

An Introduction to Across the Course

The Course of Fire

The normal course of fire consists of shooting from three different positions at various distances.

Positions

The most common positions used in Highpower are Standing (Off-hand), Sitting, and Prone.



Distances

A typical "across the course" highpower match will have the competitors firing at 200, 300 and 600 yard distances from the targets. If a match is being fired at a range where the distances are reduced the targets are smaller to simulate the greater range.

Time Limits

Different stages of a match are fired independently and have different time limits.

A slow fire stage requires that the competitors fire one shot at a time. They must load each round individually. Each shot is also scored individually. Usually shooters have as many minutes to fire the stage as there are shots to fire. For example, a ten shot slow fire string will have a time limit of ten minutes or a twenty shot string will have twenty minutes.

Rapid fire means the competitor must get into position and fire the requisite number of rounds from his magazine within a specified time limit. At the start of the phase, all shooters are in the standing position. When the targets are exposed, competitors go into a sitting or prone position (depending on the phase being fired), fire the rounds in the first magazine, change to a second magazine, and finish shooting the string. The time limit for each string in this type of fire is 60 seconds for sitting and 70 seconds for prone. Ten shots are fired in each string.

The National Match Course

This is a 50 shot course of fire that is common in service rifle only matches.

<u>Position</u>	<u># of Shots</u>	<u>Type of Fire</u>	<u>Distance</u>
Standing	10	Slow Fire	200 yards
Sitting from Standing	10	Rapid Fire	200 yards
Prone from Standing	10	Rapid Fire	300 yards
Prone	20	Slow Fire	600 yards

The Regional Course

This 80 shot course of fire is the one that we normally shoot (4 ½ hours)

<u>Position</u>	<u># of Shots</u>	<u>Type of Fire</u>	<u>Distance</u>
Standing	20	Slow Fire	200 yards
Sitting from Standing	20	Rapid Fire	200 yards
Prone from Standing	20	Rapid Fire	300 yards
Prone	20	Slow Fire	600 yards

The ranges shown above are regulation distances. Currently, we have only the 200 & 300 yard lines at Bayou Rifles. We use a target for the prone slow fire that is reduced to half size in order to compensate for our shooting the prone slow fire at 300 yards instead of at 600 yards.

There is no problem with asking questions. We know that almost everyone out here started in this high power rifle shooting game within the past few years and may have had no competition experience before that. We remember what it feels like to be new.

Just come to the range and try to follow our instructions. I guarantee that you'll be no more confused than the rest of us were when we were at your level of experience. Anyone there will try to answer your questions. We encourage participation, not rejection.

At a typical match, we "try" to get everyone signed up for the match by 7:30 so that we can assign relays (usually, one relay will be at the firing line while the other will be in the pits to pull and score the targets). It's best to arrive at the range between 7:00 and 7:15.

Let's go through a likely scenario. The "I" used here means "match director" at range.

I'll get to the range shortly before 7:00 and set up a table for registration at the 200-yard firing line.

You'll get there and fill out a match registration card. The information on the card is used when we send in your scores to the NRA and to show us where to send the match bulletin. You give me the card with your match fee of \$15.00. I sign you up for the match and assign you to a target and relay. I won't tell you which one you're on until I get everyone signed up. I may have to adjust the relays and target assignments a little bit so that I can position new shooters near experienced shooters. That gives you someone nearby that you can ask when questions come up. I will have score cards available for you to record your scores on if don't have or don't want to use your own score book.

At about 7:35 I'll give a quick safety briefing and read off the target/relay assignments and the relays will prepare to take their place, either on the line or in the pits.

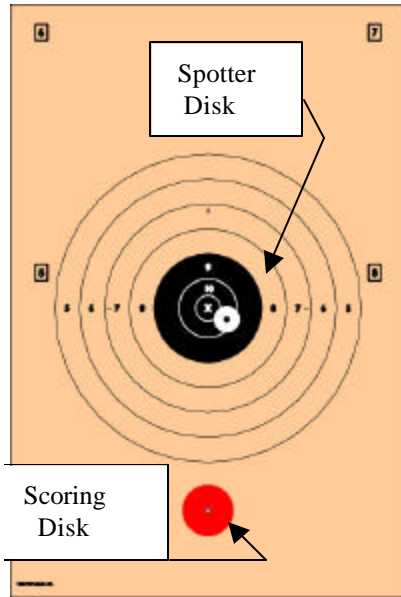
Let's assume that you have been assigned **Relay 2, Target 4**. You get your gear, including your rifle and put it about 25 to 30 feet back of the firing line behind your assigned target position. This will make it easier for you to set up when it is your turn to move to the firing line.

After putting your gear behind the firing line, you will go to the pits with the others on Relay Two. **Be sure to take eye & hearing protection with you to the pits.**

One of the more experienced persons on Relay Two will be acting as a sort of "pit boss" to direct some of the little tasks that need to be done while you are down there.

The "Pit Boss" will have you get a target out of the target shed and carry it over to target frame 4 (your assigned target), where you will put it into the frame carrier. He'll then have you get some miscellaneous gear out of the shed that you'll need as a scorer to perform pit service. Don't worry, as the pit boss or someone with experience will most likely put this stuff into small plastic tubs and just hand one to each person as they come past.

While you're getting ready, the relay that remained on the firing line will be preparing to fire off-hand. They will be ready to shoot shortly after you finish getting your miscellaneous items and get the targets put up.



When the pit relay is ready and the shooters that stayed back on the firing line are prepared, the 200-yard slow-fire (off-hand) will begin. You will stand with your back to the firing line, facing the target and the impact berm behind the targets. This is done so that you can watch the berm for the impact of bullets in the dirt. It is easier to see the dust fly than it is to watch the target and see when an itty-bitty hole is popped in it. After you see a bullet hit in the impact area behind your assigned target, you smoothly lower the target, put the spotter disk into the bullet hole and hang the scoring disk in the appropriate value hole. You then raise the target back up so that the shooter can see the target and score and prepare for the next shot. The target remains up until the next shot is fired.

On the line, the shooters will then prepare for the sitting stage. When they are ready, the targets will be raised again for two sighter shots. These are fired slow-fire and are "pulled and scored" just like you did for off-hand. After completion of the sighters, I will have the targets "pulled, pasted and raised to half-mast." Half-mast means that the upper portion of the target is in view of the firing line, but is not ready to be fired upon. When all targets are at half-mast, I have the shooters rise to standing in preparation for their sitting rapid fire.

In the pits, the pit boss will have you to raise your target to half-mast, which you do in preparation for being told to "Raise your targets." When you receive the command, you raise your target all the way (not violently, just raise it like you did in slow-fire). You then watch the berm and count the bullet strikes. 1, 2, 3, etc. This is so that if the shooter gets off fewer than 10 shots, you expect to see fewer holes in the target. It lets you be certain that there aren't some that missed the target completely or that there aren't two in almost the same location. At the end of 60 seconds, the pit boss will announce "Stand by your targets" and then, "Pull all targets." You then pull your target down into the pit. If you counted more than or fewer than ten hits in the dirt, call for help when the targets are pulled.



Your first task is to count the holes in your target. Don't start putting the spotters into the holes before counting the number of holes. If you have more or fewer than ten, immediately call the pit boss or someone with experience over to help you. This isn't really a big issue because very seldom will you find something wrong.

Get your chalkboard and score the shots. Start with the X ring first, count the holes and write down the number of X's. Then, write down the "tens" and continue down through all of the scoring rings until all ten shots of the string are accounted for.



Something to remember... the value of the shot is the highest score ring that the bullet-hole touch is touching. I.e. if the hole has touched the ten-ring at all, then the value is ten. You then repeat the scoring for each successive ring. After you have scored all of the shots, you hang the chalkboard onto the upper left corner of the frame. You put the ten spotting disks into the bullet holes in the target and raise the target all the way up so that the shooter can see the score and mark it down.

When all targets have been scored and received, the pit boss will tell you "Pull, paste and half mast all targets." This is done to prepare for the second string of the rapid-fire stage.

Everything is repeated for the second string, just like it was done for the first string.

Upon completion of the scoring of the second string of sitting, the firing line will be made safe, the pits will be "unsealed" and there will be a pit change. Your relay will return to the firing line and Relay One will remove their gear from the firing line. Then, they will go to the pits to pull targets for Relay Two.

At the firing line, Relay Two (your relay) will move their gear to the 200 yard firing line, position it just to the right of the target number indicator on the ground. And, then they will get ready for the standing slow-fire stage. Each person arranges his gear to best suit his way of firing. Spotting scope, stool, ammunition, etc. is placed where it is available with a minimum amount of movement. Handle your rifle only to the extent needed to move it to the line and for it to be positioned pointing down range. Otherwise, do not handle your rifle until I tell you that it's okay.



I announce that "Your three minute preparation period begins now." This allows you to pick up your rifle. You can then remove your open bolt indicator - OBI (a plastic yellow flag that you can get for \$1 at the match if you don't have one), adjust your sling, place an empty magazine into the rifle and begin dry firing to establish your off-hand position.

At the end of the three-minute preparation period, I will announce that you will have twenty-two minutes for two sighters and twenty rounds for record, all loaded and fired one round at a time. Upon my direction you will be allowed to load and commence firing. You will fire your shot and write down the value of the shot as you go. (Hint: Some shoot their first shot and wait for the target to be raised, mentally note their score and shoot again. Then, they write down the score of the previous shot while waiting for the target to be scored. They continue shooting and writing down the score of the previous shot while the target is down in the pit. They end up taking less time to fire the entire string this way than they would by firing, waiting, writing, loading, etc....)



After you fire all twenty-two shots, place your rifle on safe, insert your OBI, remove the magazine and raise your hand so that I can confirm that your rifle is unloaded and safe.



You can then start to prepare for your sitting rapid-fire stage. Again, put everything into position. Just, don't handle your rifle. If you have a question, check with the person next to you or call out to me for a bit of help. It's no problem. This is really the stage that is most confusing for new shooters. The biggest surprise is how complex it seems when you're just getting started and how simple it seems after doing it a few hundred times (slight exaggeration there, but at first it seems as if it will take forever to figure it out).



After the preparation period is complete, you will stay in the sitting position and load, fire and score your sighters, one at a time. When your sighters have been completed, the targets will be placed at half-mast and I will call out "Shooters rise." You'll stand up with your unloaded rifle, being sure to keep it pointed down-range. I'll then call out "With bolts remaining open, with two or five rounds, load. Ready on the right. Ready on the left. Ready on the firing line."



You will need to be watching your target while I am confirming that the line is prepared, because it will be raised within about 5 to 15 seconds of my statement that the firing line is ready.



As the targets are raised, you will sit down, close the bolt on your rifle, get into and adjust your position as needed to be aiming at your target. Fire your first two shots, remove your empty magazine, load your second magazine (with eight rounds in it) and fire the remaining shots of the string. At first, you will go bangbangbang, but you will soon find that you really have enough time to go bang, breathe, sight, bang, breathe, sight, bang....

When you hear the last few shots fired, the targets may remain up for quite awhile because many people will have hurried their shots. Generally, the rhythm that allows one to sit down, sight, fire, recover, sight and fire again, through the ten round string, takes just about 50/55 seconds on average.



When your target comes up, look through your scope and verify your score from the board.

Write one per each box on your scorecard - **X X 10 10 10 10 9 9 9 7 94-2**

This would show two Xs, 4 tens, three nines, and one seven, for a score of 94 with two Xs. After completion of the second string, you will add the two scores.

If you scored this - **X X 10 10 10 10 9 9 9 8 95-2** you'd have **189-4** because an X = 10.



Upon completion of your second string of sitting rapid-fire, you will be told to move your gear to the 300 yard line and begin to prepare for the prone rapid-fire stage. Be sure to turn in your off-hand and sitting scores to me before leaving the line.

The prone rapid-fire will proceed almost exactly like the sitting rapid-fire, three minute preparation period, 2 sighter shots slow-fire and two strings of standing to prone rapid-fire. Scored just like you did for sitting.

When you finish your prone rapid, there will be another pit change. You will move your gear to the rear of the firing line and go with Relay Two to the pits. Relay One will come out of the pits and prepare to fire their prone rapid.

When they finish their prone rapid, they will then fire the prone slow-fire. It is done the same way as off-hand with twenty-two minutes allowed for two sighters and twenty rounds for record. Each shot being loaded and fired one round at a time.

When Relay One finishes, your relay (Relay Two) will return to the firing line to shoot the prone slow-fire stage and Relay One will go to the pits again to pull targets for you.

When you finish your prone slow-fire, you can start looking forward to the next match because you know that if you just hadn't "cross-fired in off-hand" or "left two rounds in sitting," or (you fill in the blank)..... you would have shot great.... Next time will be the one!

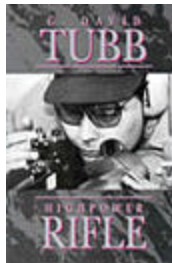
I may have lost you about 200 lines back, but don't sweat it. We'll get you out there, help you when you want help, keep you safe and watch you have a bundle of fun.

Suggestions:

1. Try to beg, borrow or preferably, buy the two books shown here. They are full of information about highpower rifle competition and will help you to improve your shooting skills. Plus, they are a great read. (Go to zediker.com)



The Competitive AR 15
Glen Zediker



Highpower Rifle
G. David Tubb

Two other fine books are **Black Magic - The Ultra Accurate AR-15** by John Feamster and **The Complete Guide to AR-15 Accuracy** by Derrick Martin (accuracyspeaks.com)

2. The rapid-fire events are relatively, the more difficult events to master. It's hard to practice and participate and think when at a match so the answer is....



Do a bit of practice at home. Get your rifle, check it twice to make sure that it is unloaded. Then take it and two empty magazines into a place where the family can't see you and decide that you've lost it. Sit down and fix your rifle and sling up as you would when in the sitting position. You may even want to have $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter black dot to practice aiming at, stuck up on the wall about 18" to 24" above the floor 25 to 30 feet away.



Place both magazines down on the floor by your right side (if you shoot right-handed) at a comfortable distance from you so that you can easily reach them. Confirm that they are facing where the cartridges would be visible to you with the bullets pointing to the front.



Pick up the first magazine and place it into the magazine-well. Rack the bolt to lock it open. Breathe a couple of times to prepare.



Visualize that the targets have come up and that you have just sat down and are getting ready to fire your string. Reach over, close your bolt, raise the rifle into position, aim and dry-fire your first two shots (one click and one mental bang). Rack the bolt open (this won't need to be done when really firing because it will lock back), remove the first magazine, pick up the second, insert it and close the bolt. Go into position and pretend to fire eight more shots, bang, breathe, bang, breathe....



Something to think about here is whether you are forcing the rifle over to point at the aiming dot? If you are, just raise your tail off of the floor and rotate around a bit until you can't detect any forcing of your hold to aim at the dot. This is called your "natural point of aim." By getting used to this at home, you'll find your natural point of aim when you're on the firing line more easily than you will by just plopping down in a match and blasting away.



After you've done this a few times, get someone to time you. You will find that you can complete this in thirty to forty seconds. That means in real life, you have twenty or more, seconds to sit down and get into position before firing your first shot. You don't want to fiddle around, but there isn't any reason to hurry up so much that you miss the target. A miss counts zero just like rounds that are left in the rifle at the end of the string.



Practice a bit and the sixty seconds that felt like half that for the first few times, begins to feel like plenty of time. And, then there will be a match where you are so darn comfortable that you will get to watch the targets go out of sight when you still have a round or two left. The idea is to pick up a rhythm and go with it. Make it not too fast, not too slow. Make it just right.



3. After you feel comfortable with sitting down and getting into position, take your equipment, scope, stool, mat, etc. and lay it out just as you would in a match. If you get in the habit of positioning each in the same place each time, you'll increase your comfort level exponentially. Doing this will make you aware of what items you should be seeing when you're on the line. It isn't much fun running from the 200-yard line back to the car at the 300-yard line to get some forgotten item when everyone else is shooting his sighters.

4. Go thorough the exercise described in two & three for your prone rapid-fire. You won't need to do quite as much for this because you have gotten most everything down to a smooth science by this point. At least, you will have it down pat at home. On the line, there will be a bit more to think about, but you will have helped yourself far more than you can imagine.

Just come on out to a match, have fun and meet lots of nice people.

Our typical match schedule at Bayou Rifles includes an across the course match on the second Saturday of each month and an all-prone match (sixty shots plus six sighters, all fired from the 300 yard line) on the third Sunday of each month. See you at the next match!

Oran R. Woody
8103 Teakwood Forest
Spring, TX 77379

oran.woody@cityofhouston.net
713/868-8473 (office)

orwoody@ev1.net
281/376-6765 (home)

Miscellaneous Pictures



David Tubb – Ten time National Highpower Rifle Champion



Glen Zediker, famous author & pit bull owner



CWO Dennis DeMille
Holder of highest official record 200-28X.
Only national record with 20 or more Xs.
(Two ten-X strings plus one eight-X string)
Satisfied user of Tubb 2000



David Tubb – Never completely satisfied
inventor of Tubb 2000



Alonda Roy's Simplified Method for Shooting Cleans

1. Look forward to it.



2. Do it.



3. Score it!



Anthony Martinez shoots his first sitting rapid (4-12-03)

Pictures used by permission of:
Harold Poole
German Salazar
Alonda Roy

Sharky Blevins
Steve Rasmussen
Celestine Woody

Glen Zediker
Anthony Martinez
David Tubb

04/29/03