



MOUNTED SHOOTERS OF AMERICA RULEBOOK

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- Class: There are Four competition classes, numbered accordingly which consist of Men, Women, and Seniors
- Levels: There are four levels. **Novice (non-winners of more that \$250 or two qualifying events)**, Non-Pro (includes level 1 and 2 shooters from other mounted shooting organizations), Semi-Pro (includes level 3 and 4 shooters from other mounted shooting organizations), and Pro (includes level 5 and 6 shooters from other mounted shooting organizations). These levels will be split by gender.
- Outlaws are NON-shooting competitors age 11 and under. Age is determined by the child's birthday during the year they turn 12. Outlaws may choose to shoot with the regular classes within the year he/she turns 12 beginning as a men's or women's level (See Outlaws rules section below)
- Lead Line Class: for ages 4-8. A parent leads their child through the pattern. The parent is on foot and keeps the horse at a walk or a jog. Parents may lead horse on horseback provided they can demonstrate they can do so safely to the match official prior to the match. Special awards will be given to all Lead Line contestants. All other Outlaw rules apply
- Senior Class- The Senior class shall be an optional class for contestants age 50 and over. Contestants over 50 must declare in which class they desire to compete upon entry at their first match of any calendar year.
- Entries: A contestant may enter a match for the jackpot no more than two times. A contestant may NOT enter twice on the same horse and may not use the same horse in different entries. Example: contestants may not switch horses for different courses. (The only time a contestant may change horses is if the horse is no longer able to compete due to injury or illness). Once a horse is "scratched" due to illness or injury it is no longer eligible for any competition for the entire match.

CLASSES:

Classes shall be determined in one of the following ways:

- Current HIGHEST standing in MSA, SASS, WSHA or CMSA mounted shooting organizations.
- MSA classifications may be changed at the discretion of a majority vote of the MSA board of directors, or an appropriate appointed committee, when evidence is shown to justify such a change.
- An MSA contestant may petition the MSA board or an appropriate appointed committee of the board to move up or down in class. The procedure for submitting a petition is simply to submit in writing to the board the reasons for such a change. Written petition must be submitted to the Board prior to an event.

Move ups in class are determined as follows:

The following events will qualify as "move-up Matches":

- State Championships
- Regional Championships
- National Championships
- World Championships

Or any other previously designated move-up match consisting of at least 4 stages.

Contestants who have won two MSA matches in their division in which there are at least 3 competitors in that division, will move up to the next division.

If a contestant wins overall at a State, National, Regional or World match, they will be moved up to the next division regardless of the number of entries in their class.

If a competitor moves up a division at a CMSA or SASS sanctioned match, that member must notify MSA via email of that move-up. However, if you move up in MSA, you are not required to notify CMSA or SASS of that move-up.

DRESS CODE:

The purpose of our dress code is to promote a professional equestrian sport with modern rodeo attire.

- Hats: A western style hat is required of all contestants when in the arena. Hats of felt, straw and palm are acceptable. Safety helmets are also acceptable.
- Boots: Boots are required when in the arena, boots should be western in style, ropers and packers are also acceptable.
- Pants: Long pants are required when in the arena.

- Shirts: All Contestants are required to wear a long sleeve button down or snapped shirt, with a conventional and or banded collar while in the arena.
- We encourage all contestants to pursue western and patriotic themes in their dress. Match directors may get permission for special “costume” matches for special events. Match director will forward a written request to the board detailing specifics of the event.

FIREARMS

- Only fixed sight, single action revolvers of .45 caliber, will be allowed in MSA competitions. Examples: Colt Single Action Army or Bisley Model, Smith & Wesson Schofield, or their reproductions and Ruger Vaqueros.
- A holster is defined as a pouch formed in the shape of a gun. A feedbag or saddlebag does not qualify and is considered by MSA to be unsafe. Pistols shall be returned to holsters, which would be limited to belted holsters, pommel, cantle, and/or shoulder holsters.
- All firearms shall be maintained in the same external condition as originally manufactured from the factory. Allowed modifications will be limited to engraving, hammer knurling or turned down hammers as long as there is no lateral movement or welded add-ons. Custom grips are allowed including Birds head grips. The original external profile shall be maintained. All external parts shall be of the type manufactured for that particular model of firearm. Stock parts may be swapped from gun to gun. Site modifications will be limited to the filing of the front site. Triggers shall be operational; “slip hammer” revolvers are unsafe.
- “Bird’s Head” type grip frames on single action revolvers are legal for MSA matches. Included are standard factory production Bird’s Head Grip Frame guns and guns equipped with aftermarket Bird’s Head Grip Frames. Aftermarket grip frames shall be a production type product. The side profile for grip frames cannot be altered on any revolver. This includes Standard, Factory Bird’s Head and guns equipped with aftermarket Bird’s Head Grip Frames.
- “Bisley Style Hammers” are legal on single action revolvers for MSA matches. A Bisley Style Hammer may replace a standard hammer so long as it is of the same manufacturer. Example: It is legal to replace a standard Ruger Vaquero hammer with a Ruger Bisley Hammer.

The only exception to these rules shall be special modifications for medical/disability reasons; the match judge will make the final call.

TACK

- Contestants must use a saddle and bridle constructed of leather and in safe condition.

- Contestants may use any bit or hackamore to reasonably control their mount as long as it is not overly severe in design.

HORSES

Mounted Shooters of America Inc. competitions are open to all breeds of horses and mules, registered and unregistered. Contestants are expected to compete with mounts that are healthy and in good physical condition. Horses should be introduced and conditioned to the sound of gunfire prior to competing in an MSA match. New contestants and/or mounts shall demonstrate that they can safely control or be controlled during the completion of a course of fire prior to entering a competition. No abuse of animals will be allowed. This is a Match Judge call, done with a warning first. If disregarded, expulsion from the match will follow.

OUTLAW RULE BOOK

- The Outlaw Rulebook will have specified rules while maintaining MSA rules and standards.
- Outlaws are contestants age 11 and under.
- Contestants will ride the same courses as chosen for the match but may be more defined by the use of cones.
- Match judges of the match or designated outlaw official should hold an Outlaw contestants meeting before the match with all Outlaws and parents attending. The meeting will address course set-up, dress code, safety, gun handling and the possibility of having an adult rider pre-ride courses for clarity.
- Parents of Outlaws will sign a release form and will be responsible that their child is prepared to participate in a safe and responsible manner
- Parents are responsible to have their child ready, prepared and in time for their class.
- Outlaws who have demonstrated the ability to safely control their mount, will ride their course using play guns and holster setup resembling the firearms specified in the MSA rulebook. Real firearms with empty loads will be allowed but will be checked by the match judge before every course.
- Outlaws will aim and shoot at their first five targets, then make their gun change and finish their next five targets with their 2nd gun. Outlaws are reminded to ride at the speed compatible to their ability and take note that safety will always come first.
- Before starting the course the Outlaw will show the match judge with which gun they are starting. After passing the timer the Outlaw will show the match judge their 2nd gun. This will confirm that the proper gun change has been made.
- Tack should be appropriate for the use and safety of the Outlaw and horse.
- Horses used for the match should fit the ability of the Outlaw.
- All penalties shall be as stated in the MSA rules. In addition “failure to follow course of fire” will include the use of predetermined placement of cones as explained in the Outlaw courses. Outlaw will stay within those additional cones.
- Match Director and Outlaw Judge for each match alter these rules based on their judgment and for the safety of the contestant’s ability to ride.

- Outlaws will have to aim and shoot at all targets for them not to be penalized. All decisions to be made by the match judge.
- No Outlaw shall have a real firearm outside the stage and loading area. Firearms shall be handed over to the responsible adult or left in safekeeping with the armorer.

PATTERN SAFETY AND GUN CHANGE GUIDLINES

- The “course of fire” or pattern of riding is commonly referred to as a “course” and should be designed for maximum enjoyment of competitors and spectators, while testing horsemanship and shooting skills. The safety of contestants, spectators and horses is a principle concern. It is MSA’s intention to standardize all courses. Standardization of size will provide contestants with the opportunity to create true time records for specific venues and events.
- A standard mounted shooting pattern is to have ten targets. A contestant is to engage the course of fire with two single action revolvers loaded with not more than 5 approved cartridges. Revolvers are used one at a time. With the first revolver, a contestant engages the first half of the pattern. After completing the first half of the course, the contestant shall holster the now empty revolver and draw the second revolver and ride to engage the second half of the stage. Pistols shall be returned to holsters, which would be limited to belted holsters, pommel, cantle, and/or shoulder holsters.
- The Match Judge will have the responsibility of making final inspections of the course before the contestant gets their go. All Contestants may ask questions regarding the course of fire prior to crossing the starting line.
- Barrel will not be closer than 25 feet to the side rails of the arena and 25 feet to the end rail and balloons shall be a safe distance from the spectators.
- After completing the course all contestants report to the armorer’s table to unload.

TIMING

Electronic beam “barrel racing” timers, such as the Pegasus Timer or FarmTek Timers, are preferred for larger championship events. The contestant and horse shall start the course of fire from behind a predetermined start/finish line.

20X

- The 20X is an eliminator style Jackpot shoot. All contestants will be separated into 6 divisions. It will be gender split with the Non-Pro division, Semi-Pro division, and Pro division. Seniors will shoot in one of these divisions and will not be separated into an additional division. If there is no Main Match offered at an event, the Match Director may add a Novice division.
- The 20X will be run with the same 3 stages, beginning with the Post, then the Arrow and the final stage is the X. (Match Directors may alter these stages at their discretion)
- The first two stages will be run with the Pro Class (men) starting and moving on down to the Non-pro. The final stage will be run Non-Pro (ladies) beginning with the slowest

contestant to make the elimination and moving to the fastest. The Semi-Pro will ride next and finally the Pro class will finish.

- Elimination is determined by the fastest times combined in the qualifying stages and the top half in a class/division will return (maximum of ten) for the final elimination stage. This final stage is the only score that will determine placement of winners.

MAIN MATCH

- Main Match Competitions are generally 4 or 6 stage matches. The number of courses should be determined prior to the start of the event.
- Each affiliate club should have at least one Buckle Match per year.
- Main Matches can run in conjunction with 20X competitions.
- Main Match competitions are generally run over the course of two days, however, 4 stage matches may be held in a single day.

HORSEMANSHIP CHALLENGE

- The Horsemanship Challenge is a scored and timed event that rates the horse on ability and willingness to negotiate several obstacles set up in a prescribed area. A sample of obstacles generally used, and method of scoring are:
 - Gate – Time starts when the rider's hand makes contact with the gate latch. The horse starts with a total of 3 points. Points are deducted for refusals, miscues or other errors in opening and closing the gate. Any refusal will result in subtracting 3 points.
 - Bridge – This is generally an elevated platform made of wood. It should be at least 4 feet wide and 6 feet long. The horse starts with 3 points and points are deducted for any feet that drop off the sides of the bridge, or a horse refuses to negotiate the obstacle. One point per foot. 3 points will be deducted for a refusal.
 - Jump – This is a low set pole that, for safety reasons the pole will easily fall if a horse bumps it. The horse starts with 3 points. Points are deducted for refusals, and knocked down poles. One point shall be deducted if the horse hits the pole but the pole does not fall. Two points for the pole falling and 3 points for a refusal.
 - Balloon shoot – Three balloons will be set in a line a few feet apart. A holster will be mounted on the fence with a loaded gun in it. The rider will pick up the gun, engage all three targets, and then holster the gun in a second holster on the other end of the line of balloons. The rider will start with three points. Each missed balloon will result in a point deduction.
 - Log Drag – A log with a lariat attached to one end will be placed on the arena floor. Two barrels or cones will be used to designate the beginning and end of the drag. The lariat will be placed on one barrel or the other with the rope end of the log behind the rear plane of the barrel. The rider will pick up the lariat, dally if necessary, and drag the log past the rear plane of the second barrel. The rider shall then place the lariat back on the top of the second barrel. The rider starts

with 3 points. Points are deducted for dropped lariats, refusals, and failing to put the lariat back on the barrel.

- Tennis ball on cone – Two tall traffic cones will be set about 20 feet apart. A tennis ball will be placed on one of the cones. The rider will pick the tennis ball up with one hand, transfer it to the other hand, and then place the ball on top of the second cone. The rider starts with three points. Points will be deducted for dropping the ball at the first cone, failing to switch hands, and dropping the ball on the second cone. Refusals will result in a 3 point reduction.
- Backing – 6 poles, a minimum of 8 feet long, will be laid out in a modified Z. The angles of the turns shall not be any less than 90 degrees. The rider may engage the backing pattern by riding through it until their horses rear legs clear the end of the poles, at which time they begin backing, or they may turn their horse at the beginning of the pattern and back through in that manner. The horse starts with 3 points and will lose points based on how many times their feet cross the poles or knock the poles out of alignment. Refusals will result in the loss of all three points.
- Curtain – This consists of a heavy material cut into strips and suspended over a 3-4 foot wide area. The material should hang down enough so that a normal sized horse can not see the other side. A pole can be set along the outside edge to make it easier to judge if the horse goes off course. The horse starts with three points. Points are deducted for the horse going off course or refusing the obstacle.
- Trailer / pen – This obstacle is not judged but will signify the end of the run. The rider will be required to dismount from their horse and either load their horse into a trailer or put them in a small pen, close the gate, then run on foot to a bell. Ringing the bell will signify the end of the run and the time will stop.
- Timing – Times will be used in the event of a points tie to determine the winner. For instance, if two riders are each penalized one point, their times will be used to calculate the winner based on the fastest time.
- Maximum time – A maximum of 3 ½ minutes will be allowed for the course. Any rider going over that time will be disqualified.

SCORING

- Mounted Shooting matches are scored according to elapsed time plus the total of any applicable penalties. The total sum of all of the courses determines the match winners. See “Penalties” for more information.

PENALTIES

Discretionary penalties have no place in timed events and penalties shall be restricted to the following:

- Missed target: 5 seconds
- Knocked over barrel: 5 seconds
- Failure to follow course of fire: 10 seconds
- Dropped gun: 5 seconds plus all missed targets.

- Crossing the timing beam prior to completion of course: 60 seconds.
- A contestant who crosses the timing beam and fires back at a target receives credit for the hit.
- Any rider dismounted during a course of fire shall receive a 60 time plus penalties for missed targets.
- Lost hat during the course of fire will result in a minimal fine, payable to the balloon setters.
- A firearm that is dropped once the course has been engaged is a dead firearm. No consequences will be received for a firearm dropped after crossing the finish line.
- No penalty is to be given if a contestant knocks over a target pole. However, the targets shall be burst by direct gunfire. All targets whether standing or lying down shall be burst by gunfire to be considered a hit. Where controversy occurs as to how a target was broken, the Match Judge's call is final. A Match Judge may rely on video replay to determine his call and it is encouraged that he does so.
- If a contestant engages a course of fire and a balloon is no longer inflated (for whatever reason) this is considered a non-miss and no penalty will be awarded.
- If a contestant hits two balloons IN THE SAME HALF OF THE STAGE with one shot they may use the remaining round to pick up a target they may have missed in that half of the stage. If a contestant misses a balloon on the first half of a stage and is able to engage the second half of the stage and breaks the missed target in the course of fire without missing the sequence of the second half, this will count and no procedural will be given. The essence of this rule is to reward the contestant for proper conduct and to recognize excellence in accuracy.
- A contestant will have been determined to engage the course once he has crossed the start line or is on the clock. Thereafter any mechanical malfunction(s) of your firearm or gear, including your horse, will not constitute a re-ride.
- If a contestant is notified during or after the completion of a stage that a timekeeper error or timing malfunction occurs the contestant will be granted a re-ride. The timekeeper and the Match Judge will determine if a re-ride is granted.
- If a run is interrupted, the Match Judge makes the call for a re-ride.
- If a contestant accepts a course that is set up incorrectly (wrong color balloon on the wrong pole), the contestant will not be offered a re-ride. The competitor will be required to engage the correct color of balloon regardless of placement. The Match Judge is encouraged to insure this does not happen and competitors are encouraged to make sure their course of fire is correctly set up but on occasion, errors do occur and are missed.

PAYOUT FORMULAS AND GUIDLINES

Top Ten Payout

1st Place 22%, 2nd Place 18%, 3rd Place 15%, 4th Place 12%, 5th Place 10%, 6th Place 8%, 7th Place 6%, 8th Place 4%, 9th Place 3%, 10th Place 2%

Payout of prize money to MSA classes

The payout of entry fee prize money to MSA classes shall be determined as follows:

- 50% of entry fee will be paid to the class. (percentage payback may be adjusted by the Match Director and advertised prior to the match)
- Payouts for class winners shall be as follows:
 - 1-3 Contestants pays 1 places 100%
 - 4-6 Contestants pays 2 places 60%/40%
 - 7-10 Contestants pays 3 places 50%/30%/20%
 - 11-14 Contestants pays 4 places 40%/30%/20%/10%
 - 15-17 Contestants pays 5 places 30%/25%/20%/15%/10%
 - 18-20 Contestants Pays 6 places 26%/20%/18%/16%/12%/8%
 - 21-23 Contestants Pays 7 places 25%/20%/17%/14%/12%/7%/5%
 - 24-26 Contestants Pays 8 places 24%/19%/16%/12%/10%/8%/6%/5%
 - 27-29 Contestants Pays 9 places 23%/18%/16%/12%/10%/8%/6%/4%/3%
 - 30-and up Pays 10 places 22%/18%/15%/12%/10%/8%/6%/4%/3%/2%

A Maximum of 10 Places will be paid.

Added Money Payout

100% of any added money will be equally divided among the classes represented and paid out with the above formula.

REFUNDS

Refunds WILL be issued to all paid contestants who do not compete in a match. Once a contestant fires a shot in a match no refunds will be issued if he/she cannot complete the match.

Points

- Points are dollars won. Each dollar equals a point.
- Points will be counted toward saddles for overall points winners in their divisions and those saddles will be awarded at the MSA World Competition.
- Points will be awarded for 20X, Main Match, All Rifle, Shotgun and Kennedy Horsemanship Challenge. No points will be awarded for “Fun shoot”, Teams or any other type of match other than those mentioned above.
- A minimum of 500 points must be won prior to MSA World Competition to qualify for the Saddle prizes.

- Points Saddle winners must compete at MSA World Competition to win a saddle
- With the exception of the Novice division, points remain with a contestant as they move up or down
- No points are required to qualify for MSA World Competition entry.

AMMUNITION

- Contestants at MSA functions are responsible for having their revolvers loaded and unloaded with issued ammunition either by or in the presence of the MSA armorer. Once a contestant accepts the ammo taken from the loading area, it is his/her ammo for that course.
- If a contestant should accidentally or otherwise fire a round prior to entering the arena they may not obtain additional ammo for that round. Potential disqualification from the entire match may be awarded depending on the circumstances and will be reviewed by the match director and officials.
- There is no “”bad ammo.
- All contestants must bring ammo back to the loading area and return/dispose of all brass after each course.
- All contestants must remain in the designated armory area, if there is room, once their guns are loaded.

TARGETS

- The standard targets used in Mounted Shooting competitions are helium quality balloons.
- When inflated, a target should measure 6 to 9 inches in diameter. Care should be taken to make sure that targets are of uniform size for all competitors. Balloons shall be of two distinctly different colors; it makes it easier for a contestant to define the first half from the second half of a course. Some courses will use the same color for all targets (example: The X, The Fish)
- For safety reasons target stands should be made of a flexible material like PVC or polyethylene pipe no larger than $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter.
- Standard target poles should be 48 inches high, but can be varied to ground level to increase the variety possible within each mounted shooting course. Traffic cones make excellent, safe bases for target poles. Once the contestant starts the course they have accepted their course.

SAFETY

- All contestants are responsible for their own personal safety and that of their horse. They should also remain alert for other unsafe conditions and/or unsafe conduct by others. All contestants are considered safety officers and should take immediate action to remedy an unsafe condition by reporting anyone whose conduct is unsafe to the Match Judge.

Safety Rules and Guidelines:

- All Firearms will be treated as if they are loaded.

- All loading and unloading of firearms should be done under the supervision of the designated armorer.
- All firearms shall remain unloaded until the contestant is called to the loading area.
- All contestants shall use the “match supplied” blank ammunition. More than one ammo product may be supplied to allow the competitors a choice. No personal ammunition of any type is to be allowed at MSA competitions under penalty of disqualification. No blank shall have an effective range longer than 20 feet for contestant and spectator safety
- No firearm shall be cocked until immediately prior to engaging a target.
- Contestants are expected to compete safely within their individual capabilities at all times. Control your firearm's muzzle direction at all times.
- Contestants will NOT ride into the course while balloon setters are inside. Contestants will not enter the arena during stage changes. When the announcement is made to clear the arena all contestants will precede immediately to the closest out gate.
- Spectators shall not be allowed in horse staging areas and vice versa.
- All contestants shall be knowledgeable and proficient in the safe use of firearms.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the arena, staging and shooting areas. This includes all persons, contestants, match judges, guests or any one else in these areas.
- Contestants shall not consume any alcoholic beverage until they have completed all of their shooting for the day and have unloaded, inspected, and stored all of their firearms. Violators will be disqualified immediately from the match and entry fees will be forfeited. Repeat offenders will be banned from MSA competitions. This rule applies to any medication that may alter a contestants' level of consciousness.
- Contestants shall have no live ammunition on their person or in their cartridge belts or saddlebags.
- Contestants have final responsibility to make sure their firearms are loaded, check for missing or dented primers, cylinders rotate freely and to be certain they are properly indexed prior to stage engagement. The armorer is not responsible. There will be no rides for ammo or firearm related problems.
- Abusive language or conduct shall not be tolerated and at discretion of Match Judge, shall be given a warning or disqualification.
- No abusive behavior to animals either in or out of the arena.

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