





PLAYING The Options

You're going to your first registered shoot, but the entry form is confusing. What do all these options mean?

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The practice has paid off, league shooting gave you a taste for competition, and your friends are encouraging you to come along and have some fun, meet some new people and visit a club where you've never shot before. You're going to your first registered shoot!

The big day arrives, and you find yourself staring at an entry form or standing in front of a person who is asking question after question, speaking a language you don't comprehend. What's it all mean, anyway?

You didn't know there was going to be a test, but that doesn't mean you can't study a little beforehand. Every registered shoot publishes a shoot program. Maybe it's just one page, distributed ahead of time, or a flyer lying on the desk where you can review before you get in line. Maybe it's online with your state association's website. Maybe it's even a 30-page full-color book.

Always read the program. It sounds simple, but that program is your guide to all of the side events that will be offered over and above the standard entry fee. Only time and experience will dictate which features you like best, and what you will choose to play whenever a club offers them — but first you need to know what they are.

Program hot in hand, here's your guide to translating desk questions into what they mean for you.

Entry fees are what it costs to shoot. Are daily fees included or does the program state "plus fees?" Daily fees can run \$4 to \$6 per event, depending on your state association's fees, and whether they're included in the cost you're seeing in the program can throw the true cost to shoot off by over \$25.

Anyone can shoot all of the events and pay only the entry fees, and a majority of shooters choose to do this.

Mandatory Purse or **Forced Class Purse** are terms applied to words following the entry fee which state that X amount will be returned to class from the entry fee. This is a good thing; it means that if you do well in your class, you might win some of your entry fee back, and that you don't have to play any other optional purses to qualify for prize money.

How much is returned to each class depends on the number of shooters in that class. There will be a chart

▼ Reading the shoot program will help you figure out what events you want to enter and which aren't for you.



outlining, for example, "1-8 shooters = 100 percent" and "9-15 shooters = 60/40" that defines the criteria for the number of shooters in each class who will receive prize money, how many places down in class the prize money will go, the percentages to be allocated to class 1st, 2nd and so on. This prize money is usually shot off, ties do not divide, so rookies need to shoot doubles, too.

Only Sub-Junior and Junior shooters are exempt from paying the mandatory purse and may shoot "targets only,"

which is an entry fee that does not include the purse. Their choice.

Added Money is put into the program over and above what might be paid out of your entry fee. If there is any money added to class, the program will say so.

If the shoot does not pay back any money to class, if you're shooting for medals or merchandise, or if it's a charity event, the only way to receive prize money is to play the optional class purse if that is being offered in the program.

OPTIONAL PURSES AND EVENTS

Optional events are just that — your option, your choice. These are bets that you will score high enough to win some money back, always shooting against those in your own class, and only against those who also played the purse. Whether you want to play them is what generates all those questions at the registration table!

Optional purses are usually paid back "high gun," which means ties divide. The most popular split is 60/40 — the highest score playing the purse will win 60 percent of the money in that pot, the second highest score will win 40 percent. If the highest score is a tie, those shooters will split 100 percent of the purse. Or, if there was only one high score with the winner taking 60 percent, and two or more "next high" scores, those shooters will share 40 percent of the purse.

"Not high gun" should also be published in the program, and it would mean that two identical high scores would split 60 percent of the purse, while the next lowest score collects 40 percent all to themselves. It's not a popular method, but you'll see it now and then.

Included in the "optional" category are purses called "50s," "Oklahomas" and "Options." They are different regional names for the same outcome. Shooters will win when they have the highest score in class on the first 50 targets, the middle 50 (second and third rounds), and the last 50 (third and fourth rounds). This option might also be offered when the event is more or less than 100 targets, but it still works the same. If the cost is \$15, this is divided among the three groups of 50, \$5 each. Lots of shooters like this option, because it allows recovery from a bad round and can be a motivator to hang on for a good score. "Options" are also usually paid out 60/40 high gun, like class purses, but read the



▲ Scores should be posted as the event unfolds. They'll help you see how many shooters in your class are playing optional purses.

program to be sure.

Other optional purses are Lewis class, which is an entirely different breed of cat, a great explanation of which was included in the World Shoot program and can be seen at bit.ly/WS19Prog, and concurrent and team purses, which also remain in class. Some programs will offer B-C-D purses, which are a good way to test the waters for newer shooters. You might see “red hots” and 100-straight purses, which are paid only to the winning score and not recommended for newer or lower-classed shooters.

Most optional purses are not shot off, but again, check your program to be sure.

CONCURRENT AND TEAM EVENTS

Concurrent events, mostly age- and gender-based, take place with the main event, thus the term “concurrent.” At many tournaments, concurrent events are free, but when you attend a competition where medals are awarded, there is usually a cost to enter. If there is a fee, and a shooter has a chance of winning, it’s a good idea to pay the fee to enter — no one wants to stand on the sidelines while someone shooting the same score climbs up on the podium.

If the event has a large number of entries, like the World Shoot, shooters will be assigned to a group within their concurrent, based on their average, in order to make winning a medal fair for all. Please note that only Group 1 winners receive

All-American points, which is why you may see shooters going through the line ask to be “bumped up” to Group 1 in spite of their average that assigned them to Group 2. Newer shooters with lower averages should stay in group 2 — to give you a better chance of coming home with a medal from your first World Shoot.

Concurrent events are the most popular option — more shooters play these than the optional class purses and Oklahomas. In addition to the Open All-American teams, there are also Concurrent All-

and associations have found team events to be popular ways for shooters to compete. Handicap and three-man blind teams are good events for newer or lower-classed shooters to play.

OTHER EVENTS

Champ of Champs used to be contested on the field, with participants shooting 25 targets in each gauge, and you will still find it offered in that format at the World Shoot. Yes, you haul those tubes out to the field! At most tournaments, it is shot concurrently and consists of

ties divide.

High Over All usually includes the 12, 20, 28 and .410 but can be whatever the club stipulates, and entry monies usually stay in class. Some shoots offer HOA for no entry fee, but again, if it is a tournament where there is a fee, the vast majority of shooters will play the event because it’s by class. For any shooter going to the World for the first time, please play HOA. You’ve come all that way and spent a lot of time and money — don’t let \$20 keep you off the podium. HOA usually offers an

▼ It’s a good idea to enter High Over All (HOA), because it’s broken down by class. It often offers an optional class purse.



American teams — but you have to play to win!

Team events are a lot of fun, two-man teams being the most popular. Team events can also be based on average-based groups or on a handicap, or teams can be assigned by the shoot software, three-man blind being the most popular, where the teams compete against each other for prize money. Creativity is the word, and many clubs

the last 25 targets of the four main events, 12, 20, 28 and .410. True Champ of Champs is just that — just one class, but some clubs offer this by class or divide shooters into a few groups based on average. For new shooters, wait until you can run 25x25 with the .410 before entering a C-of-C event that’s just one big class. It’s important to note if there will be a shoot-off to determine the winner(s) or if

optional class purse.

High All-Around (HAA) includes all events shot throughout the weekend, including doubles, and if a club offers HAA, it may be just an optional class purse. Major tournaments like the World Championships will feature HAA as a full-blown event, all the awards and titles conferred, but this is an exception.

Clubs do NOT make

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money on the optional events — the fees collected are merely passed through to the shooters who play these options. This is why as more shooters go after other kinds of points, credit cards can be used to cover entry fees only, but optional purses must be paid by cash or check.

The profit a club makes on hosting a registered tournament derives from the entry fee charged, from any sponsorship money that can be solicited, and from the revenue generated when a shoot program or flyer is printed containing the logos of those sponsors and advertisers. Clubs have held Monte Carlo nights, have raffled off pallets of ammo and adult beverages, have sold countless raffle tickets for guns and merchandise, all to be able to offer a program to entice shooters to come support their club.

Some clubs are strictly volunteer, while others have labor costs that impact the bottom line. How much money a club makes on a shoot should not determine whether you choose to support that club's efforts. Target shooting is just like any other business, any other product you might buy: Is the price worth the benefit? Are the targets as good as they can be? How about the referees? Are the shoot-offs smooth and well organized? Do you get a warm welcome, is there a good party, would you go back again? Does the club try to give visitors a better experience from year to year? Everyone has their reasons to compete, their reasons to pick one club over another, and everyone is entitled to choose where to shoot.

WHAT SHOULD YOU PLAY?

Sound advice for a new shooter coming through the line and wondering "what to play?" is "nothing." Learn the lay of the land first, see how your scores are stacking up in your class, and see how many shooters in your class are playing optional purses — information that's available on the scoreboard at every club. There will be lots of chances to

spend money once you know why.

On the other hand, among the world's best shooters, playing "everything" is so popular that shoot software includes a box to click "play all" just to save registration staff from carpal tunnel syndrome. There's a happy medium somewhere in the middle, and as you gain experience, you will find yours.

So when a desk registration person gives you the 50 questions treatment, we are not trying to upsell you or imply that you should or shouldn't play this or

▼ Concurrents break shooters into groups based on age, gender or special qualifiers such as Military or First Responder.



that — and you do not have to explain why you do or don't want a certain purse or option. There's no reason to feel uncomfortable with the process. We are just making sure you are offered everything that's available, to make your first trip through the line your last. We are all happy to explain any purse, any special game, because this is what you need to know before you can decide what, if anything, to play. And "just the entry, please" works for us, too! **CTN**