

Tony Bracci explains the discipline of skeet shooting, a great way to improve your speed and accuracy

Get your skeets on



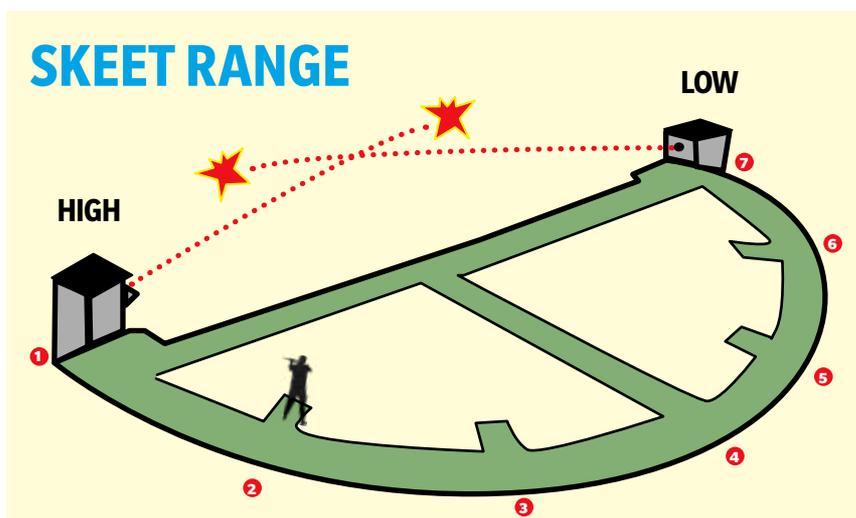
This article is not intended to be a masterclass in skeet shooting, rather a brief explanation to encourage you to give it a go if you haven't already done so.

Skeet is a formal discipline and an Olympic sport at its highest level. It has a humble history starting when some American farmers wanted to practice wing shooting in the off-season. They started with one trap, shooting at 12 stations 'around the clock' to give a variety of angles to mimic wing shooting. After a dispute with a neighbour over falling shot they added a second trap and shot in a semi-circle with seven equidistant stations, starting from station 1 at the high house and station 7 at the low house.

You can use any type of shotgun to shoot skeet, although shooting with a 32in trap gun with full and full choke may be a disadvantage. In the past skeet guns had short 26in barrels but nowadays most shoot with 28in or 30in barrels.

If you have a multi-choke gun, now's the time to use those skeet chokes or the most open ones you have, as the targets are never too far away – it's all about speed and angles rather than distance. Normal clay cartridges

“The targets are never far away; it's all about speed and angles”



The layout for an English skeet course, with seven positions around the arc of a semi-circle

are fine, but if you have to buy some go for 9s – 28g for English, 24g for Olympic. A skeet vest is handy but a pouch will do – you have to carry enough shells for the whole round. At each station there is a 0.9m square box marked on the ground, and your feet must be within the square. Most skeet ranges are run on CPSA grounds so a hat and safety glasses are a requirement.

Sequence

There is a set sequence to shooting a round of skeet, but if you're just practising there is no reason why you can't just try it out on any given stand when the ground is not holding a competition. The targets should be the same wherever you shoot. The stands are set in a semi-circle around two trap houses, the high house on the left and the low house on the right. Purists will call "pull" for a high-house bird, "mark" for a low-house bird and "pull" for a pair but you won't get penalised for just calling "pull".



... then move quickly
into position as
first clay flies

The set sequences for English skeet

- Station 1: High house single, low house single and a pair taking high house first
 - **Station 2: High house single, low house single and a pair taking high house first**
 - Station 3: High house single and low house single
 - **Station 4: High house single, low house single and a pair nominating which one you're going to take first**
 - Station 5: High house single and low house single
 - **Station 6: High house single, low single and a pair taking the low house first**
 - **Station 7: Low single, high single and a pair taking the low house first**

Skeet can help you become a better wing shot



24 targets

The round consists of 24 targets: the first target that you drop you have to shoot again, and if you get around 'straight' you can nominate your last target on station 7. Olympic skeet has an additional station 8 situated on the diameter of the semi-circular layout, midway between the two skeet houses. It also has a different sequence which is changed with each Olympic cycle.

In Olympic skeet you must start with the gun down with a line on your skeet vest, in English skeet you can start gun up or down. If you hit a pair with one shot it is a foul and you shoot the pair again; the third time this happens the pair is scored first bird hit, second bird lost.

As with Sporting you should not load your gun until you are on the station, but there is a time limit to get on the stand and call for your target – there is nobody standing there with a stopwatch but you are expected to get on the stand when it's your turn.

Skeet is usually shot in teams of five (though it can be less) but not more than six. A round should take about 20-30 minutes and a competition consist of four rounds to give a score out of 100. A full set of rules can be downloaded from the CPSA website.



Taking a 'double' requires quick reaction times

As the targets are the same wherever you shoot them it is an excellent discipline for practice and competitive shooting. The key is to find the targets you have trouble with and work out a plan to sort the issues out.

Before long you will have a plan for all seven stations, with particular foot positions, gun-hold points and visual pick-up points for each station. Try taking the outgoing targets before the imaginary halfway marker and the incoming targets after the halfway marker, and this should help with the 'doubles'. ■

For more information

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