

# CAPS

## MATCH DESIGN AND SETUP

*Revised 3-23-03*

Many of these we have learned the hard way. I'm sure we have more to learn. Some of the most important items are **bolded**.

### GENERAL

- 1) **First and foremost, keep it safe! Do not ask the shooter to perform potentially dangerous tasks.** This includes falls as well as gun-related considerations. Not everyone is a resilient twenty-year old. Do not design traps for the shooter or ROs.
- 2) Read the USPSA rules: [http://www.uspsa.org/rules/Rules14\\_2001.pdf](http://www.uspsa.org/rules/Rules14_2001.pdf)
- 3) Aim for six stages and a total round count of at least 100 rounds. Plan on at least two field courses (movement, lots of props), two speed shoots and a classifier. The USPSA recommended round count for a field course is 28 rounds. Try very hard not to exceed 40 rounds.
- 4) You should have one classifier per match. These can be selected from the USPSA National Classification Course Book.
- 5) For each stage, provide: stage name, designer name, which bay it is designed for, number of targets (steel and paper), whether or not there are no shoots, total round count, whether Comstock or Virginia count, total points and description of start position, sequence of engagement, penalties, etc. This information can be neatly printed on a target and made available at the stage or can be typed up.
- 6) Shooting bays and stages on the special interest range are numbered from south to north. Bay 1 and Stage 1 are dedicated to the classifier. Sometimes a second stage can be included in this bay.
- 7) **It is important that all stages start well within the boundaries of the bays. Also, that shots are directed to the north and northwest whenever possible. If shots are directed to the west and, particularly, the southwest, targets must be**

**up against the berms. Note that the 180 o in Bays 2-6 runs NE-SW, it is perpendicular to the side berms, not parallel to the back berm.**

8) Try to keep it 8 round (or at least 10 round) neutral. This means no more than 8 (or 10) rounds fired without having to move or do a mag change.

9) Note that you cannot require a mag change on a field course. If you have movement between firing positions it is a field course.

10) To facilitate ending at a reasonable time, do not use multi-string stages if at all possible.

11) Virginia Count is for multi-string stages or stages where targets are reengaged.

12) Once you specify that a shooter use only strong hand or only weak hand, you cannot change back to free style or using the other hand in the same string.

**13) Avoid stage starts where the gun must be loaded after the start signal.**

14) Avoid track meets. The object of a match should be shooting, not running. Do not design a stage where the shooter engages 3 close targets and then must sprint 50 yards to engage another set of close targets.

15) Avoid excessively difficult shots. Mandatory 40 yard shots at 8" plates may not be much fun for some shooters. The same goes for required upper A/B shots at 10 yards plus.

16) Do not design "my gun wins" field courses (e.g. 18 round stages if you have a Para .45, 22 rounds if you have a Para .40, 28 rounds if you have a open gun with a big stick -- instead have 23 or 29 rounds so most shooters need at least one reload).

17) Eliminate shoot throughs. It's one thing to design a COF on paper. Another to see it layed out on the range. Not everyone will shoot a stage the way that you would.

18) You need to basically have everything, including target stands, in position the night before the match. If you wait until the morning of the match, you will

probably not be ready to shoot by 0900. Do not staple targets the night before, even if they are under a shelter, they will "wilt."

19) Touch bases with the other stage designers. That wall you were planning to use may be needed by someone else as well.

## STEEL

**1) Steel cannot be engaged closer than 10m. Do not just tell the shooter this. Make sure that there are charge lines to indicate the 10m distance.**

**2) Arrange the COF to make sure that the steel striking surface is at a perpendicular to the shooter. This may require shooting boxes, fault lines or props to position the shooter in the proper orientation relative to the steel.**

**3) Do not array poppers behind each other. We have found that many shooters will hit the downed first popper while trying to engage the second. This provides a great bullet launch (bad news if we want to continue to shoot steel at CVHEC).**

**4) If at all possible position steel as close to the berms as possible. This way, if there are ricochets, they will be more likely to hit the berm.**

5) Avoid mixing US Poppers and Pepper Poppers on a single stage for pr reasons.

## OTHER PROPS

**1) Be sure to place targets at such a height that rounds will not pass through them and strike the range floor. What might work for a 5 foot tall shooter may not work for a 6 foot shooter. We must try to keep all rounds going directly into the berms, this may involve raising the targets or placing them closer to the berms.**

**2) Similarly, be sure that targets are at such a height that rounds will not pass over the berms. This can be a problem, particularly when upper A/B shots are called for. What might work for the 6 foot tall shooter may not for the 5 foot shooter.**

**3) When using steel fence posts to string fencing or anchor props, do not place the posts where they could be shot! In particular, never have steel at or near a shooting port.**

**4) When shooting through barrels (used as ports), use plastic, not metal barrels.**

5) Moving targets should not disappear completely. Leave a small portion visible to "encourage" engagement of all targets.

6) Use no shoots to protect mechanisms on moving targets.

7) Doors should open outward (toward the shooter).

8) Be sure that windows/ports are not too tall (we're not all 6' plus).

9) Avoid slippery surfaces. Add traction materials if necessary.

## HARD COVER

1) Remember to paint hard cover areas on targets in advance. Do not wait till the morning of the match.

2) The borders need to have tape to make a distinct scoring line.

3) Have extra targets with painted hard cover. If only the "head" is visible, it will quickly get shot up.

## 3-GUN CONSIDERATIONS

**1) Steel cannot be engaged with rifles.**

**2) Steel cannot be engaged with shotgun slugs or buckshot.** Steel can be engaged with birdshot (#6 or 7 1/2 is most commonly used).

3) For shotguns using birdshot, 35 or 40 yards is the maximum effective range for

poppers. (They will go down at 50y, but it takes a high hold and a careful shot.)

4) Shotguns hit the steel pretty hard. It is important to securely anchor all steel so that it responds to hits consistently. This is particularly important with the drop sliders. Also, the second (lighter weight) plate rack can not be used for shotgun stages as all the plates may or may not fall to a single hit.

5) With shotguns, paper is engaged with slugs (one hit counts as two) or buckshot (best two hits score). #4 Buck is not allowed, nor is birdshot.

**6) Do not have a shotgun stage where paper and steel are intermixed. Or where you start on paper (with slugs) and transition to steel (with shot). You can start on steel and then transition to paper.**

7) With shotguns, do not get carried away with high round counts. Many shotguns will only hold 6 rounds and loading can be a pain. A 40 rd COF would be excessive! Try to have no more than 14 rds required in a shotgun COF.

8) Combo stages should start with loaded, safed and holstered pistol or loaded and safed rifle or shotgun at low ready. **The other firearm should be grounded on table provided with no rounds chambered, although magazines may be loaded and in place.**

9) A combo stage might go this way. At signal, engage all steel with shotgun (birdshot!), ground shotgun on table, retrieve pistol and engage all paper.

**\*\*\*\*The COF must be designed so that no one goes downrange of the grounded firearm, whether it is unloaded or not.\*\*\*\***

10) **\*\*\*\*Hot holstering of a pistol during a stage will not be allowed.\*\*\*\***

11) Let's try to get some greater distances included so the capabilities of the rifle (and shooter) can be demonstrated. Alternatively, "optical" (scaled-down) targets can be employed to simulate greater distances.