All Range Officers shall have the telephone number and know the physical location of the nearest trauma center. In some areas, 911 is not necessarily the most appropriate number to call.

SAFETY EVACUATION PLAN

A well thought out plan of evacuation shall be in place in the event of an emergency. Timely evacuation of an injured shooter or spectator is paramount. The Medical Information Officer for the event shall be responsible for maintaining and implementing a safety evacuation plan.

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NON-SHOOTER SAFETY

All Range Officers shall be informed of the plan of action for non-shooting participants' control and safety. These aspects shall include a line of demarcation for non-shooters, areas of required eye and ear protection, and the availability of eye and ear protection on the range (either free or for a very nominal fee).

APPEALS PROCEDURE

Each Range Officer shall be briefed regarding the appeals procedure. In the event a call is challenged at the line, the Range Officer should know the chain of command for directing the shooter to the next higher authority to settle the dispute. It is just as important to observe an appropriate chain of command for a match as in any other organization. Remember, attitudes affect perception, and poor attitudes and shooting sports don't mix well.

RANGE SAFETY RULES

Each Range Officer shall be informed of all local range safety policies that may differ from the rules printed in the SASS Shooters Handbook and the associated Range Operations/Range Officer course materials that may offer interpretations, examples and clarifications to the rules and regulations. Otherwise, each Range Officer shall be responsible for understanding, implementing and enforcing all safety procedures, rules and guidelines contained within the most current version of the SASS Shooter's Handbook and the associated Range Operations/Range Officer course materials.

Any question(s) pertaining to local or SASS rules shall be clarified at this point.

STAGE INSPECTION

Range Officers shall be briefed regarding the operation of each course of fire. Each stage description shall be read and explained for clarity. All questions concerning the operation of each stage shall be addressed.

All stages shall be visually inspected for safety. Potential problem areas should be discussed and any safety issues resolved at this time. Also, any “**watch out areas**” should be pointed out so shooters can avoid safety problems. Any changes necessary to make the stages safer shall be completed at this time—prior to any of the participants shooting the stage.

Stage design plays a major part in the safety of a match. Poor stage design can lead to shooter confusion and safety problems, and unsafe stage design can lead to injuries. SASS Range Officers must understand stage design so safety issues are avoided prior to the match beginning.

Stage Safety Hazards

UNSAFE STAGE DESIGN ELEMENTS

The shooter with firearm in hand shall never be allowed to move with a live round under a cocked hammer. Once a revolver is cocked, the round under the hammer must be expended in order for it to be returned to a safe condition. Once a rifle is cocked, either the round under the hammer must be expended or the action opened in order for the rifle to be returned to a safe condition. Shotgun shells may be removed without penalty to return the firearm to a safe condition. Movement is defined the same as “traveling” in basketball. Once the firearm is cocked, one foot must remain in place on the ground until the firearm is made safe. 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). If restaging the rifle, the action must be closed and hammer down either on an empty chamber or expended case. Shotguns may be restaged only if open and empty. Malfunctioning guns still containing rounds will not warrant penalties so long as the malfunction is declared and the gun made safe (handed to the Range Officer or placed on a prop with the muzzle in safe direction). At this point, the firearm is still loaded, everyone knows it, and the firearm can be handled in an appropriate manner. If a competitor has a firearm malfunction that cannot be cleared on the line, the firearm may not be removed from the firing line/unloading area until the firearm has been cleared. A Match Disqualification will be awarded to the shooter if the shooter leaves the firing line/unloading area with the firearm unless under the direct supervision of a Match Official.

Moving parallel to the firing line can create safety pitfalls for shooters. It is very easy for a shooter to break the 170° safety rule moving parallel to the firing line or possibly trip over a gun or prop. Range Officers should pay special attention to stages with parallel movement that may create potential hazards. It is recommended stages flow from an up range to down range direction.

Shooters shall never be allowed to stand directly over a vertically staged gun.

Safety concerns can arise from requiring the shooter to engage from a prone or other unaccustomed shooting position. Be prepared for possible hazards when encountering these situations.

POOR STAGE DESIGN ELEMENTS

Safety concerns can arise from moving up/down or over/under props, stairs, or obstacles. All folks are not able to negotiate props in the same manner. It is a good idea to watch the shooter’s hands and movement and be prepared to help with corrections or assistance if necessary.

Stages should never be designed that have the potential to penalize a shooter for anything that is a perfectly safe situation. Examples such as moving with an empty or un-cocked firearm, drawing or holstering on the move, single versus double loading a

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shotgun, and loading a rifle round into the magazine versus the chamber are just a few that have been identified as unnecessary penalty traps.

Target order can create controversy on a stage. Double tapping a shotgun target allows for the opportunity to fire both barrels of a shotgun simultaneously and therefore should be avoided.

Targets that are activated by another target or prop (especially aerial shotgun targets) can be the source of varied interpretations and therefore require special instructions within the stage description to avoid problems.

Target placement should always allow a shooter the opportunity for a clean miss to be scored without argument. Overlapping targets of the same type should be avoided if at all possible and should not cause a Procedural “trap” by making it difficult to determine the shooter’s intent when engaging the targets.

PROPS

Props come in all shapes, sizes, and design. Not all are conceived with safety in mind. It is important to ensure guns are appropriately staged, especially when movement is required.

Note where brass is likely to fall. Be sure appointed assistance is in place to clear brass or shells that might impede the movement of a shooter.

TARGETS

Be cautious of angles at which targets are placed due to the potential for ricochet or splatter.

Pay careful attention to targets that move to unsafe angles during shooting. A dangerous target (dimpled or bent) should be replaced.

BOTTOM LINE

Remember, there are points of bad stage design and setup that cause the shooter or non-shooter to be at risk.

If a stage is found to have severe and hazardous safety flaws, the Range Officer shall politely confront the Match Director with the potential for problems. If no safe and timely remedy is implemented, the Range Officer must quietly dismiss himself from the event. Voting with one’s feet is the ultimate way of communicating with an unresponsive organization.

Shooter Evaluation

As each shooter approaches the firing line, the Range Officer or Expediter (XP) Officer shall conduct a visual inspection. This inspection shall include the following:

IMPAIRMENTS

Does the shooter appear to be physically and mentally capable of safely navigating the requirements of the stage?

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Will the shooter need any special assistance to safely navigate the requirements of the stage?

FIREARMS

Without physical inspection, do all firearms appear to be SASS legal? Are the firearms correct for the category in which the shooter is participating?

LEATHER

Does the shooter's leather (gun belt, holster, pouch, bandoleer, shotgun belt) conform to SASS rules? Remember, ammo on belts must be worn just above the pistol belt and at or below the belly button.

CLOTHING

Does the shooter's clothing conform to SASS rules and the rules of the category in which the shooter is participating?

AMMUNITION

Does the shooter have all the necessary ammunition on their person or in the correct staged positions to complete the course of fire?

EYE AND EAR PROTECTION

Does the shooter have the necessary eye and ear protection?

In the event the shooter is found to have illegal equipment or to be unprepared to begin the course of fire, the Range Officer shall direct them to the loading or unloading table where the necessary corrections can be made prior to returning to the firing line.

SHOOTING CATEGORY

In which category is the shooter competing?

This information should aid in determining the best **location** for the spotters and RO to **position** themselves in order to assist the shooter, as well as what to expect of the shooter and their equipment upon engaging a stage.

Prior to shooting the stage, Gunfighters should declare to the RO their intended option for shooting their revolvers. There is no penalty if the Gunfighter changes his or her option after declaring their intent. See Gunfighter shooting options in this material.

Some categories require specific clothing and firearms. The RO needs to be aware of these restrictions.

Range Officer Duties

THE COURSE OF FIRE

Once the Range Officer has completed the evaluation of the shooter, he or she shall prepare to supervise the shooter and stage as follows:

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Check to see if the shooter has staged their guns and ammo as required. Failure to stage guns or ammunition at the designated position(s) or location(s) is the fault of the competitor and scored as a procedural unless the competitor is able to correct the situation, unassisted, while in the process of completing the stage under the clock. It is the duty of the RO to assist the shooter safely through the course of fire.

Make sure the correct number of spotters are in position. It is a good idea to have bandanas or batons for the spotters to hold. This helps identify the spotters and keeps them on the line until they hand off the baton or bandana to the next spotter.

Determine the readiness state of the shooter by asking “Is the shooter ready?” The Range Officer shall answer any last minute questions or clear any confusion the shooter has at this point without extreme elaboration. It is inappropriate for the Range Officer to re-explain the stage for each and every shooter. The Loading Officer is available for that duty, if needed.

Prepare the shooter to begin by declaring “Shooter is ready; stand by” or “Indicate ready by saying your line.” The Range Officer shall give a short pause and start the timer so as not to surprise the shooter.

Once the shooter has engaged the stage, the Range Officer shall watch the muzzles of the guns for correct target engagement, potential squibs, and violations of the 170° safety rule. The Range Officer shall make every effort to safely assist the shooter through the course of fire by coaching and giving appropriate range commands, if necessary. The Range Officer shall always stay close enough to the shooter to control him, if necessary.

After the shooter has completed the course of fire, the Range Officer shall declare the stage raw time to the shooter and then instruct him or her to holster all revolvers, retrieve all long guns, and move to the unloading area with the muzzles in a safe direction. The raw time can then be announced to the Scorekeeper, in a loud, clear voice.

If the shooting bays are in close proximity to one another it is important for the Range Officer to cover the acoustic microphone immediately after the shooter is finished, preventing recording adjacent bay shots.

The Range Officer shall determine any misses by polling the assigned spotters and communicate the misses and any procedural or safety penalties to the person recording the score, as well as the shooter.

INCIDENTS

As each shooter engages a course of fire, the Range Officer shall be prepared for any or all of the following incidents to occur and be expeditious in his or her necessary corrective action. The Range Officer shall never be tentative with a safety call. If a command given by the Range Officer is determined to be errant (e.g., if a squib call is determined to actually be clear), the shooter will automatically receive a re-shoot.

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SQUIBS

In the event a Range Officer suspects a squib load has been encountered, an immediate command shall be given to the shooter to make the gun safe and continue on with the next procedure. The Range Officer shall assist the shooter in making the gun safe by allowing them to “hand off” the gun safely, if necessary. Multiple squibs by a shooter will be cause for the RO to request the shooter change ammo.

TARGET FAILURE

In the event a target fails, the Range Officer shall instruct the shooter to “shoot where it was.” This call will never result in a penalty of any kind to the shooter. This process has been found to be far less confusing, and thereby safer, to the shooter than requiring an alternate target to be engaged, although it is perfectly acceptable for the shooter to engage an alternate target and be scored for hits and misses in the normal manner. Do not allow the shooter to engage a downed target.

PROP FAILURE

In the event of a prop failure, the Range Officer shall be prepared to make a determination of whether or not the shooter shall continue the course of fire or cease fire immediately. In any event, the shooter shall not be penalized as the result of a prop failure.

BREAKING THE 170° SAFETY RULE

A Range Officer shall make an immediate “Cease-Fire” call if any gun breaks the 170° safety rule. This call will result in a Stage or Match Disqualification to the shooter. The Range Officer shall make a good faith effort to prevent the shooter from breaking the safety rule by verbal command or physical contact, if necessary.

It is also necessary to note **that during the course of fire**, the shooter must be given the ability to draw and holster revolvers from “straight hang” holsters and the ability to retrieve and return vertically staged double-barreled shotguns without penalty.

TRIPPING OR FALLING

In the event a shooter accidentally trips or falls during a course of fire, the Range Officer shall make an assessment of the shooter’s condition and give a “Cease-Fire” command only if a safety infraction has occurred. Otherwise, the shooter will be allowed to regroup and continue with the course of fire.

FRONTIERSMAN CATEGORY

The Range Officer shall be prepared for the unique problems associated with cap and ball revolvers. These items include potential “hang-fires,” “cap only” ignition, and a complete failure to fire. In a “cap only” ignition and failure to fire, the Frontiersman should be allowed to continue firing the remaining chambers. The Range Officer shall not confuse these occurrences as potential squib loads. Misfires on the firing line by Frontiersman will require the Range Officer to accommodate clearing the gun after

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completing the stage. The Range Officer shall always require these clearances be accomplished at the firing line. It is acceptable to recap and discharge the still loaded chamber(s) or simply uncap the charged chambers.

It is not permissible to seat the caps on a revolver's nipple using the gun's hammer. Percussion revolvers may only be capped at the loading area or on the firing line. 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.

BLACKPOWDER CATEGORIES

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

The blackpowder standard was developed using the following loading data:

- Standard .38 Special case
- 1cc Goex Cowboy Powder
- Federal Standard primer
- 145-grain bullet lubed with SPG
- Powder lightly compressed with a medium roll crimp.

Any challenges to the blackpowder standard will be administered using the process listed below in the Appeals, Challenges and Protest section. Also, the Range Master may, at their discretion, require the testing of any ammunition that is suspected of not meeting SASS ammunition requirements at any time during the match. If a competitor's blackpowder ammunition is checked, they will be asked for five rounds from each suspect firearm, preferably already loaded at the loading table. These loads will be compared to the amount of smoke produced by this published standard regardless of the specific loading techniques or components used. Failure to comply will result in a penalty for not adhering to category guidelines. The first offence is a procedure, the second offence in the same match is a stage disqualification, and the third offence in the same match is a match disqualification.

Through testing it has been determined 1cc of blackpowder, in either a .32, .38, .44, or .45 case, all produce approximately the same amount of smoke. Some types of blackpowder, or blackpowder substitutes, may produce this amount of smoke with less volume of powder. For example, a competitor may find 9 grains of one product produces the same amount of smoke as 15 grains of another. Before deciding on any reduced blackpowder or blackpowder substitutes load, a competitor should test them to ensure they meet the base line standards. Always consult with the manufacturer of the powders as to their recommendations prior to any loading.

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GUNFIGHTER CATEGORY

Since the Gunfighter uses both revolvers, shooting right- and left-handed, the best position for the Range Officer is directly behind the shooter. Two standard holsters are required, one on each side. **Cross draw, shoulder, or butt forward holsters are not allowed within these two categories.**

At no time is it acceptable for either revolver to be held in an unsafe position (e.g., one revolver behind the other). The Gunfighter and B-Western Categories are the only categories that allow two loaded revolvers out of leather at the same time.

Definitions:

“Gunfighter Style” is defined as having a loaded revolver in each hand at the same time. There is no set pattern as to how the revolvers are to be fired, but alternating revolvers is clearly the most efficient.

“Double Duelist Style” is defined as shooting a revolver cocked and fired one-handed and unsupported, with each hand—that is, left gun with the left hand and right gun with the right hand. This shooting style may be employed in the Gunfighter Category or any category that allows the “Duelist Style.”

When a stage calls for ten revolver rounds in a single sequence, or the use of only one revolver, the Gunfighter has the option of engaging the targets “Gunfighter Style” or “Double Duelist Style.” The Gunfighter shall shoot the targets in exactly the same sequence as prescribed in the stage scenario (e.g., if the stage calls for sweeping a bank of targets left to right and then right to left, the Gunfighter shall sweep the bank of targets left to right either with both guns or a single gun and then sweep the bank from right to left with both guns or a single gun).

When shooting with two guns, 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 target sequence. **Once cocked**, all rounds are to be expended prior to holstering unless the revolvers were drawn at the wrong time or a revolver/ammunition malfunction has occurred. Stage design may allow a competitor shooting “Gunfighter Style” to stage or restage revolvers between firearm sequences. Inadvertently leaving unfired rounds in a revolver is a miss unless the round is under the hammer, in which case it is a Stage Disqualification.

If the stage scenario requires the use of another firearm between the revolver sequences or the shooter’s hands are otherwise constrained (e.g., rolling the dice between revolver sequences), the revolvers **must be** shot **in the** “Double Duelist” **style** unless there is provision to safely “stage” the revolvers between the two revolver sequences. For example, if the sequence is 5 revolver rounds, 10 rifle, and then 5 revolver rounds and a convenient table or bar is provided, both revolvers may be used to engage the first five revolver targets, the revolvers staged on the bar or table, hammers down on expended rounds, and then later retrieved after shooting the rifle to complete the sequence for the last five revolver targets.

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CLASSIC COWBOY/COWGIRL CATEGORY

The Classic Cowboy/Cowgirl category has unique clothing and firearms requirements. The RO should be familiar with the following requirements:

- **Revolvers:** Any SASS legal Traditional Category revolvers shot Duelist style.
- **Calibers:** **.40 caliber rimmed cartridges or larger – revolvers and rifle.** Examples include, but are not limited to, .38-40, .44 Special, .44 Russian, .44 Mag., .44-40, .45 Schofield, .45 Colt) or .36 caliber cap and ball or larger.
- **Ammo:** SASS legal ammo—smokeless or blackpowder.
- **Rifles:** Any 1873 or earlier manufacture SASS legal rifle or a replica thereof (e.g., 1866 Winchester, 1860 Henry, 1873 Winchester). **Marlin, 1892 and 1894 Winchesters, and Colt Lightning designs are not allowed.**
- **Shotguns:** SASS–legal external–hammer double barrel or lever actions. External–hammer double barrel shotguns must have manually functioning hammers. Faux hammers and hammers that are cocked internally are illegal.
- **Costuming:** Must choose at least five of the requirements listed below. All clothing items must be worn during all shooting events and awards ceremonies.

Chaps, spurs, cuffs, tie or scarf worn loosely around the neck or with scarf slide, vest, pocket watch with full-length chain, jacket, sleeve garters, knife (must be visible), botas, leggings, braces; no straw **or palm** hats allowed. These items must be worn appropriately.

In addition to the above items, ladies may choose from the items listed below in order to compete within this category:

Period watch, split riding skirt, bustle, hoops, corset, Victorian style hat (straw allowed), period jewelry, period hair ornaments (e.g., feathers), snood, reticule (period handbag), period lace-up shoes, camisole, bloomers, fishnet stockings, feather boa, cape.

No Buscadero or drop holster rigs allowed. The holster must carry the revolver so at least part of the grip extends above the top of the belt on which it hangs. This applies to strong side, as well as cross-draw holsters.

Boots are required and must be of traditional design with leather or smooth rubber non-grip enhancing soles. Moccasins are not allowed.

Hats must be worn for the entire match.

Failure to comply will result in a penalty for not adhering to category guidelines. The first offence is a procedure, the second offence in the same match is a stage disqualification, and the third offence in the same match is a match disqualification.

”B” WESTERN CATEGORY

The “B” Western Category has unique clothing, firearms, and shooting requirements. The RO should be familiar with the following requirements:

- **Revolvers:** All SASS–legal revolvers are allowed.

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- **Rifles:** Any SASS–legal rifle of 1884 or later design or a replica thereof (e.g., Winchester 1892, 1894, Lightning Rifle, or Marlin)
- **Shotguns:** All SASS–legal shotguns
- **Ammunition:** All SASS–legal ammunition is allowed
- **Leather:** Buscadero holster rigs or drop holster rigs. (All of the 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). All holsters must be of the “double strong side” type. No cross-draw, shoulder rigs, or butt forward configurations allowed.
- **Shooting style:** Any SASS–legal shooting style may be used at any time, including Gunfighter.
- **Clothing:** Shirts must be of the B–Western style with snap buttons or any of the following: “smiley pockets,” embroidery, appliqués, fringe, or different colored yokes. Shield shirts are also allowed if they have 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. Suspenders are not allowed. Felt hats only, no straw hats. Hats must be worn. **Boots are required and** must be of traditional design with fancy stitching or multi-color fancy design with smooth, non-grip enhancing soles. Lace-up boots and moccasins are not allowed. Western spurs with rowels are required for men. Ladies may wear skirts or split riding skirts. You must choose at least one or more of the following optional items: gloves or gauntlets, scarves with slides or tied around the neck, coat, vest, chaps, or cuffs.

All costumes are expected to be fancy and flashy. The B–Western costuming must be worn during the entire match and awards ceremony with exception of evening formal occasions.

Also, 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 above. John Wayne, spaghetti western, and townspeople characters are not acceptable.

Failure to comply will result in a penalty for not adhering to category guidelines. The first offence is a procedure, the second offence in the same match is a stage disqualification, and the third offence in the same match is a match disqualification.

APPEALS, CHALLENGES, AND PROTESTS

As outlined in detail within the SASS Range Operations **Basic Safety Course** materials, each course of fire has specific duties filled by members of each shooting group (posse) in order to facilitate a match. These members are referred to as the assigned Posse or Match Officials. While every participant is a safety officer, the assigned Posse and Match Officials are the **ONLY** persons who may judge a shooter, whether on or away from the firing line. These judging responsibilities range from watching for misses and hits, correct target order engagement, appropriate completion of stage instructions, safety violations, legal or illegal equipment, appropriate ammunition,

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appropriate dress, and any category specific requirements, such as to adequately produced smoke by the blackpowder category participants. The shooter is the ONLY person who may question a call made by any of the Posse Officials on the line. A shooter should always feel welcome to politely question any call made by the assigned Posse Officials. If a shooter feels unfairly judged by the assigned Posse Officials on any stage, it is important to follow this recommended process and observe an appropriate chain of command. Remember, attitudes affect perception, and poor attitudes and shooting sports don't mix well.

If there is a question, the shooter should politely approach the assigned Chief Range Officer (the timer operator) upon completion of the stage after all firearms have been made safe. These discussions must not cause backups for an entire shooting group, so they are held away from the firing line. The Chief Range Officer shall politely discuss any discrepancies or questions with regard to safety, penalties, or rules with the shooter. In an effort to resolve any discrepancies, The Chief Range Officer should ONLY include other assigned Posse Officials in these discussions. Other members of the posse or spectators are NOT to be included in any discussions. The use of recorded audio, video, or still photography cannot be used to make or challenge the call of Posse or Match Officials. Remember, the benefit of the doubt ALWAYS goes to the shooter. At this point, the Chief Range Officer must remain completely objective, review the evidence presented, research the rules, if necessary, and ultimately make the decision. So, if there is not absolutely conclusive evidence of a missed target, shooter error, safety or rule violation, the Range Officer must make every effort to assist the shooter by relating any necessary scoring changes to the score keeper immediately upon resolution. In the event a Chief Range Officer's call is challenged by either the shooter or one of the other assigned Posse Officials, the Chief Range Officer should know the chain of command to the next level of authority to settle any dispute.

Any challenge must be taken directly to the Range Master for assistance in the resolution. The Range Master should politely conduct interviews with the individual challenging the decision as well as any and all of the assigned Posse Officials or individuals involved in the initial call being questioned. No video, recorded audio, still photography, or other persons should be included in these interviews. The Range Master must endeavor to research the situation, apply the evidence to the rules of the event, and ultimately make a decision on whether or not the original call will be upheld. In most cases, the Range Master will be at a distinct disadvantage in that s/he will not have been a witness to the initial call and therefore must look at the evidence presented very closely, often by visiting the stage where the call occurred. Challenges, such as questions of illegal ammunition, illegal firearms and/or modifications, illegal costuming, inadequate blackpowder smoke, calls made away from the firing line, and such will generally require some sort of inspection or documentation process and should be handled with generous respect for the shooter being questioned. The assigned Posse Officials making the call should take all of these type challenges directly to the Range Master for assistance in resolution. Some of these type situations may require additional information from the shooter being challenged. The Range Master should gather any ammunition required for testing from the shooter being questioned while at the loading table position after

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completion of the loading process for all of their firearms. Ammunition velocities in question should be measured easily via a chronograph. Adequate amounts of black-powder smoke should be measured by firing the shooter's rounds along with match supplied "standard" rounds in alternating sequences under the same conditions in order to make a fair comparison. Costuming or equipment in question should be carefully referenced to the SASS Handbook and RO materials. Objectivity is the key element here. The Range Master must attempt to see the situation from all aspects presented while applying the rules fairly. From here, if the initial call is upheld by the Range Master, the individual challenging the call has one other option available.

ONLY the individual who was the subject of the original call may file an official protest. A fee is usually attached to any official protests and must be collected at the time the protest is filed. It is also a good idea to have some sort of official protest form available that can list the identification of the shooter, information specific to the call being questioned, the identification of the Posse and Match Officials previously involved in the call, the date, time, and stage where the call was made. This official protest must be made ONLY to the Match Director. Once the Match Director has received the completed paperwork and any associated fees, s/he will appoint a jury to make the FINAL decision. This jury should be made up of at least three experienced people knowledgeable of the rules and preferably not aware of any details of the situation. At state level matches and higher, three Territorial Governors should be used as the jury. The Match Director will serve only in an administrative role to assure the protest is handled fairly and will be responsible for conveying any changes of the shooter's score to the appropriate scoring personnel. The jury must objectively research the situation with all means available to them, apply the evidence to the rules of the event, and make the FINAL decision on whether or not the original call will be upheld. If the original call is overturned, any protest fees collected from the shooter should be refunded.

POWER FACTOR APPEALS AND TESTING

Any challenges to power factors and/or velocities will be administered using the process listed above in the Appeals, Challenges, and Protest section. Also, the Range Master may, at his discretion, require the testing of any ammunition suspected of not meeting SASS ammunition requirements at any time during the match. If a competitor's **smokeless ammunition** is checked, they will be asked for five rounds from each suspect firearm, preferably already loaded at the loading table. Within each group of 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 from which the rounds were originally removed. The muzzle of the firearm **shall** be raised to 80 degrees and then lowered each time prior to firing through the chronograph. If the average of the four fired rounds meets or exceeds the calculated 60 power factor AND the minimum velocity requirement of 400 fps, the competitor's loads will be considered legal. If the average of the rounds fired through the chronograph measures less than the calculated 60 power factor OR the minimum required velocity of 400 fps, the competitor will be given a 30 second Spirit of the Game penalty for the last stage completed. Any subsequent stage(s) shot with the same ammunition will result in the same penalty per stage. As listed in the

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SASS RO Materials, two Spirit of the Game (SOG) penalties will result in a Match Disqualification.

- All smokeless ammunition used in SASS main match firearms MUST meet or exceed the power factor standard of 60. Penalty = SOG
- All smokeless ammunition used in SASS main match firearms MUST meet or exceed the minimum velocity requirement of 400 fps. Penalty = SOG
- All ammunition used in SASS main match revolvers must not exceed 1000 fps. Penalty = MDQ
- All ammunition used in SASS main match rifles must not exceed 1400 fps. Penalty = MDQ
- The velocity testing will be conducted using the competitor's firearm from which the rounds were removed.
- Competitors may not choose the firearm in which the ammunition will be tested.
- ALL competitor main match firearms may be subject to testing regardless of possible caliber differences.