

Smallbore Rifle Plate Match

Rules and Regulations

Version 1

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Table of Contents

1	Definitions.....	3
2	Spirit of the Game.....	3
	2.1 What it is.....	4
	2.2 What it is not.....	4
3	Rules of the Game.....	5
	3.1 Acceptable Rifles.....	5
	3.1.1 Common to both the Scope and Irons Divisions:.....	5
	3.1.2 Scoped Division, additional criteria.....	5
	3.1.3 Iron Sight Division, additional criteria.....	5
	3.2 Ammunition.....	6
	3.3 Targets.....	6
	3.4 Additional Equipment.....	6
	3.4.1 Items specifically not permitted:.....	6
	3.4.2 Items permitted:.....	7
4	Safety.....	7
	4.1 Safety Infractions.....	8
	4.1.1 Minor Safety Infractions.....	8
	4.1.2 Major Safety Infractions.....	8
	4.2 Dropped Items at the Firing Line.....	8
	4.3 Firearm Malfunctions.....	9
	4.4 Ammunition Malfunctions.....	9
5	Course of Fire.....	9
6	Scoring.....	11
7	Notes.....	12
8	Revisions.....	12

1 Definitions

RSO – Range Safety Officer. The person conducting the match. Responsible for scoring and safety. **The Boss.**

Smallbore Rifle – in this application, a 22 caliber rimfire rifle: single shot, bolt action, pump action, lever action, or semi-auto.

Relay – a group of shooters firing on targets during a given time slot.

String – a run of ten successive shots fired in a given time slot.

Course of fire – the sequence of steps that define how a match is conducted.

‘HOT’ range – the range is ready for firing.

‘COLD’ range – the range is safe, no handling of firearms.

Scope Division rifle – rifle with a mounted optic of power equal to or less than 10x.

Irons Division rifle – rifle with iron sights. Target-style sights are prohibited (hooded peep sights, for example) since they would typically not be found on a field/plinking rifle.

Senior subdivision – participants of post-high school age.

Junior subdivision – participants of high school age or younger.

2 Spirit of the Game

The purpose of the Smallbore Rifle Plate Match (SRPM) is to mimic the challenges posed to small game hunters in the field. A step or two above “tin can plinking”, the SRPM taps into the discipline and training of the rifle hunter in an exciting and reactive way. But it's not just rabbit hunters who stand to benefit from the SRPM. Hunters of all stripes can enjoy the challenges and strengthen their rifle handling skills at the same time.

Almost every hunter has a 22 rifle. It need not be fancy nor expensive. Most 22 rifles are capable of surprising accuracy - enough to hit small targets at 100 yards. These 22 rifles have been harvesting small game for a century or more. To hone the skills needed to employ one effectively, we offer you the Smallbore Rifle Plate Match. A test of skill against appropriately sized reactive steel targets. Throw in some inexpensive ammo and a tiny pinch of competitive spirit and you can experience the thrill and confidence that comes from a well-placed shot.

2.1 What it is...

The purpose - or the "spirit" - of the Smallbore Rifle Plate Match is to mimic shots at rabbit-sized game from a hunting/plinking-style 22 caliber rimfire rifle using a scope or iron sights. The course of fire is forty shots at 4" metallic "falling plate" targets from 50 yards off-hand (standing) and 100 yards prone, in strings of ten shots each, for four strings. The plates must **fall** - they can't just scoot, wobble, spin, or shift. While there is a time limit, it's not a game of speed. There are two divisions - Scope and Irons - and two subdivisions - Junior and Senior - to accommodate as many rifle and shooter combinations as possible. The matches are intended to be informal, with no "money prizes", though trophies, ribbons, and/or certificates are encouraged.

2.2 What it is not...

The Smallbore Rifle Plate Match is not a speed match. No one needs to be in a hurry - there's plenty of time to make your ten shots in each string. Nor is it a bench rest match. All shooting is done (a) off-hand (standing) with no external support for the shooter or rifle and (b) from prone with only the shooter's body to support the rifle. No bipods and no sandbags.

It's not an Olympic event. No need to show up with a \$2000 custom tack driver, a spotting scope, and a box of hand-made German ammunition. It's intended to be shot with (mostly) stock rifles by Average Joes and Janes. Just bring something like your Model 39, 10/22, or that dusty old Savage single shot your grandfather gave you. You get the idea, something you'd take rabbit hunting. Bring a box or two of inexpensive ammo. And don't forget to bring its sling.

3 Rules of the Game

While we try to keep to the “spirit of the game”, having clearly defined rules helps prevent confusion and keeps the game fair for all participants. The rules are intended to be simple and not muddled with minutia. It is our hope that shooters will not attempt to “split hairs” with the organizers and adhere to the spirit of the game in friendly competition.

3.1 Acceptable Rifles

3.1.1 Common to both the Scope and Irons Divisions:

The rifle must be of 22 caliber rimfire: 22 Short, 22 Long, or 22 Long Rifle. 22 Magnum and 17 caliber rifles are not permitted because (1) the metal targets are not designed to handle these higher power/velocity cartridges and (2) higher velocities can result in a higher likelihood of ricochets.

The rifle must weigh no more than 8 pounds, unloaded and with magazine (if applicable).

The following actions are permitted: single shot, bolt action, pump action, lever action, and semi-auto.

The rifle may be used with a sling.

Magazine capacity is not restricted but each string may be fired with only 10 rounds.

3.1.2 Scoped Division, additional criteria

Scoped rifles may have “glass optics” of any style (crosshair, red-dot, etc...) with a magnification no greater than 10x. Variable power scopes capable of greater magnification must be limited to 10x. Compliance with reduced magnification will be checked by the RSOs.

3.1.3 Iron Sight Division, additional criteria

Iron-sighted rifles cannot have any glass and/or electric optics (including red dot scopes) or target-style hooded aperture sights. Aftermarket sights are acceptable, so long as they are not a radical

departure from the factory/stock iron sights. Iron sights with natural-light “fiber optic” illumination are permitted. If in doubt, shooters should always confirm the applicability of their aftermarket sights with match organizers prior to sign-up.

3.2 Ammunition

Ammunition must be of 22 caliber rimfire: 22 Short, 22 Long, or 22 Long Rifle only, and appropriate to the rifle being used. 22 Magnum and 17 caliber ammunition is not permitted.

Ammunition must be “sub-sonic”, “standard velocity”, or “hi velocity” type, using lead or copper-plated lead bullets between 36 and 40 grains. “Hyper velocity” and “shotshell” ammunition is not permitted.

Bullets may be solid or hollow point.

3.3 Targets

Targets will be 4” round steel targets – capable of free-standing without external support – with a foot no larger than 1”x3”. The steel will be of a Brinell hardness appropriate to 22 rimfire ammunition. The impact plates will be no thicker than 3/8” and no thinner than 1/4”. The targets will be placed atop a target stand at 25 yards. The top of the target stand will no less than 30” tall and no more than 48” tall; no less than 72” wide and no more than 96” wide. Targets will be evenly spaced across the top of the target stand with no less than 3” between target edges.

Ideally, the targets will be spray-painted white (and dried) prior to each match. However, targets may be painted yellow or red to provide ample contrast to the impact berms and/or to distinguish between individual shooter’s target banks.

3.4 Additional Equipment

Additional equipment is typically not permitted because it’s not needed in the spirit of the match.

3.4.1 Items specifically not permitted:

- Mono- / bi- / tripods, sandbags, “recoil sleds” or other rifle support devices
- Add-on weights and/or levels
- Target-specific hooded aperture sights

- Target-specific shooting glasses attachments such as “eye blinders” or “scotch-taped” lenses.
- Trigger-pull “assistance” devices
- Shooting jackets
- Participant-provided shooting mats. The range will provide firing-line cover for prone shooters.

3.4.2 Items permitted:

- Shooting gloves
- Slings
- A single device for **holding** loose ammunition – drilled wooden block, pouch, dish, etc – that does not mechanically assist in reloading the rifle.

4 Safety

Colonel Jeff Cooper’s four rules of firearm safety apply at all times during the match:

1. All guns are always to be treated as though they are loaded.
2. Never let the muzzle cover anything you’re not willing to destroy.
3. Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target.
4. Be certain of your target and of what is beyond it.

Additional safety rules to be followed during the match:

1. Eye and hearing protection will be worn at all times while the range is ‘HOT’.
2. Firearms are not to be loaded **unless and until** specifically directed to do so by the RSO and only after the shooter has taken his/her position on the firing line.
3. Rifles must remain racked between strings of fire and while the range is cold.
4. No non-firing-related movement/relocation by shooters any time during the course of fire.

5. If a shooter completes his/her string of fire prior to the call for 'CEASE FIRE', the rifle will be held "at ready" in a safe condition. For semi-autos, this means to have the bolt locked back and the magazine removed. If the safety can be placed 'on' in this condition, then it should be. For semi-autos that cannot be locked to the rear, a safety flag device must be inserted into the chamber to indicate an unloaded rifle. For all other actions, the action will be left open, with the bolt to the rear and magazines removed, if applicable.

4.1 Safety Infractions

4.1.1 Minor Safety Infractions

- Handling firearms during cold range, not wearing safety equipment, etc.
- One warning. Second infraction results in disqualification (DQ).

4.1.2 Major Safety Infractions

- Covering someone with the muzzle of a firearm or negligent discharge.
- Immediate DQ.

4.2 Dropped Items at the Firing Line

- Do not attempt to retrieve **any** dropped items from the ground at the firing line while the range is hot. Dropped ammunition that reaches the ground is forfeit for that string and unengaged targets will be scored as misses. Items dropped to the shooting mat that can be reached without the shooter shifting his/her position may be retrieved.
- The only exception is dropped safety equipment. In that event, raise the non-firing hand to get the attention of the RSO.

4.3 Firearm Malfunctions

- Minor firearm malfunctions – jams and misfeeds – should be resolved by the shooter during the string of fire. No time credit will be awarded and unengaged targets will be scored as misses.
- Potentially dangerous firearm malfunctions – squibs, for example – should be resolved with extreme care. In that event, raise the non-firing hand to get the attention of the RSO.

4.4 Ammunition Malfunctions

- Ammunition malfunctions should be resolved by the shooter during the string of fire. Misfires that can be safely rechambered for a “second chance” may be reused. The option to retry or discard misfired ammunition is up to the discretion of the shooter. No time credit will be awarded and unengaged targets will be scored as misses.
- Ammunition that cannot be made to fire cannot be replaced during that string and unengaged targets will be scored as misses.

5 Course of Fire

To ensure a safe and enjoyable shooting environment, the course of fire will be strictly adhered to. Any shooter unwilling to follow the course of fire will be disqualified and asked to leave the range.

The Smallbore Rifle Plate Match is a “shooter participation” event. Shooters are expected to assist in the conducting of the match by (1) being fully prepared to assume position on the firing line from the “on deck” position (i.e., be ready to go when it’s your turn) and (2) participating in the “target reset” rotation after firing (i.e., helping to reset other shooters’ targets after they’ve been scored).

The following describes the course of fire.

1. Command: **PREVIOUS RELAY MOVE TO THE RESET AREA**

Shooters from the previous relay will take position in the resetter’s area.

2. Command: **RANGE IS HOT. EYES AND EARS.**

The RSO will call the range 'HOT'.

3. Command: **SHOOTERS, YOU MAY RETRIEVE YOUR FIREARM AND AMMUNITION, TAKE YOUR STATION ON THE FIRING LINE, AND ASSUME YOUR FIRING POSITION.**

Instruct the shooters to unrack their weapons. Shooters have 30 seconds to take their station on the firing line and assume their firing position.

4. Command: **NEXT RELAY ON DECK**

The RSO will announce the names in the next relay and instruct them to move "on deck".

5. Command: **SHOOTERS, LOAD AND MAKE READY. WHEN YOU ARE DONE LOADING, ENGAGE YOUR SAFETY AND BE SURE TO KEEP YOUR RIFLE'S MUZZLE POINTED DOWNRANGE.**

Instruct the shooters to load their rifles and chamber a round. Once the weapons are loaded, the safeties should be placed in the 'on' position (if applicable), and the weapons held "at ready" with the muzzles pointed downrange. Extra ammunition is left on the bench or on the shooting mat.

6. Command: **YOU WILL HAVE 90 SECONDS TO COMPLETE YOUR 10 SHOTS. ARE THE SHOOTERS READY?**

The RSO will instruct the shooters that they have ninety (90) seconds to shoot their string of fire and ask the shooters if they are ready. Once all shooters indicate that they are ready...

7. Command: **COMMENCE FIRING**

If necessary, shooters must reload on their own during the string of fire.

8. Command: **CEASE FIRE**

Once all shooters have completed their ten shots OR ninety seconds have expired - whichever comes first - the RSO will call

'CEASE FIRE'. Upon hearing 'CEASE FIRE' or upon completing their string of fire, all shooters will open the actions of their rifles and hold them "at ready" with the muzzles pointed downrange.

Shooters unable to complete all ten shots within the 90 seconds will not be allowed to continue firing; their targets that are not knocked-down will be counted as 'misses'.

9. Command: **UNLOAD AND SHOW EMPTY**

The RSO will proceed to each shooter - one-at-a-time - and instruct each to 'UNLOAD AND SHOW EMPTY'. Each shooter will unload their rifle, show the RSO it is empty, and place the rifle in the rifle rack, **only after being instructed to do so.**

10. Command: **RANGE IS COLD. SHOOTERS REMAIN AT THE FIRING LINE.**

The RSO will then call the range 'COLD' and proceed to the target stands to score each shooter. The RSO will confirm each score with the respective shooter.

11. Command: **RESETTERS DOWNRANGE TO RESET TARGETS**

After each shooter is scored, the RSO will instruct the resetters to reset the target stand and return to the firing line.

The cycle is then repeated for all relays until the match is complete.

6 Scoring

Forty (40) shots will be fired at forty (40) targets in four (4) strings of ten (10) shots. Scores are based on the number of fallen targets during each string of fire. A target must **fall** to be counted as a hit. Targets that scoot, wobble, spin, or shift do not count as hits. These targets may be re-engaged by the shooter, but the additional rounds fired count towards their 10-shot total for the string and un-engaged targets will count as 'misses'.

Overall scores will be marked as "XX of 40".

In the event of ties for 1st and 2nd place or 2nd and 3rd place, the tied shooters will shoot in series of 10-second “one shot” shoot-offs at 50 yards from the off-hand (standing) position under the direct control of the RSO until a shooter misses. That shooter will be awarded the lower place.

7 Notes

Ten - **and only ten** - shots are fired in each string. (Unfired rounds are counted as ‘misses’.) Shooters must bring ten - **and only ten** - rounds of ammunition with them to the firing line. The ammunition may be loose or held in **one** magazine or speedloader. Extra magazines or speedloaders are not permitted on the firing line.

Rounds that misfire - and cannot be made to fire within the allotted 90 seconds of the firing string - will be counted as misses. Replacement ammunition is not allowed.

Targets may be engaged in any order.

A shooter may only enter one division/subdivision pairing during each match. This is to (1) prevent confusion between the clubhouse staff and the RSOs during registration and to (2) allow as many shooters as possible to participate.

8 Revisions