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Can you tell me what the maximum load I can shoot Trap with is? I am hearing different versions of what is regarded as legal and how is it regulated. Also is there a limitation on the velocity of the shot shell?

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For American Trap, or Down the Line (DTL) as we strangely tend to call it here in Australia where the Australian Clay Target Association (ACTA) are the governing body, the maximum load is 28 grams of shot no larger than shot size 6 for events off common mark. This simply means events where everyone is shooting from the same distance behind the trap house. The only exception is for "Handicap" events where 32 grams of shot is permissible. In Olympic Trap, conducted under the rules of the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) the maximum pay load is 24 grams (+/- .5 g), with 2.6mm shot being the maximum size. *(This is where the confusion can start between comparing what English and Americans class as shot size 6. An American no.7 shot is an English no. 6 shot size. However the ISSF merely give a maximum diameter whereas the Australian rules state shot size 6)*

Interestingly there is no rule governing the velocity of the ammunition. This is probably due to the fact it would be too hard to enforce as a reliable chronograph would be needed at every shooting range. When I was younger I can remember a few guys that were using some super fast reloads that I thought would have bordered on what would be classed as "safe" ammunition and a simple speed test of their shot shells would have been useful not just for their safety, but for everyone else's safety on the range as well.

As far as regulating the maximum load rule then I would suggest that in both ACTA and ISSF competitions it can be described as 'poor' at best. In the 32 years I have been a member of the ACTA I have never yet been tested at a DTL event. In ISSF, apart from when I am competing in the "Final" part of the competition I am still waiting my first random check both here in Australia and abroad. I guess we all like to think that everyone is doing the right thing. In 2003 at a competition in Spain that I was contesting an Italian shooter was caught and disqualified whilst competing in the Final with 28 gram shot shells instead of 24 grams. That is the only instance I know of that somebody was penalized.

The International body for Sporting Clays (FITASC) has a 28 gram limitation whilst our domestic body for Field and Game here in Australia still allows a 36 gram maximum shot shell.

In the United States their governing body does have a limit on velocity for American Trap. For 32 grams it is 1290 feet per second (I am assuming this is measured 3 feet from the muzzle) for 28 grams it is 1325 fps and 24 grams it is 1350 fps. I am sorry, but I don't know how they control, measure and enforce this accurately at every competition.

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