SASS Wild Bunch
Match Directors Handbook

Compiled and Edited
By The Wild Bunch Action Shooting RO Committee
Version 9.0
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MATCH DIRECTOR’S GUIDE

There are a large number of factors that must be taken into consideration when conducting a Wild Bunch match. Many of these are covered in the SASS Match Director’s Guides. This guide should be used as a supplement to those publications as it covers things specific to Wild Bunch matches.

Philosophy of Wild Bunch Matches

Wild Bunch matches are typified by the use of large caliber firearms, high power factor ammunition, and high round count for each stage. Wild Bunch stages require different target placement, engagement sequences, and prop locations than normal Cowboy Action Shooting™ stages.

One of the best ways to grow your club’s attendance for Wild Bunch matches is to provide a training session to interested shooters. The first time a Wild Bunch match participant fires a 1911 pistol should not be on the first stage of the match. Training, not only for the pistol, but for the pump shotgun should likewise be considered.

Wild Bunch competitors should NOT be intermixed with Cowboy Action Shooting™ competitors during a match. Wild Bunch is not intended to be a Cowboy Action Shooting™ category. It is a totally separate match.

Part of the appeal of Wild Bunch is the high-power factor ammunition coupled with the higher round count per stage, especially with the pistol. The shotgun round count should typically be five or six rounds.

Because Wild Bunch matches use the 1911 pistol instead of revolvers, it is vitally important each posse have at least one or more members who are intimately familiar with the pistol’s operation. Malfunctions WILL occur. Not only will this familiarity allow the shooter to be coached safely through the course of fire, but if the shooter is unable to clear the pistol during the course of fire, someone must clear the pistol before it leaves the stage.

A greater emphasis is placed on shooting accuracy in Wild Bunch matches. Therefore, shotgun targets are designated as non-comstock (no makeups).

The high-power factor is an integral portion of Wild Bunch matches and checking pistol and rifle ammunition to ensure compliance should be expected by participants.
Targets and Engagement Recommendations

Because Wild Bunch matches are shot with large caliber firearms with much higher power factor ammunition, the use of reactive pistol and rifle (knockdown) targets is easily accommodated.

Since the rifle must also use higher power factor ammunition, one may end a stage with the rifle without concern the sound of the final shot won’t be picked up by the timer.

The use of more difficult targets, such as plate racks, dueling trees, and hostage targets, is both common and encouraged. The higher power factor ammunition easily makes these targets react, and the higher skill level required is appreciated by many Wild Bunch competitors.

It is important to remember; Wild Bunch is an Action Shooting sport that promotes speed, action, and accuracy. It is not a bullseye competition.

Wild Bunch Match Directors should ensure targets and sequences are appropriate for all skill levels. Wild Bunch Action Shooting stages are not bullseye shooting, but smaller and more distant targets than encountered in Cowboy Action Shooting™ are common and expected.

Since the shotgun used is the 1897 Winchester or Model ’12 and can be loaded at the loading table with the required number of shells for the shooting sequence, split shotgun sequences are discouraged. Normal round count for the shotgun is five or six rounds.

The rifle is the least emphasized firearm in a Wild Bunch match. Typical round count for the rifle is 7 – 10 rounds. If the rifle sequence is similar to a one magazine pistol sequence, seven rounds is common.

Stage writing should center on shooting the pistol. The enjoyment and challenge of shooting the 1911 is what causes almost every Wild Bunch participant to sign up for a Wild Bunch match.

Given the added emphasis on the pistol and because of the high-power factor, quality pistol targets should never be placed closer than 10 yards and low-quality targets should be placed even further away to avoid excessive ricochet/splash-back.

Steel Target Engagement Distances:
Pistol Targets 10 – 20 yards
Rifle Targets 15 – 30 yards
Shotgun Targets 13 – 25 yards
Total round counts of 35 – 42 per stage are common. All three guns do not need to be used in every stage. At a 12-stage 2-day match, one could expect to see two stages with pistol only, two stages with pistol and rifle, two stages with pistol and shotgun, and the remaining six with all three guns. Typical round count for a pistol-only stage is 42 rounds. Due to the advantages Stage Point Scoring gives to stages with different total round counts, not all stages should have similar total round counts.

The use of multiple “dump” targets on a single stage for the sole purpose of increasing round count is generally discouraged as a common component of stage design. When used judiciously throughout a match, dump targets can provide action and fun. However, they should be considered the exception and not the rule.

Remember you MUST provide a safe staging prop at EVERY location where the 1911 may be fired. Even if the sequence is not split and the pistol isn’t required to be re-staged, a malfunction may occur, and the pistol CANNOT be re-holstered until the stage is completed, and it is checked clear by a stage official.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. If the Match Director chooses to add a category, the following guidelines must be followed:
   a. The primary category must have a minimum of 10 shooters. For instance, Traditional must have 10 shooters before a Senior Traditional Category can be added.
   b. The new category must have a minimum of five shooters.
   c. To qualify for a Senior Category, the competitor must be at least 65 years old.

   Example: There would have to be at least 10 Traditional and 5 Senior Traditional competitors before the match would qualify for a Senior Traditional Category. If there are 16 shooters, 9 Traditional and 7 Senior Traditional, the match would not qualify for a Senior Traditional Category.

2. If the Match Director chooses to have a Bolt Action Military Rifle Side Match, the rifles must comply with the following requirements: The rifle must be an original caliber bolt-action rifle issued by any country to its military forces through the end of WWII. It must be as issued with original iron battle sights and NO external modifications. Internal modifications are allowed. Faithful reproductions are allowed.
3. During the Safety Meeting, be sure to stress the trigger finger must remain outside the trigger guard while moving or reloading. Also encourage shooters to be mindful of muzzle direction while reloading the 1911.

4. Have a checklist for the Posse Marshals to use before the match begins so they can verify the pistols are legal for category and all other equipment meets the rules.

5. Even though the 1911 is stressed in Wild Bunch, it is a three-gun match, and stages without all three guns should be the exception rather than the rule.

6. The equipment for checking Power Factor should be set up and checked before the match begins. Instructions for conducting Power Factor testing are found in Appendix A.

7. **INCLUDE** in your match announcement/application verbiage similar to the following: “The Wild Bunch match to be held by (insert match or club name) will be conducted using the SASS Wild Bunch rules. Please make yourself aware of these rules. The up to date rules can be downloaded from the SASS web site.”

As a friendly reminder to shooters, make sure they are aware all Wild Bunch match pistol and rifle ammunition has a minimum power factor of 150. Power factor testing should be performed.

**SAMPLE EQUIPMENT CHECK LIST**

**Traditional Pistol**

- Visually examine the pistol to determine if sights, hammer, trigger, grips, safeties, magazine, and slide releases are correct.
- Also examine slide and frame to ensure no illegal serrations or checkering are present.
- No guide rods or bull barrels are allowed.
- No extended magazine wells.
- Check operation of thumb and grip safeties.

**Modern Pistol**

- Visually examine pistol to determine if sights, grips, and magazine release are correct.
- No magazine wells or bull barrels allowed.
- Examine guide rod, if present, to ensure it doesn’t provide recoil reduction.
• Full-length dust covers and extra weights are not allowed.
• Check operation of thumb and grip safeties.

**Pistol Magazines**

• Standard length only.
• NO base pads of any kind.
• Magazine must fit flush with bottom of frame when inserted.

**Rifle**

• Must be a SASS main match legal rifle in .40 caliber or larger.

**Shotgun**

• Winchester 1897 or clone in 12 gauge. Civilian or Military style. Winchester Model ‘12 in 12 gauge is also allowed.

**Holsters, Cartridge Belts**

• Loose ammunition (i.e., ammunition not in magazines) must be carried in a SASS main match legal manner.
• Holsters and Cartridge belts must be made of traditional materials, (e.g., canvas or leather).
• No metal or plastic “competition” type equipment.
• Holster must cover the entire length of the slide and barrel from the muzzle TO the ejection port. (ejection port need not be covered)
• Magazine pouches must be worn on the opposite side of the body from the handgun. They may hold one or two magazines. Magazine pouches must be worn vertical and conform to the shooter’s body. (i.e., not tilt out from the shooter’s body)

**APPEALS, CHALLENGES, AND PROTESTS**

As outlined in detail within the Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting 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 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, appropriate dress, and any category specific requirements. The shooter is the ONLY person who may question a call made by any of the Range Officers on the line. A shooter should always feel welcome to politely question any call made by the assigned Range Officers. If a shooter feels unfairly judged by the assigned Ranger Officers on any stage, it is required to follow this 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 Chief 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 the shooter, 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, 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 completion of the loading process for all of their firearms. Ammunition velocities in question should be measured easily via chronograph. Costuming or equipment in question should be carefully referenced to the Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting 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 Wild Bunch™ Committee members or Ambassadors, posse marshals, or RO Instructors 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.
APPENDIX A – Power Factor Testing Procedures

This document contains the best current information on chronograph testing procedures. It includes information that can be used to set up the chronograph stage at any size match. At some matches the use of all the equipment and procedures outlined may not be practical. It is the Match Director’s decision to determine how the chronograph stage will be run. The decision of the Match Director on equipment and testing/inspection procedures is final.

Setting up the Chronograph Area

The chronograph area needs to be laid out for efficiency and safety. Make sure there is a position marked for the shooter to wait until their turn. The actual table from which the firing will occur needs to be large enough to accommodate the chronograph operator and all associated equipment. Designate a location on the table for the shooter to place their firearms for testing and another area for the operator to place them after testing. Provide a chair for the operator. They will be firing many rounds and comfort is important. If possible, cover the table to protect the operator and equipment from sun and precipitation.

The Chronograph Operator

The chronograph operator should be familiar with the chronograph procedures. The operator shall load the collected ammunition and fire all the firearms through the chronograph. Shooters may NOT fire their own firearms. Try to keep the same cadence with each round and for each shooter. If one round sits in the chamber significantly longer than another the heat may affect velocity. Do NOT tip the barrel up or down between shots. Try to maintain it as level as possible. A pistol rest is helpful to maintain accuracy of shots through the chronograph.

Setting up the Chronograph

The distance from the muzzle to the first start screen of the chronograph shall be 10 feet.

Radar-style chronographs are not affected by lighting.

The chronograph in use, regardless of the brand or whether it is enclosed, is the OFFICIAL match chronograph, and the test results are final.
Ammunition Samples

Ammunition samples should be collected in a RANDOM fashion. Samples should be collected early in the match. Collect five rounds for each firearm. Some posses will reach the chronograph stage early. Ammunition from each shooter should be placed in a zip closed bag with their name and posse number label placed inside the bag to avoid loss. Ammunition from the entire posse will then be placed in a large zip closed bag with the posse number label placed inside the bag to prevent loss. All collected samples must be carefully controlled and available at the chronograph station when the posse arrives. Additional samples may be collected from any shooter at any time non-compliant ammunition is suspected by match officials.

Shooters Responsibility

The shooter shall provide the chronograph operator with their firearms in a safe condition (rifle open and empty, pistol no magazine inserted, slide locked open). Firearms are to be placed on the chronograph table at the designated position. In addition to the firearms, the shooter shall provide one empty pistol magazine to be used during testing. The shooter must then wait until testing is completed and their firearms placed in the designated testing completed area. The shooter may then retrieve his/her firearms and magazine and exit the chronograph station.

Power Factor Testing Procedure

One round will have the bullet pulled and weighted. Then, the remaining four rounds will be fired over the chronograph. The average velocity of the three fastest recorded rounds will be used to calculate power factor. A minimum of two readings on the chronograph will be necessary to determine power factor. If fewer than two velocities are recorded, new samples must be collected and the ammunition retested. Power factor shall be calculated by multiplying the bullet weight in grains by the average velocity in feet per second and dividing the result by 1000.

Increasing Efficiency

At the Match Director’s discretion, not all shooters will be chronograph tested. In this case the chronograph operator may use other than the shooter’s firearm for testing. Any ammunition that fails will be retested with the shooter’s firearm.

In some cases, it may be possible to complete the chronograph testing before the main match begins. This would allow shooters whose ammunition fails, to acquire new ammunition before the match begins and avoid disqualification.
# SASS WILD BUNCH ACTION SHOOTING

## CHRONOGRAPH RESULTS

**MATCH NAME:** __________
**LOCATION:** __________
**DATE:** __________

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<th>ALIAS &amp; SASS#</th>
<th>PBW</th>
<th>AVG V</th>
<th>PPF</th>
<th>RBW</th>
<th>AVG V</th>
<th>RPF</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
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**POSSE #** ______
**POSSE MARSHAL** X____________________

**CHRONOGRAPH OPERATOR:** X____________________

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Version 9.0, January 2019
## Cartridge Weight vs. Power Factor

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<th>Bullet Weight</th>
<th>Cartridge Weight</th>
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<td>324gn.</td>
<td>653fps.</td>
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Velocity listed is minimum required to make a 150 power factor.
APPENDIX B – Firearm Legality Testing

Pistols shall be weighed with the empty magazine provided by the shooter. They shall be examined for category compliance and any non-military style parts (magazine release, grip safety, slide release, guide rod, and the like) examined for compliance. Rifle lever travel must be not less than 4 1/8" and shall be checked by the following procedure: With the action closed measure three inches back from the back edge of the trigger at the point where it enters the frame. Mark this point on both the bottom of the buttstock and the lever opposite the buttstock mark. Open the lever to its maximum extension and measure the distance between the two marks.

If at all practical, the firearm legality testing, particularly with the pistol, should be performed before the main match begins. This will help the stages flow more smoothly and prevent the distraction of doing it during the match. It will also give shooters whose firearms fail inspection an opportunity to become compliant before the match begins.
Wild Bunch Action Shooting Pistol Check Sheet

Maximum weight of empty magazine: 3.0 oz.
Maximum weight of Traditional pistol with empty magazine: 40.0 oz.
Maximum weight of Modern pistol with empty magazine: 42.0 oz.

Match Name: ____________________________ Posse # _______ Date: _______

Weighing Officer(s) ____________________________________________

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<tr>
<th>Shooter Alias/Shooter #</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Pistol Weight</th>
<th>Total Weight</th>
<th>Pistol Legal for Category &amp; Safeties Work</th>
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APPENDIX C – Sample Stages

Following are the Wild Bunch stages from the 2018 END of TRAIL World Championship match. They are typical of high-quality stages encountered at this time.
**STAGING:** Shotgun and rifle staged on shelf in building, pistol holstered.

**STARTING POSITION:** Standing at any position, when ready, say, “I want GOLD ... not washers!!”

**PROCEDURE:** In any order, with the rifle from the shelf, engage the far three cowboys twice each and one knockdown. With the shotgun from the shelf, engage six knockdowns. With the pistol, using both outside positions, engage any three stationary pistol targets twice each and a knockdown, then repeat the instructions on the other three stationary targets. Move to the other outside position and repeat the instructions.
**STAGING:** Shotgun staged at the center position; pistol holstered.

**STARTING POSITION:** Shooter starts at any position, when ready, say, "*They're after the rifles!*"

**PROCEDURE:** At buzzer, from either outside position, with the pistol Nevada sweep the close pistol targets, then repeat on the far pistol targets. From the other outside position repeat the instructions. With the shotgun from the center position, engage the eight knockdowns. You may start and end at any position.
STAGING: Unloaded pistol staged on either outside position. Slide forward, hammer down.

STARTING POSITION: Standing at either outside position, hands in the surrender position with one magazine in hand. When ready, say, “Here come the Cabernets!”

PROCEDURE: At buzzer, engage the knockdowns once each, the stationary targets twice each and the star six times. The star can only be engaged three times with each magazine. Move to the other outside table and repeat. Move to the center position, release the lever and beginning on the swinger, alternate with the plate rack targets and swinging target for fourteen rounds.
STAGING: Shotgun and rifle are staged on the first shelf, pistol holstered.

STARTING POSITION: Shooter starts behind the first shelf facing up range, hands on hat. When ready, say, “Lookout! They blew the bridge!”

PROCEDURE: At buzzer, with the rifle, engage the buffalo targets once each, Make the rifle safe vertically. With the shotgun, engage the six knockdowns. Make the shotgun safe vertically. Move to the second shelf and with the pistol, engage the five plate rack targets with seven rounds, and repeat on the other side. If the plates fall before seven rounds are expended, put the extra rounds on the dump target. Move to position three and sweep the buffalo targets from either end, then repeat the instructions.

Any plates left standing or misses on the dump target are counted as misses.
STAGING: Shotgun and rifle staged at the center position, pistol holstered.

STARTING POSITION: Standing at any position, hand(s) on firearm. When ready, say, “We're here to make a withdrawal!”

PROCEDURE: At buzzer, with the shotgun engage the five shotgun targets. With the rifle, engage the far stationary targets twice and a knockdown. From either end position with the pistol, use the same instructions as the rifle, twice. Move to the other end position and repeat.

All firearms may be shot in any order.
STAGING: Shotgun is staged at the center position, pistol holstered.

STARTING POSITION: Shooter starts at the left or right position, hands at sides. When ready say "This part of Mexico sure looks a lot like Texas!"

PROCEDURE: At the buzzer, engage the two stationary targets and the dueling tree targets, move to the other end and repeat. Move to the center position, release the lever, and engage any two stationary targets and the moving target in a continuous Nevada sweep starting on either end. Repeat using the other stationary targets. Then engage any seven stationary targets. Then, with the shotgun, engage five knockdown targets in any order.
**STAGING:** Pistol holstered.

**STARTING POSITION:** Shooter is behind cactus with hands at high surrender. When ready, say, "Federalizes!"

**PROCEDURE:** At buzzer, move to position two. With the pistol, engage any two stationary targets twice each and three knockdowns once each. Repeat on the other side. Move to position three and repeat the instructions. Move to position four and engage all the cowboys twice each and the squares once each.
STAGING: Stage one long gun on either desk, the other long gun in hand(s), pistol holstered.

STARTING POSITION: Shooter starts at any position. When ready, say, “Whisky for my men!”

PROCEDURE: At buzzer:

Rifle procedure: twice each on the far outside cowboys, once on the center cowboy and two knockdowns.

Shotgun procedure: Three knockdowns from each end.

Pistol procedure: Same as the rifle procedure, twice on the left targets and twice on the right set of targets.

All targets may be engaged in any order.
STAGING: Stage rifle and shotgun on either bar, pistol holstered.

STARTING POSITION: Shooter starts standing in the doorway with thumbs in belt. When ready, say “This ain’t a friendly town!”

PROCEDURE: At buzzer, move to the bar.

Rifle procedure: Engage all stationary targets.

Shotgun procedure: Engage four knockdowns.

Pistol procedure: Engage all stationary targets at least three times each.

Firearms may be shot in any order.
STAGING: Shotgun and rifle staged at any position, pistol holstered.

STARTING POSITION: Standing at any position, hands on hat. When ready, say, “That’s the Lordsburg Express!”

PROCEDURE: At buzzer:

Shotgun procedure: engage six knockdowns.

Rifle procedure: Engage the far hostage targets twice each on the “body,” once on the white “head,” and a knockdown.

Pistol procedure: Repeat the rifle instructions on all four sets of pistol targets.

Targets may be engaged in any order. All five positions must be used.
STAGING: Rifle is staged on the bar, pistol holstered.

STARTING POSITION: Shooter starts behind bar with thumbs in belt. When ready, say, "Where'd all those guns come from?"

PROCEDURE: At the buzzer, with the pistol sweep the close targets starting with two knockdowns, then repeat using the other two knockdowns. Then engage either set of the far targets in a double tap Nevada sweep. Then repeat on the other set of targets using the rifle for the last seven rounds.
STAGING: Stage shotgun on either window, pistol holstered, rifle in hand(s).

STARTING POSITION: Shooter starts in the doorway with rifle in hand(s). When ready, say, “Gimme your best Tequila!”

PROCEDURE: At buzzer, with the rifle engage all the stationary chilies once each, make the rifle safe in the corner. With the shotgun, engage six knockdowns and the launcher and the bird in any order. Anywhere between the doorway and the hay bale, engage the remaining knockdowns once each, then the large chili three times. Then sweep the chili targets starting on either end, then repeat starting on the other end.