

Action Pistol



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We are grateful for the input into this site on the subject of Action Pistol. The information has been around for many years and the need for its dissemination has increased over this time.

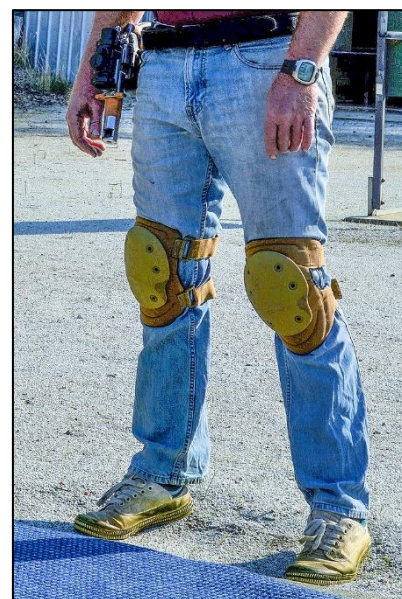
SAFETY CRITERIA

Using safety as a means of coaching, can be utilised throughout the course as it will entail a demonstration at some stage of "how to" implement the actions to draw, position, sight, trigger movement, follow through. As eye protection is mandatory for Action Pistol (and other matches) it gives a coach the opportunity to evaluate what type of eyewear is better suited for the competitor. Discussions can follow on the use of plain lens glasses, or the use of tinted lenses? Do they change tints for overcast or bright days? As most Action Pistol ranges are outdoors, most competitors use some form of tinted glasses. Which ones suit which competitor, is a personal choice, but still needs to be addressed. For example, a dark lens may inhibit the visual acuity of the sights, dot etc. A bright yellow lens may be too bright for the competitor, which may cause the pupil to react accordingly and may hamper his/her vision?

Additional personal safety may be necessary due to other factors such as age, physical limitations, injuries etc. As most of the matches involve the standing position, some require the competitor to utilise the "Prone Position".

This can be difficult and may require some safety equipment to be used. One issue some competitors may have, is knees may not be able to sustain strain or pressure from uneven ground, gravel or a stone shooting platform or have suffered knee reconstructions in the past.

An effective aide is the use of "Knee Pads". Pictured here, they need to be sturdy, yet comfortable and be able to withstand most ground situations the competitor may encounter at different ranges.



Safety Continued:

- **The barrel direction is CRITICAL at all times! This includes:**
 - o When loading the firearm
 - o When holstering the firearm
 - o When drawing the firearm
 - o When assuming the firing positions
 - o When changing position within a course of fire
 - o At the completion of a series, and
 - o If you have any problems during a course of fire

HOLSTER STYLES

CLOSED FRONT



Simple and serviceable
Fully protects firearm
and sights

PLUS

MINUS

Firearm needs to
be fully clear of
holster before it
can be raised to
target

OPEN FRONT



A good 'starter'
design
Simple and
serviceable
Protects firearm

Ensure that the
firearm does not
need to be tilted to
the rear to
disengage from
holster!

SKELETON



A more
competitive
design
Simple and
serviceable

Ensure the holster securely holds
the firearm and does not permit
the firearm to be 'bumped'
forward out of the holster.
Firearm should only be able to be
drawn directly upwards along the
line of the barrel to
disengage from the holster!

DUTY/TACTICAL



Not allowed for
PA events as
firearm
directed to
rear

INTRODUCTION

The following diagrams and explanations are a guide for competitors to use how to best go about attaining grip, position, firing of the shots, where to look etc.

All skills used in the delivery of a shot or string of shots, needs to be formulated from fact and/or data. Just because it may suit one person, it may not suit another. However, the basic skills required to fire smooth accurate shots should be universal throughout the learning and subsequent time in developing skills for Action Pistol.

As the newer members become more efficient at Action Pistol, they may develop their own "style" so to speak, which may suit them due to factors such as age, height, weight, pistols used etc. Coaches must look for common ground in the basics and teach these aspects to newer competitors. Should they develop bad habits later in the membership, it is a great time to go back to the basic/essential skills required for the match and see which areas they are neglecting and then remind them of the fundamentals.

Any breakdown in the essential skills, will need to be identified and corrected. Sometimes this is called the finer points of the match, but it requires good observational skills from the coach. The competitor should not only judge the target result, but look at the application, as they fire the shots. If the competitor is unable to identify trigger problems, grip issues, positional difficulties or just a lack of follow through, further help may be required from another competitor or dedicated coach.

Here we endeavour to show the basic skills and what to look for when conducting a "training day", be it coaching, training or just a get together.

*"Accuracy is how close it is to the point required.....
Precision is how often you can be accurate"*

In shooting, both need not be truly understood, but both need to be done in practice. In Action Match or any other matches, that include drawing from a holster with set times for the course of fire, accuracy and precision is required in every aspect of every function. The better you are with both accuracy and precision the better the results will be.

Most people would think when talking shooting about accuracy and precision, that it would be just on how accurate the ammunition is, while this is part of it, it is nowhere the lot. With the above in mind, let us start somewhere near the beginning with how it happened in a match.

You are in an Open Match maybe a State or National event, something that you have done before but you have the normal nerves of competing in a major event. You have dressed in your normal comfortable shooting clothes and shoes, you have all your gear that is required to do the job as everything is packed and or stored as you do for every match, you dress yourself before the match with your glasses, hat and ear muffs you fit your belt and holster and you load your mags or jet loaders. You are now on the line and told to load, you load and holster the gun and place your hands into the ready position the targets face you draw and fire the required shots on the required targets, you reload and re-holster you have just shot all x's why? Why not! You have done everything as you have done before (precision) and everything you have done was correct (accurate) the results speak for themselves.

The previous paragraph will take a couple of books of writing to explain everything that lead to the results but as shooting has only a few basics to get right we will start with the basics.

Stance: The match requires mostly a two hand hold of the firearm, so the stance needs to be slightly open which will have allowance for turning the torso from the hips mainly in the Mover and Plate matches.

The various positions and stance are covered in each section of the matches.



Grip & Holster

Positions: The grip starts at the ready position. Hand shoulder high or flat on the barricade it ends when the competitor starts to remove the firearm from the holster. What grip they have then, must put



the sights on the target once in the aiming area and they must be able to fire accurately. The competitor must have it correct. Both the stance and grip need to be adopted at the same time, both can be learnt and practiced at home in front of a mirror and adjusted after trialling at a live fire session at the range.

Development of a grip and stance starts with the belt and holster. The competitor should ensure the holster fits on the belt, making sure it is tight on the belt and cannot rock or move. Most good holsters have a clamping system, use it. If the belt requires an inner belt, have it on and make sure it is tight around the competitor. It may feel uncomfortable to have something tight, so if they cannot get used to it, back it off slightly, but a tight belt allows for a good holster draw (very important). How do we position the holster and belt so it's in the same spot every time they put it on. Remembering the holster course, the position of the holster must conform to the rules.

Suitable holster/belt

* *The holster must properly 'fit' the firearm* ACTION MATCH NOTES

* *The holster must retain the firearm – if the firearm falls out of the Holster during the event you will be disqualified!*

* *The holster/belt combination must be firm (no wobbling)*

* *When in the holster, a part of the firearm must be above the belt.*

Position of holster

* *Strong side only!*

* *The holster is to be positioned square on the hip. The holstered firearm is not to be directed at your leg, nor more than one metre from your body when standing normally.*

* *The holster should hold the holstered firearm such that the barrel is directed forwards at all times.*



We have a guide how to wear the holster, now, how to develop it. Hands are placed in the normal start position, hands on ear muffs, or hat but above the shoulders and always in the same spot, hands drop (strong arm) down as naturally as possible on to the stock of the firearm. Does it fall into the top of the stock? Would moving the gun forward or backwards be better? If they have a good holster, adjustments can be made in or out from the body and even tilt, remembering the rules. Spend the time to play and get it right. This can be done during the course or in the competitors own time, but must be checked to conform and be efficient to draw correctly. If the competitor is comfortable with this, before going any further they must be able to fit the belt back in the same position each time, so they need a reference point. A good starting point could be the navel and one end of the belt, anything can be used, but it must be repeatable.

The competitor can place themselves in front of a mirror with holster on and with an **unloaded firearm** holstered, stand with the chest facing the mirror and feet about shoulder width apart, if right handed, open the right foot by turning the toe end around slightly (30 - 40 degrees) and the heel end back 20mm or so, this gives an open stance for right hander, which makes for a more stable shooting 'platform', lefties do the left foot.

It must be comfortable and repeatable and give the competitor a steady stance in windy conditions. In the ready position, draw and aim directly at the aiming eye in the mirror. Did the hand hit and close on the stock in the right place? Does the holster need moving or the hand needs to be in a different ready position? Did the draw from the holster go smooth or did it hang up? Was lifting up in a straight line until clearing the holster? Would tilting the holster make a difference?

Did you have to move the barrel around to get correct sight picture? To confirm they have the correct grip, place the right hand as high up the stock as possible, add the left hand and then lift from a 45° hold position. Do the sights line up with the aiming eye in the mirror? Adjust the grip and or stance or confirm that the grip is correct, go back to holstering and drawing. As you progress pick up the pace a bit is it still working, or is further adjustment required?

In developing a smooth, accurate draw, it is advised to practice this step slowly and deliberately, to get the feeling how to grip the firearm, draw out of the holster straight up, maintain control, and having correct sight alignment on the target. As you progress in ability and confidence, the "draw" time will speed up to an acceptable time frame. Until then slow, deliberate actions for learning is essential.



Having practiced this many times and it seems smooth and quick, close both eyes and try again, open the eyes after the draw and note the position of the firearm in the aiming area? Are the sights or dot coming into alignment with the aiming eye? When doing all this, it is especially important to have the head in the correct position so when the firearm comes into the aiming area, the head does not move to adjust sight alignment. The firearm is moved only. Also the head should remain horizontal to the sights and not tilted to one side as shown in pictures.

To see if you have a grip and stance that works, set up a couple of targets say around two meters apart. Standing in front of one target at 10 yards draw and fire one shot. Do this slowly making sure every shot is the best you can fire, keep going but pick up the speed slightly, once comfortable in the execution of the draw and firing. Grouping should still be the same as in slow fire. Do not overdo it, small doses of learning are best. Are you drawing and firing smoothly? Do you need to work on a certain aspect of the draw and aim? If so, stop unload and go back to the mirror or if not convenient, slow down the process. If progressing, position yourself in the middle of both targets, draw and fire one shot on each target in 'slow mode'.

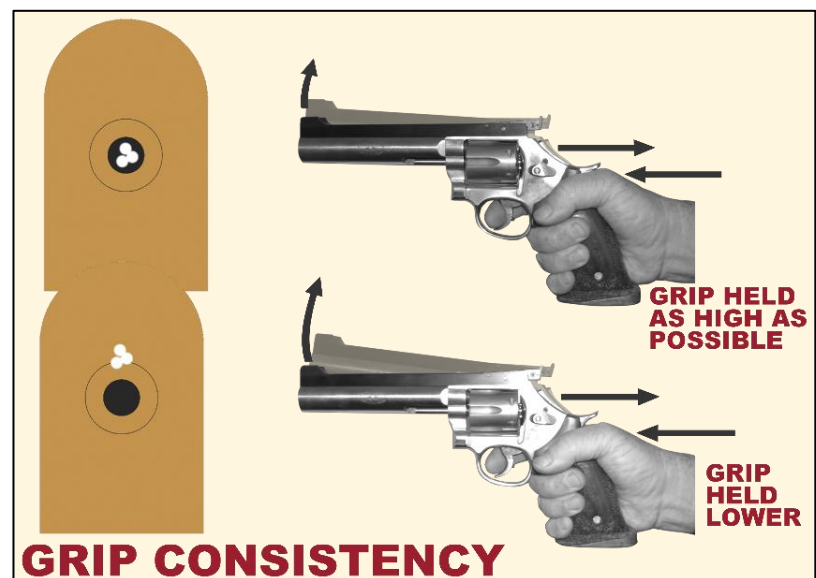
The shots must be in the centre of the aiming point. When the the first shot is fired, move to the second, what are you moving to get there. Observe that as you move from target to target, is the rotation from the hips or do they simply move the shoulders and arms? Correct this if the process if wrong, or not smooth and accurate. Pick up the pace only if your shots are centred. Again, outside help may be required here, either a fellow competitor or coach.

An overall evaluation should be made, breaking down each component as they go. The emphasis must be on the positive aspects of the competitors performance. Perhaps the draw is good, but non shooting hand placement needs to be adjusted. Praise the actual "draw" but also note a slight improvement in the non-shooting hand could benefit greatly.

"The only dumb question is the one you don't ask."

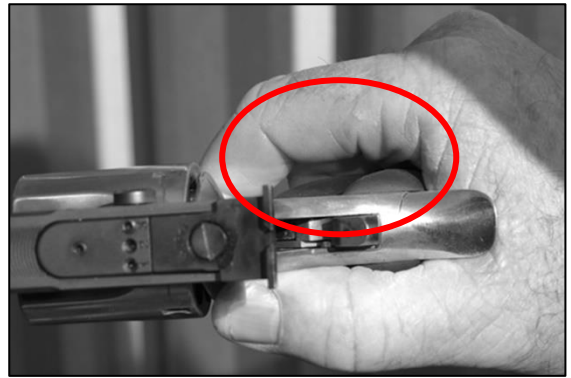
Grip

It is a noted fact that the higher the gripping hand is placed in the grip, the better control of recoil and recovery and the less the pistol will move in the hand. On 1911 type autos, the beavertail grip safety with the top part curving back is so easy to grip with the strong hand when placing the web of the hand between the thumb and trigger finger into the curve of the beavertail and then wrap the rest of the fingers around the grip front.



Either grip will result in a group, but should the grip alter from series to series, this will alter the position of the group.

Care must be taken that the trigger first joint (closest to the palm) does not rest on any part of the frame or stock, as it has a tendon that when the trigger is pressed back, this tendon will flex and move the sights out of alignment normally just as the shot breaks which makes it difficult to detect.



The length of the trigger finger normally dictates which part of it rests and operates the trigger. On auto's most have three different length triggers that can be fitted, but whatever 'spot' on the finger is used it must go straight back and the sights must stay in alignment. The rest of the strong hand fingers must have pressure on the front strap coming straight back also. The fingertips must not press on the left side of the stock. The grip should be like a vice winding the handle, only one side moves straight/parallel into the stationary side, the strong hand hold should be firm but not as firm as the weak hand which should lock up your grip.



The left hand grip starts after they have gripped the firearm with the strong hand and as they remove the firearm from the holster, the right hand swings up and out as the left hand first finger finds its spot at the back of the trigger guard where it meets the front part of the stock. The rest of the left hand fingers endeavour to clamp up on the front strap of the stock on top of the strong hand fingers. With large hand the little finger may go under the stock depending on the length of the base plate.

Some competitors with large hands, have the first finger of the weak hand wrapped around the front trigger strap, do not do this unless you must, as it even harder to obtain even pressure from all the fingers on that hand when they are in different planes. Both thumbs should hang out in space and should not rest on any part of the firearm. The strong hand thumb points away from the pistol and the week hand one tries to face the same way.

With revolvers the frame and side stocks are different and nearly any hand size can be made to fit by building up the side panels to fill the grip to strong hand. The only obstacle that may be a problem is forming the strong hand grip on the revolver as most do not have a beavertail to locate the strong hand quickly, a gunsmith can fit a beavertail to

most revolvers which does help a lot to attain the right grip quickly. The double action of a revolver will make anyone using a revolver to spend a lot of time on trigger finger training and having the smoothest trigger possible. To obtain a good trigger release the trigger finger must be trained to always travel straight on and off as the length of pull and release is not consistent and directly to the rear and front (releasing trigger) will cause sight misalignment. The best way to achieve a good trigger press and release, is dry firing at home with an **unloaded firearm**.

Standing away from any barricade that has a vertical line, grip the firearm with a two handed hold and place the sights in the vertical line, now observe the sights (sight picture) and operate the trigger. Did the sight picture change left or right and why did it change. If the sights do "move" as the trigger is pressed, the competitor should assess which parts of the hand are causing this movement or is it the actual trigger finger not being smoothly operated? The competitor should be feeling the cylinder indexing and the trigger is being pressed and trigger resetting as it is released. With an auto, the competitor should be able to feel the sear engagement as the trigger is being released. Next, do the same dry firing on a horizontal line.

Sight picture, sights and aiming

"If you have a firearm in your hands and you're looking at the target, you may be shooting, but you're not aiming and your group size and score will prove it".

Here we cover Metallic sights and optical red dot sights. There is a lot of valuable info on sights, which can be sourced through the internet or your local coach.

In a slow fire match, the pistol is raised from a 45° position. Applying pressure on the trigger while aligning the front and rear sights with your focus on the front sight. The shot breaks and the competitor notes where the front sight was in relation to the rear sight notch and then watch the front sight climb up and back down under recoil and recover. The shot is called to be high left, as that was where the sights 'sat' on discharge. Check with the spotting scope and it's just in the ten ring at 11 O'clock. We have done everything correctly, except hitting a centre ten.

An Action competitor could have just fired six shots in the same time frame or quicker! How does he/she call the shots? Going back to the slow fire shot, as that is where most of the answer is, with some exceptions. The sights on the slow fire pistol would be matched in width of front post and rear sight gap to give a very precise aim, the competitor would have been a very high grade competitor as their wobble zone (aiming area) was very small, as a high left shot was still in the ten ring where as a novices that called a high left shot could be out in the 5 or 6 ring. So, the slow fire competitor attains his proficiency by training the basics, learning the correct way by calling his shots and correcting their errors.

If the competitor is not able to call their shots, they may not be able to fix any errors which also applies to faults with their pistol or loads. They must be able to focus on the front sight and "read it" when the shot breaks. So if they cannot do this in slow fire, they will not be able to do it well in a rapid fire stage. It takes time and practice to do, remembering that dry firing is essential to learning.

All the above is still required when using a red dot scope. It just makes it easier to read where the dot was at shot release, so it is not as difficult to call the shots and correct any errors. Air pistol is an excellent way of seeing sights through the shot to aide calling.

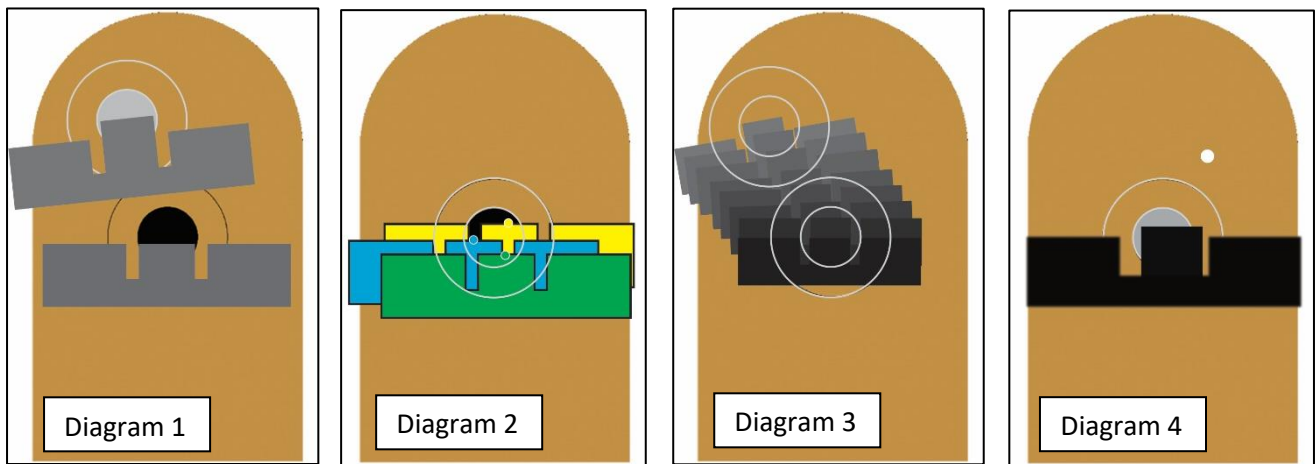


Diagram 1: Sights aligned in the centre X ring. Shot is fired and recoil forces sights high, slightly left, depending if using barricade or unsupported. The recoil (sight) position, should recoil to the same area for each shot. If the recoil is different each shot, it shows a lack of trigger control, inconsistent grip pressure or lack of follow-through.

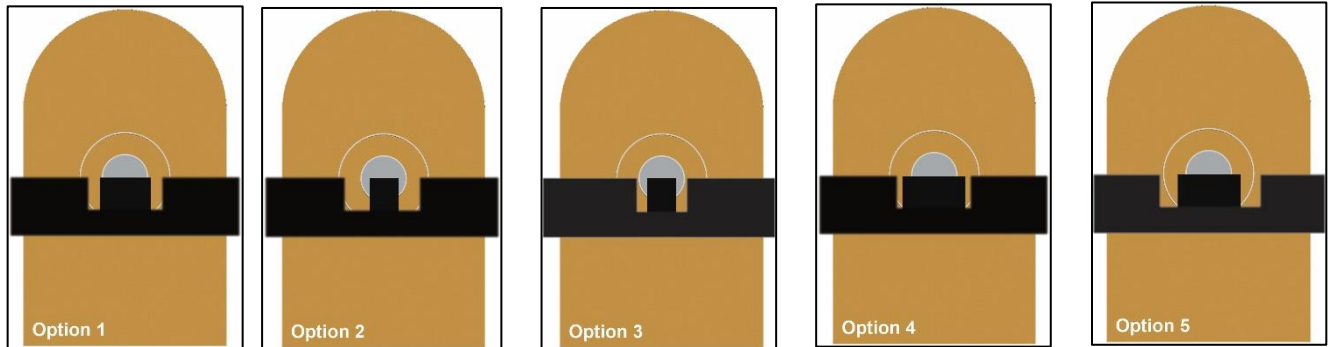
Diagram 2: Indicates 3 shots fired with an area the size of the X ring with sights aligned. Sights perfectly aligned but move within an area – Parallel error, meaning less shot displacement.

Diagram 3: Again showing sights in recoil. Dependent of the match, if barricade the recoil will be less than unsupported. Also two handed may see the sights recoil in an upward only motion. The competitor should endeavour to see the sights right through the recoil to enable shot calling.

Diagram 4: Simply shows sights misaligned and the end result. This is what is termed Angular Error which gives greater shot displacement.

Which sights should the Action competitor use?

Several options are pictured here in a possible true scale, but the individual will need to "experiment" to discover which sight option suits them. The instructor should be able to offer advice with options. Keeping in mind such things as age, visual acuity, length of arm to eye, bright days, dull days or any other factors.



There will be options which just will not work in Action Pistol for some, but others may find them to be the best option that suits them, in the current phase of their shooting ability.

Option 1: Is pretty much a standard sight picture used primarily in ISSF which can be adopted for Action Pistol. It has a 1:1 ratio with the depth the same as the front sight width. The front sight may appear wider than the X ring and may not give an accurate point of aim or a larger appearance of holding.

Option 2: Small front sight inside the X ring (most common) but a very large rear sight "gap". This allows for the front sight to be misaligned to a greater extent before the competitor is made aware of any misalignment. However, a wider rear sight does allow for easier sight alignment during the faster series of Action Pistol. Again a compromise needs to be reached by the competitor. This type of sight configuration may be good in overcast, dull days?

Option 3: A general "out of the box" sight configuration as seen by most Action competitors. It gives the front sight a definite location being inside the X ring with the rear sight slightly narrower than option 2. The only drawbacks this configuration may have is on overcast days, or shooting in the faster series it may be difficult to align the sights due to speed and recoil.

Option 4: Huge front sight, very narrow gapped rear sight. Not the best scenario for a sight picture and one that would not be recommended but still may be an option to some.

Option 5: Same front sight as option 4, but increased rear sight gap. Again it is an option and may be used if the competitors have difficulty seeing small front sights due to age or in need of prescription glasses.

Further discussions as we go.....

It is understood that focus should be at the front sight to read its movements, regardless of the speed of fire. An indication the competitors are not seeing sights is they look for holes in the target. A fellow competitor may be able to identify this by standing to the side of the competitor and observe if the eyes are moving (focussing) from sights to target? After the last shot is fired, is the competitors gaze still at the target or the pistol?

Action metallic sight firearm, has a minimum power factor of 120,000 which is bullet weight x speed in fps. The pistol is going to recoil somewhat, so what sort of sight picture do we need in a rapid fire situation? In all Action matches, the times are shorter at the closer distances and the highest scoring ring is the X ring which is 4" diameter and the ten ring is 8" diameter and in the four matches, only fire 24 shots out of 192 shots past 25 yards, so there may be a need to have a sight setup differently from a precision competitor? The width of the rear sight gap, may need to be wider, but this should only be done if they find after trying with standard gap sights, they cannot get all the aimed shots off in time. Again an age factor may come into effect.

The larger the width difference from front and rear sight, the less critical the alignment needs to be, so therefore the larger the dispersion of shots fired. This can make it more difficult to "read" the sights as the shot fires due to the front sight rear sight gap. It may be an opportunity to either try other competitor's firearms, or have a firearm that you can either change out the front sight for a thinner or thicker size or change out the rear blade. Whatever sight the competitors have, it will still yield X ring groups but given certain conditions, may alter what the competitor "sees" on the day and may need to experiment to find a solution that suits them in all conditions.

"If the trigger does not go straight back, the bullet won't go straight ahead"!

Glasses are mandatory when shooting, so another way to achieve a good sight picture is by having an optometrist make lenses for your glasses to suit the front sight focus. Having focus only on the front sight will allow the target to be "out of focus" which also helps if they have a tendency to look at the target bullet holes. Choosing an optometrist that usually specialises in sports glasses is recommended. The competitors will also benefit in clear lenses when shooting a metallic sight pistol as a colours lens may not cover all conditions. When using a red dot scope, the competitor will not be able to use the lens made for them to shoot with metallic sights. The dot in the scope is made up of a lot of little dots that are projected onto a lens in the scope and once they magnify the glasses, the dot becomes a large fuzzy ball.

Open Pistol and scope sights: The majority use a standard lens that may have a slight colour tint in them to help with the normal glare of the Australian sun. Dark glasses for Metallic cannot be worn effectively and they may not work well with a scoped pistol either. To attain even light conditions it may help to wear a cap with a forward extension e.g., a baseball cap and if required side covers for your glasses also help with glare from either side, be aware that when prone you may have to adjust the cap as the peak will interfere with the line of vision.

Where to Aim? Some considerations needed.....

Considering the best aim point, an explanation of a slow fire competitor, who's area of aim is "sub six" o'clock. The blackened sights are superimposed onto the white area of the target well below the 7 ring (the start of the black centre ISSF) and has the best contrast with a white gaps on each side of the front sight and white above the front sight. This is called "sub six" hold. The six o'clock hold has the lower black area of the target centre, placed at the top of the front sight. When using a reference point on the target, the competitor is focused on the target, not on the front sight.

So with metallic sights, sighting the pistol at 50 yards under the black X ring is advised. A very slight gap between the black centre dot of the target and the top of the sights is acceptable as we have one advantage over our ISSF competitor is that in Action Pistol, at longer distances, the rules allow the competitor to go prone and rest the gun on a mat and have enough time in the match to get very good controlled shots, so our wobble area at 50 yards is decreased significantly.

The competitor should set the sights at 50 yards using a sub six hold leaving a small amount of white at the tip of the front sight to give the competitor clarity when seeing sights and competitor the sight to give a central X ring group. Other distances, 10, 15 and 25 yards the preferred area is centre hold. At 35 yards, some may aim approximately 25mm lower than centre (dependent on some variables which will need to be confirmed in practice). This has to do with the curve path of the projectile and the height of the X ring which is 4", and the bullet's trajectory, as each distance varies slightly up to 1.5" above or below centre.

With a scoped Open pistol, most have a compensated barrel. To have any benefit from a compensator, more gas is forced through the compensator to make the pistol recoil flatter, which increases stability and results in less sight movement. It is preferred to normally have a faster velocity projectile which has other benefits with the mover and turning targets.

Using scoped pistols with a dot, it is preferred that centre hold is adopted for all distances. This is due to the bullets trajectory which is normally flatter than the metallic pistols and the height difference from open sights, which is less than 1/2" from the centre of the bore, whereas the Open pistol sight centre is over 2" from the centre of the bore line. Again, the aiming point needs to be checked by live fire and the biggest height different is at the 35 yards. So, on turning targets Open pistol aim point is centre of the X and the same for the metallic gun except a sub black hold at 50 yards.

Plates

"There are no eights on plates"!

Plates consist of six circular metal discs 8 inches (200mm) which are a white. For aiming with metal sights, the sights should be about ½" high of the centre of the plate. This match requires smooth trigger control and correct sight alignment. When training, the plates are a good way to get the basics in sight alignment, trigger control and timing better. With a red dot scope, your aim point should be the middle of the plate, the group may print slightly low at 10 yards but will be centre at each other distance.

Prone

For the prone position, the competitor needs to be aware of his/her dominate eye position which must be directly behind the front and rear sights. A quick check should be done to ensure the competitor is not looking from the side or top or bottom of the eye, as it must be from the centre of the eye.

When adopting the prone position, it can be directly behind the sights or if right handed, the body may lay to the left of a centre line drawn from the centre of the front and rear sights back. Left handed competitors do the opposite.



There are several ways to adopt the prone position but is dependent on body size and condition as there may be some issues with them. Outside assistance may be required here from a fellow competitor or coach to be able to evaluate your position and discuss the best method of obtaining a prone position in the given time frame. Here are options to consider but all care must be taken during any trials that no possible injuries can occur.

The prone position is started in the standing position with hands above the shoulder-line. The timer is started and the draw begins. Once the pistol has been drawn and pointing down range in a safe manner, the competitor is able to "kick" the feet backwards, which allows them to drop straight down. As the right hand will have the firearm in it (pointing at least 45° down range before you move from the standing position) the left hand/wrist is placed on the ground and has to take most of the weight. This can cause problems with the left wrist and elbow as discussed prior, due to age, size, conditions etc. The benefit of this way is the firearm lands in a position from where the competitor wants to shoot from.

Another option is to stand back from the aiming point the length of your body and stretched out arms. From the ready position, on an audible signal, draw the firearm out of the holster and have the barrel at least 45° down range before moving. Then drop down on both knees, with the left hand palm support the body as they slide the left hand forward of the body go forward with it till you're in the prone position. The base of the firearm can also be used in to take some weight and slide the pistol on the butt. A word of caution is that some range floors may be gravel and some concrete. A variation in mats is also a point to be cautious of (wool types) allow you to slide. Other types may not allow any slip, such as a gravel range with a nylon type mat. The pistol may not slip and could force the barrel into the mat as it stops sliding. The competitor should be able to assess each range and competitor for the best options to try out.

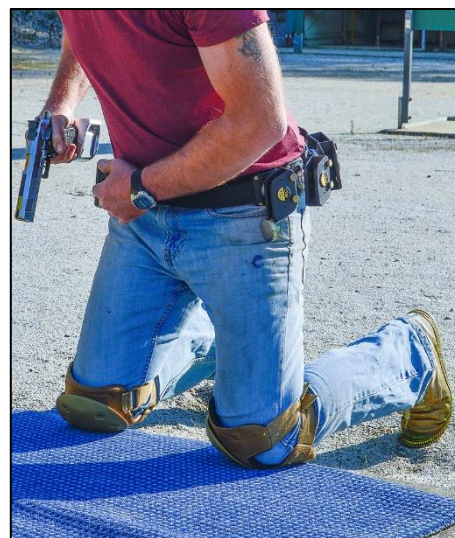
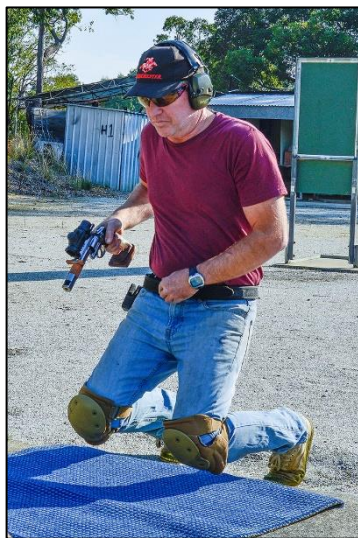


It may be best to take the weight with the left hand palm and the base of the firearm together, then lift the firearm from the mat, placing it in the spot that they will shoot from whilst the left hand slides forward to lower the body. All this whilst being aware that no part of the body forward of the barrel end, so the left hand needs to be behind the barrel at all times.



The position, once prone, should have a sight picture in the middle of the first plate and must allow you to move to the last plate (right to left, right handed competitor) without the barrel dipping down as the pistol and wrists move from plate to plate. The dominate eye must also track in the right plane to achieve the best sight picture on each plate.

As discussed previously in "Safety", the use of knee pads are common place in the matches which require the use of a prone position.



Pictured here are the use of "knee pads" and how they can aide in the prone position without added stress to knees and possible joints.

Mover

"If you love shooting, then the Mover is the one to adore".

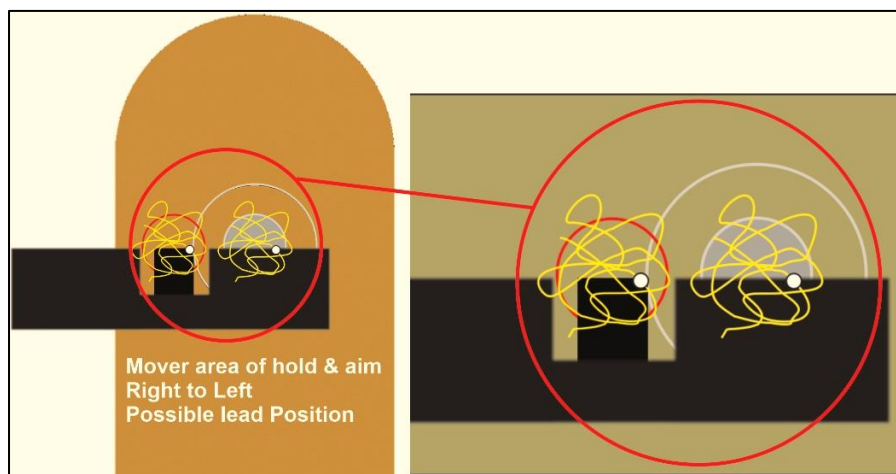
Metallic sight pistols do not have any way to compensate the lead required other than aiming ahead of the intended target area. To do this, one must be able to fire the pistol with sights aligned, and have the pistol and upper body rotating from the hips, to match the speed of the target. A two hand hold and movement from the hips will allow the pistol to move with the target, in a true parallel line.

The competitor should implement firing a series of shots, slowly and smoothly to ascertain the amount of lead required for each load and bullet weight. From the onset, the apparent "wobble" area will seem to be quite large due to a variety of functions happening at the same time such as body movement, sight lead, target movement etc. But with practice the area of "wobble" will decrease, provided the trigger is operated smoothly and directly to the rear. A rotation of only the shoulders will result in the competitor's pistol moving downwards which will result in the need to lift the pistol as it is fired. Practice should be started with dry fire and/or simply movement until a smooth movement is achieved.

After dry firing is acceptable, start with two rounds and complete series with dry fire shots to learn the importance of movement, sight alignment, smooth trigger and follow through. It may be also noted that after the target has "disappeared" behind the barricade, the competitor's pistol continues to travel slightly past the "barricade", this is part and parcel of follow through as some may attempt to "stop" suddenly after the last shot. It needs to be a continuation of movement. Time spent developing a good stance/position, grip and trigger control will make shooting the mover better. During a match though, dry firing is not allowed so the competitors follow through after the last shot is simply a continuation of body movement and sighting without any trigger roll off if using a revolver.

How much lead?

The lead required depends on the weight and speed of the projectile and from what distance they are shooting from. A 135 grain BNWC doing around 940 FPS at 25 yard line will need to lead about 9" ahead of the target centre which is the edge of the target as they are 18" wide in total. The same round at 10 yards would be around 3" in front of the target centre, which is in the size of the ten ring.



As discussed previously, a lot of aspects of shooting are happening at the same time. The competitor should allow a larger wobble area than they would for other matches, as long as the sights are aligned and they are "tracking" the target in the general area of aim whilst endeavouring to release the shots in a timely manner.

The diagram on the left shows possible lead of pistol moving right to left. The red circle indicates X ring. Yellow line indicates competitors "wobble" area or area of hold. The sights show area of "aim" (lead). The transposed yellow line and shot hole is transferred to target proper to show result. This is dependent on smooth trigger control, correct body movement and sight alignment.

Just like all the other Action matches shot, we are governed by time. The competitor's emphasis should be on utilising the time "totally" with smooth, deliberate shots, rather than rushing the 6th shot and resulting in poor execution. This will take time and diligent practice, but it should be explained that technique comes before timing. A smooth technique, will allow correct sight alignment during movement and concentration of trigger smoothness is the main criteria. As further practice on technique is taken up, the competitor should find timing will take care of itself. In real terms, "bluntly", it is no good training to achieve 6 shots fired in 5.9 seconds when all shots are either low scoring or off the target.

Discussion could also centre on "Open Class" auto with a compensator and a mover base. How it operates, its advantages over metallic sights.

Pictured here are an Open and Metallic sight used in the mover. The base of the scope is able to move to compensate the lead positions at various distances. Whereas, Metallic sights are fixed and the aiming points will vary according the distance from the target.



The Open pistol is capable of sub 1" groups at 50 yards from a rest, the groups on the moving target will be a lot closer or uniform than that of a metallic pistol. Should bad shots occur (ones you did not call), the general reason is that the competitor did not focus on the "dot" during the entire series of shots or a lack of trigger control is evident.

The further distance from the target, a slight error at trigger release will be magnified on the target in distance away from the centre. Here outside assistance or coach may be required by standing at the side and slightly to the rear to evaluate trigger control and follow through. Also observation should be done by standing at the back and slightly to the right (right handed competitor) and look over the shoulder to see that they are moving the entire upper portion of the body whilst firing.

The ten yard line is where most of the body movement will be required to track the target, so the stance position needs to be correctly adopted to achieve the least amount of strain as possible.



Standing in the "box" facing the centre of the mover run, notice the feet are parallel to the front of the box. The position needs to be such that if the mover is traversing "right to left", the position needs to be altered to face the left, where the mover will disappear from sight. The pistol is drawn to align to the left barricade (disappearing target), holster pistol, raise hands above shoulders and now "rotate" upper body from the hips, to the barricade which the target will be appearing from. As the target appears, draw and fire whilst allowing upper body to unwind in the direction of the moving target. Then repeat this when moving left to right, position the body to face the right barricade (target exit).



Again, outside help may be required should evaluate if the competitor has begun to swivel before pistol is drawn and first shot is fired? This can occur if the competitor is not stable and “rushes” the draw making exaggerated body movements to draw and aim.

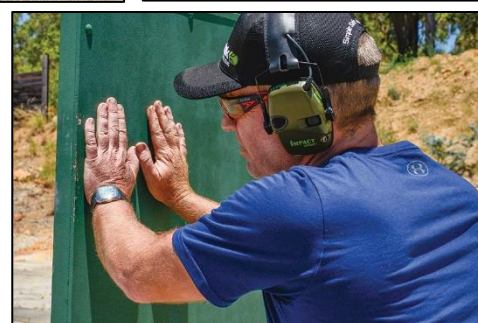
Moving back, each distance the arc is reduced due to the distance from the targets. As the competitors reach the 20 yard line with only three shots per run, the stance can be the same as normal or with very slight alignment to the barricade of target exit. The 3 shots each run at the 20 and 25 yards does allow for more time to concentrate on sight picture and once your proficiencies improve your group size will decrease. The 25 yard run of the mover is probably where this match is either won or lost. competitor’s should emphasise the importance of correct sight alignment and trigger control through the entire match but perhaps more-so at 25 yards as any errors may be compounded more than at closer distances. As the heading suggested you must shoot the mover with confidence of your abilities which can only be achieve by carrying out the basics accurately and with precision learnt from diligent practice.

The Barricade

“Wow standing with support how easy is this Barricade Match”.

Shooting ridiculously small and precise groups in the Barricade Match when shot with an Open pistol, coupled with a competent competitor, looks from an observer to be smooth, quick and easy until it’s your first time in the box at 10 yards!

Stance and position in the box should be standing upright with both hands flat on the barricade. The Instructor needs to demonstrate that the competitor should not lean into or away from the barricade and at first both feet should be beside each other. Depending on individual’s size and which side they are shooting from, the inside foot may need to open or close this position so their head does not move to the pistol sights. The pistol is to be placed in their vision to the target.



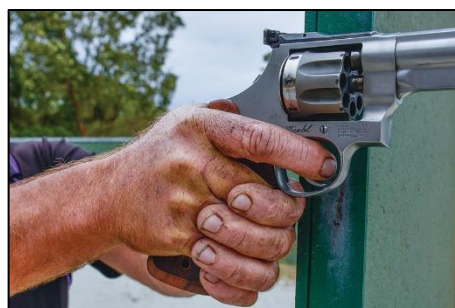
When developing grip, it must be noted by the instructor that the front and rear sight must line up with the middle of the competitors eye and head position

(face) should be as close to 90° as possible from the imaginary line that runs through the front and rear sight and into the centre of the dominate eye. As mentioned previously, head position and the pistol sights are placed in the correct position and the pistol sights are brought into the view of the dominant eye. It must be mentioned by the instructor, that the pistol is placed on the Barricade to accommodate the competitor's eye (height of competitor) and not place the pistol on the barricade for the competitor to crouch to "find" the sights or dot.

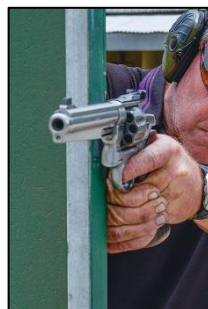
Competitors may find that shooting in Open or Metallic, the stance may not change even though each have a different type of firearm. The reason is more to do with eye relief, as both rear sight and the back lens (Ocular) of the scope should be the same distance to the competitor's eye. Here we should point this out when they mount a scope to an open firearm. Also a point to note is when mounting a scope, that the wings on open pistols, do not allow the scope to touch the barricade. While it may be easy to move the scope back away from contacting the barricade, when the firearm is mounted with wings, they also should have some room to move back and forth. A simple explanation as to why we have "wings" may be called for? Wings, when fitted and used correctly, are used to stabilise the firearm on to the back of the barricade.

It would be noted that many Action competitors come from a Service/WA1500 background where they have adopted a "Service Grip" for barricades where they use the right hand to grip and fire the pistol and shoot on the right side of the Barricade. The pistol is cradled in the left hand and used as support on the Barricade. Vice-versa for left hand side of the Barricade.

The Barricade event in Action Pistol using the same technique, may work when shooting a metallic sight pistol, with the only difference being time. Service has 15 seconds for 6 shots. Action Pistol at 10 yards in Barricades starts with 6 shots in 5 seconds. This may suit a right handed competitor on the right side of the barricade, vice-versa with a left handed competitor, until they need to fire on the weak side.



A series of pictures showing the usual method of attaining grip for the weak hand and strong hand position on the barricade.



Service/WA1500 dictates that competitors must fire from the right side using the right hand and vice-versa for the left side. Action matches utilises either hand to fire the shot and can start on either side of the Barricades. It is noted they must shoot 6 shots in the target that is on the same side from as they shoot.

Action allows for options at the Barricade event. Firing from the weak side, the pistol can be drawn by the strong hand and passed over to the weak hand and using the left side Service hold, fire aimed shots in the rest of the allowed time of 5 seconds.





Moving back to 15 yards, times change to 6 seconds. So the choices at close ranges are that if the competitors are able to utilise the time using a service grip on both sides of the barricade, do so. The other option may be to use the strong hand to shoot both sides of the barricade. Simply during the strong side, use the service grip and on the weak side use the strong hand to hold and fire the firearm around the barricade either free of support from the side of the barricade or the back of the strong hand/wrist resting on the barricade side for some support.



Keep in mind when developing grip and position, that in the Metallic match only, the firearm is not allowed to touch any part of the barricade when firing a shot or shots.

When developing the grip, the front and rear sight must line up with the middle of the eye and the face should be as close to 90° as possible from the imaginary line that runs through the front and rear sight and into the centre of the dominant eye. As mentioned earlier, the head is in position and

the pistol sights are placed in the correct spot, not the head moving to chase the sights.

Open firearms are allowed to be fully supported by the Barricade with the grip and to take full advantage of this, a change of hands so that the right side of the barricade a right hand competitor will use the left hand to fire the firearm and the right hand is independently holding the pistol on to the barricade. The thumb of the right hand rest on the left wing pushing the wing into a firm hold on the barricade, the index finger is looped over the shroud protected from the compensator by having the finger in a groove or a small deflector in front of the finger mounting area. The other three fingers are wrapped around the angle steel which the barricade board is mounted to, and the palm of the hand is pressed on the back and side of the barricade and steel upright support.

Demonstrations of this procedure is highly recommended by other competitors or coaches. It is also advised that practice be done on the draw and dry firing in a slow manner, until the competitors are confident they can go to live firing. The right hand does hold the firearm to the board as the left hand fires the pistol. All this is opposite when they shoot on the other side of the barricade. It will take a little time to get this anywhere near right and it is suggested that you make a barricade up at home and with a timer practice this to timing of mounting and dry firing finish as the targets just start to turn away or the timer sounds the end.

The only anomaly competitors may encounter going from dry firing to live fire, is the possible flex of the barricade during live rounds. Most barricades are made to the same dimensions, with the exception that some may flex more than others. The instructor should be aware how to use the "flex" to advantage such as some Action competitors use the term "ride the Barricade". When the barricades flex at recoil, it is the ability to hold the barricade, so the firearm does not move in the grip, but have a slight bend in both elbows which allows you to "ride the Barricade". The only time the competitor would hold hard in both grip and arms, is when the barricades have little or no flex

Practical Match

Timing is everything only when everything else is right

Practical Match is a match which that will test a competitor's ongoing ability quicker than the other matches. It is the match which is equal in skill set either using a Metallic or Open pistol. One of the main reasons is that it is a match that uses all of our fundamental skills using a centrefire pistol from the holster.

While timing has been discussed previously in other matches, the Practical match shows the importance of training timing and the ability to concentrate on sight alignment during shot release, without the thought of running out of time in a pressure situation. It must be reiterated the importance of dry firing with turning targets at the 10 and 15 yard line. This will help develop the fundamentals. Then live fire can be used as a proof run. If the competitor does not attain certain results, there may be the need to work on dry fire.

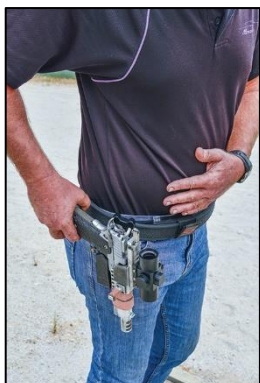
Starting at the 10 yard line, one shot each on two targets spaced 3 feet apart in three seconds, that is draw, aim, fire one shot, recover and move to the second target, aim and fire second shot. In the same series, 8 seconds to draw, change hands to your weak hand and with your weak hand only fire 3 shots on one target, recover and move to the second target and fire the remaining three shots. Diligent training is required here so that during a match, the competitors start well so that the rest of the match will benefit with the confidence gained.

Observations of all facets of the 10 yard series from the side, starting with dry fire and noting grip, trigger application and follow through should be done by another competitor or coach. It would be presumed the competitors have mastered the draw and position between the targets. A "proof" run may be called for, but in a slower manner with targets facing and no time limit. This is purely for observation to ascertain if the competitor is applying the fundamentals in a competent, smooth manner. As the competitor progresses, timing factors can come into play.

The draw to the weak hand may be developed in a few ways later during your career, but there is the need to begin instruction on a "general" position/stance using either a Metallic or Open pistol.

A stance/position needs to be adopted which is stable in windy conditions. In adopting a "Practical" stance/position, the competitor needs to position themselves between the two targets with the normal open "stance". Then move the left foot approximately 1 foot length forward and rotate the right foot clockwise until it feels comfortable. Raise the left arm up to shooting position, where does it point? Adjust position of feet so the hand/arm is coming to the centre of the target on the left. Left handed competitors simply do the opposite. This is basic, but essential stance/position and needs to be adjusted to suit, based on age, size etc.

The draw for weak hand only shooting starts similarly to that of the strong hand. However your right hand thumb and forefinger (vice versa for the left hand competitors) instead of going to the highest point on the stock (whilst holstered) the thumb and forefinger grip the base of the stock but they must be able to maintain a safe grip.



Action Pistol allows for extended bases on the grip, which is used mainly for the prone position.

With a good designed extended base, the competitor can maintain a strong grip using the strong hand, to pass to the weak hand.

The draw of the firearm using the lower portion of the grip with the strong hand, is raised and swung out of the holster and up around the 45° angle to the weak hand. The weak hand thumb and forefinger meet with the highest part of the stock or the beavertail. Starting the same grip with the fingers and palm as they would with the strong arm. The hand is now at an angle from the shoulder, so the competitor needs to adjust the left hand grip whilst the strong hand is still in control. If they do not have enough height in their grip for both hands to maintain safety, then they may need to grip the barrel (if Metallic pistol) or if an Open Pistol, the scope with the right hand so to adopt a good grip with the weak hand.

This will take time to do, and it's not recommended especially with the Open Pistol as most are electronic scopes these days and there is always the chance that the scope could be turned off in the handling. As most new Action competitors start with Metallic Pistol, it is best to develop the strong hand to the base of the stock as it works well for both Metallic and Open. There are other ways to draw to weak hand shooting, but basics should be mastered first.

Action Pistol, Practical, Barricade, and Plates, competitors are not restricted in any way in which target they choose to start with. WA1500 and Service do have Match rules in some positions which targets they shoot first.

As a right or left strong arm competitor, using two hands and an open stance, the draw and the first target should be the first one on the strong side and as explained previously, when using the weak hand only, the target on the weak hand side should be the first one. Drawing from a holster on the strong side and acquiring the strong side target, is quicker and more fluent. It also allows for the turning of the hips to rotate to the next target without having the arms move across the body, which may cause the competitor to turn at the shoulders which will cause issues with the Plates and Mover due to extended distance turned. Be precise in what you do, and accurate results will follow.