

Official Rules for 1000 yard Benchrest Rifle Shooting competitions in Australia

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

1 a) 1000 yard Benchrest Rifle matches in Australia broadly follow the match procedures and rules conducted in the USA and the UK. As has been found in other competing countries, minor adjustments have been needed to best suit the situations and/or range equipment of the local organisers and the conduct of each countries' matches have evolved to meet these situations. The following rules have developed over the past ten years to reflect this. For a brief history of the development of 1000 yard Benchrest shooting please refer to separate document called "1000 yd competition in Australia".

1 b) All competitors and match procedures are subject to the rules and regulations pertaining to the Host Club. In most cases this will be an NRAA affiliated club so the procedures laid out in the Standard Shooting Rules (SSRs) will pertain.

1 c) Competitors are expected to familiarise themselves with those rules and also any specific firearms licensing requirements. At all times all personnel at any event will be under the control and direction of the designated Range Officer and/or Target Butts officer.

1 d) Host Clubs can determine procedures, according to these rules, which best suit the organisational circumstances of their members and their range equipment.

1 e) Host Clubs can also determine their own membership requirements and should outline and advertise such in all programs or annual calendar of events.

1 f) Any equipment, procedures or behaviour deemed unsafe may result in disqualification and removal from the range property.

SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT

2. RIFLE CLASSES

2 a). There are two rifles classes used in competition: Light Gun and Heavy Gun.

2 b). Rifles used in both classes shall be less than 40 calibre, or as is determined by Host Clubs in accordance with their own range rules or State legislation.

Light Gun

2 c). Light Gun rifles have a maximum weight of 7.71 kilogrammes (17 pounds) and are fired from sandbag rests front and rear. There are no restrictions on the shape or width of the stock or the barrel contour. Muzzle brakes are allowed in the Light Gun subject to any range restrictions and/or the rules of the Host Club. Muzzle brakes that exhaust to the rear or are of a clamshell design are not allowed.

Heavy Gun

2 d). Heavy Gun rifles have no weight limit. There are no restrictions on the shape or width of stock or the barrel contour. Muzzle brakes are not allowed. Rifles must be fired from sandbag rests front and rear but the rear sandbag rest can be part of a mechanical rest. (see "RESTS" below)

3. RESTS

3 a) A sandbag is defined as a bag having a leather or cloth type of covering that is capable of being easily flexed by the fingers. It can contain a dry, finely divided non metallic substance such as, but not limited to, sand, gravel or grain, without additive and packed loosely enough that the bag can be easily deformed by pressure of the fingers. The rear sandbag may contain compartments or “ears” and have the base of the bag made from a thicker layer of similar material (eg. leather or rubber). Lubricant such as talcum powder, graphite powder or Vaseline may be used on the bag for lubrication if required.

3 b) A front sandbag rest shall support the front part of the rifle and a rear sandbag rest shall support the rear part of the rifle. Neither can be attached to the bench, to the rifle or each other and must be moveable in all directions independently of each other. No device of any kind can restrict the upward movement of the rifle and the rifle must be capable of being lifted clear of the sand bags and rests without exerting more effort than would be required to support the rifle itself.

3 c) Any part of the rifle resting on a sandbag must maintain a minimum 13mm distance from any part of the retainer or container that holds the sandbags. Wherever the rifle contacts on its sides there may be a maximum of sand 13mm high and a minimum of 13mm thick on either side. Sandbags for front rests must be a minimum of 38mm wide and 100mm long. Sandbags for rear rests must be a minimum of 38mm wide and 75mm long.

3 d) Any sandbag used as a rest without support from a retainer or container and that has movement without restraint need not comply with rule 3 c) above.

Rests for Light Gun

3 e) Rifles are fired utilising sandbag front rests that may be supported on a pedestal. This may incorporate adjustments for windage and elevation and does not co-act with the sandbag to restrict up and/or rearward movement of the rifle. The rear rest shall be a sandbag or combination of sandbags only. The rear rest must not be mechanical in nature. Bunny ear type bags are acceptable.

3 f) As bench heights on ranges will vary slightly a separate vertical spacer shall be allowed, if required, between the under side of the rear sandbag and the bench top to gain enough elevation. Such spacer shall not incorporate adjustments for windage or elevation, nor shall it contain any protrusions that can be inserted into the bench top or the sandbag. The top and bottom of the spacer shall be substantially flat. Examples include, but not limited to; a flat piece of timber, hard rubber or cork. The exception to these rules relates to the use of “donut bags” which are bags containing sand and these are subject to the same requirements as the rear sandbag itself.

Rests for Heavy Gun

3 g) Rifles are fired utilising sand bag front rests which may be supported on a pedestal and may incorporate adjustments for windage and elevation and that does not co-act with the sandbag to restrict upward and/or rearward movement of the rifle. The rear rest shall comprise of a sandbag that may be attached to a pedestal that may incorporate adjustments for windage and elevation and supports the rear part of the rifle stock between the pistol grip area and the toe of the butt. The rear rest for this class may also be simply a traditional sandbag similar to that used as a rear rest for a Light Gun.

Bi-Pods

3 h) The use of Bi-Pods is not allowed in official 1000 yard Benchrest competition. Host Clubs may determine to give some latitude in relation to this for events that may be termed as their “club events” but for no more than two visits per shooter.

4. TARGETS

4 a) The targets used shall be the standard IBS 1000 yard Benchrest target. (See illustration below). The X ring is 3 inches (76mm), the 10 ring is 7 inches (178mm), 9 ring 13 inches (330mm), 8 ring 19 inches (482mm), 7 ring 25 inches (635mm), 6 ring 31 inches (787mm), 5 ring is 37 inches (940mm). The paper card size is 42 inches (1067mm) square. Targets are usually printed either black or blue on white. The 9 and 10 rings are a solid dark colour apart from a square area within the 10 ring.



5. COURSE OF FIRE AND TIME LIMITS

- 5 a) The course of fire for a single stage of a 1000 yard Benchrest match is composed of two parts: a “sighting period” and a “record period”.
- 5 b) The sighting period is six minutes long. During the sighting period, the competitor can fire as many shots as they need to in order to determine their point of aim.
- 5 c) The record period is for a maximum of ten minutes or at the completion of the last competitor’s string, whichever is sooner. During the record period, Light Gun competitors will fire five (5) shots and Heavy Gun competitors will fire ten shots at the record target.
- 5 d) Competitors are not allowed extra shots if some of their allocated record shots do not hit the target.
- 5 e) All shooters shall shoot from the designated benches. Shooting off-hand or from the prone position is not permissible.
- 5 f) Shots fired on record targets will be counted for score and measured for group and then recorded on the result sheets. Group size and target score are recorded separately. All ten shots for Heavy Gun and all five shots for Light Gun must be on the target sheet to allow group size to be measured and recorded. (Also see rule 8 c.)
- 5 g) The Butts will indicate each shot fired at the sighter target. (See rule 6 d. below)

6. MATCH PROCEDURES

6 a) Host Clubs shall determine the procedure for setting relays and target duty or to provide separate paid target crews as they desire. Matches or events may consist of one target, two target aggregate, three target aggregate or more for each class as determined by the Host Club.

6 b) Competitors may enter and shoot in both classes providing the equipment used meets the rules of each class and they pay the appropriate entry fees. Host Clubs have the discretion to allow or not allow competitors to enter and shoot in both classes.

Relays

6 c) Shooters are to be allocated relays. If competitors are allowed and they have entered in both classes they should be placed onto separate relays. A relay may consist of a combination of competitors shooting Light Gun class and Heavy Gun class.

6 d) If the Host Club decides on a procedure to have competitor marking then it is the responsibility of each competitor to be available for duty in the Butts when called. For those unable to do the physical work of pulling target frames they should be assigned jobs like scoring or communications. All competitors must participate and carry out their duty in the Butts (subject to Match Organisers' discretion) or their scores and results for the day will not be recorded.

Getting on target

6 e) Host Clubs should determine a system to assist getting each competitor sighted in and 'on target' before their relay commences. It is suggested that this be done immediately before the six minute sighting period begins for each relay. It is also suggested that each shooter be individually coached to get their shots on target. The assistance of other competitors may be required.

6 f) Competitors may have assistants help them during the six minute sighting period but during the ten minute record period for shooting all non shooters shall be back from the firing line as determined by the Range Officer.

Sighter targets

6 g) When a shot is fired onto a sighter target, the target crew shall pull the target and mark the position of the shot by placing a coloured marking disc in the bullet hole to mark its position. The target frame will then be raised for the next shot. Subsequent sighting shots will require the target crew to move the marking disc to the position of the most recent shot and patch the previous hole. Targets during the sighting period will have no more than one marking disc displayed at a time.

Record targets

6 h) The Host Club should give each competitor the choice of one of the two arrangements for their record targets. They are:

a) Have every record shot indicated during the ten minute time period. This is commonly known as the "marked" system.

b) Have no record shots indicated during the ten minute time period. This is commonly known as the "blind" system.

6.

6 i) The Range Officer should ask each competitor their choice before the six minute sighting period begins for each relay and notify the Butts Officer accordingly. If the match is part of a multi-target event a competitor may choose a different arrangement for subsequent record targets.

Marked shots (*option A.*)

6 j) If a competitor chooses option (a) from above, then each record shot will be indicated with a spotting disk and the target raised in as short a time as possible. As each subsequent shot is indicated in the same way so the shooter can see the group as it forms. No shots are to be patched out. At the completion of record period all the disks will be removed by the scoring team and the number of shots counted, scored and group size measured. It is recommended that the discs used for this purpose should be smaller than the disc used to indicate the sighter shots. These discs should be approx 50mm in diameter and have a centre stick of a smaller diameter so they do not distort the bullet holes.

Blind shots (*option B.*)

6 k) If a competitor chooses option (b) from the above target marking options then the target will remain up and no shots will be indicated for the duration of the record period. At the completion of the relay and after the 'cease fire' command has been given those targets whose values have not been shown can have all of the shots marked for viewing if requested by the competitor.

6 l) After a short period of presentation all the targets from the relay will then be examined and scored before being recorded by the scoring team. Targets will then be replaced or patched out as determined by the procedure of the Host Club and at the direction of the Butts Officer. (Also see rule 6 m. and 8 c.)

Posting of targets

6 m) Host Clubs can determine their own procedure about whether individual record targets will be returned to competitors or not. Subject to how the targets and frames are constructed, the targets can either be patched out to be re-used again or returned to each competitor.

7. RANGE COMMANDS

Sighting period

7 a) Orders for the Sighting period are as follow:

- a. The Range Officer shall announce "You have 6 minutes for your sighting period. You may insert bolts and Commence Fire" and notify the butts of the same.
- b. After 5 minutes the range officer shall announce "you have one minute remaining for sighting shots".
- c. At the completion of six minutes the range officer shall announce "Cease firing, prepare for your record shots".
- d. The Target Butts officers should be advised by radio to prepare for record targets after the last sighter shots have been displayed.

Record period

7 b) Orders for the Record period are as follow:

- a. When the record targets are displayed and the competitors are ready the Range Officer shall announce “You have 10 minutes for your record shots, Commence Fire”.
- b. After 9 minutes the Range Officer should announce “you have one minute remaining”.
- c. At the completion of 10 minutes or earlier if all competitors are finished, the Range Officer shall announce “Cease Fire, remove your bolts and have your rifle cleared before leaving the firing line”.
- d. Extra time calls may be given as determined by the Range Officer.

Delays

7 c) If there is a delay of more than one minute between the end of the Sighting period and the commencement of the Record period then all shooters on that relay will be given the option of having a further sighting shot. If any one competitor requests it then the whole relay will have a one minute period to fire one sighter shot if desired.

8. RESULTS**The Scoring Team**

8 a) Each record target will be scored by a Scoring Team appointed by the Match Director on the day.

8 b) The Scoring Team should consist of suitably experienced persons and should preferably include the Butts Officer. Persons assigned to each target frame can assist the Scoring Team with the scoring of the targets on their frame particularly when this involves potential crossfires or targets being examined with less than the required number of shots. The decisions of the Scoring Team and the Butts Officer are final.

Scoring procedures

8 c) The score and group results for each target will be recorded separately on an appropriate score sheet. For a group size result all ten shots for Heavy Gun and all five shots for Light Gun must be on the IBS 1000 yard BR target paper (the target card). This may include shots that are outside of the scoring area. All targets should be examined for the required number of shots and the total confirmed with the Scoring Team before further scoring is undertaken.

8 d) If the required number of shots cannot be found on a target then the scoring chief and assistants should examine nearby targets for possible crossfires and also carefully check each bullet hole for possible double ups before making a determination. If more shots are found on a target and they cannot be determined as being a crossfired shot or shots from another competitor then the group will be measured counting all shots and the score will be calculated ignoring the highest scoring shot or shots. The determination of the allocated scoring team will be final.

8.

8 e) If the event is a multi target match (two or more targets) then the group sizes will be averaged and the scores will be aggregated to determine winners of the day. Host Clubs may determine their own procedure in regards to trophies and/or awards.

Ties

8 f) In the case of a tie for group average then the competitor with the higher total score shall prevail. For a tie on total score then the competitor with the most number of X ring hits shall be the winner or if still equal the competitor with the smallest group average shall prevail. If a tie still exists then dual winners will be declared.

Records

8 g) Potential State, National or International record breaking groups or scores should be carefully examined. In the case where Host Clubs use the glued target faces system or where targets do not normally get replaced between matches it is recommended that any targets having potential records be removed for later examination and that another prepared target be used for the rest of the match.

8 h) Records can be recognised for the following:

1. Smallest 10 shot individual group (Heavy Gun Class).
2. Smallest 5 shot individual group (Light Gun Class).
3. Highest scoring 10 shot individual target (including X ring counts) (Heavy Gun Class).
4. Highest scoring 5 shot individual target (including X ring counts) (Light Gun Class).
5. Highest 6 match group average (Heavy Gun Class).
6. Highest 6 match group average (Light Gun Class).
7. Highest 6 match score average in (Heavy Gun Class)
8. Highest 6 match score average in (Light Gun Class).

9. SAFETY

9 a) The general procedures and safety rules pertaining to the NRAA SSRs and the Host Club will apply. All competitors should make themselves aware of those rules, as they will be separate from these rules.

9 b) Bolts should be removed from rifle actions at all times except where the range officer calls for the competitors at the benches to *insert bolts and commence fire*.

9 c) If a malfunction results in a stuck live round that cannot be simply removed from the breech end of the barrel, the firearm is to be made safe and removed from the range property for repair by a competent person. Under no circumstances is an attempt to be made to remove the round by insertion of a cleaning rod, or similar, from the muzzle.

9 d) As Bench Rest shooting encourages and facilitates handloading of ammunition it is the responsibility of every competitor to ensure that all safe practices and codes outlined for such procedures are diligently observed.

9 e) Competitors should note that decisions by the Range Officer, particularly in relation to any of these circumstances listed above, are final. ((also see rule 1 b) and 1 c) above)

10. FACILITIES

Bench Design

10 a) Where possible benches provided for shooting should be a solid, rigidly constructed table preferably with a concrete top and a solid base or with a block base design. The height of the bench should enable a shooter of average build to comfortably sit to use their equipment. The size of the top should be suitably shaped, take into account left handed shooters and be of a reasonable size bearing in mind the type of equipment often used for these matches. This usually means a curved cutout section to the rear left and right hand corners.

10 b) The spacing or separation of the benches should be as wide as practical, preferably three meters apart. There should be some sort of roof covering (temporary or permanent) to offer protection from the elements. If a Club is to allow the use of muzzle brakes for the Light Gun class then good separation of benches and position of roof cover is an important consideration. Portable or moveable benches may be used but they should be as rigid as is possible.

Target Equipment

10 c) Target frame machinery will usually involve target frames as commonly used at NRAA Full Bore target rifle ranges in Australia. The frame to hold the target boards should preferably be large (such as the 800 metre Full Bore target) and have the IBS 1000 yd target card placed in the middle of the board. This will assist everyone getting their shots onto target and help the scoring crew identify any missed shots. Consideration should be given to a system that does not allow the target to blow away or fold and tear especially when wet.

10 d) Targets faces may be glued onto target frame boards and patched out all day using the same face for many competitors. This shall be the prerogative of the Host Club. Conversely a Host Club might adopt a procedure where competitors are can be given their own targets after they are scored and this will involve fitting a new target face for each competitor.

Wind Flags

10 e) The Host Club should provide some form of wind flags on the range. The typical arrangement being the usual red and yellow NRAA Full Bore wind flags. Competitors may place their own wind flags or devices subject to the rules of the Host Club and these must not interfere or impede any equipment or other competitor.