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SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

The Single Action Shooting Society is an international organization created to preserve and promote the fast growing sport of Cowboy Action Shooting™. SASS endorses regional matches conducted by affiliated clubs and annually produces END of TRAIL, the World Championship of Cowboy Action Shooting™ & Wild West Jubilee.

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

Contestants shoot in several one- to four-gun stages (courses of fire) in which they engage reactive steel and cardboard silhouette targets. Scoring is based on accuracy and speed.

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The truly unique aspect of Cowboy Action Shooting™ is the requirement placed on authentic period or western screen dress. Each participant is required to adopt a shooting alias appropriate to a character or profession of the late 19th century, or a Hollywood western star, and develop a costume accordingly.

Your SASS shooting alias is exclusively yours. In the tradition of the Old West cattle brand registries, SASS prohibits one shooter duplicating another's alias. There is only one Tex, one Kid Curry, and one Loophole Pettifogger.

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

American history buffs and serious shooters alike agree the use of vintage firearms, authentic costuming, unique targets, and fast action make Cowboy Action Shooting™ one of the most

interesting of all shooting sports for both spectator and contestant.

This handbook includes the specific rules, regulations, and general guidelines adopted by the Single Action Shooting Society. The SASS Range Operations Basic Course and SASS Range Officer Training Course offer an in-depth interpretation and further clarification of these rules. It is the intention and hope of SASS these requirements will serve to preserve and protect Cowboy Action Shooting™ from the gimmickry and technical gamesmanship that have had such a negative effect on other shooting disciplines. The founders of SASS believe END of TRAIL and club and annual matches are as much an opportunity for fun and fellowship as they are shooting competitions.

SPIRIT of the GAME

As the game of Cowboy Action Shooting™ has evolved, our members have developed and adopted an attitude towards their participation we call "The Spirit of the Game." Competing in

"The Spirit of the Game" means you fully participate in what the competition asks. You do not look for ways to create an advantage out of what is or is not stated as a rule or shooting procedure. Some folks would call "The Spirit of the Game" nothing more than good sportsmanship. Whatever you call it, if you don't have it, Cowboy Action Shooting™ is not your game.

EQUIPMENT and SHOOTING CATEGORIES

Originals and reproductions of firearms manufactured during the early to late 1800's, including Colts, Winchesters, Remingtons, Smith & Wessons, Marlins, Sharps, and Henrys, are allowed in SASS competitions, so long as they are in safe shooting condition.

RIFLES

Main, Team, and Side Matches (not Long Range or Precision Rifle)

Any lever or slide action, tubular fed, exposed hammer rifle or carbine manufactured between 1860 and 1899, or any reproduction thereof.

- Centerfire, .25-20 caliber or larger.
- Rifle must be in a "pistol" caliber (examples include, but are not limited to, .32-20, .38 Special, .38-40, .44-40, and .45 Colt. No "rifle" calibers such as .30-30 or .38-55 are allowed.)
- Only original or replica style open iron sights or tang mounted peep sights of the 1860 to 1899 period are allowed.
- Barrel must be over 16" in length.
- Rifles with box magazines may not be used.

SHOTGUNS

Any side by side or single shot shotgun typical of the period from approximately 1860 until 1899 without automatic ejectors, with or without external hammers, having single or double triggers is allowed. Lever or slide action single barrel tubular feed, exposed hammer shotguns of the period are

allowed, whether original or replicas. Military configurations are not allowed. Certain shooting categories require a specific type of shotgun and ammunition to be used in those competitions. Please see the shooting categories for further information.

- No larger bore than 10 gauge and no smaller than 20 gauge.
- All shotguns must have a barrel over 18" in length.
- Number 4 **lead birdshot** or smaller must be used in all events (no steel or plated shot).
- Magnum and high-velocity loads are not allowed.
- Pump and lever action shotguns are allowed to load no more than two rounds at a time in the main match stages unless specified in the stage description. Single loading the pump/lever shotguns is always acceptable. In team events, shotguns may be loaded to their maximum magazine capacity.

REVOLVERS

Cowboy Action Shooters are divided into six basic categories: Modern, Traditional, Frontier Cartridge, Duelist, Gunfighter, and Frontiersman. A shooter's category is determined by the type of "six-gun," propellant, and shooting style he or she uses.

Although the .32 caliber revolvers and .36 caliber cap and ball pistols are legal, they may not be powerful enough to handle all reactive targets. To the extent possible, reactive targets are set to fall when squarely hit with a standard .38 Special 158 gr. factory load.

MODERN

Any .32 caliber or larger single action revolver with adjustable sights.

Two Traditional revolvers **cannot** be used in the Modern category. For two-revolver stages, it is permissible for one revolver to be a Traditional style handgun. For one-revolver stages, a Modern handgun must be used.

ditional style" pistol. The same gun in the model having adjustable rear sights must compete in the Modern category.

FRONTIER CARTRIDGE

Traditional style percussion or cartridge single action revolvers of original manufacture prior to 1896 or reproductions thereof.

- .32 caliber or larger.
- Must use blackpowder in all loads (rifle, six-gun, and shotgun).
- Must use a side by side or lever action shotgun in the main match stages.
- Any SASS legal pistol caliber rifle is acceptable.

Frontier Cartridge Duelist is also recognized. See Duelist description below for required shooting technique.

NOTE: Frontier Cartridge competitors may use any SASS legal firearms and propellants in team and side matches.

Examples: Colt New Frontier, Ruger Blackhawk and .32 caliber Single Six, and Ruger New Model Bisley.

TRADITIONAL

Single action cartridge, percussion, or blackpowder cartridge conversion revolver manufactured prior to 1896, or reproduction thereof.

- .32 caliber or larger.
- Must have non-adjustable, traditional, notch-style sights. Dovetailed front or rear sights are acceptable for percussion and blackpowder cartridge conversion firearms if they conform to sights commonly found on the originals.
- May use any appropriate propellant.

Examples: Colt SAA; Ruger Vaquero; Smith & Wesson American, Russian, or Schofield; Remington Models '75 or '90; Bisleys; and their reproductions.

The Ruger Old Army percussion revolver with traditional, non-adjustable sights is a "Tradi-

DUELIST

Requires a Traditional style single action revolver **cocked and fired** one-handed, unsupported. The revolver, hand, or shooting arm may not be touched by the off-hand except when resolving a malfunctioning pistol problem. Any SASS legal shotgun, rifle, or propellant (blackpowder or smokeless) may be used.

GUNFIGHTER

This category requires two Traditional style single actions, both shot Duelist style, one right handed and the other left handed. Any SASS legal shotgun, rifle, or propellant may be used. Two standard holsters are required, one on each side. No cross-draw or "butt-forward" configurations are allowed.

Definitions:

"Gunfighter Style" is defined as shooting with a pistol in each hand and shooting the pistols alternately or changing leads, which is defined as

no more than two sequential rounds from the same pistol.

“Double Duelist Style” is defined as shooting a revolver cocked and fired one-handed and unsupported with each hand, but with only one loaded revolver in hand at a time. This shooting style may be employed in the Gunfighter Category or any Category that allows the “Duelist Style.”

When a stage calls for ten pistol rounds in a single sequence, or the use of only one pistol, the Gunfighter has the option of engaging the targets either “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, when shooting “Gunfighter Style” the Gunfighter shall sweep the bank of targets left to right with both guns and then sweep the bank from right to left with both guns. If shooting “Double Duelist Style,” the Gunfighter shall sweep the bank of targets left to right with one

rolling the dice between pistol sequences), the pistols are shot “Double Duelist.”

FRONTIERSMAN

Same as Frontier Cartridge except handguns are limited to .36 caliber or larger percussion pistols shot Duelist style.

CLASSIC

- *Handguns:* Any SASS legal Traditional Category pistols
- *Calibers:* .40 caliber rimmed cartridges or larger - pistols and rifle (e.g., .38-40, .44 Special, .44 Russian, .44 Mag, .44-40, .45 Schofield, .45 Colt, .36 caliber cap & ball or larger)
- *Ammo:* SASS legal ammo - smokeless or blackpowder
- *Rifles:* Any 1873 or earlier manufacture SASS legal rifle or a replica there of (e.g., 1866, Henry, 1873 Winchester)
- *Shotguns:* SASS legal external-hammer double barrel or lever actions

pistol in one hand and then sweep the targets from right to left with the other pistol in the other hand.).

When shooting Gunfighter Style, both pistols may be cocked at the same time, but must be shot one at a time to facilitate scoring. A Gunfighter may not holster pistols until all rounds are expended unless the pistols were drawn at the wrong time or a pistol/ammunition malfunction has occurred.

In the event of a malfunction while using both pistols, the Gunfighter shall keep both pistols pointed in a safe direction, shoot the functioning pistol empty, and holster it. If the pistol that malfunctioned cannot be cleared, it will then be handed off to a Range Officer or otherwise made safe, and the stage completed in the best manner possible.

If the stage scenario requires the use of another firearm between the pistol sequences or the shooter's hands are otherwise constrained (e.g.,

- *Costuming:* Must choose at least three of the requirements listed below. All clothing items must be worn for the duration of the entire match, including awards ceremonies.
 - Chaps, spurs, cuffs, scarf worn loosely around the neck or with scarf slide, tie, vest, pocket watch with full length chain, jacket, no straw hats allowed.
- In addition to the above items, ladies may choose from the items listed below in order to compete within this category:
 - Period watch, split riding skirt, bustle, hoops, corset, Victorian style hat (straw allowed), period jewelry, period hair ornaments (e.g. feathers), snood, Reticule (period handbag), period lace up shoes, camisole, bloomers, fishnet stockings, feather boa, cape.
- Pistols **MUST** be shot as described in the SASS Duelist Category requirements **ONLY!**
- No Buscadero or drop loop holster rigs allowed.

- All boots must be of traditional design (i.e., leather or smooth rubber) with non-grip enhancing soles.
- Hats must be worn for the entire match.

AGE AND GENDER-BASED CATEGORIES

SASS additionally recognizes protected shooting categories based upon age and gender. These categories incorporate the following standards. Unless otherwise stated, any SASS legal firearm, propellant, and (non-Gunfighter) shooting style can be used.

- Juniors are defined as persons aged 12 through 16. The category may be sub-divided by gender. Caution is urged in allowing competitors under age 12. Parental consent is required for all competitors under twenty-one years of age.
- The women's category may be sub-divided according to the use of Modern and Traditional handguns as well as shooting style, e.g., Lady Duelist.

- Forty-Niners are Traditional Category competitors 49 years of age or greater. Forty-Niner Ladies Category is also recognized.
- Seniors are competitors 60 years of age or greater. Senior Ladies is also recognized. Senior Duelist is a recognized senior category and either Modern or Traditional pistols can be used.
- Elder Statesmen / Grand Dames are competitors 70 years of age or greater.

Note: Only juniors may shoot as Juniors. Only females may shoot as Women. Only seniors may shoot as Seniors. Only Forty-Niners can shoot as Forty-Niners. There are no men's categories. No competitor is compelled to shoot in one of these categories by reason of his or her age or gender. A competitor may compete in any category for which they qualify. Any woman, junior, or senior who wishes to compete under one of the six basic shooting categories may do so. For example, a junior female shooting a Colt one handed with blackpowder rounds

may elect to shoot as a Junior, a Woman, a Traditional, a Frontier Cartridge, or a Duelist competitor.

SIDE MATCHES

THE PLAINSMAN

The event requires two .36 caliber or larger Traditional style percussion revolvers, shot Duelist style.

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

POCKET PISTOLS and DERRINGERS

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

- A pocket pistol is defined as an external hammer or hammerless, small frame, fixed sight, single or double action pre-1900 design revolver of solid frame, tip-up, or break down construction having a barrel length of four inches or less. Pocket pistols may be percussion ignition, rimfire, or centerfire and must be .31 caliber or larger. Model "P" Colts and clones and revolvers with swing out cylinders are specifically not allowed regardless of caliber, frame size, or barrel length.
- A Derringer is defined as an external hammer, fixed sight, breech-loading or percussion ignition, small frame pre-1900 design firearm having one to four barrels up to three and one-half inches long. Derringers may be either rimfire or center fire .22 caliber or larger. The Remington style

over/under barrel configuration and the Sharps four-barreled Pepperbox are typical SASS legal Derringers.

.22 Magnum Derringers are not allowed.

LONG RANGE (or PRECISION) RIFLE

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

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

- Lever action, pistol caliber
- Lever action, rifle caliber
- Single Shot

- Buffalo Single Shot
- Open Category (may be used at the match directors option to include those firearms not covered by the four official Long Range Categories)

Blackpowder categories can be added to any or all of the basic categories at the option of the match director. The Buffalo Single Shot is blackpowder or blackpowder substitutes only. Each category competes within itself.

Basic Rules for the Long Range Competitions

- Front barrel sights may vary from simple blades to period hooded wind gauge designs using interchangeable sight inserts and having a spirit level mounted integral with the sight or sight base.
- Rear sights must either be open iron sights mounted on the barrel or original style tang or stock wrist mounted peep sights. Long range rear barrel mounted sights of the flip-up ladder type may use a peep-hole drilled

through the sliding sight leaf. An example of this is the various ladder type sights used on the Springfield trapdoors.

- Optical and receiver mounted sights are not allowed.
- "Rifle Caliber" competition rifles must use traditional, period, rimmed cartridges. No cartridge chambered for use in any SASS approved main match pistol or rifle may be used in the "Rifle Caliber" competition. Thus, .30-30 WCF, .38-55 Marlin & Ballard, .43 Spanish, or .45-70 Government cartridges would be legal, while a .375 Winchester, .444 Marlin, .32-20 WCF, or .44-40 WCF would not be legal.
- Any SASS approved propellant, including smokeless, Pyrodex, and blackpowder may be used (with the exception smokeless powder is not allowed in the Buffalo Single Shot competition).
- Regardless of category or caliber, bullets used in long range and precision rifle matches must be made of pure lead or lead

alloy having a plain base, gas checked, or paper patched configuration. Muzzle velocities are restricted only by safety considerations. Extremely high velocities tend to work to the shooter's disadvantage.

Lever Action Rifles used in long-range matches, whether pistol or rifle calibers, must be originals or replicas of rifles manufactured during the period from approximately 1860 until 1899. Lever or slide action, tubular feed, exposed hammer rifles or carbines are allowed, providing they are in safe working condition. Note: The rifles must have an exposed hammer and a tubular magazine, thus eliminating the use of a Winchester Model '95 and a Savage Model 1899 or other similar rifles having a box or rotary magazine.

Single Shot and Buffalo Single Shot firearms must be originals or replicas of single shot rifles manufactured during the period from approximately 1860 until 1899. All rifles **MUST** have exposed hammers. The caliber and cartridge rules for the "Rifle Caliber" firearms noted

above under basic rules also apply to Single Shot and Buffalo Single Shot rifles with the exception that Buffalo Single Shot rifles must be .375" caliber or larger.

Buffalo Single Shot competition has further restrictions requiring original or replica rifles to be of a pre-1899 design of US manufacture with exposed hammer. Spring-loaded ejectors are also prohibited, except for Springfield Trapdoor Rifles.

SASS MOUNTED SHOOTING

SASS Mounted Shooting is a special event where experienced riders traverse a course of fire in the shortest period of time shooting balloons with match supplied .45 caliber blanks. Please see the SASS Mounted Shooters Handbook for additional information.

FIREARMS RESTRICTIONS

A number of general restrictions have been listed below. **A far more inclusive list of allowable**

firearm modifications is available in the Range Operations Basic Safety Course materials.

- Firearms of all approved types should be maintained in as original exterior condition as possible. The firearm must "look" period.
- No visible external modifications other than (non-rubber) grips, recoil pads on shotguns, and leather wrapping (e.g., rifle levers) are allowed.
- Contemporary rubber grips, modern target grips, and grip tape are not allowed. Replacement grips of wood, ivory, pearl, stag horn, bone, and the like are perfectly acceptable so long as they are not severely customized to constitute a "target" grip. That is, they must be of original shape and scale.
- Minor exterior modifications and cosmetic engraving are acceptable so long as the overall outward appearance of the firearm is not altered. Cosmetic embellishment such as engraving is permitted to the extent it does not create a competitive advantage. For example,

back strap checkering or stippling is not allowed. Engraving your alias on the back strap is permissible.

- Modifying the stock length to fit you or changing a barrel to a different legal length is acceptable.
- Colored sights and sight inserts are not allowed. Sight outlines or inserts must be blackened or removed (e.g., Marlin's Cowboy Rifle factory sights).
- Trigger shoes, compensating ports, counter weights, bull barrels and all other such modifications are prohibited.
- A stage disqualification is issued for use of any non-legal SASS firearm at matches above the club level.
- Sights may be altered to allow the gun to shoot to point of aim so long as the resulting sights appear to be "period."
- No more than two main-match pistols may be worn to the firing line.

General "Spirit of the Game" guidance ... if you have to ask permission to use something because

it offers you a competitive advantage, the response will nearly always be "no".

HOLSTERS, CARTRIDGE BELTS and BANDOLEERS

- All handguns must be carried in a safe holster capable of retaining the firearm throughout a normal range of motion.
- Main-match holsters must be located one on each side of the belly button and separated by at least the width of two fists at the belt. (Note: Pocket pistol and Derringer holsters are not "main-match" holsters.)
- Holsters may not depart from the vertical by more than 30 degrees when worn.
- Ammunition required for reloads during the course of any stage must be carried on the shooter's person in a bandoleer, belt, pouch, or pocket. Rifle and pistol ammunition may not be carried in a shotgun loop. No ammunition may be carried in the mouth, ears, nose, cleavage, or any other bodily orifice.

- Bandoleers, cartridge belts, and pouches must be of traditional design (e.g., bandoleers must be loose and not secured in any way to prevent movement). Modern drop pouches, combat-style shotgun loops, wrist or forearm bandoleers, and such are not allowed. Pouches shall have a flap and must carry their contents loose, with no special provisions to organize the contents for rapid retrieval. Leather belt slide ammo loops are acceptable.
- Cartridge loops must not have a metal or plastic liner.
- Shotgun ammo loops may not accommodate more than two rounds per loop, and rifle/pistol ammo loops shall accommodate only one round per loop.
- Ammo belts must be worn around the waist (at or below the belly button).
- Shotgun ammo loops must conform to the shooters contour (i.e., not tilt out from the belt).

- Cartridge loops mounted on a firearm's stock or forearm are not allowed.

AMMUNITION

- Revolver ammunition must have a muzzle velocity less than 1,000 fps. Rifle ammunition must have a muzzle velocity less than 1,400 fps. Ammunition suspected of exceeding these velocity restrictions may be examined by the range-master. Shooters may be held responsible for damage caused to a target or injury to personnel due to "bounce-back" because of inappropriate ammunition. This major safety violation is grounds for "instant disqualification" and ejection from the match.
- Revolver and (main match) rifle ammunition may not be jacketed, semi-jacketed, plated, gas checked, or copper washed. It must be all lead. Molydisulfide coated bullets or equivalent are acceptable.
- Revolver and rifle ammunition must be of "single-projectile" design. "Multiple-projectile" bullets are illegal.

- Ammunition with bullets recessed below the case mouth is disallowed.
- Throughout this manual, blackpowder means blackpowder, Pyrodex, Black Mag, or comparable propellants. Any combination of smokeless and blackpowder (so called duplex loads) is specifically prohibited.

SCORING and TIMING

SASS matches are scored based upon elapsed shooting time and added penalty points for missed targets. Each stage is scored individually and, in most club matches, the total combined score for all stages fired is ranked for place of finish, either over all or by category.

At END of TRAIL, SASS Regionals, and at the discretion of each affiliated club, rank scoring is used.

In rank scoring, each stage is ranked for all competitors' place of finish. At the conclusion of the match, each competitor's rank from each stage is added together, and the combined total is then ranked for overall place of finish. For example,

if your place of finish in stage one is 23, stage two is 12, stage three is 5, and stage four is 33, your total rank score is 73. All competitors with lower total rank scores will finish ahead of you.

Rank scoring is recommended when all of the stages in a match are not of approximately the same duration and degree of difficulty.

The alternative to rank scoring is scoring based upon total time (total raw time plus penalties).

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

Electronic timers are generally used for timing all SASS events, but stopwatches may be used.

Rifle, pistol, and shotgun targets must be engaged with the appropriate type firearm. A "miss" is defined as the failure to hit the engaged target using the appropriate type firearm. Missed targets are scored as five-second

additions to the competitor's raw time for the stage (at annual matches and above). If any targets are shot (hit) using the wrong type firearm, a single procedure penalty is assessed in addition to the miss.

Procedurals are unintentional "mistakes" where the competitor engages the stage in a manner other than the way it is supposed to be shot. Procedurals are scored as a ten-second penalty, no more than one per stage.

A stage disqualification is issued for each stage in which a non-SASS legal firearm is used at matches above the club level.

Minor safety infractions occurring during a course of fire that do not directly endanger persons will result in a ten-second penalty being added to the shooter's time per occurrence for that stage. "Minor" safety infractions are occurrences such as failure to open a long gun's action at the conclusion of a shooting string or failure to return a handgun to its holster at the conclusion of a shooting string.

Major safety infractions will result in the shooter's disqualification from the stage or the match. A second major infraction in the match shall result in the shooter's ejection from the range. "Major" infractions include a dropped gun, an accidental discharge that impacts within ten-feet of any person (an impact within five-feet is a match disqualification), violation of the 170 degree safety rule, "sweeping" any person with the muzzle of a firearm, and similar acts that have high potential for personal injury.

In the event a competitor feels a range officer's ruling is in error, the ruling may be politely and immediately appealed to the Rangemaster/Match Director after clearing the range, allowing match activities to resume. The Rangemaster/Match Director will consider the appeal on grounds of policy and rules interpretation only, and their decision is final. At major matches special protest juries comprised of Territorial Governors may be empanelled to aid the Range Master/Match Director in making a reasonable judgment.

Failure to Engage

A "failure to engage" occurs when a competitor willfully or intentionally disregards the stage instructions in order to obtain a competitive advantage (i.e., taking the penalty would result in a lower score or faster time than following the instructions) and is not assessed simply because a competitor "makes a mistake." In such a case, in addition to any penalties for misses, a 30-second failure to engage/Spirit of the Game penalty is assessed.

For example, a shooting problem at a club match had the competitor start the stage by knocking a "stick of dynamite" over with a bullwhip. This procedure required swinging the whip across the dynamite stick just a few feet away. It was possible to miss, and many did. You had to keep swinging until you got the dynamite.

One shooter, determining he could shave some time by taking a penalty rather than attempting to knock over the dynamite, simply threw the

bullwhip on the ground and went after the targets.

In Cowboy Action Shooting™ we call this "failure to engage." And, it definitely is not in keeping with "Spirit of the Game."

RANGE OPERATIONS

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

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

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

A more detailed guide to match design is available in the Match Directors Guide.

- Metal and paper targets of generous size are used. Reactive targets such as pepper poppers and falling plates are used when practical to enhance shooter feedback and spectator appeal.
- Targets are set at close to medium range. There are no absolute rules, but we suggest the following distances, by firearm, if using a target approximately 16" X 16":
 - Revolver - 7 to 10 yards
 - Shotgun - 8 to 16 yards
 - Rifle - 13 to 50 yards
- Derringer/Pocket Pistol - Point blank to three yards (paper, cardboard, or balloons only. It's too close to safely shoot steel.)
- Handguns are returned to leather (reholstered) with hammer down on an empty chamber or a spent case at the conclusion of the gun's immediate use, unless the shooter has been specifically

directed otherwise. For example, when changing from handgun to rifle in a two-gun stage, the handgun will be holstered before the rifle is picked up.

- Only Gunfighters shooting in the "Gunfighter Style" may have two loaded pistols in their hands at once.
- Competitors choosing to use six-shot percussion revolvers may load and cap **only five** chambers. If a particular stage requires a one shot reload, the sixth chamber may be charged at the bench and then capped "on the clock." A complete reload is handled by staging a loaded, uncapped revolver down range or switching uncapped cylinders and capping under the clock.
- SASS matches above the club level are "no alibi" matches. Once the first round goes down range, the competitor is committed to the stage and must finish the shooting problem to the best of his ability. Reshoots are not awarded for ammunition or firearm malfunctions. However, if there is a range failure (failure of props, timer, or the range

officers) beyond the competitor's control, a reshoot may be granted. On a reshoot, the competitor starts over clean, carrying only accrued safety penalties with him.

- The role of the Range Officer is to **safely assist the shooter through the course of fire**. Coaching and constraining the shooter from unsafe acts are expected when appropriate, minimizing procedural and safety penalties whenever possible.
- It is expected the Range Officers will be the responsible parties for observing and resolving all safety related matters occurring in the loading, unloading, and firing line areas. However, any shooter who observes a safety infraction not seen by the Range Officer(s) should call the infraction to the Range Officer's attention, at which time the matter will be resolved.

SAFETY PRACTICES

First, Last, and Always

Our sport, by its very nature, has the potential to be dangerous and a serious accident can occur. Every participant in a SASS match is expected to be a safety officer. Each shooter's first responsibility is for his or her own safe conduct, but all shooters are expected to remain alert for actions by others that are unsafe.

Any Range Officer or shooter may confront any participant about an observed unsafe situation, and it is expected the matter will quickly be corrected and not repeated. Any argument concerning the correction of a safety related matter can be expected to result in that shooter being ejected from the range.

Hearing protection is highly recommended and eye protection is mandatory in and around the shooting areas. While small, period glasses look great, full protection, high impact glasses are strongly recommended.

Shooters shall adhere to the following safety guidelines:

1. Treat and respect every firearm at all times as if it were loaded.
2. Muzzle direction is important between, before, during, and after shooting a stage. A muzzle must not be allowed to “sweep” the other participants at any time. **Long guns will have their actions open with chambers and magazines empty and muzzles pointed in a safe direction when transported at a match.** Failure to manage safe muzzle direction is grounds for disqualification from the stage, and for repeated offenses, from the match.
3. All firearms will remain unloaded except when under the direct observation of a Range Officer on the firing line or in the loading area.
4. All loading and unloading will be conducted only in the designated areas. NOTE: Percussion revolver shooters must exercise care to ensure they maintain safe muzzle direction

- during loading and have fired or cleared all capped chambers prior to leaving the unloading area.
5. Six-guns are always loaded with only five rounds (five shooters with four), the hammer lowered and left resting on the empty chamber
6. No cocked revolver may ever leave a shooter’s hand.
7. Once a live round is placed under the hammer, the round must be expended. If the firearm is shot out of sequence, the shooter will receive a single procedural penalty. The shooter has the option of making the gun safe and moving to the correct position or restaging it. Shotguns may be opened and rounds removed or replaced without penalty.
8. The shooter shall not cock his revolver until the firearm is pointed safely down range. Any accidental or premature discharge of any firearm impacting within ten-feet of the shooter is unsafe and will result in disqualification from the stage or, if less than five-feet, from the match. A second stage disqualifica-

tion shall result in the shooter's ejection from the match. A safe practice is to develop the habit of cocking handguns with the "weak" or off-hand after the gun has cleared leather and is pointed safely down range.

9. Rifles may be staged down range from the shooter with the magazine loaded, action closed, hammer down, and **chamber empty**.
10. Shotguns are always staged open with magazine and chambers empty and are loaded on the clock unless the stage begins with the shotgun in the shooter’s hands. Mule-eared shotguns can be cocked at the beginning of a scenario, whether staged or in the shooters hands. Long guns are never staged with their muzzles on the ground.
11. Long guns will be left open with magazines and chambers empty at the conclusion of each shooting string (i.e., whenever the gun leaves the shooter's hands during or at the end of a stage). This does not apply to “re-staged” guns.
12. A live round left in the chamber constitutes a stage disqualification. Any other rounds,

- live or empty, left anywhere in a long gun in which it was loaded is a ten-second minor safety violation. Broken guns still containing rounds will not warrant penalties so long as the malfunction is declared and the gun made safe.
13. All shooters must demonstrate rudimentary familiarity and proficiency with the firearms being used. Shooters are expected to perform within their capabilities at all times. SASS matches are not the forum in which to learn basic firearms handling.
14. SASS matches **are not** fast draw competitions. Any unsafe gun handling in the course of a draw from the holster or any "fanning" will result in the shooter’s disqualification from that stage. “Slip-hammering” is not the same as fanning and is legal.
15. Extreme care must be exercised when drawing a pistol from a cross-draw or shoulder holster or returning the pistol to leather. The user must “twist” their body, if necessary, to ensure the muzzle never breaks the

170 degree safety rule during the process. Failure to ensure the muzzle is always down range is grounds for an immediate stage disqualification. A second infraction during the same match is grounds for match disqualification. (Note: The 170° safety rule means the muzzle of the firearm must always be straight down range +/- 85 degrees in any direction. If a competitor “comes close” to breaking the 180 degree safety plane, the 170 degree safety rule has been violated, and the competitor is at fault.)

16. When changing location during a stage, all firearms being carried must either have the hammer down on an empty chamber or spent case, or have the action open.
17. A dropped unloaded gun on the firing line (loading table to unloading table) results in the shooter's disqualification from the stage. A dropped loaded firearm results in a match disqualification. A shooter may not pick up a dropped gun. The Range Officer will recover the gun, examine it, clear it, and return it to the shooter.

18. Ammunition dropped by a shooter in the course of reloading any firearm during a stage or “ejected” from any firearm is considered “dead” and may not be recovered until the shooter completes the course of fire. For example, if a round of shotgun ammo is dropped while reloading, the round must be replaced from the shooter's person or counted as a missed shot. No attempt may be made by the shooter to pick-up the dropped round, as to do so prompts muzzle direction loss of control. Staged ammunition dropped back where it was staged is not considered “dead.”
19. The unloading officer or Range Officer MUST inspect all firearms before they leave the shooting stage. All rifles and pump or lever action shotguns must have their action cycled for the inspecting official. All pistols, whether used or not in the stage, must also be inspected.
20. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the range area for all shooters, guests, range officers, and others, until shooting is done for

the day. No shooter will consume any alcoholic beverage until he or she has completed all of their shooting for the day and stored their firearms.

21. No shooter may ingest any substance that will affect his or her ability to participate with a maximum state of awareness and in a completely safe manner. Both prescription and non-prescription pharmaceuticals that may cause drowsiness or any other physical or mental impairment must be avoided.
22. Eye and hearing protection must be worn by all competitors when in the loading area or on the firing line. Such protection is recommended for everyone when in the range area, and eye protection is **mandatory** for spectators when within direct line of sight of steel targets.
23. Only registered competitors may wear firearms.

SELECTING an ALIAS

Every SASS member is required to select a shooting alias representative of a character or profession from the Old West or the western film genre. Your alias may not in any way duplicate or easily be confused with any other member's alias. SASS headquarters is the final arbiter of whether an alias is acceptable or not.

These rules are enforced in accepting a new alias for SASS registry:

- It must be “printable” before a wide audience.
- No duplications are permitted.
- If it SOUNDS the same, it is the same.
- Adding “too,” “II,” etc. is not acceptable.
- “Ranger” could become “Texas Ranger” but not “The Ranger.” “John Henry Chisum” could be modified to “Jack Chisum” but not “John H. Chisum” or “Jon Henry Chisum.”
- Historical names may not be modified to make them different. “Wyatt Earp” and

“Marshal Wyatt Earp” are considered the same.

The SASS Alias Registry changes daily. Telephone or fax the SASS office to confirm the availability of your choice of alias.

If an acceptable alias is not selected, the member's SASS number will be used. All subsequent name changes are subject to a “name change fee”.

CLOTHING and ACCOUTERMENTS

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

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

Determine the clothing items you need, and begin your search.

There are many commercial suppliers of traditional western clothing and accouterments who advertise in *The Cowboy Chronicle*.

The other way to go is on your own. Visit your neighborhood thrift stores. Look for lightweight wool slacks with plaid or vertical stripe patterns or old formals, for example. Men, remove the belt loops from the slacks, add suspender buttons, and presto, you have a pair of Old West trousers. Ladies, take the old satin, silk, or whatever formal, add a little lace, change a hem line, add a feather boa, and a hair comb ... voila, you're a saloon girl.

Another possibility exists with the commercial costume rental companies. Many of these firms offer a good selection of authentic western wardrobes.

Don't want to get that involved in developing your costume? Well, okay.

All shooters must be in costume, and we encourage invited guests and family also to be costumed. **Shooters must remain in costume at all match events: dinners, award ceremonies, dances, etceteras.**

It is neither difficult nor expensive to assemble a colorful and authentic costume. A little imagination and a dose of creativity can go a long way.

The best way to develop a costume is to first decide on a character or profession you wish to portray. (This is also a good way to decide on your shooting alias.) SASS members have adopted the personas of bankers, blacksmiths, lawmen, gunslingers, railroad engineers, saloon girls, schoolmarmes, East Indian British cavalry, U.S. Army cavalry, mountain men, trail cowboys, prairie women, American Indians, and silver screen heroes ... you name it!

Once you have adopted your character, do a little research. Go to the library and look at historical photographs depicting your character.

Denims of the Wrangler, Levi, and Lee variety are acceptable. Designer jeans (the ones with the colored piping and name embroidered on the pocket) are not allowed.

Contemporary cowboy shirts with snap fronts are okay, but not even very B-western. Inexpensive cotton work shirts with button fronts are available at Sears, Wal-Mart, K-Mart, and J.C. Penney stores. These are much more representative of the type of shirt worn in the late 1800's.

If you know a good seamstress or tailor, many patterns for Old West clothing are available. Any large fabric shop will carry cotton goods adaptable to great western wardrobes.

Visit with the other shooters at your local club. They have great ideas about how to assemble a Cowboy Action Shooting™ wardrobe.

OUTLAWED

- Modern shooting gloves
- Short sleeve shirts
- Modern feathered cowboy hats (Shady Bradys). Straw hats of traditional design (e.g., Stetson, Bailey, sombreros,) are acceptable.
- Designer jeans
- Ball caps
- Tennis, running, jogging, or aerobic shoes (Indian moccasins work well for relaxing after a long day in boots.)
- Clothing displaying manufacturer's or sponsor's logos.
- Nylon, plastic, or Velcro accouterments

Mainly, SASS wants our participants to be safe, have fun, develop their competitive shooting skills, and enjoy the rich traditions of the Old West. We ask you join us in the friendly spirit of competition and preservation of our heritage.

NOTES**SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING
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