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I have been shooting Trap and Skeet at several different clubs in Queensland and I am noticing how much variance there is in the speed of the targets. Is there a rule that states exactly how far a clay target must be thrown no matter what climatic conditions are occurring? I notice some clubs still try and throw the target to the distance marker no matter how strong the head wind is blowing.

Carl Nelson, Gold Coast QLD

Yes Carl all Trap and Skeet events have pre determined distances that the target is required to travel in still air. For instance in DTL, or American Trap as it is often called here, the target is required to travel 46 metres + / - 2 metres when the target is measured at 3 metres above ground level at a distance of 10 metres from the trap house. All that sounds pretty easy until you turn up at your local club on the morning of a competition and you are faced with a howling head wind. This is where the invention of the radar gun has revolutionized target setting.

By placing the radar gun beside the trap throwing arm we know that pretty much to get the target to go 46 metres in still air the target must be thrown off the trap arm at an initial velocity of 71 kmph. This can vary slightly from different brands of machines and targets, but once your targets have been verified and calibrated once in still air conditions that they are being thrown the correct and legal distance, you can pretty much expect that this will never change.

In Olympic Trap, which throw the fastest targets in all the clay target events, the initial velocity of the fastest target which is a 1.5 metre high target (at 10 metres) has an initial velocity off the trap arm of 103 kmph.

As long as you are consistent in where you measure your targets from this is a great way to make sure the targets you are shooting at are equitable and legal, but here is the drawback. It is presently illegal to set your targets up using this method only. Under both Australian domestic rules and International rules it clearly states that a physical check must be made that the targets are being thrown to a set distance marker, but again the same rule books also state this needs to be done in still weather. Bad luck if your club shoots over a cliff into the ocean that predominately has a head wind! This is an area where we need to move to the next millennium as a sport and take advantage of some of the great technology that is available to us now that wasn't here when many of these rules books were first written.

I have the clay target shooting bug at the moment and I admit that I am addicted to the sport even though at present I am only shooting practice. I am shooting in and around Melbourne 2 or 3 days a week. I really would like to see if I could make some money out of the sport. Is there some sort of professional league that hopefully one day I can get some financial reward from? I guess what I am asking you is how do I make a small fortune out of shooting?

Anthony Gauci, Braybrook VIC

That's an easy one Anthony. The only way I know to make a small fortune out of shooting is to start with a big one. Trust me within time you will have a small one.

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