

This rulebook pertains to all ranges and types of competition unless the match or range rules specifically state otherwise. Safety rules also pertain to training and practice locations.

Every person involved in competition is expected to be familiar with the rules. This pertains to coaches, parents, guardians and anyone else that assists a competitor.

4-H Muzzleloading Discipline Rules

Range Safety	1000/1300
Range Rules and Regulations	2000/2470
Competition and Eligibility	3010/3070
Range Officers	4000/4030
Rifle Line Commands	4040/4130
Rifle Line Matches	5000/5010
Targets Scoring and Marking	10000/10790

*Note: Not all sections have corresponding rules at this time. New rules will be added in the appropriate sections as the need arises.

The National Muzzleloading Rifle Association (NMLRA) provided the foundation of these South Dakota 4-H Muzzleloading Discipline Rules. These rules are taken from the NMLRA 2008 edition of that organization's rules and regulations. Some rules have been modified specifically to encompass the age and abilities of the competitors, as well as specific requirements of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. If these rules are silent, the current National Muzzleloading Rifle Association rulebook will serve as the authority.

QUALIFICATION

To qualify for the State Muzzleloading Competition, 4-H members must shoot the published qualifying score in the presence of a certified 4-H muzzleloading instructor. If your Club does not have a certified Instructor, a certified instructor from any 4-H Club will be acceptable. You can make arrangements to have a volunteer attend your shoot to accomplish this.

RANGE SAFETY

1000 Discipline – The safety of competitors, range personnel, and spectators requires continuous

attention by all to the careful handling of firearms, and caution in moving about the range. Self-discipline is necessary on the part of all competitors, range personnel, and spectators. Where such self-discipline is lacking, it is the duty of the range personnel to enforce discipline, and the duty of competitors to assist in such enforcement.

1010 Early Shots – Any shot fired before the command of "COMMENCE LOADING, YOU MAY FIRE WHEN READY" is a serious infraction of many safety rules. Any competitor violating this rule will be disqualified from competition for a period of time determined by the sponsoring organization.

1020 Late Shots – Any shot fired after the command of "CEASE FIRING" without the express permission of the Range Officer is a serious infraction of the safety rules.

At the Range Officer's discretion any one, or combination, of the following will be enforced.

1. Verbal reprimand
2. Shot with the highest numerical value on the target will be counted as a miss
3. Target disqualification
4. Suspension of the competitor

The Range Officer will sign the target, state the penalty and reason, and send it to the scoring room.

1025 Loading Early – Any person guilty of beginning to load a firearm before the command of "COMMENCE LOADING, YOU MAY FIRE WHEN READY" will be disqualified from competition for a period of time determined by the sponsoring organization.

1030 Intoxicating Beverages Or Drugs – The use of or impairment from intoxicating beverages and/or drugs in the range area is prohibited. The 4-H Code of Conduct will be enforced at all 4-H muzzleloading events.

1040 Smoking – No person is allowed to smoke on the firing line or in the loading bench area at any time.

1050 Safety Inspection of Equipment – Range officials, acting under the authority of the Chief Range Officer, shall have the right to examine a shooter's equipment for safety concerns. The responsibility shall be on the shooter to submit questionable equipment for official safety inspection and approval in sufficient time prior to the beginning of a match so that it will not inconvenience either the shooter or the official.

1060 Unsafe Firearm – No firearm shall be used in any competition if ruled unsafe by the Range Officer.

1070 Muzzleloading Firearm – Any muzzleloading rifle, pistol, or shotgun that complies with the Range Safety regulations of this rulebook and loads from the muzzle, or into the chamber of a revolver's cylinder and complies with Rule 1250, is approved. For compliance of break-open actions, see rule 2470.

1080 Carrying Firearms – Fire arms will be carried between the loading benches and firing line with the muzzle above the shooter's head and pointed directly up. (Exception: pistol shooters and bench shooters need not keep the muzzle above the shooter's head.)

1085 Firearm Placement Between Relays – After the command 'GROUND ALL FIREARMS AND MAKE THE LINE SAFE' is given, the firing line is considered SAFE. During this safe time competitors may be directed to go down range and post and retrieve targets, so all firearms on the firing line will be positioned safely and may not be touched. Rifles must be placed with the butt plate on the ground with the barrel pointed up and leaned against the loading bench; pistols will be placed on the loading bench with the barrel pointed muzzle up.

1090 Blowing Down the Barrel – There will be NO blowing down the barrel of any firearm during 4-H matches or practice, or anything that requires placing the head in front of the muzzle. A flexible blow tube may be used at the shooter's option, provided that the shooter's head is not placed in front of the muzzle.

1100 Loading Flintlock Firearms – All flintlock firearms must be loaded with the frizzen and hammer in the forward position.

1110 Swabbing Between Shots – Swabbing between

shots with a damp patch to eliminate the possibility of glowing embers igniting the next powder charge is strongly recommended.

1120 False Muzzles – All false muzzles must be attached by a cord or similar device so that the firearm may not be placed in a normal firing position without first removing the false muzzle from the barrel.

1130 When to Load – No firearm will be loaded, or caps snapped, until the command "COMMENCE LOADING, YOU MAY FIRE WHEN READY."

1140 Capping/Priming – After the command 'COMMENCE LOADING, YOU MAY FIRE WHEN READY' has been given, shooters may cap/prime only on the firing line or designated area with the muzzle pointed downrange. Any competitors violating this rule will receive the minimum penalty of having their targets disqualified, along with such other actions, as the Range Officer may deem necessary, including suspension. The Range Officer will sign the target, state the penalty and reason, and send it to the scoring room.

1150 Loaded Firearm – No loaded firearm shall be taken from the firing line.

1160 Clearing Misfires – Extreme caution must be used, including reasonable care to inform neighboring shooters. The removal of a ball or bullet must be done in such a manner that there is no danger to persons or property. The use of a CO₂ ball discharger is highly recommended, and is considered the safest method of ball removal.

1170 Ammunition – The projectile is a patched round ball.

1180 Patching – Patching shall be of cloth or paper from natural fibers only.

1190 Plastic Sabots – The use of plastic sabots with bullet shaped projectiles is prohibited.

1200 Lubricant – Any safe lubrication may be used at the shooter's option.

1210 Propellant – Propellant will be black powder or any BATF approved black powder substitute only.

1220 Powder Measure – A separate powder measure or holder will be used to carry the powder charge from container to the muzzle of the gun. Charging directly from horn or flask is unsafe and is not permitted.

1230 Open Powder Containers – There will not be any open containers of powder on the firing line or loading benches of any range.

1240 Triggers – Triggers must be of the pull type. Triggers that function on delay, release, or electronic or hydraulic mechanisms are prohibited. Set triggers are permissible.

1250 Ignition – Ignition must be one of the following: (a) flint stone or substitute, excluding metal, striking frizzen; (b) old type percussion cap that fits on the nipple; (c) primers may be used in all inline actions; (d) frizzens must be faced with steel soles only; (e) wheel locks with old type of ignition; (f) tube locks, pill locks, and Maynard tape primers may be used in or on an unaltered original. (Matchlocks are not allowed in national competition.)

1260 Safety Shields – All flintlock rifles must use a safety shield. Offhand flintlock matches will be shot next to a safety shield.

1270 Safety Glasses – Safety glasses are mandatory on all ranges.

1280 Hearing Protection – Hearing protection is mandatory.

1290 Firing Position – Competitors will take their position at the center of their numbered firing point marker. No portion of the shooter's body or equipment, except wind flags, may rest on or touch the ground forward of the firing point.

1300 Pistol – Also see Pistol section for safety rules pertaining to pistol competition.

RANGE RULES AND REGULATIONS

2000 Disqualification – The Chief Range Officer, upon proper presentation of evidence, may disqualify any competitor for violation of paragraphs included in this section. He may disqualify any competitors or order their expulsion from the range for violation of these rules, or for any conduct considered by the Chief

Range Officer to be discreditable.

2010 Suspension – The 4-H Shooting Sports Committee, upon presentation of evidence and hearings, as provided in the 4-H Grievance Policy, may suspend or expel any member for violations of these rules.

2020 Aliases and Falsification – Any competitors who fire under an assumed name, who falsify their score or that of any other competitor, who do not qualify under the 4-H age requirements, or are an accessory thereto, will be disqualified.

2030 Bribery – No person will offer a bribe of any kind to any of the range personnel, nor be an accessory thereto. Any person doing so will be disqualified. Further action may be taken by the proper officials.

2040 Disorderly Conduct – No disorderly person shall be allowed in the range area at any time.

2050 Loud Language – Loud or abusive language will not be permitted. Competitors, coaches and range personnel will limit their conversations on the firing line to official business. Everyone in the range area is asked to be respectful and avoid disruptive language or conversations.

2060 Refusal to Obey – No person will refuse to obey the instructions of the Range Officers or any other officer of the matches in the proper conduct of the affairs of his office.

2070 Evasion of Rules – No competitor will evade, nor attempt to evade, nor be an accessory to the evasion of any of the conditions of a match as prescribed in the program or in these shooting rules.

2080 Delaying a Match – No competitor may delay the start of a match through tardiness of returning from down range between relays.

2090 Interference – The firing line will be kept clear at all times, with the exception of shooters in competition and such range personnel as may be necessary. Any person or competitor who interferes with or annoys the competitors in any way will be warned, and upon failure to stop will be ordered off the firing line area.

2100 Interference with Targets – Competitors will not be permitted to interfere with the handling of targets by the range personnel at any time.

2110 Turning in Completed Targets – When the match program states that the competitors will pull and post their own targets, it is the competitors' responsibility to turn the targets in at the end of the relay in which they are fired. Leaving a target hanging after the start of the next relay may result in the disqualification of that target (see exceptions: Rules 2180 and 2190).

2130 Changing Firearms – No competitor will change firearms during the firing of a match, unless it has become disabled and has been so designated by the Range Officer. For the purpose of this rule, the firing of a match is considered to have started when the competitor has fired the first record shot. A claim that a firearm is disabled must be made immediately. All shots fired up to the time that the claim is made will stand as a part of the official score. No score or partial score will be refired because of a disabled firearm.

2140 Substitution – No competitors shall be allowed to have another competitor do their firing.

2150 Sharing of Firearms – No more than one competitor may use the same firearm in the same relay.

2160 Other Shooters' Equipment – No shooter or official shall touch the equipment of another without first receiving permission, except for safety reasons or efficient range operation by range officials.

2170 Inspection and Approval of Guns – All firearms in qualification rounds and competitive matches must be inspected, and marked by a range official before firing the first record target.

2180 Time Allowance – A competitor may claim inability to complete the score within the time limit because of a disabled firearm, or is ordered by the Range Officer to discontinue firing. If the Range Officer is satisfied that conditions are as claimed, the competitor will be allowed to finish that target in another relay. The time allowed to finish such targets will be equal to the amount of time remaining in the

relay at the time of the claim.

2190 Time Limits – Time limits are established using 4 minutes per record shot to determine the total running time. Example: 10 shots are allowed 40 minutes.

2200 Posting of Targets – It is the individual competitor's responsibility to insure that the proper targets have been assigned to the position they wish, and to see that they are hung there.

2210 Completing of Targets – Once a competitor has posted an official target, said target must be completed in that relay, unless rule #2220, Malfunction, or rule #2230, Sighting in Problems, is allowed by the Range Officer.

2220 Malfunction – If the firearm fails to function properly due to mechanical defects in a firearm you must notify the Range Officer. If your claim is deemed valid by the Range Officer you will be allowed additional time equal to the time remaining at the time of the malfunction claim to finish that target after you have the gun repaired and inspected. If the firearm is unable to be repaired to the satisfaction of the Range Officer, or if it is declared unsafe, see rule #2130, Changing Firearms. Performance failure due to improper operation or loading, such as loading without powder, is not to be considered a malfunction.

2230 Sighting-In Problems – Sighting-in problems are defined as a competitor's inability to find the target due to equipment problems. If competitors have unusual sighting-in problems, they must notify the Range Officer; additional sighting time may be allowed, at the discretion of the Range Officer. The competitor must not have fired a record shot. A competitor may not claim sighting-in problems due to changes in weather conditions, loading without powder, or the inability to shoot a tight group.

2240 Time Intervals – It is not the duty of the Range Officer to warn competitors of the passage of time intervals. Competitors may inquire of the Range Officer as to the time remaining before expiration of the time limit. Range Officers will give such information in a tone, which will not disturb other competitors. Range Officers should give a five, or two-minute warning.

2250 Targets Shot by Wrong Competitor – If another competitor hangs and shoots one of your targets by mistake, that target will be disqualified, and the shooter firing the wrong target will not get a score. A new target may be issued to the competitor who was not at fault.

2260 Wrong Markings on Targets – The competitors are responsible for making sure that they receive the correct targets for each match. If the sponsoring organization gives you the wrong target, or a mismarked target, and you shoot it anyway, that target will be disqualified. The Range Officer will sign the target, state the penalty and reason, and send it to the scoring room. CHECK YOUR TARGETS.

2270 Practice Targets – Practice targets may be shot when range space is available. The sponsoring organization may provide practice targets, but is not required to.

2280 Vacant Positions – In the event that a competitor is unable to find a vacant firing position and the Range Officer knows of a position that has been unattended, that position shall be deemed vacant, and the Range Officer may pull any equipment, shooting benches, or spotting scopes back off the firing line to make room.

2290 Protests – A competitor may formally protest:

- Any injustice they feel has been done to them, except the evaluation of a target, which is outlined under the “Challenges” rule;
- The conditions under which another competitor has been permitted to fire;
- The equipment that another competitor has been permitted to use.

2290.1 How to Protest – State the complaint orally to the Chief Range Officer; if not satisfied with the Chief Range Officer’s decision, file with the Protest Committee, a written appeal stating all the facts. At national matches, such appeals must be filed within twenty four (24) hours after the decision of the Chief Range Officer. Protest fees may be established and shall be handled as in the Challenge rule.

2310 Challenges – When competitors feel that a match fired by themselves or by another competitor has been improperly evaluated or scored, they may

challenge that evaluation or score. Such a challenge must be made within the challenge period. It shall be the challenging competitor’s privilege to view the target during rechecks.

2320 Challenge Fee – Competitors may challenge their own score once per match without charge, but if still dissatisfied, they must pay a challenge fee as set by the match sponsor. The official scoring committee, comprised of an odd number of individuals, will decide the target, and the majority decision will prevail and be final. A competitor challenging another competitor’s target must pay the challenge fee to have the target rescored. In both cases, if the challenge is sustained, the fee will be returned to the challenger. If the challenge is lost, the fee will be included in the shoot revenues. Any challenge requiring a fee must be made on a challenge form, and the fee paid in advance of the reexamining of the target.

2330 Challenge Period – It shall be the match sponsor’s responsibility to state in the match program the time limits within which a challenge may be made.

2340 Wind Flags – Wind flags are permitted, but may not be of any electronic nature. Flags or poles to which they are attached must not be of a size or placed to interfere with another shooter. Flags may be placed ahead of the firing line.

2350 Shooting Jackets – Shooting jackets up to and including a large or smallbore jacket of standard weight will be allowed in all matches. Leather or international cinch type jackets are NOT allowed.

2360 Slings – Slings may not be used in any shooting position.

2370 Artificial Support – The use of artificial support is prohibited. Digging of, or use of, elbow or heel holes at the firing point, or the use of depressions that form artificial support, is prohibited.

2380 Position of the Rifle Butt – In all positions, the butt of the rifle must be held against the front of the shoulder on the outside of the shooting coat or shirt, and must not touch the ground.

2390 Spotting Scopes – The use of spotting scopes

is permitted in all events. The placement of a spotting scope shall not interfere with another competitor or range officials.

2400 Firing Points – The firing points are numbered. All ranges are measured from these firing points to the face of the targets when hung in their customary position in front of the backstop.

2410 Firing Line – The firing line is that part of the range immediately to the rear of an imaginary line drawn through several firing points.

2420 Shelter – The firing line may be covered but not closed in. The shooter must be exposed to the prevailing winds.

2430 Distance – Outdoor ranges are 25 yards and 50 yards, One half scale silhouette ranges are 40 meters for chickens, 60 meters for pigs, 77 meters for turkeys and 100 meters for rams.

2440 Illumination – Lighting of the range is authorized.

2450 Policing the Range – It is the duty of all competitors to police the firing points and loading benches after the completion of each match. All cleaning patches, empty cap boxes, etc., shall be picked up and placed in the proper receptacles behind the firing line.

2460 Aiming Points – All paper targets used in competition have a printed front side. This printed front side must be posted with the printing towards the competitor, and no other spotters or aiming points may be attached to the target face.

2470 Break-Open Policy – Sealed-ignition break-open muzzleloading firearms will be allowed on all ranges in specified matches during the National Shoots.

- a. Approved firearms will have a semi-permanent, mechanically fit breeching system.
- b. Said breeching system shall be either threaded or welded in place.
- c. Firearms with a press-fit breech plug secured by an O-ring, such as the Harrington and Richardson Huntsman model, are prohibited,
- d. Approved primers include the priming disk, 209

shotgun primer, centerfire cartridge primer, and percussion cap.

- e. Each range will implement its own range procedures.

RANGE OFFICERS

4000 Chief Range Officer – The Chief Range and Safety Officer is in complete charge of all ranges.

4010 Range Officers – Range Officers are appointed by and work under the authority of, the Chief Range Officer. Range Officers will be in charge of a specific range, and enforce all safety and specific match rules. The Range Officers have full authority on the firing line. It is the duty of Range Officers to familiarize themselves with these regulations.

4020 Block Officer – A Block Officer is a range official operating under the authority of a certified Range Officer to assist in range operation and safety.

4030 Complying with Instructions – Every competitor must promptly comply with the instructions of the Chief Range Officer, Range Officers, and Block Officers. If competitors disagree with these instructions they may protest under Rule #2290; however the instructions must be followed.

Range Commands

4040 Cease Firing – At the command of Cease Firing, no firearm shall be discharged without permission of the Range Officer. The Cease Firing command may be given for two reasons:

- #1 An unsafe condition exists on the range.
- #2 The specified time limit has expired.

If this command is given due to an unsafe condition, the clock will be stopped. After the unsafe condition has been corrected the command of Commence Fire will be given, and the clock restarted. If this command is given due to the expiration of allotted time, the competitors must report all loaded firearms to the Range Officer.

4050 Report All Hot Loads – At the expiration of allotted time and the command of "Cease Fire", the command "Report All Hot Loads" is given. If any hot

loads are reported to the Range Officer, the other competitors will be directed to stand back from the firing line. When the Range Officer is convinced that it is safe to do so, the person reporting the hot load will be directed to fire the hot load into the back stop, Hot loads fired after the command of Cease Fire must not be fired without the express permission of the Range Officer; see safety rules (#1020, LATE SHOTS) Hot Loads fired after time has expired and the command of Cease Fire, must not be fired at a record target; see NMRLA scoring rules (10660, RECORD SHOT FIRED AFTER EXPIRATION OF TIME).

4060 Ground All Rifle Butts and Make the Line Safe – After all hot loads have been fired and the Range Officer is sure that there are no loaded firearms on the line, the command “Make The Line Safe and Ground All Rifle Butts” will be given. This will allow the competitors time to place their guns up against the loading benches with the muzzles safely pointed upward.

4070 Competitors May Go Forward and Pull and Post Targets – When the Range Officer is convinced that the line is safe this command will be given. This will allow the competitors to safely go down range and retrieve completed targets, and post new targets for the next relay.

4075 Any Person Guilty of Beginning to Load a Firearm Before the Command of “Commence Loading” Will Be Disqualified From Competition. – This command is intended to remind the competitors of the importance of not having any loaded firearms while their fellow competitors are down range. This command may be used once or twice a day or at the end of every relay, at the Range Officer’s discretion.

4050 No More Targets May Be Posted – When the Range Officer determines that the competitors have had sufficient time to “Pull and Post” this command will be given to prevent undue delay by someone going down range at the last minute.

4090 Ready on the Right – This is a preparatory command given after everyone has safely returned

from down range. The Range Officer will look to the right and make sure that nothing is reported that would delay the start of the next relay.

4100 Ready on the Left – This is another preparatory command given after the Range Officer is sure everything on the left is safe. The Range Officer will look to the left and make sure that nothing is reported that would delay the start of the next relay.

4110 Ready on the Firing Line – This command announces that the next relay is about to begin, and gives all competitors one last chance to report any unsafe condition that would delay the start of the next relay.

4120 Commence Loading; You May Fire When Ready – This command allows the competitors to start loading, then start firing as soon as they are ready The official time limit of the relay starts with this command.

4130 As You Were – This command means to disregard the command just given. (Example: If the command were given ‘Ready on the firing line’ followed by “As you were,” it would mean that an unsafe condition has been reported.)

RIFLE LINE MATCH RULES

5000 Coaching in Rifle Matches – Coaching is defined as: reading of wind, changing of sights or suggesting sight changes, and indicating in any manner when to fire a shot. Loading of any firearm and placing a bench gun on the bench shall not be considered coaching. Coaching is allowed in all junior matches, no coaching is authorized or allowed in senior matches.

SIGHTS

5010 Approved Sights – May use any metallic sight (AMS). No optical sights allowed.

TARGETS SCORING AND MARKING

10000 Scoring of Targets – Targets will be scored with use of NMLRA overlays.