

# COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™

## Range Officer Training Course (Level II)



Compiled and Edited for SASS  
By  
The Range Operations Committee

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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.

# **COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™**

## **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. Early registration is encouraged whenever possible.

SASS Range Officer Instructors should inquire about the 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. Students may also have the opportunity to act as the Chief Range Officer/Timer Operator, and handle a mock shooter at the firing line. Examples of damaged targets, props, firearms with external modifications, appropriate and inappropriate clothing, leather, and other items should be provided to make the appropriate points.

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**COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™**  
**SASS Range Officer Training Course**  
**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 designed to train SASS Range Officers, with particular emphasis given to the duties of the Chief Range Officer, otherwise known as, the Timer Operator. References in course material to "Range Officer" are generally meant to refer to those persons in official match positions with official duties (Posse Marshals/Leaders, Stage/Berm Marshals). Upon completion of this course you will be better equipped to hold such a position at a SASS match. However, as was mentioned in previous course material, we are all "safety officers," responsible for our own basic safety and the safety of those immediately around us. Completing this course gives the shooter, whether in an official match capacity or not, a better working knowledge of the rules and of current safety practices.

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 procedures for "safely assisting" a shooter through the course of fire. 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 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. Posse Marshals/Leaders and other Range Officers with officiating duties must attend. The briefing should include the following topics:

***MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PLAN***

A plan to assist any injured shooter or spectator must be in place in the event of an emergency. All Range Officers should know the procedure for contacting medical services. 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

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location of the medical facility. In some areas, 911 is not necessarily the most appropriate number to call.

When SASS events are held in remote areas, or during events with large numbers of shooters and/or spectators, it is advisable to have trained emergency responders on site, whenever possible. As a further precaution, it is also recommended that SASS clubs and matches consider gaining access to a portable Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and other emergency medical supplies, if professional medical services are unavailable.

### ***SAFETY EVACUATION PLAN***

A well thought out plan of evacuation shall be in place in the event of an emergency requiring the timely evacuation of an injured shooter or spectator. The match director or designated club officer (medical information officer) shall be responsible for maintaining and implementing the safety evacuation plan.

### ***SPECTATOR AND 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 Chief 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 should 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. Range Officers are 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 / WALK-THROUGH***

Posse Marshals/Leaders and Berm/Stage Marshals should be briefed on the operation of each course of fire, and on the operation of stage/prop equipment. Each stage description should be read and explained for clarity and consistency.

All stages shall be visually inspected for safety. Any noted potential problem areas shall 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

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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 start of the match. Range Officers are always encouraged to voice any safety concerns they might have.

### *UNSAFE STAGE DESIGN ELEMENTS*

SASS Range Officers must always be on the lookout for unsafe stage designs. Elements that make a stage unsafe to shoot include, but are not limited to:

Moving up range (back toward the posse members) to an anticipated or next shooting position, especially while carrying loaded firearms

Negotiating complicated or arduous stage fronts and doorway thresholds that create trip hazards, resulting in possible loss of muzzle control

Engaging targets downrange while firearms are staged for use in the line of fire between the target and the shooter

Moving parallel to the line can also present safety issues when prop/stage front design creates trip hazards along the way. Poorly placed gun blocks or fences that are intended for staging a long gun after use will increase the chances of knocking the firearm over while moving along the stage.

Moving up range with or without long guns is never a good idea, with the prime concern being muzzle control while moving up range. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to prevent an unsafe muzzle direction while carrying a long gun and moving toward the posse! Moving up range to a position from which a shooter must then turn down range and draw their revolvers could result in a serious safety situation if the shooter were to draw prematurely, before they made the turn down range (this can be prevented by occupying BOTH of the shooters hands with a prop). It is simply better not to put a shooter in this precarious position.

Shooters should never be allowed to stand directly over a vertically staged firearm. Start positions and shooting positions should allow firearms to be staged and re-staged after use so as not to induce a shooter to be in the path of their own muzzle!

Safety concerns can also arise from requiring the shooter to engage the stage from prone or other unaccustomed shootings positions, or from awkward stances.

Range Officers should always be vigilant for any objects or hazards along the shooter's path of movement, such as gun blocks, doorway thresholds and stage front bracing. Pathways used by shooters during the stage should always be kept clear and free of any trip or entanglement hazard, including hulls and brass. These issues should always be brought to the attention of match officials.

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### ***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 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 AND STAGE FRONTS***

Props come in all shapes, sizes, and design. Not all are conceived with safety in mind. Large stage or building fronts should be adequately secured to the ground, so as to prevent adverse effects from the wind and other harsh elements. Places where shooters can sit or lean on props must be secure and sturdy. Staging positions involving gun blocks, horizontal platforms, gun racks and other such equipment must be of adequate size and construction to support the weight and continued abuse by shooters staging and restaging their firearms. Pathways between stage front and props, and shooter movement paths, must give the shooter and Chief Range Officer/Timer Operator enough space to pass without the risk of entanglement.

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. A solid landscaping rake is always a good tool to have handy!

### ***TARGETS***

Be cautious of angles at which targets are placed due to the potential for ricochet or splatter. When using bays with multiple stages (no berms between stages) it is also important to ensure that all target faces are parallel with the line. Target faces aligned squarely to the firing position, if on the extreme edges of the stage, can cause excessive splatter on the adjacent stages and loading and unloading benches due to excessive angles.

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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 Chief Range Officer shall politely confront the Range Master or Match Director with the potential for problems. If no safe and timely remedy is implemented, Range Officers should consider quietly dismissing themselves from the event. Voting with one's feet is the ultimate way of communicating with an unresponsive organization.

### **Duties of the Chief Range Officer (CRO) / Timer Operator (TO)**

The Timer Operator is the Chief Range Officer on the stage at the time. The person who holds the timer is responsible for the safe conduct of the stage, and for safely assisting the shooter through the course of fire. A positive attitude, a thorough knowledge of the safety rules and a helpful demeanor is essential for success in this role.

When the stage is clear, targets have been reset, spotters are in position, and it is safe to do so, the CRO or Expeditor will call the next shooter to the line. Use of phrases that are positive and cheerful to call the shooter always sets a good tone for the stage, and may relax a nervous shooter. ("Next Cowboy/Cowgirl...come on up!" or something similar) Shooters should not be allowed to walk onto the course of fire for the purposes of engaging the stage without being called by the CRO or the Expeditor.

Avoid the temptation to engage the shooter in unrelated banter or discussion. Generally, shooters are concentrating on the stage sequence, and some may not appreciate the distraction.

### ***SHOOTER EVALUATION***

As each shooter approaches the course of fire, the Chief Range Officer (CRO) or Expediter (XP) Officer shall conduct a visual inspection. This may be best accomplished by asking oneself the following questions as you observe the shooter approaching:

#### **IMPAIRMENTS**

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

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?

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### **LEATHER**

Does the shooter's leather (gun belt, holster, pouch, bandoleer, shotgun belt) conform to SASS rules? Remember, it is the **ammo** on belts that must be 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 Chief Range Officer shall direct them to the loading or unloading table where the necessary corrections can be made prior to returning to the stage.

### **SHOOTING CATEGORY**

In which category is the shooter competing?

This information should aid in determining the best location for the spotters and Timer Operator 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 Timer Operator 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 Timer Operator needs to be aware of these restrictions.

### **The Course of Fire**

Once the Chief Range Officer / Timer Operator has completed the evaluation of the shooter, he or she will prepare to "safely assist" and supervise the shooter through the course of fire.

It is the duty of the CRO/Timer Operator to ensure the shooter begins at the correct location (e.g. "behind the fence") on the stage, and in the correct starting position / stance (e.g. "hands at high surrender")

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Watch to see if the shooter stages their firearms and ammo as required. Failure to stage firearms 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.

**Failure to bring enough ammo to the line to complete the stage is NOT a procedural. (scored the same as misses for any un-fired rounds). The procedural in this case would only apply to ammo (like firearms) when not correctly staged on the line (e.g. on/in a prop), and not corrected by the shooter unassisted, on the clock.**

**A shooter MAY NOT leave the line once the stage has begun to retrieve ammo or firearms until all firearms brought to the line are verified as clear. Penalty for violation is a **Stage Disqualification**.**

Make sure there are three spotters in place and are ready, and are in an appropriate position to see the targets. Generally one can't be an effective spotter from the gun cart or while chatting with a buddy! 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 and attentive 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 Chief 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 Chief Range Officer to re-explain the stage for each and every shooter. The Loading Officer is available for that duty, if needed. If a shooter is obviously unprepared for the stage, politely advise them to move to the unloading table for further reflection.

Prepare the shooter to begin by declaring "Shooter is ready; stand by" or "Indicate ready by saying your line." The Chief Range Officer shall give a short pause and start the timer so as not to surprise the shooter. Check the operation of the timer by noting the recording of the first shot.

The best way for the CRO to safely assist a shooter is to ANTICIPATE the shooter's next move. This can be achieved by 'shooting the stage in your own mind.' Knowing what the shooter will/should do next gives the CRO a powerful tool to assist the shooter.

The Range Officer should make every effort to safely assist the shooter through the course of fire by coaching when required or requested, and giving appropriate range commands, if necessary. Watch the muzzle of the firearm for correct target engagement sequence, potential squibs and violations of the 170 degree safety rule. The CRO, should be counting shots fired, but should NOT be counting misses. Stay close enough to the shooter to control him/her, physically if necessary, but not so close as to impede the shooter.

Typical occurrences for which the CRO must be vigilant are hulls left in long gun actions, long gun levers remaining or falling closed or "taking the firearm with you" when instructed by the stage description. Immediately alert the shooter so that they may correct the situation before they move to the next firing position.

As the shooter approaches the last shot to be fired, prepare to watch the last timer update and cover the timer's microphone immediately after the shooter is finished,

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preventing the recording of shots from the adjacent bay(s). Once the shooter is finished the course of fire, the CRO shall call out the raw time in loud, clear voice to the shooter, and then instruct them (if they are not doing so already) to holster all revolvers, retrieve all long guns, and move to the unloading area with the muzzles in a safe direction. With the shooter moving to the unloading table, the raw time is then communicated to the score keeper and the spotters polled for misses, procedural input and safety input. These penalties may then be communicated to the score keeper and the shooter without delay.

Discussion between the CRO, spotters and score keeper that takes more than a moment, or issues that need resolving in order to determine a score, should not take place on the firing line. The CRO should consider passing off the timer to a new CRO, new spotters engaged and the discussion moved well behind the firing line. This will minimize any potential delay, and keep the stage moving.

### ***INCIDENTS DURING THE COURSE OF FIRE***

As each shooter engages a course of fire, CROs should be prepared for any or all of the following incidents to occur and be expeditious in his or her necessary corrective action. CROs must never be tentative with a safety call. If a safety command is given by the CRO, that is later determined to be errant, (e.g., if a squib call is determined to actually be clear), the shooter will automatically receive a reshoot.

### **SQUIBS**

In the event a Chief Range Officer suspects a squib load has been encountered, an immediate command shall be given to the shooter to make that firearm safe and continue on with the next procedure. The CRO will allow the shooter to make the suspect firearm safe **preferably** on a nearby and appropriate horizontal surface (box, table, straw bale, ground, etc.), or **if necessary**, assist the shooter by allowing them to “hand off” the firearm. Multiple squibs by a shooter will be cause for the Timer Operator to request the shooter change ammo.

### **FIREARM MALFUNCTIONS**

**In the event a shooter declares a malfunction, the shooter will be given the opportunity to make that firearm safe and continue on with the next procedure. The CRO will allow the shooter to make the malfunctioning firearm safe, preferably on a nearby and appropriate horizontal surface (box, table, straw bale, ground, etc.), or if necessary, assist the shooter by allowing them to “hand off” the firearm. Multiple malfunctions by a shooter will be cause for the Timer Operator to request the shooter change firearms.**

### **TARGET FAILURE**

In the event a target fails or falls to the ground, the Chief Range Officer should 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

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and misses in the normal manner. Do not allow the shooter to engage a downed target as this may cause further damage to the target, or worse, may result in dangerous ricochets.

### **PROP FAILURE**

Given the nature of “Old West” props and stage fronts, failures sometime happen. Prop failures include: Fronts falling down, gun blocks falling over, tables collapsing, fences falling over, activating mechanisms of targets not working and other such occurrences. In the event of a prop failure, the Chief Range Officer should be prepared to make a determination of whether or not the shooter shall continue the course of fire or cease fire immediately. The shooter will not be penalized for a prop failure.

### **BREAKING THE 170° SAFETY RULE**

A CRO/TO/Spotter shall make an immediate “Cease-Fire” call if any firearm breaks the 170° safety rule. This call will result in a Stage or Match Disqualification to the shooter. The Chief 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 **approved/legal** 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 Chief 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.

## **CATEGORIES WITH UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS**

### ***FRONTIERSMAN CATEGORY***

The Chief 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 CRO shall not confuse these occurrences as potential squib loads. Misfires during the Course of fire by Frontiersman will require the Chief Range Officer to accommodate clearing the firearm after completing the stage. The Timer Operator shall always require these clearances be accomplished down range at the firing line. It is acceptable to recap and discharge the still loaded chamber(s) or simply uncapped the charged chambers.

Percussion revolvers may only be capped at the loading area or on the course of fire. It is **not** permissible to seat the cap on a revolver’s nipple using the revolver’s own hammer. 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.

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### ***BLACK POWDER 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 2F 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.

### ***GUNFIGHTER CATEGORY***

Since the Gunfighter uses both revolvers, shooting right- and left-handed, the best position for the Chief Range Officer is directly behind the shooter. **Two holsters are required, one on each side.**

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.

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

**A competitor shooting Gunfighter Style in either Gunfighter or B-Western categories is EXPRESSLY DISALLOWED from utilizing a simultaneous "double cross draw" method of drawing/holstering revolvers.**

**If Gunfighter Style is used (both loaded revolvers out at the same time), the shooter MUST shoot the left-side revolver with the left hand and the right-side revolver with the right hand, regardless of how they are drawn from leather.**

**Failure to comply will result in the progressive penalty for "failure to adhere to the guidelines of the category...".**

**Cross draw IS ALLOWED by any competitor shooting "DOUBLE DUELIST STYLE" in any category.** 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. *A Gunfighter may utilize any sequence that might be available for use by any other shooting category.* (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 revolvers or a single revolver and then sweep the bank from right to left with both revolvers or a single revolver). *Stage instructions that specify separate revolvers such as "first pistol/second pistol"; "left revolver/right revolver"; or "with each handgun" are considered as "1st five shots/2nd five shots" when shooting GUNFIGHTER STYLE.*

When shooting with two revolvers, both 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.

# COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™

## SASS Range Officer Training Course

### *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 Main Match fixed sight model 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, single shot or lever actions. External—hammer double barrel shotguns must have manually functioning hammers. Faux hammers and hammers that are cocked internally are illegal.
- **Costuming:** Must choose at least five of the requirements listed below. All clothing items must be worn during all shooting events and awards ceremonies. Chaps, Western spurs with spur straps, cuffs, tie or scarf worn loosely around the neck or with scarf slide, vest, pocket watch with full-length chain, jacket, sleeve garters, knife (must be visible; screw knives do NOT qualify), 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 non-grip enhancing (i.e. “NO Lug”) 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 1880 or later design or a replica thereof (i.e. Burgess, Lightning Rifle, 1892, 1894 Winchester 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). **No shoulder rigs 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. Ladies may wear dresses, skirts, or split riding skirts. Suspenders are not allowed. Felt hats only, no straw, or palm leaf hats. Hats must be worn. Boots are required and must be of traditional design with fancy stitching or multi-color fancy design with non-grip enhancing (i.e. “NO Lug”) soles. Lace-up boots and moccasins are not allowed. Western spurs with rowels and spur straps are required for men.

You must choose at least one or more of the following optional items: gloves or gauntlets, scarves with slides or tied around the neck or bolo tie, coat, vest, chaps, or cuffs.

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 Range Officers. While every participant is a safety officer, the assigned Range Officers 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, appropriate dress, and any

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## SASS Range Officer Training Course

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 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 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 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 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

## **COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™**

### **SASS Range Officer Training Course**

completion of the loading process for all of their firearms. Ammunition velocities in question should be measured easily via chronograph. Adequate amounts of blackpowder 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, designated Chief ROs, 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.

### **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 center fire ammunition used in SASS main match firearms in smokeless categories **MUST** meet or exceed the power factor standard of 60. Penalty = SOG
- All center fire ammunition used in SASS main match firearms in smokeless categories **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.

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