



Match Director's Guide 2025

Introduction:

The Match Director is the single representative of a hosting club or association, responsible for all facets of a USMS match. There is a tremendous amount of work that goes into a USMS match. His/her job starts well before the match begins. This guide can be used as a checklist for Match Directors. Most clubs schedule a number of matches during a calendar year. For the purpose of ease, we will follow one match from beginning to end in this guide. USMS Clubs may have one Match Director or may assign a different individual for each match.

Things you need to know:

USMS Clubs and members are covered by USMS's \$1,000,000 general spectator liability insurance policy. This coverage is available to any USMS Club in the United States.

USMS clubs agree to follow USMS rules.

USMS clubs must provide a schedule of match dates to USMS which will be published on the USMS website.

Scheduling:

It is important to get the match schedule out as early as possible. This allows participants plenty of time to schedule your match on their calendar. It is also helpful to work with clubs in your region or area to avoid doubling up on dates and make your shoots complementary to each other.

Arena:

Covered arena's take Mother Nature out of the picture and ensures your contestants they will be shooting in good conditions. If you use a covered arena advertise as such.

- Ideal size: 120 feet wide by 300 feet long. If your arena is smaller, adjust the course setup to allow for safety.
- Footing should be that of team penning or barrel racing. (no rocks) Should have equipment to work the arena, such as tractor, etc.
- Stalls or pens to accommodate your contestant's animals. Contestants tend to be very concerned about the comfort of their animals when expecting them to be so highly competitive.
- If outdoors and it is dry, make arrangements for watering the arena.
- Have a concession stand available.
- Make sure you have adequate bathrooms.
- It is always nice to have showers if you are having a two or three day match.

Match:

- Timing system
- Scoring system: One computer and one dry copy by hand.

- Match Directors.
- Announcer who knows our sport.
- Gate personnel to keep the flow going. No one likes dead time.
- To keep the match running smoothly you should average 60 sec. between shooters. Make sure your announcer and gate personnel are aware of this goal. Have someone check to keep you on schedule.
- Set stages up to eliminate procedurals. You should use experienced people.

Sponsors:

Once you have a date for your match submitted to USMS it is time to approach businesses or other organizations for award monies and prizes. You need a lot of time to develop this which is why scheduling early is so important. Get into the area where the match is being held. Surrounding tack shops, feed mills and equine supply stores are a good place to start. Do not limit yourself strictly to horse related businesses however. There are plenty of opportunities to gain sponsorship in an area. Use your imagination. This is a sport that sells itself; explain what you are doing and how many people are attending.

The Host Arena:

You should physically check out the host arena 45 days before your match. Confirm the cost of arena rent for your event (check your contract if you have one), but make sure to make contact with the owner/manager. Check to see if there are adequate restroom facilities; are there functional restrooms and are they located conveniently for campers and riders or do you need to supplement with portable toilets? Is there a food stand? Is there a cost for camping? Are electric hookups available? Cost? How about horse stalls? Electric hookups for trailers? Barrels for the stages? And MOST important; check out the arena. Is it big enough? Is there an area for the balloon setters to work safely? What about a staging area; entrance and exit gates? Announcer stand? Bleachers? Is the ground acceptable for the kind of running we do? Does the host arena have the means to drag the arena? Cowboy mounted shooting has developed into a very competitive sport with contestants pushing themselves and their horses. Safety is always the first concern, so good ground is paramount to a good shoot. Most of this has already been done before scheduling, however conditions can change and it is important to follow up 45 days prior to the match.

Balloon Setters:

Most clubs use balloon setters as a way to keep the match moving. In the case of large shoots, balloon setters are mandatory in order to get the stages done in a timely fashion. It is easiest to find balloon setters in the area of the shoot. Local 4-H clubs, youth riding clubs, church groups, and youth baseball or football teams or other school clubs (check with the local schools) work great. These groups use balloon setting as a fund-raiser to provide equipment for their organization. (You should make it known immediately that there is no live ammo used at these shoots and that there is no projectile. Some clubs do not like children around guns, which is something we work to dispel.) If the host arena does not offer a food stand this may be another opportunity for the club to raise funds by running the food stand as well. It is important that the youth group realizes that setting balloons for a USMS match can be a very athletic job and it is necessary to have a good number of setters properly dressed (running shoes for sand, no sandals). A typical time from beginning to the next participant is about 75 seconds, which means every 75 seconds they are responsible for removing deflated balloons, placing new balloons, and blowing

up 10 balloons. That's a lot of running, so don't sugarcoat it. These kids will be earning their money. It is helpful if you plan to supply a tent for shade, cold drinks and plan on buying a minimum of 1 lunch for each balloon setter. Often it works well to have more than one spot for the balloons setters to work or enter from. This may shorten the distance they have to run to reset the balloons thereby saving time between shooters.

Announcers, Timekeepers/computer person and Armorers:

Many clubs use volunteers for these jobs but it is good to confirm who will be doing what long before the match starts. It is important that you keep electronic (on the computer) and hard copy (handwritten) scores to ensure accuracy. USMS provides software for timekeeping. You will also need to coordinate speaker systems, tables for the armorers, computers, and timers. Also, who is bringing the cones, barrels, balloon inflators, and any other equipment you deem necessary to run a match.

Range Master:

Choose your Range Masters. These should be individuals who are experienced in performing these duties. The number of Range Masters will depend on the number of entries but no less than 2 per event.

Ammo and Balloons:

Ammo suppliers will need a minimum of 30 days to complete an order, so be thinking ahead. Estimate how many shooters you think will be attending, multiply that by the number of stages you will be hosting. Then add ten percent. That's the amount of ammo and balloons you will need.

Promotion:

It is important to get all the details of the shoot out to the potential participants as early as possible. This is done on the USMS website as soon as you submit the schedule. It is also helpful to send out e-mails or hard copy letters reminding shooters of the up-coming match. For bigger matches radio and television media coverage may be used. Flyers posted at neighborhood feed stores and tack shops. The more people exposed to cowboy mounted shooting the more successful your match will be.

Awards:

Decide what you need for awards, making sure you cover every level that will be participating. The awards should be confirmed before the shoot so they can be announced. This should be part of any flyer sent out to encourage participants. Participants like to know what prize structure will be.

Budget:

Once you have all the components of the shoot in place it is time to develop a budget for the shoot. You will need this to generate a registration form. It is important to include all your costs for this shoot in the budget. Everyone tries to keep the costs down; however, you cannot operate a club and lose money on your shoot. The way to develop this budget is estimate how many shooters will be participating and break down your costs per shooter. Then you will know what you need to charge as an entry fee.

Registration/Registration Form:

You must arrange to have individuals take registration forms and a liability release form that the rider signs before competing. Some of this may be done in advance with preregistrations. On the evening before and the day of the event you must assign someone to be responsible for the registration. This will require an organized individual(s) used to handling money. Some cash should be kept on hand to make change. Each contestant USMS membership shall be verified active before allowed to register. Once registration is closed, this information should be turned over to the timekeeper/computer person that will enter the stage times. Your registration, timing and scoring people must read & understand the following rules.

1. REGISTRATION

- A. To be included on the USMS Score sheet, a contestant shall be one of the following:
 - 1. A current USMS Member
 - 2. An individual will only be considered a contestant in a match if he or she pays an entry fee and engages at least one stage of the match.
- B. You must use the USMS Official Score sheet provided by USMS for any sanctioned event. No other score sheet will be accepted. No handwritten sheets will be accepted.
- C. Time Only's are not allowed on USMS Score sheets.
- D. USMS cards should be checked at registration to insure correct USMS numbers.
- E. Results will be double checked (certified) by the USMS office.

2. HOW TO HANDLE RESULTS OF AN USMS MATCH

- A. **E-mail the match results to tad@usmountedshooting.com 48 hours of event completion. Please include your Club name and event date.**
- B. Mail the event fees to: **USMS - 155 N Redwood Rd. North Salt Lake, UT 84054**

Match Day:

Although you are the Match Director, you do not need to do everything. DELEGATE responsibilities to other club directors and members. Most people want to help to feel part of the club and if everyone does something no one will be overworked. It will be a very long weekend if you don't. At the end of this guide there will be a match day checklist.

Before the first shot:

Make sure your support staff is ready: announcer, balloon setters, timekeeper, and armorers.

Safety Meeting:

Before the match starts you must give all the riders the rules for the weekend. This safety meeting sets the tone for the match and you can address any special circumstances you will encounter over the course of the match; an example would be your balloon setters are on the east side of the arena and your Range Masters will be directing gunfire away from them. Also, if you are going to be dragging the ground or racking it should be announced here at what intervals that will take place as to provide consistency and fairness. Define the "designated

loaded area". No competitor shall have shells in their gun outside this area. There is a safety-meeting checklist at the end of this guide to assist you.

End of Match:

After completion of the match, announce when the results will be posted and awards presented. The scores will need to be in the prescribed format for USMS. These scores need to be sent within 48 hours of the completion of the match.

Summary:

In order to host a successful USMS match, you as the Match Director need to do your homework. There will always be minor problems that arise during the course of the match. If the preparation for the match is done, these problems are easy to fix. Remember to delegate responsibilities; you cannot do every aspect of the match. Your job is to make sure every aspect gets done in a professional manner. You are representing both your club and USMS. There are checklists at the end of this guide, use them.

SAFETY

All contestants are responsible for their own personal safety and that of their horse. They should also remain alert for other unsafe conditions and/or unsafe conduct by others. All contestants are considered line judges and should take immediate action to remedy an unsafe condition or confront anyone whose conduct is unsafe.

45-Day Checklist

1. Check the Hosting arena
 - a. Date confirmed
 - b. Good ground
 - c. Bathrooms
 - d. Camping amenities
 - e. Host hotels & motels.
2. Balloon Setters – confirm date and time with crew; ensure tent and cold drinks will be available
3. Announcers/timekeepers/computer entry – confirm announcer and support staff; make sure computer equipment and software is available and who will set that up. Make sure there is a PA system available. Confirm support staff
4. Armorer – confirm dates and availability
5. Equipment - make sure that the equipment will be brought to the shoot; balloon inflators, poles, cones, timers
6. Ammo and Balloons – confirm who has these and who is bringing them to the shoot.
7. Registration Form and Promotion – make sure someone is circulating the correct form with prices, dates, times etc.
8. Awards – make sure there is someone handling the awards. This includes ordering buckles, obtaining other prizes, figuring out cash payouts. Etc.
9. Budget – ensure that the budget is being adhered to so that there are no surprises.

Match Day Checklist

1. Support Staff in place
 - a. Someone to setup computer equipment
 - b. PA system
 - c. Timer
 - d. Cones and poles – courses of fire for each stage
 - e. Balloon inflators, pegs etc. Tent for balloon setters; refreshments for balloon setters.
 - f. Tent for armorer
 - g. Someone taking registration
 - h. Grounds staff
2. Balloon Setters – Review basic safety rules. Instructed as to what to do and when to do it. Wait until it is safe to enter the arena. Never pick up a dropped gun. Etc.
3. Ammo and Balloons – ensure that they are at the shoot; have someone get the balloons to the balloon setters; ammo should go on the Armorer's table. A tent should be put up over the Armorer's table.
4. Draw Patterns – Stage patterns shall be drawn and posted 12 hours prior to the event. The pattern should not be set up until just prior to the first shot. No individual should be allowed to walk or run the pattern on horseback prior to the shoot (not even to demonstrate the pattern). If warm up is allowed in the same arena as the shoot and the pattern is setup, riders should be instructed that they are not allowed to practice the pattern and they should stay to the outside rail.
5. Safety meeting – assign someone to do the safety meeting. Make sure that all elements of safety are covered; loading, unloading, gun handling, what to do with unfired rounds, where to enter and exit, etc. You should especially pay attention to those items that are specific to your shoot. All of the other safety issues (listed above) should be covered also.
6. After the match is concluded the announcer should notify all contestants when and where the awards are being presented.
7. Your final responsibility as Match Director will be to ensure that the results get turned in to USMS within 48 hours after the completion of the match.