



## INTRODUCTION TO HIGH POWER RIFLE COMPETITION

---

There are several forms of competition with high power rifles. The NRA sanctions metallic silhouette competition with high power rifles at ranges up to 500 meters; 300 meter international rifle competition is a high power event; bench-rest competition is done with high power rifles and, until recently, running game and biathlon events made use of high power rifles.

High power rifle shooting was originally based on courses of fire for military instruction. Today's courses still include both slow and rapid fire stages and involve shooting from various positions at fixed targets of standard dimensions at several standard distances. The shooter who has mastered the high power rifle course of fire is not necessarily an accomplished field shot but he has acquired the basic skills to develop into a first-rate shot in the field of combat or hunting.

### **COURSE OF FIRE:**

There are 4 strings of fire which are the basic building blocks of any NRA high power course of fire or tournament. There are: With 2 sighting rounds at the beginning of each course of fire.

- Slow fire, standing - 20 rounds at 200 yards in 20 minutes.
- Rapid fire, sitting or kneeling - 2 strings of 10 rounds at 200 yards in 60 secs.
- Rapid fire, prone - 2 strings of 10 rounds at 300 yards in 70 secs.
- Slow fire, prone - 20 rounds at 500 or 600 yards in 20 minutes.

Every NRA High Power Rifle match for which classification records are kept is a multiple or combination of one or more of these strings. The popular NATIONAL MATCH COURSE, for instance, consists of 10 rounds slow fire standing; 10 rounds rapid fire sitting or kneeling; 10 rounds rapid fire prone and 20 rounds slow fire prone. Matches fired all at one distance and in one position are known as "single-stage" matches and are usually 20 shot matches (2 times one of the basic strings).

"Slow fire" does not require much explanation. The shooter takes his position on the firing line, assumes the prescribed position and is allowed one minute per shot to fire his string.

"Rapid fire," on the other hand, is more elaborately choreographed. In rapid fire sitting or kneeling, the shooter uses a preparation period to establish his sitting or kneeling position; he then comes to a standing position and, on command, loads either 2 or 5 rounds (depending upon the firearm) into his rifle. When the targets appear or the command to commence fire is given the shooter gets into his firing position, fires the rounds in the rifle, reloads with 8 or 5 more for a total of 10 and finishes his string. The procedure for rapid fire prone differs only in the firing position and the time limit.

## **BASIC EQUIPMENT:**



### **RIFLE**

Rifles to be used in High Power Rifle competition must be equipped with metallic sights, should be capable of holding at least 5 rounds of ammunition and should be adapted to rapid reloading. Tournament programs often group competitors into two divisions, Service Rifle and Match Rifle. The rifles currently defined as "Service Rifles"; The M1, M14, M16 and their commercial equivalents meet these requirements. Winchester and Remington have made their Model 70 and Model 40x rifles in "match" versions and custom gunsmiths have made up match rifles on a number of different military and commercial actions. 1903 and 1903-A3 Springfield, 1917 Enfields and pre-war Winchester Model 70 sporters in .30-06 are all equipped with clip slots for rapid reloading. The most suitable rear sights are aperture or "peep" with reliable, repeatable 1/2 minute (or finer) adjustments. Front sights should be either of the post or aperture type.

### **SLING**

The shooting sling is helpful in steadying the positions and controlling recoil. The sling may be used in any position except standing.

## **AMMUNITION**

Most competitors eventually turn to hand loading. Careful hand-loading will provide the shooter with ammunition less expensive and more accurate than what can be procured otherwise. Both tracer and incendiary ammunition are prohibited by NRA Rules and armor-piercing ammunition may be prohibited by local range regulations.

## **NRA CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM:**

NRA rules describe a classification system which is designed to let shooters compete against others at a similar skill level. Each shooter, depending on his average competition score, is placed in a class designated High Master, Master, Expert, Sharpshooter or Marksman. Tournament sponsors generally give awards in each class. Temporary classification is established after the first tournament and is maintained by the shooter himself. When 120 shots fired in NRA sanctioned competition have been reported to the NRA Headquarters, the shooter will be sent his classification card and will no longer maintain a temporary classification.

## **LONG RANGE COMPETITION:**

NRA rules provide for slow fire prone competition at ranges beyond 600 yards. Some of these matches permit the use of telescopic sights. Shots fired in Long Range competition are not reported for classification.

## **REDUCED-DISTANCE:**

High power rifle shooting at the full regulation distances requires a range with firing lines at 200, 300 and 600 (or 500) yards.

Every official NRA stage or course of fire normally conducted at 200, 300, or 600 yards can be run at 100 yards on NRA official reduced targets. The SR-1 target simulates the 200 yard target; the SR-21 is the 100 yard equivalent of the 300 yard target and the MR-31 gives the same appearance at 100 yards as the normal 600 yard target does at the full distance.

Because of their smaller size, the reduced targets are well adapted to being hung on stationary frames. Because of the short distances involved, it is practical to walk down to the targets after each string and remove them for scoring elsewhere or to score them on the frames. The use of stationary target frames avoids the complications that sometimes arise when the number of shooters on the line isn't equal to the number of target operators in the pits. Reduced 300 and 600 yard targets are also available for firing at 200 yards. The NRA can provide a list of target sources, including reduced targets.

## **PRACTICAL TIPS**

OK. Now you have an overview. Here's what you really need to know at a match.

- The first couple of matches, start in the pits or on a relay that doesn't fire first and WATCH. Take mental or physical notes of how things are done (the worst way, and the best - learn from examples!). When it comes for your turn to fire, if you screw up or break safety rules on the firing line you may be DQ'ed (asked to leave) or instructed on the correct procedure. It all depends upon the severity of the infraction, and how each match director chooses to enforce them. You will get no second chances at Perry or regional matches. SAFETY FIRST!
- Have your gear ready and be familiar with it. Don't wait for match day to find out your sites are 1 MOA, 1/2 or 1/4! Or during a string of fire find out your mags will not drop out by themselves. Know how to use your sling and where it needs to be set for each position it is allowed to be used, and where to park it for offhand. BE PREPARED.

- **Become familiar with the line commands and what they mean.**

**"Shooters, bring your equipment to the line."**

**"Shooters, your three minute prep time begins when your targets appear".** You may handle the rifle now and dry-fire, get slinged-up if necessary.

**"Shooters, your prep time is over!"**

The match director will give an intro to the match, and tell you the time limit allowed, number of rounds to be fired, etc.

**"With one round, load." Or, "with two or five rounds, load."** ONLY M1 closes bolt!!

**"All ready on the right, all ready on left, all ready on the firing line?"** Show you are ready or not with a nod.

**"Shooters, you may begin firing when your targets appear!"**

**"Are there any saved rounds OR alibis?"** DO NOT fix a miss-fire, etc if you want to take advantage of a re-fire. Look for a range officer for help and instructions. If someone else had problems, you will be given further instructions. If you have saved rounds - shots that did not get fired within the time limit - let a range officer know so the guys in the pits don't go nutz looking for holes that aren't there.

**"Shooters, make you rifles safe and wait for you score!"** Put in Empty Chamber Device (aka ECD).

**"Shooters, remove you equipment from the line for the next relay."** Know where to park your gear when not on the line.



- **Become familiar with the pit commands and what they mean, and how to mark a target.**

**"The pits are now opened!"** Grab something to drink, munch on, your smokes, hearing protection, and a pen if scoring in the pits. Get your butt downrange. If leaving, don't procrastinate - otherwise you'll be rushed getting ready on the line.

**"The pits are now closed!"** Make sure target is clean, ready, and the correct one. Ask or look around if not sure. You should be OK since most of the time you will be paired up with someone experienced, or consult the 'pit boss'.

**Stand by your targets.....half-mast your target".** Put target up halfway so match director can see that it is ready.

**Stand by your targets.....targets UP!"** You will mark and score each shot in offhand or slow-prone, using a small disk to mark the shot and a large disk to score on the target perimeter (see target above). LEAVE THEM UP IF IT IS A RAPIDS RELAY!! This is the most common mistake even regulars make! Watch and learn, but don't neglect your target.

**Stand by your targets.....targets DOWN!"** Rapids will be scored after allotted time period has expired by using a scoreboard and golf tees in the bullet holes. Only time you may need help is scoring bullet holes on a line (they get the highest value), finding multiple hits on same hole, or not having the proper number of bullet holes for the string.

**Make your targets ready for the next relay"** You will either use pasters, a clean center, or new target to cover the holes just made.