

February 2007

I have been trying different shotguns to use in Sporting Clays. I am having trouble determining whether or not I am looking down the centre of the barrels when I mount the gun from the "off the shoulder" position. Do you have any tips to mount the gun more consistently?

Peter Hanlon, Parramatta, NSW

The first thing I would do would be to get a centre bead placed mid way down the barrel. The advantage of the small mid sight is purely for practice purposes to gain a consistent gun mount. If you mount the gun incorrectly it is easy to determine with the use of a centre sight as it will be obviously out of line with the main sight at the end of the barrel. When you are actually shooting at a target correctly the mid sight will become invisible and the main sight should appear only as a blur in your fore vision. This is a common problem with beginners who shoot with one eye closed. They often try to get a clear focus on the front sight then switch their vision back and forth from the target to the sight trying to make everything look perfectly focused when they fire their shot. The important issue to practice is seeing the target in total clarity when its time to pull the trigger.

When you are shooting in a competition I was told the only thing that will postpone the match is a thunderstorm with the possibility of a lightning strike. Is this correct?

Jose Jantos, Darwin NT

Certainly in an International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) event once the competition has started weather generally does not cause the postponement of the event unless it is in very unfair circumstances to the competitors currently competing at the time. Lightning certainly qualifies for a postponement. If you are shooting a Russian made shotgun you are safe in lightning to stand out in the open and hold it above your head as even God can't hit anything with those guns. (Just kidding, get under cover ASAP!)

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