

Chapter 6

Combat Shooting Match Rules and Regulations

Combat Shooting Matches will be governed by the rules established and listed in this chapter.

1. Combat Shooting Matches. Base commanders are responsible for approving the courses of fire supporting a Combat Shooting Match. The match will consist of several different courses of fire that closely replicate combat scenarios.

a. In order to standardize competition, Combat Shooting Matches must be designed to include the skill sets outlined in Appendix G that support the overall intent of combat marksmanship.

b. The weapons fired will be organic to the Marine Corps with no special modifications such as triggers or sighting systems.

c. There are no official Marine Corps awards or badges associated with combat shooting matches at this time. A Base or individual unit can present awards in recognition of superior marksmanship.

2. Officials

a. Host Commander. The host commander has local overall responsibility for supporting and conducting the matches. He will be guided by instructions contained in this Order.

b. Match Director. A Match Director will be appointed by the host commander. He will be guided by instructions contained in this Order and those issued by the host commander. His duties will include, but need not be limited to, the following:

(1) Ensures courses of fire comply with safety precautions and the skill sets outlined in this Order (Appendix G).

(2) Oversees range operations.

(3) Assigns range personnel.

(4) Makes decisions on challenges and protests. The decision of the Match Director on challenges and protests is final.

c. Range Master. A Range Master will be appointed by the host commander. He will be guided by instructions contained in this Order and those issued by the host commander. His duties will include, but need not be limited to, the following:

(1) Develops match courses of fire and rules and regulations in accordance with this Order. Verifies stages of fire are built to support range specifications and skills sets outlined in this Order (Appendix G).

(2) Trains and supervises Position Safety Officers (PSO) and Range Safety Officers (RSO).

(3) Assigns three range personnel to a challenge committee to make decisions on challenges and protests.

(4) Briefs competitors on the rules of the match to include safety, scoring and award procedures.

(5) Supervises conduct of the matches and ensures competitors comply with range and match regulations.

d. Statistics Officer. A statistics officer will be appointed by the host commander. The Statistics Officer will be responsible for all statistical and administrative services in connection with the matches except for the recording of scores on the range. The Statistic Officers is responsible for:

(1) Squadding. The Statistics Officer will assign competitors to a group (squad) for the prescribed course of fire.

(2) Scorekeepers. The Statistics Officer assigns scorekeepers and ensures they know scorekeeping regulations and procedures.

(3) Verification of Scorecard Entries and Totals. All scores and totals entered on scorecards will be verified on an adding machine. Scorecards on which the word 'protest' has been entered by competitors will be immediately referred to the Match Director for decision. The decision will be final.

(4) Maintenance of Statistics Board. A statistics board will be maintained on or near the range for the purpose of keeping competitors and spectators apprised on the high scores as they are fired. Names of high shooters and their scores will be posted according to ranking.

(5) Management of Scoring. The Statistics Officer will:

(a) Verify scores and totals.

(b) Make necessary changes on scorecards.

(c) Ensure competitors sign scorecards.

3. Range Personnel

a. Officer in Charge (OIC). The OIC ensures the overall safe conduct of the range operations during the match in accordance with reference (f).

b. Range Safety Officer (RSO). The RSO provides overall responsibility for the safety, discipline, performance, and conduct of all personnel in accordance with reference (f). Combat Shooting Matches are dynamic in nature and thorough Operational Risk Management (ORM) must be applied.

c. Position Safety Officer (PSO). The PSO is responsible for the safety of the individual shooter during the conduct of the match. His duties will include, but need not be limited to, the following:

(1) Trains range operating personnel responsible for resetting stages of fire after scoring.

(2) Briefs competitors on the rules and conduct of the stage of fire.

(3) Moves with the shooter through the stage of fire, ensuring safety as well as that the stage is fired in accordance with match regulations.

(4) Immediately stops the shooter if a safety or match rule is violated. The PSO briefs the Range Master on the violation of match or safety rules.

(5) Due to his proximity with the shooter, the PSO may be tasked with keeping accurate time during the stage and scorekeeping.

d. Challenge Committee. A challenge committee is made up of three knowledgeable individuals responsible for making decisions on challenges and protests. Committee members will be responsible for:

(1) Firing a weapon to determine if a stoppage is caused by the shooter or a malfunction of the weapon.

(2) Determining score value on targets if there is a dispute. Targets may be pulled for review by the challenge committee or they may review targets in place.

4. Instruction Detail. The Combat Shooting Team (CST), Quantico, is authorized to form and send a Mobile Training Team (MTT) to match sites at the request of the host commander to:

a. Facilitate the setup and conduct of the match.

b. Provide instruction on combat shooting techniques.

5. Duties and Responsibilities of Competitors

a. General. Competitors are responsible for having full knowledge of the match rules and for ensuring that their conduct and equipment conform therewith.

(1) Competitors will adhere to weapons safety rules at all times in accordance with references (g) and (h).

(2) Competitors will comply with match rules and regulations at all times.

(3) Competitors are responsible for the condition of their weapon at all times.

(4) Competitors are responsible to make their relay assignments/rotation.

(5) Competitors are required to perform corrective action to clear stoppages and keep firing during a match.

b. Sportsmanship and Conduct

(1) Participants and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous, sportsman-like manner at all times. Misconduct will be handled promptly and fairly by the Match Director.

(2) Competitors and spectators will not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, or prescription drugs that will render their ability to conduct the match. Any competitor found to be impaired and deemed unsafe as a result of legitimate prescription drugs may be directed to stop shooting and requested to leave the range.

(3) Clothing with any offensive or obscene logos, sayings, pictures or drawings will not be worn or displayed while at the match site/range.

6. Weapons, Ammunition, and Equipment. The Match Director authorizes use of weapons, ammunition, and equipment for a match in accordance with this Order. The Match Director has the authority to standardize equipment among all competitors to prevent an unfair advantage.

a. Weapons

(1) Weapons will be provided by the Host Commander and/or the unit for use in Combat Shooting Matches. Only standard-issue weapons will be employed (i.e., M9 pistol, M9A1 pistol; M4 carbine or M16A4 rifle with standard-issue Rifle Combat Optic). The authorized shotguns to be used in Combat Shooting Matches are the Joint Service Shotgun (M1014) and the M3 Convertible Shotgun. The sighting system (iron sights or optical) will be determined by the Match Director of the competition.

(2) During non-Marine Corps competition, units will provide standard-issue weapons provided Marines are competing as representatives of their Base or Station team. Personal weapons are authorized for use when Marines are not competing as representatives of their Base or Station team.

b. Ammunition

(1) Ammunition will be provided by the Host Commander for use in Combat Shooting Matches. The CST, Quantico, will facilitate obtaining ammunition for match sites.

(2) During non-Marine Corps competition, units will provide ammunition provided Marines are competing as representatives of their Base or Station team.

(3) Only government-issued ammunition may be fired with government-issued weapons. The following list of ammunition is authorized for matches under the following conditions:

(a) AA67 Cartridge, 5.56mm Spec Match Molybdenum Coated: Any paper and specific steel targets at 100 yards (minimum).

(b) A059 Cartridge, 5.56mm ball M855 10/clip: Paper targets and specific steel targets at 100 yards (minimum).

(c) A363 Cartridge, 9mm Ball M882: Paper targets and steel targets at 7 meters (minimum).

(d) A014 Cartridge, 12 Gauge #7 1/2 Shot: Clay and steel targets at 10 meters (minimum).

(e) A017 Cartridge, 12 Gauge #9 Shot: Clay and steel targets at 10 meters (minimum).

(f) A023 Cartridge, 12 Gauge 1 Ounce Slug Commercial: Paper and specific steel targets at 50 meters (minimum).

(g) A011 Cartridge, 12 Gauge 00 Buckshot.

(h) No tracer, incendiary, armor piercing or steel jacketed ammunition is allowed.

c. Equipment

(1) Pistol Holsters and Equipment

(a) Standard-issue holsters are authorized for use in Combat Shooting Matches. The holster must have material that completely covers the trigger on all pistols. The belt upon which the holster and magazine/speed loader pouches are attached must be worn at waist level. The pistol may be worn on the hip or the thigh.

(b) Shoulder holsters are not authorized.

(c) Cross draw holsters are not authorized.

(2) Rifle Accessories. Service rifle accessories on the barrel of the weapon (e.g., grip pod, vertical fore grip, flashlight, night aiming device) are authorized for use in Combat Shooting Matches if authorized by the Match Director.

(3) Shotgun Equipment. Shotgun caddies and saddles are authorized for use in Combat Shooting Matches if authorized by the Match Director.

7. Targets

a. Steel targets will be employed in accordance with TECOM Safety of Use Memorandum (SOUM) 1-02.

b. All reactive steel targets used in the match will be calibrated prior to the match to ensure the target falls using standard ammunition.

c. The MPMS-1 target shall be used for paper targets in Combat Shooting Matches.

8. Positions. There are no restrictions of positions emplaced upon a Combat Shooting Match. The Range Master will determine unauthorized firing positions specific to the Combat Shooting Match.

9. Match Regulations and Range Operation

a. Safety Precautions. Safety precautions/rules will be as established by the host commander in local range regulations, and as contained in references (g) and (h). Competitors are required to adhere to safety rules at all times.

(1) Designated Safety Areas. Designated safety areas will be established to provide a location in which weapons may be pointed and/or handled without interfering with a stage of fire or personnel. A safe grounded condition is placement of a weapon within a designated safe area (e.g., table, bucket, or ground) while transitioning to a different weapon on a multi-gun stage. The weapon must be placed on Safe prior to being placed in the designated safe area. Stage briefings will identify specific safe grounded condition for all weapons.

(a) Safety areas will be clearly marked with signs.

(b) Unloaded weapons may be handled and/or displayed only in safety areas.

(c) No ammunition may be handled in any safety area.

(2) Weapons Carries Between Stages

(a) Rifles and shotguns must be cased or carried slung with the muzzle up if carried by the competitor. Non-motorized carts or conveyances may be used, with unloaded rifles secured. Rifles and shotguns must be carried in Condition 4.

(b) Pistols must be cased or remain in holster, magazine removed except in designated safety areas, or under the direction of the RSO on a stage. Pistols must be carried in Condition 4.

(3) Eye protection is mandatory for competitors, spectators and range personnel at the match site.

(4) Ear protection is mandatory for competitors, spectators and range personnel while on or near a stage of fire.

b. Weapons

(1) All weapons used by competitors shall be serviceable and safe. A Limited Technical Inspection (LTI) and Pre-Fire Inspection (PFI) sheets will be given to the Match Director for each weapon fired in the match prior to beginning the competition.

(2) Competitors will not reconfigure any weapon during the course of a match (e.g., change caliber, barrel length, shotgun magazine tube length, sighting systems or stock style.)

c. Ammunition. Ammunition will be issued on the range in designated areas only. Only the ammunition issued may be used. Possession on the firing line of any other ammunition of the same caliber is grounds for disqualification.

d. Wounded Warrior Participation. Participation of Wounded Warriors in Combat Shooting Matches is highly encouraged. Accommodations (i.e., revisions to the stage of fire) for shooting the match for competitors with a disability will be determined by the Range Master on a case-by-case basis.

e. Disqualifications. Competitors are subject to disqualification for violation of any rule or regulation.

(1) Competitors may be disqualified from a stage of fire or the entire match depending on the violation.

(2) Match Disqualification will result in complete disqualification from the match and the competitor will not be allowed to continue with the match. The competitor will not be eligible for awards.

(3) The Match Director has the final say on disqualifications.

(4) Disqualifications will result from the following:

(a) Negligent discharge of a weapon. A negligent discharge is defined as the discharge of a weapon in an unsafe manner or unintentionally.

(b) Dropping a weapon, loaded or unloaded, or dropping a weapon while in the loading/unloading process.

(c) Violating a safety rule in accordance with the stage brief.

(d) Violating a match rule in accordance with the stage brief.

(e) Firing outside the left and right lateral limits of the range.

f. Alibis. If the competitor experiences a stoppage or failure to fire, the competitor is responsible for performing corrective action to get the weapon back into action (Condition 1) and continue to shoot through the stage. An alibi will be awarded if any condition caused by the weapon, ammunition, or range operation causes the competitor to not have an equal opportunity to complete a stage. An alibi will not be awarded for any condition caused by the competitor.

(1) Circumstances Which Do Not Constitute an Alibi. An alibi will not be awarded for any condition caused by the competitor. The following are examples of events, conditions, and failures to fire which do not constitute an alibi:

(a) The weapon has not been maintained, cleaned, or lubricated in accordance with the weapon's technical manual.

(b) The weapon or magazine is improperly assembled.

(c) Lost ammunition.

(d) The competitor fills his magazines improperly or fills magazines with the incorrect number or rounds.

(e) The competitor fails to conduct the load properly, e.g., failure to properly seat the magazine.

(f) The competitor fails to make ready and conduct a chamber check properly. The shooter is responsible for chambering the first round of each magazine.

(g) The competitor fails to take the weapon off safe prior to firing.

(h) The competitor is not ready to fire after acknowledging that he is ready to fire.

(i) The competitor engages the safety while firing.

(j) The competitor engages the magazine release button while firing.

(k) The competitor engages the pistol slide stop while firing.

(l) The competitor fails to reset the trigger.

(m) The competitor fails to reload properly.

(n) The competitor fails to offer enough resistance to recoil with the pistol.

(o) The competitor fails to perform corrective action properly when a stoppage occurs.

(2) Competitor's Alibi. Competitors are responsible for bringing to the attention of the PSO a situation which, in their opinion, warrants a competitor's alibi. The PSO will be observing the competitor for safety, compliance with match rules, as well as stoppages. An alibi will not be awarded unless the ammunition is faulty or the weapon is actually broken and will not shoot another round. A malfunction is the unintentional stoppage of a weapon due to mechanical defect (disabled weapon) or defective cartridge. The following are examples of events and conditions which constitute a competitor's alibi:

(a) Defective Cartridge. A defective cartridge is one that bears the mark of the firing pin on the primer. The imprint of the firing pin on the primer will constitute a misfire without any further test being made, provided the hammer or bolt is in the forward position.

(b) Disabled Weapon. A disabled weapon is one that cannot be fired as it was intended to be fired. An alibi will be awarded if a malfunction occurs with the weapon (e.g., trigger spring or locking block breaks on the pistol, a rifle or pistol that fires automatic-fire, a sight breaks, shotgun's feed ramp breaks).

(3) Range Alibi. A range alibi may be awarded if any condition caused by the range operation causes the competitor to not have an equal opportunity to complete a stage of fire or causes conditions that are extremely unfavorable when compared to the conditions under which other competitors have competed. Examples of situations that might justify a range alibi are:

(a) Interference in shooting. During actual firing, only essential line personnel and assigned competitors will be permitted on the firing line. Firing points are reserved for the exclusive use of assigned competitors. Competitors interfered with during the firing of a string may receive a range alibi.

(b) Disengagement of or damage to targets during firing of a stage.

(c) Failure of stage equipment to operate as designed.

(d) A cease fire occurs for actions unrelated to the competitor.

(4) Procedure in Case of Disabled Weapon or Defective Cartridge

(a) In the event of a disabled weapon or a defective cartridge, the competitor will perform corrective action. The PSO will determine if it is a stoppage (caused by the competitor) or a malfunction.

(b) The PSO will call the Range Master immediately upon expiration of the allotted time for that stage. Challenge committee members may fire the weapon to determine if the stoppage was caused by shooter error or by a malfunction of the weapon.

(c) The Range Master, if satisfied that there is a disabled weapon or defective cartridge, will permit the competitor to fire another string in a later relay. Shots fired by that competitor in the stage will not be scored. A refire string will be authorized by the Range Master.

(d) If a weapon becomes disabled at any time during a match, it will be delivered to an official match armorer for repair or replacement. A competitor will not be permitted to change weapons during the firing of any match unless it has become disabled and had been so designated by the Range master. If a competitor's weapon becomes unserviceable during competition, that competitor may replace his/her weapon with another of the same model, caliber and sighting system approved by the Match Director. For the purpose of this rule, a match is considered to have started when the competitor has fired his first record shot.

(e) When a disabled weapon is replaced or undergoes repairs which are likely to disturb the weapon's zero, the Range Master may authorize weapons to be zeroed.

(5) Procedure in Case of Range Alibi. In the event of a range alibi, the competitor will bring it to the attention of the PSO. The PSO will determine whether or not to stop the competitor. Range personnel will reset the stage of fire. Shots fired by that competitor in the stage will not be scored. A refire string will be authorized by the Range Master.

g. Protest General Principles. Occasional disputes are inevitable in any competitive activity governed by rules. In order to minimize disputes and provide a standardized resolution, the following guidelines will be in effect.

(1) Protests may be submitted for arbitration for any matter except the actual scoring of targets.

(2) If the complainant disagrees with a decision as administered by the challenge committee, the Range Master will be summoned and asked to rule.

10. Scoring

a. Scoring. Scoring per stage is based on the total time it took to fire a stage plus penalties.

(1) Each stage will have its own maximum time limit; failure to fire within the maximum time will result in misses for any remaining targets not engaged.

(2) A Stage Not Fired (SNF) penalty will incur the maximum penalty (i.e., misses recorded for all targets) and maximum time for that stage.

(3) Scoring on Paper Targets (see Appendix F). The MPMS-1 cardboard target, designated as a 'shoot' target, requires two (2) hits inside the scoring areas on the target for all classes. To reward accuracy, the following penalties will be added to the competitor's raw time for the stage of fire:

(a) The best two hits on paper will be scored for all classes. There is no penalty for additional hits on paper.

(b) 'A' zone hit - no penalty

(b) 'B' zone hit - 0.5 second penalty

(c) 'C' zone hit - 1.0 second penalty

(d) 'D' zone hit - 1.5 second penalty

(e) Less than the required number of hits (Failure To Neutralize) - 15 second penalty for each hit less than the required number.

(f) Miss (no hits on target) - 40 second penalty

(g) Designated 'No Shoot' targets that are hit - 30 second penalty for each hit.

(h) Procedural penalty - 10 seconds per shot; may be assessed for failing to follow the stage directions as briefed in the stage description.

(4) Scoring on Knock-down Style Targets (i.e., poppers or steel). Targets must fall to score. A Miss will result in a 40 second penalty. Hitting a steel target with a shotgun slug round will result in a 30 second penalty for the stage.

(5) Scoring on Frangible Targets. Targets must break to score (one BB hole is a break.) A Miss will result in a 40 second penalty.

(6) Scoring on Swinging Style Rifle Targets. Swinging style rifle targets must be struck solidly enough to cause the hidden "flash card" to be visible to the stage PSO. A Miss will result in a 40 second penalty.

b. Stage Points. Each stage will have a stage winner, based on the lowest time achieved.

(1) First Place (lowest time) for the entire match.

(2) In the event of a tie, the Range Master will determine a course of fire and conduct a shoot-off to determine the winner.

c. Scorecards. Competitors are responsible for checking and signing their scorecards to include:

(1) Before firing their stage, verifying general information placed on their scorecards.

(2) After firing their stage:

(a) Verifying total and aggregate scores.

(b) Initialing scorecards.

(c) Signing cards when aggregate scores have been entered by scorers.

(3) Failure of competitors to initial or sign scorecards forfeits their right to protest the score entered by the scorer.