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I was at a major Sporting Clays event late last year watching several competitors whom I am told are the countries best. I am only a C grade shooter so I hoped to pick up some tips. The only thing I learnt was the art of "claiming targets". On every single stand at least one person in the squad claimed a fault with a target that they missed. To my amazement the squad actually all worked together to claim each other targets. What is the rule here and does this happen overseas?

Name withheld by request

Without being there to watch the incidents you are talking about I am hesitant to comment on the particular rule that these shooters are "claiming targets" under. Rules on what constitutes a "no target" in clay target shooting vary from event to event. However I do admit I hear the same criticism of Sporting Clay events so many times that it seems there is a "sub culture" developing amongst selected squads of competitors. It is certainly something that the sport needs to get on top of and by no means is it confined to Australia. England's George Digweed, probably the world's best ever Sporting Clays shooter, wrote an open letter to F.I.T.A.S.C (the organizing body of International Sporting Clays) last year condemning this practice at all levels of competition. For the governing body of the sport to publish this letter on their website it tells me there is a problem that needs to be attended to. It's sad to say it, but when groups of friends are allowed to squad together and are allowed to referee and score themselves then temptation to take advantage of certain situations may inevitably happen. I have often wondered would shooters elect to pay an extra few dollars per event at the major competitions to have qualified and paid referees on each stand?

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