SHOOTERS HANDBOOK

TWELFTH EDITION
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SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

The Single Action Shooting Society is an international organization created to preserve and promote the fast growing sport of Cowboy Action Shooting™. SASS endorses regional matches conducted by affiliated clubs and annually produces END of TRAIL, the World Championship of Cowboy Action Shooting & Wild West Jubilee™.

Cowboy Action Shooting™ is a multifaceted amateur shooting sport in which contestants compete with firearms typical of those used in the taming of the Old West: single action revolvers, lever action rifles, and side by side double barreled, pre-1899 pump, or lever action shotguns. The shooting competition is staged in a unique, characterized, Old West style.

Contestants shoot in several one- to four-gun stages (courses of fire) in which they engage reactive steel and cardboard silhouette targets. Scoring is based on accuracy and speed.

The truly unique aspect of Cowboy Action Shooting™ is the requirement placed on authentic period or western screen dress. Each participant is required to adopt a shooting alias appropriate to a

character or profession of the late 19th century, or a Hollywood western star, and develop a costume accordingly.

Your SASS shooting alias is exclusively yours. In the tradition of the Old West cattle brand registries, SASS prohibits one shooter duplicating another's alias. There is only one Tex, one Kid Curry, and one Loophole Pettifogger.

SASS affiliated clubs are required to respect the sanctity of SASS members' aliases and shooter numbers, using them in their articles for publication in *The Cowboy Chronicle* and giving them preference over local club members who are not SASS members and are using a duplicate alias.

American history buffs and serious shooters alike agree the use of vintage firearms, authentic costuming, unique targets, and fast action make Cowboy Action Shooting™ one of the most interesting of all shooting sports for both spectator and contestant.

This Handbook includes the specific rules, regulations, and general guidelines adopted by the Single Action Shooting Society. The SASS Range Operations Basic Course and SASS Range Officer

Training Course offer an in-depth interpretation and further clarification of these rules. The very latest version of the Shooters Handbook can always be found on the SASS web site, <www.sassnet.com>. It is the intention and hope of SASS these requirements will serve to preserve and protect Cowboy Action Shooting™ from the gimmickry and technical gamesmanship that have had such a negative effect on other shooting disciplines. The founders of SASS believe END of TRAIL and club and annual matches are as much an opportunity for fun and fellowship as they are shooting competitions.

SPIRIT of the GAME

As the game of Cowboy Action Shooting™ has evolved, our members have developed and adopted an attitude towards their participation we call "The Spirit of the Game." Competing in The Spirit of the Game means you fully participate in what the competition asks. You do not look for ways to create an advantage out of what is or is not stated as a rule or shooting procedure. Some folks would call The Spirit of the Game nothing more than good sportsmanship. Whatever you call it, if you don't have it, Cowboy Action Shooting™ is not your game.

SELECTING an ALIAS

Every SASS member is required to select a shooting alias representative of a character or profession from the Old West or the western film genre. Your alias may not in any way duplicate or easily be confused with any other member's alias. SASS headquarters is the final arbiter of whether an alias is acceptable or not.

These rules are enforced in accepting a new alias for SASS registry:

- It must be "printable" before a wide audience.
- No duplications are permitted.
- If it SOUNDS the same, it is the same.
- Adding "too," "II," etc. is not acceptable.
- "Ranger" could become "Texas Ranger" but not "The Ranger." "John Henry Chisum" could be modified to "Jack Chisum" but not "John H. Chisum" or "Jon Henry Chisum."
- Historical names may not be modified to make them different. "Wyatt Earp" and "Marshal Wyatt Earp" are considered the same.

The SASS Alias Registry changes daily. Telephone or fax the SASS office to confirm the availability of your alias choice.

If an acceptable alias is not selected, the member's SASS number will be used. All subsequent name changes are subject to a "name change fee."

CLOTHING and ACCOUTERMENTS

Cowboy Action Shooting™ is a combination of historical re-enactment and Saturday morning at the matinee. Participants may choose the style of costume they wish to wear, but all clothing must be typical of the late 19th century, a B-western movie, or Western television series.

SASS puts a great deal of emphasis on costuming because it adds so much to the uniqueness of our game and helps create a festive, informal atmosphere that supports the friendly, fraternal feeling we encourage in our competitors.

All shooters must be in costume, and we encourage invited guests and family also to be costumed. **Shooters must remain in costume at all match events: dinners, award ceremonies, dances, etcetera.**

SASS FIREARMS COVENANTS

SASS Cowboy Action Shooting™ competitions are divided into three separate types of matches: main,

team, and side matches. The rules regarding SASS approved firearms depend upon the type of competition in which you are participating.

Original and replicas may be used in competition provided they are in good, safe working order. In each of the respective sections, allowed modifications are listed. Just because a manufacturer designs a part or firearm for this sport or just because a firearm was available, does not necessarily mean it is legal for competition. Only the modifications referenced here as allowed are approved, all others are illegal. As any firearm related sport can be inherently dangerous, SASS does not recommend or suggest the modification of any firearm or the removal of any safety device. Participants in this sport accept responsibility for the use and/or modifications of their firearms and do not depend upon SASS or any of its affiliated clubs or members to make that judgment for them. Please consult with the firearm manufacturer prior to making any firearm modifications. Firearms must operate as intended by the original pre-1900 designs they depict. Firearms must function in a safe manner.

SASS recognizes the desire to enhance firearm performance. Firearms manufacturers, importers,

gunsmiths, and the membership as a whole must use caution in any quest to develop mechanisms designed to enhance the operation of firearms for SASS Cowboy Action Shooting™. Any firearm modification not referenced in this Handbook is prohibited. Parties interested in having modifications, parts or firearms considered for approval and inclusion in the SASS accepted modification text can request a Firearms Modification Consideration application from SASS. Written receipt of acceptance from SASS will be the ONLY source of approval. Unless referenced within these Covenants, any modifications, parts or firearms used without this approval are illegal.

A stage disqualification is issued for each stage in which a non-SASS legal firearm is used.

ALL FIREARMS

- All firearms must be designed to fire by use of an impact mechanism such as required by centerfire primers, rimfire primers, or percussion caps. All other firing mechanisms are illegal.
- Internal modifications not referenced here that cannot be seen while the firearm is at rest (action closed) are allowed provided they do not

affect the external operation or directly conflict with one of the modifications listed here.
- Modifying the firing, cocking, chambering, or levering mechanism in any way that changes the process from an entirely manual operation to any other style operation (e.g., blow-back operation, gas operation, or recoil operation) is expressly prohibited.
- All firearms may be repaired and/or restored to their original condition.
- Replacement parts may be made from materials other than the original unless such material is specifically prohibited.
- All parts may be smoothed, re-profiled, polished, deburred, or replaced with similar or dissimilar parts provided they are not prohibited in these Covenants.

Hammers

- Hammers may be replaced or exchanged with hammers designed for the same frame size (e.g., small frame revolver hammers may not be installed on large frame revolvers or vice versa).
- Internal parts of the hammer may be changed (e.g., to allow for a half-cock notch on a revolver).

- Bisley style revolver hammers may only be used when mated with a Bisley style grip frame.
- Ruger Blackhawk revolver hammers may be replaced with Ruger Super Blackhawk revolver hammers as a Modern Category revolver only.
- Hammer stops may be added.
- The hammer travel distance on any revolver may be adjusted.
- Rear sight notches cut into the revolver hammer may be widened.
- Hammer spur grooves may be re-cut.

Barrels

- Barrels or chambers may be re-bored, lined, or sleeved to any of the approved calibers or gauges for that particular firearm provided industry safe limits are maintained.
- Original barrels may be replaced with new barrels of correct styles (e.g., round, octagon, half-round) for that particular model firearm.
- Barrels may be shortened and/or crowned.
- Rifle barrels must maintain a length greater than 16 inches.
- Rifle barrels may be altered to accept mounting hardware for an alternative tube

magazine configuration and capacity appropriate to the model of firearm being altered.

- Barrels may be altered to accept period style sights as described within the Sights Section.
- Shotgun barrels must maintain a length greater than 18 inches.
- Shotgun barrels may have internal choke tubes installed provided they do not extend beyond the muzzle.
- No heavy competition or "Bull Barrel" is allowed on revolver caliber firearms.
- Barrels must be made of steel or iron only.
- Visible counter-weighting devices are not allowed.
- Compensating ports are not allowed.

Triggers and Trigger Guards

- Triggers may be profiled to narrow their width.
- Trigger position may be adjusted.
- Trigger stops may be added.
- Shotgun trigger guards may be wrapped with leather or other natural material.
- Bending the trigger guard on side by sides so triggers are more exposed is not allowed.
- Trigger shoes are not allowed.

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Stocks and Grips

- The length or style of stock may be altered or replaced (e.g., a carbine style stock may be interchanged for a rifle stock and vice-versa).
- Checkering, carving, or laser engraving is allowed on fore-stocks, butt-stocks, and revolver grips.
- A permanently fitted, non-adjustable, lace-on, or slip on recoil pad is allowed on the butt-stock of rifles and shotguns.
- Butt-plates may be changed to a butt-plate style that was generally available from the original manufacturer.
- A piece of leather or similar natural material may be attached to the butt-plate or butt stock.
- Grips of simulated or natural materials are acceptable provided they are not customized to constitute a "target" grip. That is, they must be of the same basic profile as grips found on original firearms.
- Revolver grips must conform to the front and rear of the grip frame but may extend beyond the bottom surface.
- Contemporary rubber grips, modern target grips, grip tape, and the like are not allowed.

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- A slide-on leather cover to protect the offhand from barrel heat is allowed on side by side shotguns.
- Leather on a pump shotgun's fore-end or grip surface is not allowed.

Sights

All Firearms

- Sights must look like sights available during the cowboy era—bead, blade, simple post or otherwise approved front sights (such as the XS Cowboy Express) made of materials such as steel, iron, ivory, faux ivory, brass, gold, pewter, copper or silver are allowable.
- Rear and front sights may be "blacked." Colors other than those of the materials referenced above or any "day glow" materials are not allowed on either front or rear sights.
- All rear sights may have their openings adjusted.
- The front sight may be raised or lowered to bring point-of-aim and point-of-impact into alignment.
- The back of the front sight may be serrated.

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Rifle

- Tang mounted rear sights may utilize changeable "peep" apertures and eye-cups.
- No bolt or receiver-mounted sight is permitted.
- Dovetails may be milled in the barrel for sight replacement.
- Beech style front sights and sight hoods are allowed.
- Front sights may include a bead or insert of steel, iron, ivory, faux ivory, brass, gold, pewter, copper, or silver. The bead or insert shall be the color of the material.
- Rear sights may utilize an insert of the same color as the rear sight to allow easy sight adjustment.
- Ramp style front sights are allowed if original to the firearm.
- Modern style click-adjustable barrel or receiver sights are not allowed.

Revolver - Traditional Category

- Traditional category revolvers may only use traditional style, barrel mounted, fixed metallic

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foresights of a simple blade, bead, or post configuration.

- A simple open-notched rear sight cut into the frame, hammer, or latch mechanism is the only rear sight allowed.
- Ramp style front sights are not allowed.
- Beaded post front sights or inserts are not allowed.
- Allowed Exceptions: Original open-top cartridge revolvers, cap and ball revolvers, cartridge conversion revolvers, and their modern-made replicas may have either a dovetail front or rear sight, and they must conform to the types commonly found on the originals. Any other revolver by whatever manufacturer or model that has either a dovetailed or screw-adjustable front or rear sight, whether movable or adjustable, is a Modern category revolver.

Revolver -Modern Category

- Modern category revolvers may have dovetailed or adjustable rear sights and/or dovetailed front sights.
- The rear of Modern revolver front sights may be reshaped (such as rounded).

- Ramp style front sights are allowed if original to the firearm.
- Beaded post front sights or inserts are not allowed.
- Modern revolver REAR sights may be replaced with commonly available sights of the same size and type. Modern replacement targets sights such as the Bomar and Millett type sights are not allowed.
- Modern revolver FRONT sights may not be undercut.

Shotgun

- Front sights may be bead or simple post types.

Cosmetic Embellishment

- Period style tacks, carving, engraving, checkering, inlays, and other such embellishments are allowed on stocks and grips provided they do not constitute any kind of radical or target type grip enhancement.
- Receiver, frame, grip frame, cylinder, or barrel engraving is permitted provided it does not constitute a grip enhancement.

- No portion of the grip frame may be checkered or stippled.
- A light bead blasted finish may be applied to the exterior of any SASS firearm.
- Metal surfaces may retain their natural color or be blued, browned, plated (such as nickel, gold, or silver), blacked, color case hardened, aged to a patina type finish, or jeweled.

Screws

- Factory screws may be replaced with socket head cap or other type screws.

Frames and Receivers

- Frames and receivers may be drilled and tapped (such as to accept approved type sights).
- Ruger Blackhawk frames may be modified by removing the rear sight assembly, welding up the sight cutout, re-contouring the frame top strap, and cutting a new sight notch to replicate a Colt SAA frame. The reconfigured frame must be mated with a conventional Ruger Vaquero type barrel, hammer, and the original grip frame assembly in order to be allowed as a Traditional Category style revolver.

- Percussion revolvers may be converted to accommodate cartridge-firing mechanisms common to the period. They may also be modified by adding a narrow cap guard to the recoil shield and undercut the hammer (i.e., Manhattan modification). Modern percussion revolvers may have the frame contoured to approximate original type designs.
- The dimensions of the ejection port on a slide action shotgun may not be altered.

Levers

- "John Wayne" style levers may be substituted on rifles for the standard factory lever.
- Levers may be wrapped or padded with leather or other natural material.
- Filler "blocks" or other such mechanisms designed to prevent all movement of the fingers within the lever loop are not allowed.
- With the exception of the "John Wayne" levers, any replacement lever must maintain the same basic contour and size as the original lever.
- The lever may be cut and welded provided the basic exterior contour and size is not changed.

- The exchange of an 1873 rifle lever with an 1866 rifle lever is allowed.
- All lever action rifles must have a lever travel distance of not less than 4-1/8 inches when measured as follows:
  With the action closed, measure three inches back from the back edge of the trigger at the point where it enters the frame. Mark this point on both the bottom of the buttstock and the lever opposite the buttstock mark. Open the lever to its maximum extension and measure the distance between the two marks.
  Exception: The Browning BL-22 in .22 caliber, is a legal rifle for the Buckaroo Category and is a legal rifle for .22 caliber rifle side matches.

Feed / Loading Mechanisms

- The carrier and/or lifter mechanisms in rifles may be lightened, welded, modified, or replaced.
- A "two-shot" drop type system for lever action shotguns may be added.
- Loading lever mechanisms on percussion revolvers may be removed or modified to accommodate barrel length changes.

- The seating mechanism on percussion revolvers may be removed or may be modified to adjust seating depth.

Firing Pins

- The length of the firing pin may be extended.
- The visible contour of the rear portion of firing pins or firing pin extensions may not be altered.
- Friction reducing devices such as roller bearings are not allowed on the rear portion of firing pins or firing pin extensions.

Recoil Reducers

- Internal recoil reducing devices may be added.

Revolver Ejector Rods

- Colt style bullseye or crescent ejector rods may be installed.

Revolver Grip Frames

- Birdshead grip frames and grips may be installed on any SAA or its modern replicas but may not be used with Bisley style hammers.

- Grip frames may be replaced, "rounded," or extended (e.g., the exchange of a Single Action Army grip frame with an 1860 Army grip frame and vice versa).
- Brass or aluminum grip frames are allowed.
- Bisley style grip frames may only be used when mated with a Bisley style hammer.

Revolver Cylinder Base Pins

- The cylinder pin may be shortened.
- A screw may be used to secure the base pin.

Revolver Cylinders

- Centerfire and rimfire cylinders may have no less than five and no more than six chambers.
- The front of the cylinder may be beveled.
- Un-fluted cylinders may be fluted.
- Lead in grooves may be cut or extended.
- The revolver may be altered to allow the cylinder to spin in either direction.
- Cylinders may be re-bored, lined, or sleeved to any of the approved revolver calibers provided industry safe limits are maintained.
- Cylinders must be made of steel or iron only.

Shotgun Break Action

- Internal mechanisms to guarantee side-by-sides do not close accidentally may be added or modified.
- The open angle for side by sides may be increased.

RIFLE REQUIREMENTS

Rifles or carbines used in the main and team matches must be original or replicas of lever or slide action rifles manufactured during the period from approximately 1860 until 1899, incorporating a tubular magazine and exposed hammer. Rifles with box magazines may not be used. Certain shooting categories require a specific type of rifle and ammunition to be used. Please see the shooting categories for further information

Rifle Calibers

- Must be centerfire of at least .32 caliber and not larger than .45 caliber.
- Must be in a caliber commonly available in revolvers. (Examples include, but are not limited to, .32-20, .32 Magnum, .357 Magnum, .38 Special, .38-40, .44-40, .44 Special, .44 Magnum,

and .45 Colt.) The only allowed exceptions are the .25-20 and .56-50. No rifle calibers such as .30-30 or .38-55 are allowed.

- Standard velocity .22 caliber rimfire ammunition is allowed within the Buckaroo Category only.

REVOLVER REQUIREMENTS

Original single action revolvers manufactured prior to 1899, their approved replicas, and the SASS approved modern category revolvers are the only revolvers approved for use in SASS main match competition. The rules relative to SASS approved revolvers depend upon the competition category in which one participates. Examples of SASS approved revolvers for each category are listed elsewhere in this Handbook. Sights are a major factor for determining in which category a revolver may be used. Certain shooting categories require a specific type of revolver and ammunition be used. Please see the shooting categories for further information

No more than two main-match revolvers may be carried to the firing line.

Revolver Calibers

- Must be centerfire calibers of at least .32 caliber and no larger than .45 caliber or percussion calibers of at least .36 caliber and no larger than .45 caliber.
- Must be in a caliber commonly available in revolvers. Examples include, but are not limited to, .32-20, .32 Magnum, .357 Magnum, .38 Special, .44 Magnum, .44-40, and .45 Colt).
- Standard velocity .22 caliber rimfire ammunition is allowed within the Buckaroo Category only.

SHOTGUN REQUIERMENTS

Any side-by-side or single barrel shotgun typical of the period from approximately 1860 until 1899 without automatic ejectors, with or without external hammers, having single or double triggers is allowed. Lever action, single barrel, tubular feed, exposed hammer shotguns of the period are allowed, whether original or replicas. The only slide action shotgun allowed is the Model 1897 Winchester shotgun, whether original or replicas. Certain shooting categories require a specific type of shotgun and ammunition to be used. Military con-

figurations are not allowed (i.e., trench guns). Please see the shooting categories for further information.

Shotgun Gauges

- Side-by-side, single barrel, and lever action shotguns must be centerfire of at least 20 gauge and no larger the 10 gauge.
- Slide action shotguns must be centerfire of at least 16 gauge and no larger than 12 gauge.
- Side-by-side, single barrel, and lever action centerfire shotguns in .410 gauge are allowed within the Buckaroo Category only.

ANY EXTERNAL MODIFICATION TO MAIN MATCH FIREARMS NOT SPECIFICALLY REFERENCED IN THIS HANDBOOK IS EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED!

OTHER APPROVED FIREARMS

The following additional firearms have been approved for use:

- Small frame Model P revolvers such as the Cimarron Firearms Lightning, Uberti Stallion, and Ruger Single Six .32 H & R Magnum.

- Henry Big Boy Rifle (not legal in Classic Cowboy/Cowgirl Categories).
- US Firearms Omni Potent Revolver.
- Marlin 1894 Tube Feed Rifle—.32 H&R Magnum.
- Original or replica Nagant Single Action Revolver.

HOLSTERS, CARTRIDGE BELTS, and BANDOLEERS

- All handguns must be carried in a safe holster capable of retaining the firearm throughout a normal range of motion.
- Main match holsters must be located one on each side of the belly button and separated by at least the width of two fists at the belt. (Note: Pocket pistol and Derringer holsters are not “main-match” holsters.)
- Holsters may not depart from the vertical by more than 30 degrees when worn.
- Ammunition required for reloads during the course of any stage must be carried on the shooter's person in a bandoleer, belt, pouch, holster, or pocket. Rifle and revolver ammunition may not be carried in a shotgun loop. No ammu-

nition may be carried in the mouth, ears, nose, cleavage, or any other bodily orifice.

- Bandoleers, cartridge belts, and pouches must be of traditional design (e.g., bandoleers must be loose and not secured in any way to prevent movement). Modern drop pouches, combat-style shotgun loops, wrist or forearm bandoleers, and such are not allowed. Pouches shall have a flap and must carry their contents loose, with no special provisions to organize the contents for rapid retrieval. Leather belt slide ammo loops are acceptable, however, shotgun shell slides may not be worn over shotgun belts. Shotgun loops must be in a single row.
- Cartridge loops must not have a metal or plastic liner. However, the entire loop may be made of metal.
- Shotgun ammo loops may not accommodate more than two rounds per loop, and rifle/revolver ammo loops shall accommodate only one round per loop.
- Ammo belts must be worn so all ammo is positioned at or below the belly button.
- Shotgun ammo loops must conform to the shooters contour (i.e., not tilt out from the belt).

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- Cartridge loops mounted on a firearm's stock or forearm are not allowed.

MAIN MATCH AMMUNITION

- Revolver ammunition must have a muzzle velocity less than 1,000 fps. Rifle ammunition must have a muzzle velocity less than 1,400 fps. Shooters may be held responsible for damage caused to a target or injury to personnel due to "bounce-back" because of inappropriate ammunition. This major safety violation is grounds for "instant disqualification" and ejection from the match.
- Revolver and rifle ammunition may not be jacketed, semi-jacketed, plated, gas checked, or copper washed. It must be all lead. Molydisulfide coated bullets or equivalent are acceptable.
- Revolver and rifle ammunition must be of "single-projectile" design. "Multiple-projectile" bullets are illegal.
- Ammunition with bullets recessed below the case mouth is disallowed.
- Throughout this manual, blackpowder means blackpowder, or a blackpowder substitute such as Pyrodex, 777, APP, or comparable propellants

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intended for muzzle loading firearms. Propellants containing nitrocellulose are prohibited as blackpowder substitutes. Any combination of smokeless and blackpowder (so called duplex loads) is specifically prohibited.

- Shotgun shot size must be number 4 lead birdshot or smaller for all events (no steel or plated shot).
- Magnum and high-velocity loads are not allowed.
- Pump and lever action shotguns are allowed to load no more than two rounds at a time in the main match stages unless specified in the stage description. In team events, shotguns may be loaded to their maximum magazine capacity.
- All centerfire or rimfire ammunition must be designed to package the bullet, gunpowder, and primer into a single metallic case precisely made to fit the firing chamber of the firearm. The primer must be of the type that uses only a small charge of impact-sensitive chemical that may be located at the center of the case head or at its rim. Electrically-fired ammunition is illegal.

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CATEGORIES

TRADITIONAL

- Any Main Match revolver with non-adjustable, traditional sights.
- Revolvers may be shot two handed or one handed (duelist style)
- May use any SASS–legal main match shotgun and any main match rifle.
- May use any SASS–legal ammunition.

MODERN

- Any Main Match revolver with adjustable, Modern sights.
- Two Traditional revolvers **cannot** be used in the Modern category. For two-revolver stages, it is permissible for one revolver to be a Traditional style handgun. For one-revolver stages, a Modern handgun must be used.
- Revolvers may be shot two handed or one handed (duelist style)
- May use any SASS–legal main match shotgun and any main match rifle.
- May use any SASS–legal ammunition.

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DUELIST

- Any Main Match revolver with non-adjustable, traditional sights.
- Revolvers must be **cocked and fired** one-handed, unsupported. The revolver, hand, or shooting arm may not be touched by the off-hand except when resolving a malfunctioning revolver problem or when transferring the revolver from one hand to the other. Revolvers may be shot one in one hand and one in the other, but at no time shall the competitor have two loaded revolvers in hand at once.
- May use any SASS–legal main match shotgun and any main match rifle.
- May use any SASS–legal ammunition.

GUNFIGHTER

- Any Main Match revolver with non-adjustable, traditional sights.
- Revolvers must be cocked and fired one-handed, unsupported, one right handed and the other left handed. Only Gunfighter Style or Double Duelist Style may be used. "Gunfighter Style" is defined as shooting with a revolver in each hand. There is no set pattern as to how the

revolvers are to be fired, but alternating revolvers is clearly the most efficient. "Double Duelist Style" is defined as shooting a revolver cocked and fired one-handed and unsupported, with each hand, that is, left gun with the left hand and right gun with the right hand. The revolver, hand, or shooting arm may not be touched by the off-hand except when resolving a malfunctioning revolver problem or when transferring the revolver from one hand to the other.

- The Gunfighter and B-Western Categories are the only categories that allow two loaded revolvers out of leather at the same time.
- When a stage calls for 10 revolver rounds in a single sequence or the use of only one revolver for the stage, the Gunfighter may draw both revolvers and engage the targets. The Gunfighter shall shoot the targets in exactly the same sequence as prescribed in the stage scenario.

  Both revolvers may be cocked at the same time, but must be shot one at a time to facilitate scoring. A Gunfighter may not holster revolvers with the intent to engage another revolver sequence. All rounds must be expended prior to holstering unless the revolvers were drawn at the wrong

time or a revolver/ammunition malfunction has occurred. Stage design may allow a competitor shooting "Gunfighter Style" to stage or restage revolvers between target sequences. Inadvertently leaving unfired rounds in a revolver is a miss unless the round is under the hammer, then it is a Stage Disqualification.

If the stage scenario requires the use of another firearm between the revolver sequences or the shooter's hands are otherwise constrained (e.g., rolling the dice between revolver sequences), the revolvers must be drawn and shot one at a time unless they are allowed to be staged rather than holstered. In this case, both revolvers may be employed at the same time for the first five rounds, safely restaged, and then employed at the same time again for the second five rounds.

- May use any SASS–legal main match shotgun and any legal main match rifle.
- May use any SASS–legal ammunition.
- Two standard holsters are required, one on each side. No cross-draw or "butt-forward" configurations are allowed.

BLACKPOWDER CATEGORIES

It is expected the blackpowder competitor shall contend with smoke-obscured targets. To insure this, all shotgun, revolver, and rifle powder charges must produce smoke at least equivalent to a base line load of 15 grains by volume (1 cc) of ffg blackpowder.

FRONTIER CARTRIDGE

- Any Main Match revolver with non-adjustable, traditional sights.
- Revolvers may be shot two handed or one handed (duelist style).
- Must use blackpowder in <u>all</u> loads (rifle, six-gun, and shotgun).
- Must use a side-by-side or lever action shotgun in the main match stages.
- Any SASS–legal pistol caliber rifle is acceptable.
- Frontier Cartridge Duelist is also recognized, with all requirements being the same except the Duelist shooting style is used. See Duelist description for required shooting technique.

NOTE: Frontier Cartridge competitors may use any SASS–legal firearms and propellants in team and side matches.

FRONTIERSMAN

- Any Main Match percussion revolver.
- Revolvers must be shot duelist style. See Duelist description below for required shooting technique.
- Must use blackpowder in all loads (rifle, six-gun, and shotgun).
- Must use a side-by-side or lever action shot-gun in the main match stages.
- Any SASS–legal pistol caliber rifle is acceptable.

CLASSIC COWBOY/COWGIRL

- Any Main Match revolver with non-adjustable, traditional sights.
- Revolvers must be shot duelist style. See Duelist description for required shooting technique.
- Revolver calibers: .40 caliber rimmed cartridges or larger—revolvers and rifle (e.g., .38-40, .44 Special, .44 Russian, .44 Mag., .44-40, .45 Schofield, .45 Colt) or .36 caliber cap & ball or larger.
- May use any legal ammunition as long as it adheres to the above caliber restrictions.

- Rifles: Any 1873 or earlier manufacture SASS–legal rifle or a replica thereof (e.g., 1866 Winchester, 1860 Henry, 1873 Winchester).
- Shotguns: SASS–legal external–hammer double barrel or lever actions.
- Costuming: Must choose at least five of the requirements listed below. All clothing items must be worn appropriately during all shooting events and awards ceremonies.

  Chaps, spurs, cuffs, tie or scarf worn loosely around the neck or with scarf slide, vest, pocket watch with full-length chain, jacket, sleeve gar-ters, knife, botas, leggings, braces; no straw hats allowed.
- In addition to the above items, ladies may choose from the items listed below in order to compete within this category:
- Period watch, split riding skirt, bustle, hoops, corset, Victorian style hat (straw allowed), period jewelry, period hair ornaments (e.g., feathers), snood, reticule (period handbag), period lace up shoes, camisole, bloomers, fishnet stockings, feather boa, cape.
- No Buscadero or drop loop holster rigs allowed (i.e., part of the grip must be above the belt on which the holster hangs).

- All boots must be of traditional design with leather or smooth rubber, non-grip enhancing soles.
- Hats must be worn for the entire match.

"B" WESTERN

- Any Main Match revolver with Traditional or Modern sights.
- Revolvers may be shot in any SASS–legal shooting style, at any time.
- Rifles: Any SASS–legal rifle of 1884 or later design or a replica thereof (i.e. 1892, 1894, Lightening Rifle, or Marlin)
- May use any SASS–legal shotgun.
- May use any SASS–legal ammunition.
- Leather: Buscadero holster rigs or drop loop rigs. (All of the revolver(s) must be carried below the top of the gun belt.) All belt and holster rigs must be embellished (fancy stitching, conchos, spots, or tooling). All holsters must be of the "Straight Hang" type. No cross-draw, shoulder rigs, or butt forward configurations allowed.
- Costuming: Shirts must be of the "B" Western style with snap buttons or any of the following: "Smiley Pockets," embroidery,

appliqués, fringe, or different colored yokes. Shield shirts are also allowed if it has piping or embroidery. Pants must be jeans, ranch pants, or pants with flap over the rear pocket, keystone belt loops, and/or piping or fringe. Pants must be worn with a belt. Suspenders are not allowed. Felt hats only, no straw hats. Hats must be worn. All boots must be of traditional design with fancy stitching or multi-color fancy design with smooth, non-grip enhancing soles. Lace-up boots and moccasins are not allowed. Western Spurs with rowels are required for men. Ladies may wear skirts or split riding skirts.

You must choose at least one or more of the fol-lowing optional items: gloves or gauntlets, scarves with slides or tied around the neck, coat, vest, chaps, cuffs.

All costumes are expected to be fancy and flashy. The "B" Western costuming must be worn dur-ing the entire match and awards ceremony with exception of evening formal occasions.

AGE AND GENDER-BASED CATAGORIES

SASS additionally recognizes protected shooting categories based upon age and gender. These categories incorporate the following standards. Unless otherwise stated, any SASS–legal firearm, ammunition, and (non-Gunfighter) shooting style can be used. The age for a competitor is determined by their age on the first day the match starts.

- Juniors are persons aged 16 and under. The category may be sub-divided by age and gender. Suggested divisions are "Young Guns" aged 14 through 16 and "Buckaroos" 13 and under. Caution is urged in allowing competitors under age 14. Local laws, regulations, and insurance requirements may prevent matches from offering some age groups.
- Parental consent and supervision is required for all competitors under twenty-one years of age.
- "Buckaroos" may use revolvers, rifles, and shotguns meeting the external standards but may be chambered in .22 LR for revolvers and rifles and .410 caliber for shotguns. Standard velocity ammunition for these firearms must be used.

- The women's category may be sub-divided according to the use of Modern and Traditional handguns as well as shooting style, e.g., Lady Duelist and Lady Gunfighter.
- Forty-Niners are competitors 49 years of age or greater. Forty-Niner Ladies Category is also recognized.
- Seniors are competitors 60 years of age or greater. Senior Ladies and Senior Duelist are also recognized senior categories.
- Elder Statesmen/Grand Dames are competitors 70 years of age or greater.

  Note: Only juniors may shoot as Juniors. Only females may shoot as Women. Only seniors may shoot as Seniors. Only Forty-Niners can shoot as Forty-Niners. There <u>are</u> <u>no</u> men's categories.. No competitor is compelled to shoot in one of these categories by reason of his or her age or gender. A competitor may compete in any category for which they qualify. Any woman, junior, or senior who wishes to compete under one of the six basic shooting categories may do so. For example, a junior female shooting a Colt one handed with blackpowder rounds may elect to shoot as a Junior, a Woman, a Traditional, a Frontier Cartridge, or a Duelist competitor.

SIDE MATCHES

THE PLAINSMAN

The event requires two .36 caliber or larger Traditional style percussion revolvers, shot Duelist style.

- Must use a SASS–legal singleshot rifle firing a traditional blackpowder rifle or revolver caliber cartridge (e.g., not a .30-30). The rifle may have spring-actuated ejectors if they are standard for that rifle.
- Must use a side by side, with or without exposed hammers or lever action shotgun.
- Must use blackpowder in <u>all</u> loads (rifle, revolver, and shotgun).

POCKET PISTOLS and DERRINGERS

Pocket pistols and Derringers are popular for use in side matches and are occasionally introduced as an additional firearm in main match stages.

- A pocket pistol is a small frame, fixed sight, pre-1900 design revolver having a barrel length of four inches or less. Pocket pistols must be .31 caliber or larger. Model "P" Colts and clones and revolvers with swing out cylinders are specifically not allowed regardless of caliber, frame

size, or barrel length. Pocket pistols may not be used as or converted to main match revolvers.

- A Derringer is defined as an external hammer, fixed sight, breech-loading or percussion ignition, small frame pre-1900 design firearm having one to four barrels up to three and one-half inches long. Derringers must be .22 caliber or larger. The Remington style over/under barrel configuration and the Sharps four-barreled Pepperbox are typical SASS–legal Derringers.
- .22 Magnum ammunition is not allowed.

LONG RANGE (or PRECISION) RIFLE

SASS long range or precision rifle competition is different than main match rifle competition with more emphasis placed on <u>precision</u> shooting at <u>longer</u> ranges, with time being a secondary scoring factor. Scoring for these matches is determined by the number of hits, with either of two methods used to break ties. At the match director's option, either total time used to shoot the required number of shots or a shoot-off may be used to break ties.

There are four categories in long range or precision rifle competition, plus one optional category:

- Lever action, revolver caliber,

- Lever action, rifle caliber,
- Single Shot,
- Buffalo Single Shot,
- Open Category (may be used at the match directors option to include those firearms not covered by the four official Long Range Categories).

Blackpowder categories can be added to any or all of the basic categories at the option of the match director. Each category competes within itself.

Basic Rules for the Long Range Competitions

- Front barrel sights may vary from simple blades to period hooded *wind gauge* designs using interchangeable sight inserts and having a spirit level mounted integral with the sight or sight base.
- Rear sights must either be open iron sights mounted on the barrel or original style tang or stock wrist mounted peep sights. Long range rear barrel mounted sights of the flip-up ladder type may use a peephole drilled through the sliding sight leaf. An example of this is the various ladder type sights used on the Springfield trapdoors.

- Optical and receiver mounted sights are not allowed.
- "Rifle Caliber" competition rifles must use traditional, period, rimmed cartridges. No cartridge chambered for use in any SASS approved main match revolver or rifle may be used in the "Rifle Caliber" competition. Thus, .30-30 WCF, .38-55 Marlin & Ballard, .43 Spanish, or .45-70 Government cartridges are legal, while a .375 Winchester, .444 Marlin, .32-20 WCF, or .44-40 WCF are not legal.
- Any propellant powder may be used (with the exception smokeless powder is not allowed in the Buffalo Single Shot competition).
- Regardless of category or caliber, bullets used in long range and precision rifle matches must be made of pure lead or lead alloy having a plain base, gas checked, or paper patched configuration.

Lever Action Rifles used in long-range matches, whether revolver or rifle calibers, must be originals or replicas of rifles manufactured during the period from approximately 1860 until 1899. Lever or slide action, tubular feed, exposed hammer rifles or

carbines are allowed, providing they are in safe working condition.

Single Shot and Buffalo Single Shot firearms must be originals or replicas of single shot rifles manufactured during the period from approximately 1860 until 1899. All rifles MUST have exposed hammers. The caliber and cartridge rules for the "Rifle Caliber" firearms noted above under basic rules also apply to Single Shot and Buffalo Single Shot rifles with the exception Buffalo Single Shot rifles must be .375" bore size or larger.

Buffalo Single Shot competition has further restrictions requiring original or replica rifles to be a design of US manufacture. Spring-loaded ejectors are also prohibited, except for Springfield Trapdoor Rifles.

SASS MOUNTED SHOOTING

SASS Mounted Shooting is a special event where experienced riders traverse a course of fire in the shortest period of time shooting balloons with match supplied .45 caliber blanks. Please see the SASS Mounted Shooters Handbook for additional information.

SCORING and TIMING

SASS matches are scored based upon elapsed shooting time and added penalty points for missed targets. Each stage is scored individually and, in most club matches, the total combined score for all stages fired is ranked for place of finish, either over all or by category.

At END of TRAIL, SASS Regionals, and at the discretion of each affiliated club, rank scoring is used.

Rank scoring is recommended when all the stages in a match are not of approximately the same duration and degree of difficulty.

The alternative to rank scoring is scoring based upon total time (total raw time plus penalties).

Overall winners, often including both the top male and top female competitors, are traditionally recognized at SASS matches. The "best score" for the main match stages determines the overall winner.

Rifle, revolver, and shotgun targets must be engaged with the appropriate type firearm. A "miss" is defined as the failure to hit the appropriate target type using the appropriate type firearm. Missed

targets are scored as five-second additions to the competitor's raw time for the stage (at annual matches and above).

Procedurals are unintentional "mistakes" where the competitor engages the stage in a manner other than the way it is supposed to be shot. Procedurals are scored as ten-second additions to the competitor's raw time for the stage, no more than one per stage.

A stage disqualification is issued for each stage in which a non-SASS–legal firearm is used at matches above the club level.

Minor safety infractions occurring during a course of fire that do not directly endanger persons result in a ten-second penalty being added to the shooter's time per occurrence for that stage. "Minor" safety infractions are occurrences such as failure to open a long gun's action at the conclusion of a shooting string or failure to return a handgun to its holster at the conclusion of a shooting string.

Major safety infractions result in the shooter's disqualification from the stage or the match. A second major infraction in the match shall result in the shooter's ejection from the range. "Major" infractions include a dropped gun, an accidental dis-

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charge that impacts within ten-feet of any person (an impact within five-feet is a match disqualification), violation of the 170 degree safety rule, "sweeping" any person with the muzzle of a firearm, and similar acts that have high potential for personal injury.

In the event a competitor feels a range officer's ruling is in error, the ruling may be politely and immediately appealed to the Rangemaster/Match Director. The Rangemaster/Match Director will consider the appeal on grounds of policy and rules interpretation only, and their decision is final. At major matches special protest juries comprised of Territorial Governors may be empanelled to aid the Range Master/Match Director in making a reasonable judgment.

Failure to Engage

A "failure to engage" occurs when a competitor willfully or intentionally disregards the stage instructions in order to obtain a competitive advantage (i.e., taking the penalty would result in a lower score or faster time than following the instructions) and is not assessed simply because a competitor "makes a mistake." In such a case, in addition to

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any penalties for misses, a 30-second failure to engage/Spirit of the Game penalty is assessed.

RANGE OPERATIONS

Cowboy Action Shooting™ **is not** intended to be a precision shooting competition. Small targets and long distances take the "action" out of the game and make it more discouraging for newer shooters.

Both experienced and inexperienced shooters want hits on their targets. Some folks just hit (or miss) a little faster than others. Too many misses, or the perception the targets are too difficult to hit, discourage folks from continuing to play, especially the less proficient shooters.

Ask any experienced Cowboy Action Shooter, and she or he will tell you <u>there is no such thing as a target too big or too close to miss</u>!

A more detailed guide to match design is available in the SASS Match Directors Guide.

- Metal and paper targets of generous size are used. Reactive targets such as pepper poppers and falling plates are used when practical to enhance shooter feedback and spectator appeal. Targets are set at close to medium range. There

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are no absolute rules, but we suggest the following distances, by firearm, if using a target approximately 16" X 16":

  Revolver – 7 to 10 yards
  Shotgun – 8 to 16 yards
  Rifle – 13 to 50 yards
  Derringer/Pocket Pistol – Point blank to three yards shooting paper, cardboard, or balloons only. It's too close to safely shoot steel.

- Handguns are returned to leather (reholstered) with hammer down on an empty chamber or a spent case at the conclusion of the shooting string, unless the shooter has been specifically directed otherwise.
- Only Gunfighters or B-Western competitors may have two <u>loaded</u> revolvers in their hands at once.
- Competitors choosing to use six-shot percussion revolvers may load and cap **only five** chambers. If a particular stage requires a one shot reload, the sixth chamber may be charged at the bench and then capped "on the clock." A complete reload is handled by staging a loaded, uncapped revolver down range or switching uncapped cylinders and capping under the clock.

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- SASS matches above the club level are "no alibi" matches. Once the first round goes down range, the competitor is committed to the stage and must finish the shooting problem to the best of his ability. Reshoots are not awarded for ammunition or firearm malfunctions. However, if there is a range failure (failure of props, timer, or the range officers) beyond the competitor's control, a reshoot may be granted. On a reshoot, the competitor starts over clean, carrying only accrued safety penalties with him.
- The role of the Range Officer is to **safely assist the shooter through the course of fire**. Coaching and constraining the shooter from unsafe acts are expected when appropriate, minimizing procedural and safety penalties whenever possible.
- Failure to stage guns or ammunition at the designated position(s) is the fault of the competitor and scored as a procedural unless the competitor is able to correct the situation, unassisted, while in the process of completing the stage under the clock.
- It is expected the Range Officers will be the responsible parties for observing and resolving all safety related matters occurring in the loading,

unloading, and firing line areas. However, any shooter who observes a safety infraction not seen by the Range Officer(s) should call the infraction to the Range Officer's attention, at which time the matter will be resolved.

SAFETY PRACTICES

First, Last, and Always

Our sport, by its very nature, has the potential to be dangerous and a serious accident can occur. Every participant in a SASS match is expected to be a safety officer. Each shooter's first responsibility is for his or her own safe conduct, but all shooters are expected to remain alert for actions by others that are unsafe.

Any Range Officer or shooter may confront any participant about an observed unsafe situation, and it is expected the matter will quickly be corrected and not repeated. Any argument concerning the correction of a safety related matter can be expected to result in that shooter being ejected from the range.

Shooters shall adhere to the following safety rules:

1. Treat and respect every firearm at all times as if it were loaded.
2. Muzzle direction is important between, before, during, and after shooting a stage. A muzzle must not be allowed to "sweep" the other participants at any time. Long guns shall have their actions open with chambers and magazines empty and muzzles pointed in a safe direction when transported at a match. Failure to manage safe muzzle direction is grounds for disqualification from the stage, and for repeated offenses, from the match.
3. All firearms shall remain unloaded except when under the direct observation of a Range Officer on the firing line or in the loading area.
4. All loading and unloading shall be conducted only in the designated areas. NOTE: Percussion revolver shooters must exercise care to ensure they maintain safe muzzle direction during loading and have fired or cleared all capped chambers prior to leaving the unloading area. It is not permissible to seat percussion caps on a revolver's nipple using the gun's hammer.
5. Dry firing at the loading table is not allowed and results in a stage disqualification. Dry firing is allowed at designated safe areas. Dry

firing is defined as the act of bringing the gun into a shooting position, cocking the hammer, and pulling the trigger as if to cause the gun to fire normally.
6. Six-guns are always loaded with only five rounds and the hammer lowered, fully down, and left resting on the empty chamber. Five-shooters may load five rounds, but the hammer must rest on a dummy chamber or safety slot in the cylinder so the hammer does not rest on a live round/cap.
7. No cocked revolver may ever leave a shooter's hand.
8. Once a revolver is cocked, the round under the hammer must be expended in order for it to be returned to a safe condition. Once a rifle is cocked, the round under the hammer must be expended or ejected in order for it to be returned to a safe condition. Shotgun shells may be removed if necessary without penalty in order to return the firearm to a safe condition.
9. If a firearm is shot out of sequence or from the wrong position, the shooter will be awarded a single procedural penalty. In this situation, if the shooter elects or is forced to miss an appropriate target due to unsafe angles or target

availability, a round may be reloaded to avoid a miss penalty (the dreaded "Double Jeopardy" of a procedure and miss). This does not mean a shooter may reload a rifle or revolver at any other time to make up a miss. Unfired ejected rifle rounds may be reloaded.

10. The shooter shall not cock any revolver until the firearm is pointed safely down range. Any discharge of any firearm impacting within ten-feet of the shooter is unsafe and will result in disqualification from the stage or, if less than five-feet, from the match. A second stage disqualification shall result in the shooter's ejection from the match.
11. Rifles may be staged down range from the shooter with the magazine loaded, action closed, hammer down, and chamber empty.
12. Shotguns are always staged open with magazine and chambers empty and are loaded on the clock unless the stage begins with the shotgun in the shooter's hands. Mule-eared shotguns can be cocked at the beginning of a scenario, whether staged or in the shooter's hands. Long guns are never staged with their muzzles on the ground.

13. Long guns will be left open with magazines and chambers empty at the conclusion of each shooting string (i.e., before shooting the next firearm). This does not apply to "restaged" rifles.
14. A live round left in the chamber of a long gun constitutes a stage disqualification. Any other rounds, live or empty, left anywhere in a long gun in which it was loaded is a ten-second minor safety violation. Broken guns still containing rounds do not warrant penalties so long as the malfunction is declared and the gun made safe.
15. All shooters must demonstrate rudimentary familiarity and proficiency with the firearms being used. Shooters are expected to perform within their capabilities at all times. SASS matches are not the forums in which to learn basic firearms handling.
16. SASS matches are not fast draw competitions. Any unsafe gun handling in the course of a draw from the holster or any "fanning" will result in the shooter's disqualification from that stage. "Slip-hammering" is not the same as fanning and is legal.

17. Extreme care must be exercised when drawing a revolver from a cross-draw or shoulder holster or returning the revolver to leather. The user must "twist" their body, if necessary, to ensure the muzzle never breaks the 170-degree safety rule during the process. Failure to ensure the muzzle is always down range is grounds for an immediate stage disqualification. A second infraction during the same match is grounds for match disqualification. (Note: The 170-degree safety rule means the muzzle of the firearm must always be straight down range +/- 85 degrees in any direction. If a competitor "comes close" to breaking the 180-degree safety plane, the 170-degree safety rule has been violated, and the competitor is at fault.)
18. When changing location during a stage, all firearms being carried must either have the hammer down on an empty chamber or spent case, or have the action open.
19. A dropped unloaded gun on the firing line (loading table to unloading table) results in the shooter's disqualification from the stage. A dropped loaded firearm results in a match disqualification. A shooter may not pick up a dropped gun. The Range Officer will recover

the gun, examine it, clear it, and return it to the shooter.

20. Ammunition dropped by a shooter in the course of reloading any firearm during a stage or "ejected" from any firearm is considered "dead" and may not be recovered until the shooter completes the course of fire. The round must be replaced from the shooter's person or counted as a missed shot. Staged ammunition dropped back where it was staged is not considered "dead."
21. The unloading officer or Range Officer MUST inspect all firearms before they leave the shooting stage. All rifles and pump or lever action shotguns must have their action cycled for the inspecting official. All revolvers, whether used or not in the stage, must also be inspected.
22. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the range area for all shooters, guests, range officers, and others, until shooting is done for the day. No shooter may consume any alcoholic beverage until he or she has completed all of their shooting for the day and stored their firearms.
23. No shooter may ingest any substance that will affect his or her ability to participate with a

maximum state of awareness and in a completely safe manner. Both prescription and non-prescription pharmaceuticals that may cause drowsiness or any other physical or mental impairment must be avoided.

24. Hearing protection is highly recommended and eye protection is mandatory in and around the shooting areas. While small, period glasses look great, full protection, high impact glasses are strongly recommended. Such protection is recommended for everyone when in the range area, and eye protection is mandatory for spectators when within direct line of sight of steel targets.
25. Only registered competitors may wear firearms.

OUTLAWED

- Modern shooting gloves
- Short sleeve shirts
- Modern feathered cowboy hats (Shady Bradys). Straw hats of traditional design (e.g., Stetson, Bailey, sombreros,) are acceptable.
- Designer jeans
- Ball caps

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- All types of athletic shoes or combat boots no matter the material from which they are constructed.
- Clothing displaying manufacturer's or sponsor's logos.
- Nylon, plastic, or Velcro accouterments

Mainly, SASS wants our participants to be safe, have fun, develop their competitive shooting skills, and enjoy the rich traditions of the Old West. We ask you join us in the friendly spirit of competition and preservation of our heritage.

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