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TEAMS OPERATIONS

1.0 PRINCIPLES

Team shooting is about various individuals working together to help each other achieve the best possible result by sharing information, experience, advice, support and, in some cases, equipment.

2.0 TEAM STRUCTURE

No matter how many members in a team, each team should consist of a coach and captain.

Captain: - makes decisions on behalf of the team,
 - handle or delegate organisational requirements,
 - ensure the team complies with time schedules.

Coach: - gives shooting instructions to the shooter,
 - advises who should shoot and when,
 - the role of the shooter,
 - firing point,
 - quantity of ammo to be fired,
 - firing sequence,
 - make wind and mirage calls,
 - make or advise sight corrections,
 - count shots,
 - give advice on when to shoot,
 - encourage and motivate the shooter.

Shooter: - listen to and obey the Captain,
 - listen to and obey the Coach,
 - put the team before themselves,
 - ensure all equipment required is available and operational,
 - advise coach of shooter equipment specifics (sight increments, calibre, etc),
 - advise coach on any complex issues or settings, or required settings (zeros),
 - advise coach of weaknesses (eg. inability to shoot fast, poor eyesight, etc).

Team Member: - all to assist other team members where and when needed,
 - collect spent cases,
 - carry equipment,

3.0 EQUIPMENT

Team equipment, if supplied by club, team or individual, needs to be of good quality and in good condition for the team to achieve the best possible results. Like many things, the budget could be endless. Some basic needs are:

- quality spotting scope capable of:
 - seeing bullet holes in targets at 300 in reasonable conditions,
 - seeing deep through mirage,
 - scope stand that allows fast changes, is steady and versatile,
 - scope to stand mounting to enable the scope being directly positioned down the barrel line of the firearm without inhibiting the shooter,
- score book with target diagrams for dimensions and plotting shots,
- wind charts (to suite calibre and bullet being shot),
- any other equipment that may be needed to help the shooter and obtain high results.

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Coach and shooter should meet prior to the match and/or string to discuss equipment for familiarity, advantage, changes and factoring in equipment flexibility or restrictions.

4.0 SPOTTING SCOPE AND USE

The telescope is very important to the coach in determining sight adjustments by reading the mirage (wind condition) or observing the locations of hits to accurately plot them on the coaches plot sheet and later transfer the information to the shooters score book. Depending on the range, the use of a telescope varies.

- a. At 200 in the standing position slow fire, the telescope is used to check the location of hits. The scope should be positioned on a shooters firing side. The scope should be focused clearly on the target.
- b. At 200 sitting rapid fire and 300 prone rapid fire, the scope is used to watch vapour trails and check mirage (wind). The scope should be directly behind the shooter, far enough from the shooter as to not interfere with the shooter as they assume a standing position, but close enough to clearly communicate. The scope should be positioned directly in line with the bore of the firearm to facilitate viewing of the bullet vapour trail.
- c. At 600 prone slow fire, the scope should be positioned directly in line with the bore of the firearm to facilitate viewing of the bullet vapour trail, and as close to the shooter as possible to freely communicate. The scope should be focused mid-range for reading the mirage (wind).

5.0 POSITIONS – SHOOTER AND COACH

The shooter should consider where the Coach would be best position so the shooter can most effectively hear and understand calls. In all cases, the coach should be behind the line of the barrel and as close as possible to the shooter so the shooter can hear the calls without obstructing the shooter.

6.0 COACH TO WATCH FOR...

- Flags to see wind conditions, direction and changes,
- Mirage to see wind conditions, direction and changes,
- Bullet trace/vapour trail for fall of shot – (Make call to self before target is marked),
- Targets up (call “targets” to help cue the shooter in case shooter not focused),
- Targets down (perhaps 1 second before targets go down so the shooter does not waste a shot),
- Watch for jams/misfeeds and offer assistance (verbally or physically).

7.0 SHOOTER CADENCE (BEING READY)

A shooter getting into a cadence during a string is very important to shoot well. The main components of the shooting cycle, breathing, sight picture and trigger control, all takes time. A rhythmic execution of all these 3 elements ensures no rushed shots during a string while still shooting as quickly as possible (with sacrificing accuracy) and minimising the threat of fatigue (that may come later during a long or slow string).

The shooter should be ready to go as soon as the string begins. This means having everything ready to go (mags or stripper clips loaded, coat on, sight black on, equipment needed separated, sling set to correct length, etc. This means as soon as you enter the firing point, you can spend time studying the wind conditions and use preparation time affectively to build a solid shooting position.

7.1 TIMINGS – SHOOTING SLOW FIRE works out to 1 shot per minute. But considering potential stoppages and considerable condition changes, it is best to shoot as fast as possible,

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without sacrificing accuracy. If you finish with plenty of time to spare, then so be it. (most top shooters finish in less than half the available time).

7.2 TIMINGS – SHOOTING RAPID FIRE, with due planning, is easy. Plan the string, time yourself and know your shooting pattern to build/develop an affective cadence ensuring you finish with time to spare (in case there is a typical stoppage that you can clear and recover from (assuming no alibis given)).

8.0 COMMUNICATIONS - GENERAL

8.1 DIALOG: During team events, communications between team members should be kept:

- to a minimum to avoid information overload (the most typical problem),
- as effective and concise as possible to avoid confusion and misunderstandings,
- as quiet as possible so other teams cannot pilfer your information and use it against you.

8.2 COACH CALLS: The Coach should take up position as close to the shooter as possible so the shooter can hear coaching calls. Remember the shooter would be wearing ear protection and should not be put in a position to have to concentrate for the coaches voice causing breaks in concentrating on shooting.

8.3 TIME CALL WHILE COUNTING SHOTS: The Coach should keep track of shots fired during a string in case of alibis or hits on target challenges. Also the coach should consider the amount of shots remaining in the available time by keeping using a stopwatch. An example might be, a shooter may have begun slowly and have over half the prescribed number of rounds to be fired in less than half the allocated time. A time call to the shooter is often a good indicator to speed up. The Coach may call out “20 seconds” to advise the shooter that 20 seconds remains, or “20 seconds and 5 shots remaining” indicating the shooter has 5 shots to fire within the 20 seconds.

9.0 COACHING THE SHOOTER

9.1 LIMITATIONS: Know the limitations of the shooter. Simply, ask them, “What are you capable of?”. Consider previous scores, all the factors present on the day (light, wind, mirage, equipment, loads, surroundings, etc).

9.2 BE OPEN: Coach should communicate freely with the shooter at any stage during the string (even if the shooter is just about to pull the trigger). Likewise the shooter should be open with the coach at any stage of the string. Shooters must learn the skill of talking and communicating with the coach while shooting. It is important for achieving good results, however talking should be kept to a minimum, but be concise and effective.

9.3 CORRECTIONS: Give corrections in the simplest form. Ask the shooter how best to communicate. Examples might be, to come a few inches left:

- “come 6 clicks left”
- “come 1 turn left”
- “come 1 point left”
- “favour left” (no sight adjustment, just aim off - explained later).

9.4 WHEN TO SHOOT: The job of the coach is to tell the shooter when to shoot. The shooter should be receptive to the coach orders and follow them precisely and immediately. The shooter

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may make a suggestion to the coach if a change is noticed in an area that the coach has not noticed at that exact moment. In most cases, the shooter should shoot fast, and on demand.

9.5 SHOOTING SLOW FIRE: As each shot is marked, it gives plenty of time for the coach to communicate to the shooter, while the shooter reloads and settles to refire. Some basic calls a shooter will hear from a coach during firing is:

- STOP! Do not pull the trigger and wait for next command. This could come at any time.
- GO! Pull the trigger ASAP and accurately. The quicker this is done, the better.
- HURRY! If the shooter is taking too long, he can suffer a wind change without a late correction. It is important to shoot as quickly after the call from the coach as possible so the shot is fired in the condition that was called by the coach.
- WAIT!
 - Take the pressure off the trigger, but don't take your mind off the job.
 - Be patient, but stay diligent, sharp, and ready to shoot.
 - The wait could be seconds or minutes, but the GO could come at any time.
 - Keep breathing and don't "stare" down the sights (look around you) – eye fatigue.
 - The difference between STOP and WAIT, is WAIT is to stay in position and be patient – breath, exercise eyes, breath, take pressure off grip and sling, breath.

9.6 SHOOTING RAPID FIRE: This single string is an art to coach. There needs to be good communication and understanding between the coach and shooter prior to getting on the line. This course requires an intense burst of loud, concise and clear calls from the coach to the shooter. Within the rapid fire period, be it 30, 50, 60 or 70 seconds, or other, it is easy to flood a shooter with so much information that could result in confusion, mistakes and a worse score than if the shooter did not have a coach. The shooter should be told as much information as possible that can be reasonably retained by the shooter within the seconds the shooter has to hear, understand, apply and execute.

9.7 KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING: You need to know how good the shooter is you are about to coach. What is that shooter capable of? Ask the shooter how they feel, how well they think they will shoot, what is the condition of the equipment, anything specific the coach should know (calibre and load considerations, sight increments, etc.).

9.8 INSTRUCTIONS: As there are so many instructions that can be given to the shooter, it is best to simulate a rapid fire (with various scenarios built into one string) below.

The coach should:

9.8.1 ASK:

- What is the calibre of rifle and bullet weight?
- Can you hold the black (keep shots within the aiming mark)?
- Can you accurately call shots (know where the bullet should go after pulling trigger)?
- What are your sight increments and orientation (direction)?
- Do you shoot fast or slow?
- Are you relaxed during the string? Do you need to be encouraged to relax?
- Do you need time calls (time calls can worry a shooter)?

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9.8.2 ENCOURAGE AND REMIND:

- Remind the shooter to breath, take a deep breath before targets appear and breath between each shot.
- Before the string starts, while the shooter is waiting for targets to appear, reminder the shooter of the target they are shooting at. Keep calling it out while they make ready to fire.
- As targets come up, remind shooter of target, to breath and relax.
- Time keep and let the shooter know after the first reload of time remaining. Also give 10second remaining call. If shooter asks for more time updates, then do so.

9.8.3 MAKE CALLS:

- It is VERY important that the coach is directly looking, or as close to, over the barrel line to target. This will allow the coach to watch the trace of the bullet while in flight to the target. This will also allow the coach to quickly pick up, if sighting is poor, where on the target the bullet hits.
- Do not call out loud shot qty, but keep note of shot count (as backup to shooter error). If the shooter has fired insufficient rounds, then the shooter should be quickly advised.
- Keep calls standard, short and descriptive. Discuss with shooter prior to string. This is a service you are doing for the shooter. It is important to do as the shooter wants. Do not impose your will on the shooter as it could affect the result.
- Every shooter may be different, so ask the shooter what he would like called, and how. Example, some shooters may want shot value and location – 10 at 6 o'clock. Other shooters may want info on location, not regarding the score – out at 3 (shot is out of 10ring at 3 o'clock).
- Make the calls immediately after, or as close as possible to, the shot hitting the target.

9.9 EXAMPLE CALLS:

9.9.1 CALLING SHOTS:

- "10 at 4 o'clock". Shot is in 10 ring at 4 o'clock.
- Assuming the shooter can call their shots and hold the aiming mark:
 - "Centre" or "Good". Hit the X ring.
 - "In at 9". Hit the 10 ring at 9 o'clock.
 - "Out at 7". Hit the 9 ring at 7 o'clock.
 - "Way out at 1". Through a scoring ring outside the 9 ring at 1 o'clock.

9.9.2 CALLING CHANGES:

- "Take White". Shooter needs to aim lower from the 6 o'clock position to show white.
- "High" or "Low". Shots going high or low into the 9 ring.
- "Way High" or "Way Low". Shots going high or low into the 8 ring or further.
- "Favour Left" or "Favour Right". Shooter to aim halfway between centre and edge of aiming mark due to wind change.
- "Favour way left". Shooter to aim on edge of aiming mark.
- "Left (or right, up or down) x clicks". This call is from the coach to shooter to ask the shooter to make a correction during reload (not a recommended call during firing).

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10.0 “COACHING” Detailed information on the coach.

10.1 General

A coach must give direction to the development of a shooter. The rate at which a shooter progresses is, to a great extent, dependent on the shooter's personal desire to excel. However, the coach must help to guide that development. From the very first days of training, a coach must utilise correct training practices to avoid forming harmful habits. It is much harder to correct harmful habits than it is to teach proper techniques initially.

10.2 Attributes of a coach

A good coach has the ability to impart the benefits of his knowledge to the shooters on his team in a logical, methodical manner. He must be able to detect errors, analyse problems, and be sympathetic and encouraging to the shooters. Although each person has their own personality, there are some attributes that are common to all good coaches:

- a) Personal experience in marksmanship. Coaches experience will give themselves an insight into the problems the shooters may be experiencing.
- b) A positive attitude.
- c) Thorough understanding of the fundamentals and proven training techniques.
- d) Desire to promote esprit de corps within the team and the drive to win.
- e) Must be able to provide an effective training plan for the shooter's development and insist on its execution.
- f) Must never forget that each shooter is an individual, each with their own personality. A good coach will be able to develop an approach to effectively communicate with all their shooters.

10.3 Evaluation of Shooters

A coach must constantly evaluate shooter performance and match conduct and techniques used by experienced shooters and teams. The coach must refine doctrine and raise performance standards by constant review of training manuals, materials and methods used by those that are experienced. This will aid the coach in the preparation of marksmanship training. The coach must maintain a current evaluation and an estimate of potential of each shooter. This estimate should include an analysis of the rate of progress, strengths and weaknesses, and an individual training approach so that each shooter can maximise their potential.

During a match, the coach should keep notes on any mistakes made by team members and develop solutions to implement into their training program to prevent the errors from reoccurring. While on the firing line, the coach should study the shooter's behaviour. When guiding the shooter's technique of employing the fundamentals, observe the shooter's temperament. Study the shooter's reaction to good and bad shots. Ultimately, there should be no difference. A positive attitude usually is conducive to a positive performance.

A coach's recognition of a shooter's performance is very important. Excellence should be publicised and encouragement rendered. It is important for a coach to keep in touch with the shooters. A shooting coach is a person who appreciates the problems faced by the competitive shooter and is not inclined to be arbitrary in judgment.

10.4 Reading the mirage and vapour trails.

Mirage can be used to judge the speed and direction of wind. The coach takes advantage of watching vapour trails caused by the bullet passing through the mirage. A vacuum that forms behind a projectile creates a vapour trail. As air attempts to fill the vacuum and the bullet pushes air

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out of it's path, a cone of distortion Is created. If viewed correctly, the path of the bullet can be seen from slightly forward of the muzzle through the apex of the trajectory to just forward of the target. It will appear as a distorted cone of air. It is imperative that you set up directly in line with the lay of the firearm to properly see accurate bullet flight.

In utilising the scope to read the mirage and vapour trail, the following adjustment technique is used. As we are concerned with the wind between the shooter and the target, the focus of the scope should be mid-range between the shooter and the target. Be aware that the further y ou are from the target, more mirage may be detectable. One is usually the dominant wind and one is an indicator for impending change. Trial, error and experience are your only ally. Always focus on the most dominant. If you are properly focused on the mirage, you will have the correct focus for vapour trails. With practice and experience you will learn where bullet impact occurs based on vapour trail appearance.