Trap

American Trap is popular throughout the United States and may well be the most popular form of clay target shooting in North America. Official events and rules are governed by the Amateur Trap Shooting Association or **ATA**. The ATA is generally considered the governing body of American trapshooting and is one of the largest shooting sports organizations in the world. The ATA hosts the Grand American World Trap Shooting Championships, which is held every August. After decades in Vandalia, Ohio, the "Grand" moved to the new World Shooting and Recreational Complex in Sparta, Illinois. The Grand attracts as many as 6,000 shooters for the thirteen day event, which is billed as the world's largest shooting event.

The ATA sanctions registered trapshooting competitions at local clubs and facilities throughout North America. Here at Highland Gun club we host severle such matches a year.

American trap is broken down into three categories: 16 yd singles, 16 yd doubles and, handicap which is shot between 19 and 27 yd. In singles each shooter takes one shot at each of five targets in each of the five positions in sequence, while standing 16 yards back from the trap house. The trap rotates back and forth so it is impossible to know which way the target is going to come out. Handicap is the same as singles but shot from further away. Adult male shooters start at the 20 yd line (19 for new Lady or Sub-junior shooter) and work their way back, "earning yardage" for shooting a score of 96 or higher, winning a championship or other major event, or shooting the highest score when 15 or more competitors shoot that event. No two shooters on the same squad should have a difference of more than three yards between them. Doubles is shot from 16 yards and the trap is fixed to fire straight away with the left and right targets appearing to be straight away when standing between positions 4 & 5; and 1 & 2, respectively. Two targets are thrown at the same time, with one shot per target allowed. There is no second shot on any target in American trap singles or handicap.

When shooting American trap for practice or fun a squad of five will shoot 25 targets each for a total of 125. Registered ATA shoots require shooters to shoot 50, 100, or 200 targets per event (depending on the scheduled event). Most of these shoots are for personal average or handicap yardage.

Double Trap is a relatively new Trap form, Olympic since 1996 (from 2008 it has Olympic status only for men), where two targets are thrown simultaneously but at slightly different angles from the station three bank of machines. The target speed is about 50 mph, very close to that of ATA doubles.

The shooting procedure is identical to the above, with the only unique item in that the targets are released with a variable delay up to 1 second. This was instituted to minimize the practice of spot-shooting the first target.

Arms and equipment for trap

American Trap is generally shot with a 12 ga. single (such as the Browning BT-99, Perazzi MX-15 or MX-2000, or Krieghoff K-80) or double barrel shotgun such as the Browning XT. Shooters will often buy a combo-set of a mono and over-under barrel gun for shooting singles and doubles respectively. Semi-autos are popular due to the low recoil and versatility because they can be used for singles, handicap, and doubles. Trap-specific guns are normally a manufacturer’s top of the line model and often embellished with engraving or inlay work and higher grades of wood. Trap guns differ from field and skeet guns in several ways

and normally shoot higher than their counterparts as the targets are almost always shot on the rise. The most obvious difference is in the stocks; they are normally Monte Carlo or have an adjustable comb, an adjustable butt plate, or both. Such guns also have long barrels (from 28 to 34 inches), often with porting, and anything from a modified to a full choke. The majority of trap shotguns built today feature interchangeable choke tubes, but older guns generally have fixed chokes. Some shooters have a complete set of choke tubes (modified, improved modified, improved cylinder, full).

Most shooters wear a vest or belt that will hold 25 cartridges with a second pocket for the spent shells.

Ammunition for trap

American trap is shot with lead target ammo, with a shot size between 7 ½ and 9. Ammunition is allowed a maximum of 1-1/8 oz of shot and maximum velocities vary with shot mass; 1290fps (feet per second) for 1-1/8oz, 1325fps for 1oz, and 1350fps for 7/8oz. Maximum loads are generally only needed for long handicap or the second doubles shot. (Note that at certain trap clubs, when required, steel shot can be used.)

Although Winchester AA, Remington STS, and other higher end shot shells have been popular in the trapshooting world for quite some time, cheaper shells such as Federal Top Gun and Rio are becoming increasingly popular due to the increase in price of the higher end shells. Federal Top Gun and Rio still offer the decent firepower of Winchester AA shells, but lack a sturdy hull thus making them difficult to reload. Reloading is also becoming much more popular because it doesn't cost nearly as much as buying new boxes of shells and doesn't take quite as long to manufacture a box of shells as it used to - due to the invention of hydraulic reloading machines.

Trap etiquette

American Trap shooting, more so than other shooting disciplines, including Olympic "international" trap, develops a certain rhythm to a squad timing between shots. The manners of any other squad member(s) can affect the performance of individuals within a squad. Shell catchers are a must for anyone using a semi-automatic - a shell hitting you in the head or arm can certainly disrupt your concentration. Most shooters also carry a few extra shells in case they drop one. It is better not to pick up any dropped shell, or other item, until after the 5th shooter has fired his 5th shot of the station and the squad is about to rotate to the next position. Idle chatting between shots, vulgar calls, and unnecessary movement can be generally disruptive. Things are considerably more relaxed during a practice squad, but one should use some discretion.

Commands from the scorer and other shooters are as important to squad timing as the behaviors of the shooters on the squad. To start a squad the shooter will ask if the squad and puller are ready (usually by calling "Squad ready?" then "Puller ready?"), followed by asking to see one free target, traditionally saying "Let's see one." The scorer will call missed targets with a command of: loss, lost, etc. When the first shooter has fired his final shot of the position the scorer will sometimes call “end” and will command “all change” after fifth shooter has fired his last shot. The shooter on position five then moves behind the rest of the shooters on his way to the first station and will signal when he is ready to the First shooter who is now on station two. The standard call for a target is “pull,” but many shooters like to use their own variations of "pull," or words that will help them concentrate on the target.