



IMPROVE YOUR SCORES!! TOP 10 FITASC SPORTING TIPS AND TRICKS!!

The Clay Target Shooting Association of South Africa

The governing body for Clay Target Shooting in South Africa since 1954

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1. Sighters – coping with following a competitor who is missing more than they are hitting!

It can be unsettling to follow an inexperienced competitor who misses a lot of targets, and some may complain that it “puts them off their game”. Instead of getting grumpy and annoyed though, think about turning this perceived negative into a positive!

No matter how much sympathy or annoyance you might feel, the only thing that you can control is how you respond to the situation. If you miss a target, it's your fault and not the fault of the inexperienced competitor.

Try this way of thinking instead : think of the missed targets as free sighters!!! It's another chance to view the trajectories! Watch carefully and then when it is your turn to shoot, focus on maintaining your own method of approach for shooting the targets.



2. Which targets are in the doubles? How to position yourself for both shots

Savvy range setters will try and trip you up with tricky doubles by forcing you to decide whether to position yourself for the first target or the second. The modern “pad”/straight-through system has removed much of this though, due to the more restricted area within which to shoot. This means that it's generally not necessary for a competitor to shuffle their foot position from one target to the other.

However! It should still be an automatic ritual to check the stand target menu to see which targets are in the doubles. You may need to decide to shoot the first target in a specific spot in order to set yourself up correctly for the second target.

3. Seeing targets through trees



Unless you really can see a target through a tree, don't claim that you can in order to mount your shotgun with quicker/better timing. First of all, the umpire should know that you cannot see the target and should therefore call “no bird, first warning” if you mount your shotgun too early.

What you can do is count the timing of when the target appears so that you have an idea of when you will see the target. Don't push your luck though!

4. Pick a point where the target appears

If the target appears from behind a bush/tree/rock, make sure you can pick a point where the target appears to allow you to lock on to the target the moment it appears. Remember though! Look to see where you can see the target clearly and not as a blur, otherwise your eyes will take a moment to adjust. This can adversely affect your hand-to-eye co-ordination.

5. It's not the last round (although it is!)

The times I've heard people say “OK guys, last round!!!” or the squad might start talking about getting on the road to get home or what they are going to be doing after the shoot. This is often followed by lower scores because the competitor is not fully concentrating on the targets and is thinking about work or traffic. The cure? Focus on “one bird at a time” like you know you should.

6. All targets should be treated with equal respect

: There are no “easy” or “difficult” targets – there are just “targets”. Treat them all with the same respect and then you won't miss the “easy” ones!!

7. If you are a serious competitor (or even if you are not!), tips to concentrate and avoid distractions that cost you targets

Focus. Focus on the targets, watch the sighters, note where the targets appear, look at the menu and make sure you know which are normals and which are not, find the sweet spot to shoot each target and use your normal ritual to set yourself up for each target.

Apart from the above, the only other things to do are to umpire or score when required. We don't have the luxury of paid umpires so we are called upon to be the umpire from time to time. **Use this as an opportunity to watch the targets more intensely – take advantage of being closer to the shooting stand! Avoid unnecessary chit-chat, high-fiving, shouting out “good shot!”, etc etc.** These are all distractions which are unnecessary, which waste energy and which can be avoided. **Oh, and keep that cell phone switched OFF and ignore your social media accounts until the championship is over!!!**

8. How to be a good umpire

Focus and give respect to the duty of being an umpire. Watch the targets carefully and stand such that you can see the target for the full trajectory. Stand on the left of a left-handed competitor and stand on the right of a right-handed competitor. This is to ensure that you can see the position of the shotgun and ensure the “gun down” rules are adhered to. **See point 9!!**

9. Learn the rules

Competitors lose targets because they don't know the rules. Some umpires GIVE targets away because they don't know the rules and the competitors in the squad ALSO don't know the rules so targets are lost/given in error.

10. Know your place – get in line!

The order of shooting and squad member rotation is important for all competitors to learn. It will avoid competitors shooting out of turn which can cause confusion and unnecessary discussions to correct errors. Knowing when it is your turn to shoot and being ready to shoot (which means having your shotgun and ammunition ready and standing behind the competitor who you follow) will ensure the smooth running of the squad and the competition. Part of “knowing your place” also means not putting your gun bag and shotgun bag too close to the shooting stand and standing so close that other squad members have to push past you to get to the shooting stand.

