



The Bullet Hole

September – 2019

Next Shoot October 20, 2019 - Shooters' meeting at 9:30 a.m.

SILVER STATE SHOOTISTS MATCHS IN GOLD HILL !!!



From the Board;

[SEPTEMBER 2019 Gold Hill Shoot](#)

From the president:

We had 27 shooters in the Gulch for the September 22nd shoot and we could not have asked for better weather. Thanks to Wylie Fox for the stage designs! And thanks to everyone who helped setup and tear down.

Remember, the club needs stage writers so sign up and receive the accolades and admiration of your fellow club members. Jackpot Jerry has placed some stage writing guidelines of the WEB.

The new steel appears to be performing well, the fences worked for most of the match, and the layout was good.

Each time the Gulch gets a little better. Some of the suggestions that we will try to incorporate for the next shoots are:

- Move the non-shooters, spotters, and others back about five feet from the firing line to reduce splatter.
- Always use large tables for loading tables to reduce loading bottleneck.
- Doc will get some bundles to put on the ground in front of the targets to reduce splatter
- We will move the shooting side of the table forward so it is in line with the posts for the firing line.

- Jackpot Jerry will work on the fencing so that it will be more stable and wind tolerant.
- We will groom the range to try and improve the line layout and clean what we can for better footing for the shooters.
- There was a lot of inconsistency in calling misses/golden B B on the shotgun swingers. From now on, the T.O. will call again if it is a clear miss. Only the T.O. will call again if needed.

CLEAN SHOOTERS FOR SEPTEMBER 2019 ----

Big Dave
 Georgia Blue
 Tumbleweed Ed
 Washoe Monty

Stage Writers and Rang Setup –

Jackpot Jerry will write the stages for October unless somebody wants to try to write them in which case he will work with the writer too co-author the stages.

Meetings –

We will have a Board Meeting after the October shoot at the Silverland Hotel in Virginia City. This meeting will be open to all members. Main topics will be the Turkey Shoot, RO Classes, Gulch versus Carson Range, and the Christmas Party.



If you have a problem finding the location, or if you would like more information about the information in this newsletter, call Jackpot Jerry. My cell phone number is: 310-990-6482

Writing Stages 101

Jackpot Jerry –

Stage writing is fun and really helps in understanding the flow of a match. My first attempt at writing stages was a total disaster. I made them way to complicated and so they were not fun. I now keep a list of stages I have shot at our clubs or other venues that were fun and challenging. I take these as the “root” of my match and modify them to fit our range and available targets.

The following information I have picked up off the internet from other SASS members that have far more experience than I do.

In my opinion, the goal of stage writing is to make the match as fun as possible for the maximum number of folks. We want all of the shooters to have fun and look forward to coming back to the next match. I am trying to mix fairly fast stages with some good challenges in each match. Each of you can select the flavor you want to have for your matches.

For SASS Cowboy Action Shooting

Prepared By Chuckaroo SASS #13080

Writing Stages Preface

Stages can be prepared with a graphics program, a word processor or written by hand. No matter how you produce them, they all will need the same attention.

Stage design is one of the most important aspects of a Cowboy Action Shooting match. It is, after all, the initial reason we go to the match. Poor stages can make or break a shoot, create **safety** issues, will delay a match or cause a backup, and complicated designs can frustrate shooters because they become "Procedural Traps." Properly written stages are a lot more than just picking targets, making up a shooting order and choosing a prop or two.

Stages can have a wide variety of activity and shooting. The more complex the stage, the longer it will take to shoot. An annual or large match (150 plus) would suffer if stages were too lengthy. Complicated stage directions make it more likely there will be a high number of procedural penalties.

Clear, easy stage directions are a must. All potential questions must be anticipated and addressed in the stage description. Be precise. Where to start, what position to be in, where the hands are, shooting and firearm order, where to place the empty firearm, any motion, all verbal's and when to speak. Also include if make up shots for shotgun are permitted and any local special rules. Remind shooters, in the description, if there are **safety** items to be aware of.

The format of the stage directions should be uniform from stage to stage and flow from beginning to end.

SAFETY is number one, fun is second. Do not compromise **safety** for any reason. We will cover the do's and don'ts later. If at all possible, have your club **safety** officer check the stages for potential **safety** issues. What looks good on paper might not be **safe** after it has been set up in real life.

Participants will be from 12 years old to 80 plus. Some are short and others are tall. Many are seniors and cannot participate in an all day marathon of running and climbing. Keep the stages fun for all potential shooters. Good stage design also balances the stages, as much as possible, for all shooting categories.

For annual and large matches, keep the shooting and movement equal between all of the stages. A big backup on one stage can really mess up a great match.

The stage writer must be familiar with the club rules, targets available, props on hand, range layout, **safety** issues of the range and the amount of help available for set up and tear down. Some ranges must use a common firing line and cannot have any movement downrange ([this is our situation at Crown Point Gulch and at Railroad Flats.](#))

Stage Writing Do's & Don'ts

- Do not have shooter movement up range. It is too easy to break the 170 when coming back toward your posse.
- If your range has uneven or poor footing, have limited or no movement.
- Do not stage a shotgun loaded.
- Do not design a stage where the shooter must use a "House Gun" as part of the shooting scenario.
- Do not design a stage where the shooter must go up or down a flight of stairs as part of the stage movement.
- Never permit drawing or holstering a cross draw holster while seated.
- Never move with a cocked gun. Some movement with a rifle (with the hammer on a spent round), is OK but discouraged. It is a safety in the making. You will answer 20 posse questions about how they are supposed to do that properly.
- Do not design a stage where the shooter is firing from an unstable platform, moving bridge or any prop that is not stable enough to support any shooter during the course of shooting.
- Limit kneeling and do not have a shooter start laying down. Never have a shooter lying down with holstered guns.
- Never design a stage that can jeopardize a spotter or posse worker. Everyone should be visible to the RO. This is a challenge on some building fronts. If there is no way around it, specific **safety** warnings should be included in the stage description.
- Do not put targets at harsh angles from the shooter. If necessary, have a different shooting position so the shooter can be directly in front of the targets being shot.
- When you do have movement, be specific about drawing, loading or handling firearms before they get to the shooting position.

- Anticipate potential questions. If your description of a stage generates questions from the posse, it will add time to the stage. So, address items in detail. Where, when, which direction, how and how many.
- Keep shotgun rounds no more than 6 and do not do that on more than half of the stages. Four is ideal but a few 6 shot shotgun stages are OK. This is easier on young folks, seniors and the ladies as well as a BIG time saver.
- Do not have a five shot pistol reload. At the most, load one more rifle round.
- Keep movement laterally, toward the unloading table.
- As a writer, you must put your "intentions for the stage" into words so that everyone will understand your intentions. Writing must be very concise. It should include the exact staging location of all firearms. If it is the intent of the writer to have the rifle on the right side of the buckboard, then it should say that. If it says "In the buckboard," then it can actually go anywhere in the buckboard. If you do not want the shooter to start with a hand on their pistols, you must be specific as to where they go. "Both hands flat on the table" will do that.
- If the writer starts a stage off by saying "Shooter starts behind the buckboard by their rifle. At the buzzer, pick up your rifle." If you don't want the shooter to hover over the rifle like a vulture with their claws out you need to be more specific. Have the shooter hold something with both hands or have their hands on their hips, touching their hat or resting on the pistols.
- Balance shotgun targets for 97 Vs double barreled shotguns. An odd number of shotgun targets favors those shooting a 97. Have some shotgun target next to each other for the double folks and some separated for the pump users.
- Have most stages (but not all) with the pistols back to back. This makes a stage fun for the Gunfighters and easier on the memory for the rest of the folks. An occasional split handgun stage is great for variety only.
- Be specific on gun staging. Be equally specific as to where they go when you finish with them. This is important when pistols are staged outside of the holsters. If the intent is to holster the pistol when finished, say "Holster the pistol and....."
- Do not make the stage a marathon run. Movement is part of the game however, short distances are better on the shooter, RO and spotters.
- Do not design complicated shooting sequences. It will cause procedurals, and lots of questions. As each shooter comes to the line, they will ask the RO over and over what the sequence is. This can really slow down a big match. It has the potential to double the time the posse takes to shoot the stage.
- On a stage with a building front, design the stage so that spotters can see the targets.
- Be careful about ending a stage with the rifle, especially if you are shooting it through a store window or doorway. Many timers will not accurately pick up the shots from rifles with our lighter loads.
- Do not design a stage where "Luck" will have an effect on the time it takes to shoot the stage or change the difficulty of the stage. For example, drawing an Ace from the deck should not allow the shooter to skip a target or to shoot an easier target.
- Consider right and left handed shooters. Have duel gun rest, whenever possible, so the shooter has a choice.

Tricks of the trade

- After you complete the stage writing, review each stage for round counts, placement of all firearms, starting position (including the hands), where to put empty firearms, spelling, grammar, props needed, target placement, **safety** concerns and flow through the course of the action.
- Whenever possible, mirror the pistol sequence with the rifle sequence. If the rifle is a double tap sweep left to right, then make the pistols a double tap sweep left to right. This tip alone will make your shooters come back next month. Target sequences, that are symmetrical in some way, are easier to remember. Try not to call everything some sort of sweep. Out of town folks may not understand.
- A stage that has the rifle left to right, one pistol right to left, another pistol Nevada sweep and the shotgun center - center - outside - outside is NOT fun. It will result in procedural after procedural. It can make many shooters decide to stay home next month.
- Have the shooter say a short line before the buzzer to indicate when they are ready. This is a real time saver! At a big shoot, have the line posted at the actual starting position for the stage.
- Avoid lines after the buzzer.
- Have stage movement go toward the unloading table. It will speed things up.
- If you can go downrange to reset poppers or clay birds, it takes a little extra time. Use of reset cables can speed things up.
- Things that add time are reloads, more than four shotgun rounds, movement, complicated stage instructions, having to get up from a kneeling or sitting position on a horse and getting free from ropes or handcuffs, to name a few. Individually they are doable but when you combine several together, you are going to have a backup on that stage.
- Format the stage instructions with the round count at the top, along with the stage title. Next have a drawn layout of the stage with the targets and major prop placement along with the location of staged guns. Below that, have the story line (keep it fun but brief). Next, write the round count and staging location for each firearm. Next paragraph should tell where the shooter begins and the starting position for their hands. Remember, if you don't say where the hands start, they can put them anywhere, including on the first gun. Next have the ready to shoot line. Finally, the shooting sequence. Show the shot placement under each target when there is a specific order.
- Whenever possible, have long gun staging that is flexible for left hand and right handed shooters.
- After your stages are written, go over them for **safety**. Then go over them for clarity and description of your intent. Then try to anticipate what another shooter might have a question on. Whenever possible, have someone else check them over as well. After looking at them for a long time, it is real easy to miss some items that are actually very obvious to new eyes. The three most often asked questions on the stage are "What is the round count?", "What am I supposed to say?" (Put the phrase, in italic bold letters to make it easy to find) and coming in a close third is "Where can my hands be?"

- If your club is short on targets, you can design a stage with forward movement between the pistol and rifle rounds. You can shoot distant targets with the rifle, then move forward and shoot the same targets with the pistols.

