

Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Project General Rules (2016)

Shooting sports events are a functional part of the Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Project. They are not the objective. Kids and youth development are the primary objectives of the Project. We are seeking to educate young people and introduce them to some activities that are enjoyable, socially acceptable, mentally and physically challenging and useful in building character. Rules are part of every formal game. While we have tried to keep rules to a minimum, the nature of these sports results in abundant rules, some of them very specific. Fun and safety are primary products of the project. They are deeply intertwined with these rules, formalizing courtesy and maintaining order.

This set of General Rules should be applied to any event within the 4-H Shooting Sports Project and supersede those posted in governing body rules such as NRA, USA Archery, NSCA, etc. For all 4-H events, the rules governing each will be posted with the event information and may vary in certain specifics. The event specific rules supersede any other rules. Be sure to always check event specific rules and procedures first.

1. COMPETITION

1.1 4-H competition

Any competitive shooting event that is authorized or sponsored by a Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Project at any level is a 4-H competition. Conduct, range and safety standards must comply with 4-H criteria. In general, event operation criteria set by national or international governing bodies are acceptable, unless otherwise modified. Follow 4-H event specific rules posted separately each year.

1.2 Authorization

Matches and tournaments (series of matches) must be authorized by the state 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator in order to be promoted as State level 4-H events or to include 4-H classes in other shooting events. County and District level 4-H events can be authorized by County Extension Agents and/or District Specialists and operated at those levels, even though the event may be open to all members in the state.

1.3 Rules

Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Project rules apply to all 4-H competitions in shooting sports. In general rules of national or international governing bodies are acceptable with specific modifications imposed by the 4-H project. District or county matches to determine participants in State 4-H events **must** follow current 4-H rules for all classes being qualified for State competition. Modification of 4-H rules for local events and locally sponsored invitational events is permitted as long as safety and control regulations are not reduced below these standards. Any such modification of the base rules must be posted and available to all participants.

1.4 Types of tournaments

Several types of competitive shooting events are allowable through the 4-H program.

a. State Events

Annual competitions may be conducted by the Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Project for 4-H Shooting Sports members and/or volunteer coaches or leaders in specified shooting sports events at announced times and locations. Participation in county or district matches or some level of placing in those matches may be required for participation at the State level.

b. Postal matches

Postal matches follow announced courses of fire under specified rules. They are fired locally with scores submitted to the State 4-H Office for compilation and determination of placing.

c. County, District or Regional Invitational

Clubs, counties or districts may hold announced matches in any and all shooting sports events as specified in rule 1.5.c.

1.5 Types of matches

a. Open Match

An Open Match is defined as any match or competitive event, open to all participants. 4-H Shooting Sports membership is required unless otherwise specified and local, county, district or regional restrictions may be applied by the match sponsor.

b. Restricted Match

A restricted match may be limited to specified ages of competitors.

c. Invitational Match

These matches are defined by the sponsoring 4-H group or organization as determined by invitations to participate extended to specified clubs, counties, districts or regions of the State. The entire State may be invited to participate.

2. ELIGIBILITY

2.1 Age Requirements

Youth may participate in 4-H year from September 1st of grade three through August 31st following completion of grade twelve, with these age restrictions:

- Minimum age - 8 (in addition to being in the 3rd grade)
- Maximum age - 18 (as of August 31 of the current 4-H year)
- Special education youth who are older than 19 and have not graduated from high school may participate in 4-H Youth Development programs as members, with approval by the county Extension agent. Participation is limited to the club or county level. County Extension staff have the option, on a case-by-case basis, to allow Special Education youth older than 19 to participate in competitive events at the club or county level.

a. Disqualifications

Otherwise eligible shooters who are members of organized collegiate or military teams or collegiate or military shooting clubs receiving coaching are **not** eligible for 4-H shooting events in the disciplines involved. Active participation in other matches or receiving general or specialized instruction in shooting camps, training projects or similar activities (e.g. Junior Olympic Shooting Projects, Olympic Training Center Shooting Camps and state, national or international matches) **does not** disqualify any shooter otherwise qualified from participation in the 4-H Shooting Sports events.

2.2 Age Classifications

Texas 4-H Member Categories

- **Junior:** Grades 3, 4, and 5
- **Intermediate:** Grades 6, 7, and 8
- **Senior:** Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12
 - **Shooting Sports Specified Events Only (See specific event rules)**
 - **Senior 1:** Grades 9 and 10
 - **Senior 2:** Grades 11 and 12

2.3 Team Representation

No shooter may be a member of more than one team or represent more than one county shooting sports project in any given event. All members of any team in 4-H events must meet the eligibility requirements, including active participation in a shooting sports project.

2.4 Club or County Teams

All members of a team representing a club or county in any 4-H Shooting Sports event must be members of the club or county being represented by the team. Members crossing county lines to participate in the project may do so in two ways:

- a. They may participate with the host club or county but retain their membership in and represent their home county in all events or
- b. They may elect to transfer all 4-H activities to the host county with an annual letter agreeing to such transfer on file with both the host and home county Extension offices.

This election is at the shooter's option, but no individual may be a 4-H member in more than one county.

3. EQUIPMENT

3.1 Eye protection

All shooters and other persons on or in the immediate vicinity of the firing line, including coaches, range officials and any spectators must wear adequate eye protection (glasses or goggles). The equipment must protect both eyes. Eye protection must be kept on until all shooting has ceased and the firing line has been made safe. Eye protection is mandatory for all shooting disciplines with the exception of archery, where eye protection is encouraged.

a. Corrective lenses

Normal corrective lenses constructed of impact resistant materials may be used. Polycarbonate lenses are preferred.

b. ISU glasses

ISU shooting glasses may be used only if the lens system for the shooting eye is large enough and properly situated to provide adequate protection to the shooting eye **and** an impervious shield for the non-shooting eye is firmly attached to the frames to provide adequate protection for the non-shooting eye. Safety is the over-riding consideration in the use of eye protection, and the judgment of the range officials and shoot management is final relative to the safety issue, and glasses deemed to be inadequate to protect both eyes may not be used. Shooters should clear their intended glasses prior to entering the range.

3.2 Ear protection

Adequate ear protection is required for all shooters participating in activities and events with the exception of Archery, BB gun, or air pistol/rifle events where they may be worn at the shooter's option. Hearing protection may consist of either appropriate plugs or headphones or a combination of both.

4. Challenges and Protests

4.1 Challenges

When a shooter or coach feels that a match fired where he/she is competing has been improperly evaluated or scored, the shooter may challenge the score. A challenge must be made within the challenge time posted within the event specific rules.

4.2 Protests

A competitor may formally protest:

- a. Any injustice which he feels has been done him except the evaluation of a target, which he may challenge as outlined in Rule 4.1.
- b. The conditions under which another competitor has been permitted to fire.
- c. The equipment which another competitor has been permitted to use.

4.3 How to Protest

A protest must be initiated immediately upon the occurrence of the protested incident. Failure to comply with the following procedure will automatically void the protest:

- a. State the complaint orally to the Range Officer or Statistical Officer. If not satisfied with his/her decision then,
- b. State the complaint orally to the Match Director. If not satisfied with his decision then,
- c. File a formal protest with the Match/Event Director stating all the facts in the case. Such written protest must be filed within 12 hours of the occurrence of the protested incident.
- d. The Match/Event Director will form a Jury, discuss the facts, make a decision and report to the competitor.

The protest and result of the protest will only be discussed with the shooter/participant that filed the complaint.

5. SHOOTER AND COACH RESPONSIBILITY

5.0.1 Behavior and sportsmanship

The spirit of 4-H sportsmanship and appropriate behavior is expected of all participants, parents and volunteer leaders in the 4-H Shooting Sports Project.

5.1 Safety

Shooters and coaches are responsible for understanding and practicing the rules of safe firearms handling. The highest standards of safety are to be followed at all times.

5.2 Knowledge of procedures and rules

Shooters and coaches will make an effort to understand the procedures used in each event and comply with the rules and standards of the events. Questions are encouraged to clarify any areas of misunderstanding or ignorance. Ignorance of the rules in any event does not override their existence. Shooters are responsible for knowing the rules and procedures of their event and staying within them. Learning the rules of the events is part of the educational process for 4-H Shooting Sports participants.

5.3 Eligibility

It is the shared responsibility of the shooter and his/her coach to determine that all eligibility requirements for participation in the shoot have been met. Eligibility is based on 4-H standards.

5.4 Reporting

Shooters are responsible for knowing the proper time to report for each event and appropriate relay with equipment and materials necessary for completion of the event. They are also responsible for reporting in a timely fashion for any announced orientation programs and for observing progress in their events in order to be prepared early if shooting proceeds at a rate faster than the posted times. Shooters should be prepared to take the field a minimum of 45 minutes ahead of their posted firing time.

5.4b Required Orientation

Where an orientation is required any shooter failing to attend the orientation will be disqualified from events during that day unless they are able to make up the orientation. No guaranteed availability of such make-up sessions is required. It is the shooter's responsibility to attend and receive the evidence of that attendance.

5.5 Checking scores

Each shooter is responsible for checking the scoring and mathematics of their individual score cards or targets. **Only** the shooter may review these cards or targets. Some events may allow others assist any shooter wishing to review their cards or targets.

5.6 Clearing the firing point

Each competitor must leave the firing point promptly at the completion of his/her relay. Firearms must be unloaded with their actions open before leaving the firing line and all other shooting equipment must be safely stored and handled.

