

Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Project General Rules (September 2023)

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 seek to educate young people and introduce them to 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 shall 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. ELIGIBILITY

For there to be a 4-H Shooting Sports project in a county, there **MUST** be a 4-H Certified Coach in the discipline being offered. For youth members to be eligible to participate in the shooting sports project, they **MUST** be participating under the supervision of a 4-H Certified Coach in that discipline.

1.1 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.

1.2 Age Requirements

Youth may participate in 4-H 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) as of August 31st of the current year.
- Maximum age - 18 (as of August 31 of the current 4-H year)
- Participants should refer to the Texas 4-H Rules and Guidelines for any additional policies on participation and age qualifications.

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.

1.3 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
- See specific event rules for more details on age classifications.

1.4 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.

1.5 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 by requesting, completing and submitting a cross county transfer request form.

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

COMPETITION

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

2.3 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 the State 4-H Roundup event will follow current year 4-H Shooting Sports rules, but the process will be determined by the District hosting the qualifying match. Modification of 4-H rules for local events and locally sponsored invitational events is permitted as long as safety and control regulations do not fall below the Texas 4-H standards. Any such modification of the base rules must be posted and available to all participants.

2.4 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. Each State event has its' own set of rules which should be referred to for contest qualification and procedures.

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 2.5.c.

2.5 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.

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 earplugs or earmuffs or a combination of both. **Electronic "Blue Tooth Air Buds" or other similar products ARE NOT ALLOWED.**

3.3 Rifles

Effective 01/18/23
Revised 02/28/23

Each year, the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee reviews the Minimum Standards and Best Management Practices of a 4-H Shooting Sports Program. Decisions to edit are based on the safety and education of our youth as well as the integrity of the 4-H program. In keeping with our long-standing philosophies of not participating in simulated combat sports nor shooting at humanoid targets the committee has implemented a new minimum standard, listed below.

- **Any firearm built or modified to give the distinct impression of a modern military style firearm such as an AR or AK is not allowed in the 4-H Shooting Sports Program.** Examples of unacceptable firearm components include: any type of muzzle devices (muzzle brake, recoil compensator, skeleton stocks, suppressors, porting), front pistol grips, heat shield/shroud, and magazines extending more than 1 inch below the receiver.

Ported barrels are permitted on shotguns & pistols.

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 as soon as is possible.

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.

5.0.2 Dress Code

Participants and spectators are required to dress appropriately. Team uniforms or shirts are encouraged, but not required. Both young people and adults should wear attire appropriate for the weather while remaining modest and socially acceptable. Shooters must wear a shirt with sleeves. Clothing deemed immodest or distracting to other shooters will not be permitted. Where eye and/or ear protection is required, fully enclosed shoes must be worn for safety reasons for both shooters and spectators. This includes in front of the firing line when checking targets.

For all Archery events (exceptions noted in archery event summaries) and walking Hunting events, the shooter must wear long pants and closed toed shoes. All shooters and coaches should remember that they may be having photographs taken or be asked to interview for the media. Remember **you** represent all of 4-H Shooting Sports. Make it a positive image!

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 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.

5.3a 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 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.

