

## **18Bn Black Powder Rules & Guidance**

### **In General**

Most black powder shooting is conducted using 50m Pistol targets, with the exception of the smoothbore flintlock musket and matchlock events, which are shot at French 200m targets placed at 50m. Some offhand events are shot at 50m, while the Cartridge prone and bench rest events are usually shot at 100m or further. Some clubs program long-range shoots and make use of other targets.

A 'walk-up' paper target event could start at 100m, walking down with unloaded firearms to 75m then 50m. It could also start at 75m, down to 50m then 25m; more challenging is the 300m walk down to 200m then 100m.

Alternative targets includes armour-steel gongs where the score is either 'a hit' or 'a miss'. Using several diameters of gong it is possible to remain on the same firing line moving from one lane to the next seeking to hit a reduced diameter gong thereby experiencing an increase in the degree of difficulty. For gongs after each detail is finished and 'range closed' is called requires only a volunteer to go forward with a can of spray paint to freshen up the metal target faces for the next shooters.

To avoid having a sighting-in period, Muzzleloading events comprise 13 shots fired within a fixed time period. The best 10 scoring shots count.

Black powder Cartridge events will follow the course of fire for the match and usually consists of 2 sighting shots and 10 for record that score within a fixed time period.

Long-arm matches based on military course-of-fire also include precision, timed and snap.

Although not shot at the Hornsby shooting complex, muzzleloading percussion shotgun and black powder cartridge shotgun is shot from five stations 8m from the thrower and flintlock from three stations 5m from the thrower. Each detail is 25 clays. The shooter loads the gun in an area behind the firing station and waits until the Range Officer calls them forward to the next station.

An interesting insight into shooting these old-fashioned muzzleloading firearms is that in each event the shooter is permitted a certain number of 'misfires' before being penalised.

All in all, black powder cartridge or muzzle-loading target shooting is an exciting and enjoyable outdoors recreation.

The Club will commence with the introduction of Percussion Muzzle Loading and Cartridge Black Powder only. As experience is gained and interest forms then consideration to earlier locks can be given. Only those rules and guidance relevant to percussion cap muzzle loading and cartridge breach loading shall apply.

### **SAFETY TIPS**

- NO SMOKING ON THE FIRING LINE OR IN THE SAFETY AREA
- FIREARMS TO BE SECURED IN YOUR VEHICLE WHEN NOT IN USE
- FIREARM/S IN USE MUST BE UNDER DIRECT SUPERVISION AT ALL TIMES
- BLACK POWDER HANDLING ONLY TO OCCUR IN THE SAFETY AREA OR

ON THE FIRING LINE AS INSTRUCTED BY THE RANGE OFFICER

- BULK BLACK POWDER AND CAPS MUST BE IN THEIR ORIGINAL CONTAINERS
- BLACK POWDER CAN BE MADE UP INTO CHARGE CARTRIDGES OR DISPENSED FROM MEASURING FLASKS
- DO NOT MIX DIFFERENT BRANDS OR CLASSES OF BLACK POWDER!

**ANY DOUBTS, ASK;**

**NO QUESTION IS DUMB OR SILLY WHERE SAFETY IS CONCERNED!**

1 - Use only Black Powder or substitute powder.

- DO NOT use smokeless powder in muzzle loading firearms; you won't be around to do it a second time!

2 - Once primed and / or capped, a loaded firearm must always be;

- pointed down range towards the target
- closely attended at all times and
- held by the shooter until discharged.

3 - An unloaded Muzzle Loading rifle must be carried with the muzzle pointing up. Unloaded Cartridge Rifles are to have their breech open. When not in use firearms are preferably locked away out of sight in the car.

4 - Before leaving the firing line secure paper cartridges, powder measure and caps in your range box or sealed bag. Once ready to leave obtain a "Clear to Remove" from a safety officer before stepping off the firing line. NO CLEANING TO OCCUR ON THE FIRING LINE, DO SO AWAY FROM THE FIRING LINE AND SAFETY AREA.

5 - Powder must always be in a closed container, horn or flask except when filling the powder measure or charging the firearm. Be certain of the charge weight as mass volumes differ between brands and grades of Black Powder and substitutes.

6 - Powder must be kept in the original factory container until put in a horn, flask, powder measure, charger, or cartridge. Use only unbreakable static-free original containers.

7 – Percussion shooters are allowed one container of Black Powder with a maximum quantity sufficient for the match being shot in a single horn or flask on the firing line. Flintlock shooters no more than two clearly marked horns or flasks are allowed at any one time, ie: 1 of FFG (2F) and 1 of FFFFG (4F). All other powder and cap containers must be sealed and in a closed range box (or sealed bag) and kept off the firing line.

8 – The filling of horns, flasks, multiple pre-measure devices, etc. must be done well behind the firing line only in the Safety Area.

9 - DO NOT pour powder from a powder container directly into the muzzle or bore of any muzzleloader, ALWAYS use a powder measure or pre-measured paper cartridges.

10 - DO NOT bring powder containers of any sort into the club house.

11 - Percussion caps must always be kept in the original (unbreakable) factory containers. Shooters are allowed one tin of percussion caps on the firing line at a time. All other percussion cap containers must be in a closed range box (or sealed bag) kept secured behind

the firing line. No handling of caps or capping devices except when priming the firearm. No loose caps allowed – keep them contained and covered.

12 - It is recommended that percussion caps be dispensed from a capper or holder. If the shooter does not have one then use one cap from the container at a time resealing the container before shooting.

13 - Paper cartridges must be kept in a closed container or pouch until one is removed for use. DO NOT carry loaded paper cartridges in your pockets.

14 - A powder measure may be used to charge the firearm. NEVER load directly from a bulk-container, free-flowing horn or flask into the bore. Pre-set measuring charger horns and flasks and pre-loaded cartridges meet this need. TO DETERMINE MASS VOLUME ACCURACY OF THE HORN / FLASK MEASURE THEN WEIGH SEVERAL CHARGES.

15 - NEVER EXCEED THE MAXIMUM RECOMMENDED POWDER CHARGE AS SHOWN IN YOUR INSTRUCTION or RELOADING BOOK. To do so could result in injury or death to the shooter or bystanders and will ruin what was a totally fine day.

16 - Ramrods, swabbing and loading rods should be clearly marked to indicate when inserted for their full length either an “Empty” or “Loaded” condition.

17 - Only load when you are;

- a. instructed to do so by the Range Officer and
- b. able to concentrate on what you are doing.

18 - When loading, be certain the powder, patch and projectile are in their proper sequence and that THEY ARE COMPLETELY SEATED AGAINST ONE ANOTHER - NO AIR GAPS - making sure “POWDER > PATCH > BALL”.

19 - Keep body parts well away from the muzzle while loading. ANGLE THE MUZZLE AWAY FROM THE FACE AND BODY WHEN LOADING.

20 - Be aware of your surroundings. Only expose powder if the adjacent shooters is not ready to fire. Also, only fire if the adjacent shooter does not have powder exposed or is otherwise unprepared. LOOK LEFT, LOOK RIGHT IF POWDER IS EXPOSED OR LOADING IS UNDERWAY, WAIT, DO NOT FIRE.

21 - Flintlock shooters should never fire if adjacent shooters have powder exposed.

22 - Flintlock shooters must notify shooters on the touchhole side of the muzzleloader before firing. Calling out “Fire in the hole!” or “Flint” a few seconds before firing - this is encouraged. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY NOT TO CAUSE PROBLEMS.

23 - Only load, prime or cap when you are instructed to do so by the Range Officer on the firing line keeping the firearm pointed downrange once loaded.

24 - Clean loading AND firing benches of all spilled powder before continuing. Powder spilled on the ground must be well scattered before continuing. DO NOT RECYCLE!

25 - Flints must never be knapped in the cock when the muzzleloader is charged. It is recommended to change out the old flint with a newly knapped one instead beforehand.

26 - Do not try to beat the “one minute” cease fire warning. Don’t start loading after the “one minute” has been called.

27 - If your muzzleloader is loaded and / or primed / capped when a cease-fire is called raise your hand, keeping the muzzle pointed down-range and wait for the attention of the Range Officer. You may only fire after the cease-fire has been called with specific permission from the Range Officer. Stay pointed down range and follow the instructions of the Range Officer.

28 - In the circumstance you do not discharge your muzzleloader either;

- a. the percussion cap must be removed and the hammer is placed at half cock or
- b. the frizzen must be emptied wiped and the cock placed down to the pan, then
- c. place the un-primed partially “loaded” muzzleloader in the gun rack or loading rack, muzzle up.

A good practice is to tag a piece of red or orange material to or into the muzzle to indicate a partial load. If there is no gun rack then the load must be discharged safely down range.

29 - As a safety check having removed the percussion cap / emptied the frizzen and wiped it out, place the ramrod in the bore resting on top of the ball, patch and charge to confirm to yourself that the muzzleloader has been charged and is loaded. Once a cease-fire is called DO NOT fire without specific permission from the Range Officer.

30 - Keep the firearm pointed down range - follow the instructions of the Range Officer.

31 - If you have a misfire keep the firearm safely pointed down range until it is made safe. Wait at least 3 minutes after the last attempt to fire the muzzleloader before moving away from the firing line with the muzzle pointed upwards at all times.

32 - Loads that need to be pulled must be brought to the attention of the Range Officer and handled according to their instructions. If possible, loads that need to be pulled will be taken off the firing line while being worked on.

33 - Carbon dioxide gas (CO2) dischargers may be used to remove powder loads on the firing line under supervision of the Range Officer.

34 - No blowing down the barrel - There will be NO BLOWING DOWN THE MUZZLE of any firearm during matches in any manner that places the head in front of the muzzle.

35 - It is recommended for Muzzleloaders that the bore be damp wiped between shots or a flexible blow tube may be used at the shooter’s option providing that the shooter’s head is not placed near or in front of the muzzle.

36 - Cap and Ball rifles may be loaded and sealed but must not be Capped and placed in loading stands in the cordoned off Safety Area behind the firing line.

37 - Cap & Ball cylinders and percussion rifles MUST only be capped and flintlocks primed on the firing line, pointed downrange. DO NOT carry any capped revolver rifle, cylinder or primed flintlock around.

38 - Firearms are only to be transported to and from the firing line once the Range Officer has declared the range open.

39 - Muzzleloaders shall be unloaded and grounded (loading stand) or racked or bagged during cease fires. Percussion hammers to be at half cock to show that there is no cap present and flint lock cocks shall be in the fired position. FIREARMS TO BE UNDER DIRECT SUPERVISION AT ALL TIMES OR LOCKED AWAY OUT OF SIGHT IN A VEHICLE.

40 - All muzzleloaders, cartridge rifles, revolver rifles will be loaded with "ONE" ball, maxi, Minie or projectile per bore or cylinder. There will be NO double balling.

### **HORNSBY RIFLE RANGE - STANDING ORDERS (In Part)**

Black Powder target shooting is permitted for use on the following ranges;

100m Multi Use Range - A 100 meter range with firing lines at 25m, 50m, 75m and 100m for up to 20 shooter positions. There is a spectator area and range lights to provide year round amenity. This range is wheelchair accessible and two concrete firing lines are provided.

800m Main Rifle Range - The 800m range offers 14 firing positions on the firing line. There are competition target lifters in the butts trench. When shooting from the 100m line operate only lanes 8 – 14 for black powder shooting if the adjoining 100m MUR is in use.

A Safety Area where Black Powder is to be handled, when required, is to be established behind the firing line with table or bench. Signs to indicate the area is No-Flame / No-Smoking / Authorised People Only.

IF AT ANY TIME, YOU HAVE ANY SAFETY CONCERNS REGARDING BLACK POWDER SAFETY, PLEASE CONTACT THE BLACK POWDER CHAIR.

ANY DOUBTS, ASK!  
NO QUESTION IS TOO DUMB OR SILLY WHERE SAFETY IS CONCERNED!

Recommended Reading from the Internet...

MAKING CARTRIDGES by Patrick Reardon

NZAAA Auckland Branch - Paper Patching <http://www.antique-arms.co.nz/ppatch.html>

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### **Black Powder Firearms & Classes**

Matchlock, wheel-lock, flintlock and percussion are the four types of ignition that can be used to fire a muzzle-loading firearm. Only percussion cap is permitted currently.

Historically, this takes us from the earliest practical shoulder fired long-arms up to when smokeless powders replaced black powder, then breech loading, then drawn cartridges became standard. This covers the period from the mid-12th to late 19th century when the drawn brass cartridge, first loaded with black powder then smokeless was to see off smoothbore muzzle loading.

As the propellant became more powerful for a given volume, the calibre reduced and as velocity increased cast lead projectiles were to become jacketed with gilded nickel or copper metal to prevent lead stripping away coating the bore at the higher velocities and pressure.

Black powder muzzle-loading and cartridge events are divided into several classes. The muzzle loading class of long-arm is shot from the Moses stick (offhand), cross-sticks (sitting / kneeling), prone, supine and bench rest positions. For Cartridge matches prone, supine, sitting / kneeling, bench and off-hand are the positions adopted.

Class 1 (Military) comprises original and replica firearms that were issued to troops somewhere in the world. The .75" Brown Bess, the .450"-.577" Martini Enfields and .58" Zouave rifled muskets shooting Minié balls are examples. All Class 1 firearms must be as-issued, meaning unaltered from the original pattern. Reproductions must be 'in the spirit'.

Class 2 (Traditional) comprises traditional or civilian-style rifles loaded with a ball and patch or cartridge. The 45/70 calibre rifles, Kentucky long rifles and Hawken rifles are included. Flintlocks may be used in Class 2 events, but percussion firearms cannot be used in flintlock events.

Class 3 (Open) only requires that the firearm consumes black powder and lead projectiles. The firearm must be fitted with iron sights with or without click adjustment. Cap and ball revolver rifles with adjustable rear sights fall into this class. Optical sights are not permitted in competition.

[Not available currently - Firelocks - There are several Firelock classes, which permit the use of original or replica muzzleloading military or civilian-style muskets, rifles, matchlocks, wheel-locks, flintlocks, smoothbore longarms. These firearms may be in any calibre, but must shoot round balls only.]

Shotguns - There are two Shotgun classes, which permit the use of percussion and flintlock shotguns to hit clay targets. Shotgun is not used at the Hornsby shooting complex.

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