



Match Judge's Handbook

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Introduction

A Match Judge is a key element to a well-run mounted shooting event. The Match Judge's responsibilities include maintaining a safe environment for both shooters and spectators, assessing any penalties incurred on a shooter's run and keeping the match moving in a timely fashion.

Match Judge must fully understand current rules of MSA. He/She should have a pocket copy of these rules with him/her for referral as he/she is performing these functions.

Before The First Shot

Before the first rider starts, the Match Judge should look over the selected course, insuring there are no safety hazards for shooters or spectators. When setting up a course a Match Judge has the latitude to change any balloon placement to insure the gunfire is directed in a safe area. The barrels are to be a minimum of 15 ft from the side of the arena and 25 ft from the end. It should also be pointed out that a Match Judge could help himself by setting up the courses to minimize procedurals. It is inevitable that some procedurals will occur during a

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match, but it is easy enough for the Match Judge to minimize these. The less ambiguity in course design the easier the Match Judge's job can be.

After the course has been set the Match Judge should address ALL shooters and give a verbal description of the course and answer any questions. Addressing potential procedural and pointing out hazards of a particular course can avoid controversy. All potential controversies should be settled before the first rider crosses the timeline. Once the first rider has crossed the timeline it is too late to make any changes. If a Match Judge change is made during a stage, it's very important that the outgoing Match Judge communicate how any "judgment calls" have been ruled (so the replacement can continue in the same manner).

When addressing all shooters the Match Judge should review the Safety Rules as proscribed by MSA. These should include, but not be limited to, abuse of animals, poor sportsmanship, use of alcohol, and dispute resolution.

Check List

Once the first rider enters the arena the Match Judge should be going through a mental checklist. 1) Check gates to make sure all are closed. 2) Balloon setters, spectators or gatekeepers are on the outside of the arena 3) The course is set with 10 inflated balloons set as targets 4) Timer is working 5) Side Judge is in place.

Match Judge's Location

The Match Judge should be in plain sight of the contestants and the timekeepers. It is highly recommended that his/her location remain in the same area during the entire match.

Side Judge

The Side Judge should be appointed by the Match Judge and should communicate any penalties or discrepancies (i.e. tipped barrels or dropped guns) with the Match Judge.

Timer/Match Judge Coordination

Constant communication between the Match Judge and the timing crew is essential to facilitate correct timing and a smoothly flowing match.

Radio Communications

It is recommended if the distance between the Match Judge and the timing crew is too great.

Hold/Start Signal

The rider should remain in the ready position with his/her gun holstered until the Match Judge raises an arm indicating all is clear and the rider can start. The start indicator should be the arm pointed toward the course.

Problems After A Riders Engages The Course

Once a rider crosses the start line any problem that causes them to stop, slowdown or miss balloons are not grounds for a re-ride. This includes: unloaded gun(s), lame horse, injured riders, broken tack, torn clothing, broken gun(s), missing gun(s), wasn't really ready, started

on the wrong lead, started on the wrong side of the arena, didn't understand the course of fire and etc., etc., etc.

Ammo and The Match Judge

All ammo is certified by MSA. It is the rider's responsibility to check his/her guns after loading to insure the cylinder spins freely and the ammo has been reloaded correctly. Once a rider crosses the timer they have accepted the ammo, and any problems with the gun firing at the targets is a GUN problem, not an ammo problem and no re-ride will be given for "High Primers, Squibb shots or Misfires". The Match Judge should point this out at the Safety Meeting before the match starts.

Dropped Guns

The Match Judge or a Side Judge must be the only person to pickup a dropped gun. Guns dropped before crossing the start line or after re-crossing the finish line are not assessed a penalty. A rider who drops a firearm before crossing the timing beam is removed from his place in line until the firearm has been cleaned and inspected by a match official. Guns dropped the course of fire are always assessed a 5 second penalty (plus penalties for missed targets). If a rider drops both guns while riding the course there is only one-5 second penalty assessed (plus all missed targets). No penalties will be received for a firearm dropped after crossing the finish line, but the match official or the armorer shall still inspect the firearm.

Unintended Crossing Of The Start/Finish Line

If a rider unintentionally crosses the start/finish line (prior to completing the course of fire) their run is finished and they are to receive a 60 second time plus penalties for any missed targets.

Procedurals

A procedural is a 10 second penalty for not following the course of fire. Only one procedural can be given per run and should be avoided whenever possible. Procedurals can be avoided by explaining the rules and course of fire prior to the first rider. Again, making sure that the course is laid out with little or no room for judgment calls on the part of the Match Judge. **Examples of procedurals are:** failure to turn a barrel, turning the wrong barrel first, shooting the wrong color balloons first, not shooting the required balloon(s) first, shortening the course of fire by not engaging balloon(s) and etc.

Slow Dying Balloons/Not Broken by Gunfire

This is the Match Judge's call, so watch for it! All balloons must be burst by gunfire. They cannot be broken by any other means. If broken by any other means the Match Judge will determine if a penalty applies. Example: If the horse's tail obviously breaks the balloon target it will count as a penalty. It is not required to shoot at the empty stick, but it is recommended as a way to keep one's timing and to expend all the live ammo prior to leaving the arena.

Down Or Under Inflated Balloons

If a rider requests that a low balloon be replaced, the Match Judge should order the Balloon Setters to do so, if the request is warranted. Once the rider crosses the start line then he/she

has accepted the course - no free hits or re-rides should be given for missed undersized (but not deflated) balloons. Correspondingly, a rider is given the "hit" if a balloon goes down on its own (not the same as being stepped on by a horse - which is counted as a miss) before the rider re-crosses the finish line.

Calling Misses

Match Judge will communicate number of misses to the timing crew.

Maximum Time Runs

There are no maximum time runs. See unintended dismount and crossing of the start line.

Unfired Rounds

The Match Judge should request that a rider fire any unfired rounds into the ground before leaving the arena. (This should be announced at the rider's meeting.) Handing the gun to the Match Judge is not required and wastes time. If there is a question about a live round that won't fire, the rider should be directed to the Armorer.

Miscellaneous Calls

No abuse of horses is permitted by MSA rules. This is the Match Judge's call, with a warning issued first. If the warning is disregarded, expulsion from the match should follow.