

Smallbore Rifle Competition

Many individuals become interested in smallbore rifle competition; however, unless they start off with the proper information, they find it difficult to begin. The cost of equipment is generally a stumbling block. Many feel that unless they have the best of everything they cannot compete. This is not true. Most start with a minimum investment of a .22 caliber rifle (new or used), spotting scope with stand, sling, glove and shooting coat, and most important, eye and ear protection.

Equipment

Section 3 of the NRA Smallbore Rifle Rule Book defines authorized equipment and ammunition. This section is not meant to restrict equipment but to define limitations.

Rifle - (light rifle or match rifle) Whichever rifle you select, be sure it will be suited for the rules of the particular type of shooting you wish to do. A reliable gun dealer is most helpful in selecting a proper rifle. Remember, a used rifle for a beginner is not a bad idea if the dealer can certify the condition of the rifle.

Rifle Sights - After checking the rules, the purchase of good quality sights for whatever type of shooting is a sound investment.

Spotting Scope/Stand - It is the most important piece of equipment after the rifle and rifle sights. Allows you to check your target from a distance. Spotting scopes are precision optical instruments (often you get what you pay for). Scope stands should be suited for the job you will want them to do.

Gun Case - Used to protect your rifle as you travel to and from the range. Necessary in some areas to comply with local laws.

Ammunition - Generally, standard velocity ammunition will shoot more accurately than will high velocity. If you wish to become more competitive, tournament quality ammunition best suited to your particular gun will give the best results.

Accessories

There are many accessories available and no attempt will be made to mention them all. Some of the most common and useful ones will be discussed.

Shooting Box or Kit - Some means is necessary to transport your accessories to and from the range. This can be as elaborate as a leather case or as simple as a large box or cloth. The choice will depend on the type and amount of shooting you do.

Specialty Equipment - Shooting mat, shooting coat, glove, sling, kneeling roll, shooting pants, shooting boots - are too varied to mention. The purchase of such equipment depends on personal preference. However, some of these pieces of equipment can be essential depending on the type of competition in which you wish to become involved.

Courses of Fire

Smallbore rifle competition is held over distances of 50 feet, 50 yards/meters, and/or 100 yards. Match competition can be as quick as 30 shots (10 shots prone, standing, kneeling) in a league or as long as 40 shots at the National Championships. Competition is conducted in as many as four positions - prone, sitting, kneeling, and standing - to as few as one - prone only or standing only. Section 7 of the Smallbore Rifle Rule Book discusses all courses of fire recognized by NRA, while section 17 covers all courses of fire recognized for national records. Smallbore rifle competitions may be fired outdoors or indoors.

A group of matches added together for a total aggregate score is called a tournament. They can be held locally, state-wide, regionally or nationally.