

## **Lincoln Rifle Club Intro to Multi-Gun shooting- Match Director Jeff Boyes**

Multi-Gun or 3-Gun competitions differ from traditional shooting sports in a couple of essential ways: 1) The use of multiple weapons on the same stage 2) The emphasis on speed

While many other disciplines have time limits, in Multi-Gun, your score is your time, plus penalties for misses. The need to go fast necessitates a concurrent emphasis on safety; from taking your weapons out of the car, moving between stages, loading and showing clear at the start and end of each stage. The Four Cardinal Safety Rules apply here as well.

- 1) All guns are always loaded. Even when you know they are not, treat them as if they are.
- 2) Never allow your muzzle to cover anything you are not willing to destroy, yourself included.
- 3) Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target and you have made a conscious decision to fire.
- 4) Be aware of your target and what is around it-front, back and sides

### **Pre-Match and On Arrival**

Sign in and payment is done through a free website called Practiscore.com. This speeds things considerably on match day. Matches are shown as "Lincoln MGD".

Check in with match officials, confirm which squad you are on as you may have been moved to balance squads.

Assist with completing stages if necessary (set up is typically done the Wednesday before the match).

Move your firearms, unloaded and cased, to the Bay where you are going to begin (i.e. Squad 1 is on Bay 1). Long guns may be moved from the safe table (marked) to a rack or a cart if you are using one. All long guns must be flagged with a visible chamber flag. Park carts with firearm muzzles towards berms. Handguns may be holstered while at the safe table. The mag well must be empty and the striker/hammer should be down.

A general safety briefing for all competitors is held before the match starts and after final stage setup. Shooters are then sent to their respective starting bays to begin competition. We all need to have the same understanding of how the stage is to be run. A printed copy of the stage description is typically posted at each stage.

## **At your Bay**

Your RO will conduct a walk thru of the course of fire explaining how it is to be run. This is your time to ask questions and erase any confusion. A five minute period follows the walk thru allowing people to inspect the stage to plan how they will run it. You should also make sure your equipment is prepared. Magazines should be loaded. On some stages there will be a pre-load table for shotgun to speed up the rotation. The RO or assistant will announce the shooting order identifying the shooter who is up, on deck and in the hole. If you are in one of these positions you are excused from taping/resetting targets and policing brass. Otherwise, when the RO calls out "range clear", you should be assisting with the reset.

## **Your Turn**

When you are called to the starting position any long guns should be carried muzzle up. The safety is on and the chamber flag still in place. The RO will direct you to "make ready". If you need to check the status of your optics (magnification or dot intensity) do so before you load. When you load make sure that the muzzle stays downrange. The shortest path to a DQ is a simple 180 violation. If there are multiple weapons to be prepared the RO will typically hold the long gun for you while the handgun is loaded and holstered. On some stages a weapon will be pre-placed at another location. Preparing the weapon is typically done at that location.

## **Commands**

The RO will direct you to assume the appropriate starting position. This may be port arms, hands at side, hands at shoulder height, muzzle on "X", heels on "X" or others. Once you have complied, he will ask, "Shooter, do you understand the course of fire?". If you do, a simple yes or nod of the head will suffice. If you don't, ask! RO will then say, "Shooter ready" or ask you to give a nod if ready. This is followed by, "Stand by" and within a few seconds, the audible start tone from the shot timer.

## **Shooting the Stage**

The challenge of this type of competition is always the need for balance between speed and accuracy. Go fast only when circumstances allow. A six inch plate at 100 yards with rifle requires more precision than a clay bird at 10 yards with shotgun. How fast either of those is shot depends on your skill level. If there is open ground to be covered, do it as quickly as you are able. Although there are competitions that resemble marathons, ours are not. Foot speed is not usually a big factor in success. If targets are in the open and you are not shooting from cover, shooting while moving is always faster, if more difficult

Reload as necessary. MGD does not allow you to do a speed reload and leave partially loaded magazines behind (procedural penalty). If cover is available, you are required to reload behind

it. A recent revision of this rule allows you to load on the move without cover as long as your chamber is still loaded (i.e. you could defend yourself). Leaving cover with an empty weapon incurs a procedural penalty. Partial mags may be dropped at your last shooting position.

When transitioning to another weapon, you must first ensure that the one you are abandoning is on safe. Even if it is locked back and apparently empty the safety (if there is one) must be applied. Weapons with de-cockers must have the hammer dropped. In MGD a weapon abandoned without being made safe is grounds for a DQ (in other disciplines it may be only a procedural penalty).

When you have completed the stage and stopped shooting the RO will ask, "If you are done, empty your weapon and show clear". Remove the magazine, eject the round from the chamber and either lock or hold the slide to the rear so that the RO may see the empty chamber. The RO will then direct you to drop the slide, point the muzzle in a safe direction downrange and pull the trigger. If it is a handgun it may be holstered at that time. If a long gun, the chamber flag will be inserted and the weapon carried, muzzle up, back to the rack or cart.

The RO and whoever is assisting will score the course of fire. On paper targets, anything outside the A zone incurs a time penalty. Misses incur larger penalties as do hits on no-shoot targets. Steel targets must fall or react as designed. Some targets that are more difficult are designated as high value targets with higher time penalties in order to prevent people from bypassing them. This is tabulated on an electronic scoring pad. You will be given the opportunity to review your targets and your score and approve the result on the pad.

## **Skill sets and Equipment**

Obviously, this is an equipment intensive sport. You will see a lot of innovative technology at a multi-gun match. Each governing body sets limits on what is allowable for different divisions. MGD is all lumped together as far as equipment restrictions. Rather than reiterate all the rules, refer to the MGD rules on the Lincoln Rifle Club website. Observe other competitors.

## **Shotgun**

What truly separates the shooters is their skill with these tools. It's the Indian, not the arrow. One of the biggest areas for time differential is the ability to reload the shotgun quickly. MGD does not have a round limit on shotgun capacity. With tubular magazines you quickly reach a practical limit because of the length of the magazine extension protruding from the front. Therefore, the ability to reload quickly is a critical skill. Techniques have evolved from the start of the sport when the state of the art was vertical shell carriers with 4,6 or 8 shells. Next came dual loading, with carriers that stacked shells in such a way that you grabbed shells 2 at a time. The current state of the art is called quad loading and it is exactly as its name implies; grabbing 4 shells at a time and loading them into the shotgun in pairs held in line with each other. When

done efficiently, it looks like sleight of hand performed by a magician. When done by someone unpracticed or unskilled, it looks like an ammunition yards sale.

Whatever technique you choose, get some inert rounds and practice. Extensively. Or be like me and buy a magazine fed pump gun. Whatever shotgun you choose, it must be reliable running birdshot loads. Many good runs have been ruined by inopportune stoppages.

## **Rifle/PCC**

The majority of firearms used fall into the AR-15 category. Being that we are competing in California, that presents extra complications. Without going into the myriad of options that are available, it is the shooter's responsibility to make sure they are compliant with the law or assume the consequences if they aren't.

On a less gloomy note, because our longest bay barely allows for 100 yard shots, a PCC (9mm minimum) is a fairly viable option. Some, like the Ruger, are California legal without jumping thru any hoops. They are light and quick handling and can be configured to take the same Glock magazines used by many competitors.

Although iron sights can be used, most shooters will mount some sort of optic. A red dot or 1x optic is extremely quick on target. Magnification is limited to 4x. Although I often fail to take my own advice on this, avoid cheap entry level optics. Your life may not depend on it since this is a game but it's extremely frustrating to have your equipment go south in the middle of a match.

Remember that your optic is mounted at least a couple inches above the bore. On center mass shots, this makes little difference. If you are trying to hit the A zone box in the head or avoid a hostage target, it can be critical. The closer you are to the target, the lower your bullet will strike relative to your point of aim (mechanical offset).

## **Handgun**

The minimum caliber is 9mm. Because MGD does not have separate divisions based on equipment(yet), 9mm is the most common choice (higher magazine capacities and less recoil). That said, you can run whatever you already own without going out to buy a specific weapon for competition. Reliability is more important than match accuracy. New in November 2019 are PCC and Senior Divisions. PCC is used in lieu of pistol, seniors are 65 years and up.

## **Ammo**

This is a big recurring expense and we all want to save money. That said, don't buy junk. With some widely advertised reloads my PCC shot 6 inch groups at 50 yards; with factory, 2 inches. If you are loading your own, resist going too light, we still have to knock stuff down or spin it.