

Moving from ATA Trap to the Bunker

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Part one of three.

There has been a wonderful growth of the shotgun shooting sports in the United States through the Scholastic Clay Target Program. Beginning with trap, and now expanding to skeet and sporting, the impact has never been felt as greatly as at this year's Grand America. Over 1100 young shooters came together this August in Vandalia, Ohio to compete for the National Championship in five age and experience groups. With this revitalization of trapshooting in America, USA Shooting has seen a steady flow of new, young shooters into our Olympic Trap (Bunker) program. This is mainly seen during the hosting of the annual SCTP Junior Olympic Development Camp and USAS's Junior Olympic Shotgun Championships. Since its beginnings, SCTP participants have added to the USAS ranks of shooters and have placed many youngsters on our Junior Olympic Team. This welcome influx of new blood is keeping our sport healthy and growing.

The following guide to the Olympic game will make the road easier for incoming shooters to understand the bunker by explaining the basic techniques used. This first installment points out the similarities and differences between the ATA trap and the bunker. It will explain the bunker's course of fire, squad procedures, and the target presentations seen in bunker. In the next two issues we will cover foot position and stance, gun mount, where to hold the gun and how to look for targets. These will provide a basis to help new shooters make the transition from the American games to the sport shot in the Olympics.

Let's begin by comparing the two events side by side and then explain the squading and special safety rules for Olympic Trap.

	<u>American Trap</u>	<u>Olympic Trap</u>
Target	standard	lower profile & harder
Angle	17.5 degree each side of center	45 degrees each side of center
Speed/Distance	50 yards	76 meters (83 yards)
Shooting Stations	16-27 yards	15 meters
Machines	1 machine oscillating horizontally	15 stationary machines (3 in front of each shooting station)
Target Release	Voice or manual release	Voice release only
Shots per Target	1 shot per target allowed	2 shots per target allowed
Sequence	5 shots per station – then shooter moves to next station	1 shot per station – then shooter moves to next station
Guns	Single shot only required for singles & handicap	Must be capable of 2 shots
Ammunition	12 gauge, 2-3/4", 1-1/8oz,	12 gauge, 2-3/4", 24 gram (7/8oz),
Clothing	Same	Same
Tournaments	100 targets per event	150 targets (125 + 25 final) per event



Figure 1 The trap house is ground level and contains 15 stationary clay target launchers.

Target Presentation – The trap house is ground level and contains 15 stationary clay target launchers. There are five shooting stations 15 meters from the front of the bunker and a station behind Station One for the sixth shooter (referred to as Station Six). Each shooting station has three trap machines in front of it. One throws a right angle target and one throws a left angle target. The center machine throws a +/- 10 degree target. The total range of the targets will be +/- 45 degrees from center and vary from a height of 1.5 to 3.5 meters. Because the targets fly 76 meters they are much faster than the ATA target. Each station will be shot 5 times with the shooter moving after each target. On each station the shooters will get 2 left-to-right targets, one straight-away target and two right-to-left targets in random order for a total of 25 targets. The selection of the target sequence is computer controlled and the shooter will be unaware of which machine in front of him will throw the next target. The angle and height settings of the target launchers do not change from squad to squad, and there are 9 nine settings or schemes that may be used on any field. These settings may be changed for each day's shooting.



Figure 2 The targets are released using a voice-activated mechanism when the shooter calls for the target.

Variations of the game – Not everyone is located near one of the 25+ bunker locations. To begin to experience the Olympic game and to get used to the wider angles and heights there are several variations of Olympic Trap which could be used for beginning your training. These include “Automatic/Wobble Trap” (American Trap field layout with ground-level single machine which oscillates vertically & horizontally), and “Continental Trap” (American Trap field layout and an above ground trap house with single machine which oscillates vertically & horizontally). All of these will provide a suitable alternative for an actual bunker during training.



Figure 3 Squads in Olympic trap consists of six shooters.

Squading for the match – Squads in Olympic Trap consists of six people. There are five shooting stations plus one non-shooting position behind and to the left of Station One. Unlike ATA trap, the squads are created by randomly drawing names and assigning them to each squad. Do not be disappointed that you may not get to shoot with five of your friends. This type of squading offers the opportunity to shoot shoulder to shoulder with the nation’s best. Being around better shooters will help your skills improve. After your squad has finished its round you may be asked to be an assistant referee (flanker) during the next round. This means you will either keep score or sit and look for missed targets. Everyone flanks at some time, its part of the game. The time between rounds could be from one to three hours depending on the number of competitors and available fields.

Taking your turn – Once the round begins there are several rules to guide you during your shooting. At the beginning of your first round of the day you are offered the opportunity to test fire your gun. It is not mandatory but is recommended. A trial target will not viewed prior to the start of each round, so be ready to go. The referee will signal the first shooter to begin.

A shooter must take his or her position, close the gun and call for the target within ten (10) seconds after the previous shooter has fired at a regular target and the result is registered. The same applies once the referee has given the signal to start. When the first shooter is ready to fire, he must raise the gun to the shoulder and call clearly for the target. When the result of the shot(s)

is known the second shooter must do likewise, followed by the third shooter and so on. When the shooter has called for the target it will be released immediately. In ATA trap you were allowed to close the gun immediately after loading. In Olympic trap a shooter may close the gun only after the previous shooter has completed his turn. Two (2) shots may be fired at each target *except* in the “Finals” and any shoot-off before and after a final when only one (1) cartridge must be loaded.

After the first shooter has fired at a regular target he must move to the next station, but cannot leave his station before the shooter on the right has fired at a regular target and a result is registered. The exception to this is when he has completed shooting on Station Five. In this case, he must proceed immediately to Station One (or Six) being careful not to disturb the shooters who are on the line as he passes by. He is to always walk behind the referee. The other shooters in the squad must, on their stations, do likewise in rotation from left to right. This whole sequence must continue until all shooters have each shot at 25 targets.

Special Safety Rules for Olympic Trap - When moving between Stations One and Five all guns must be carried *open* and may have shells in the gun. When moving from Station Five to Station One (or Six), the gun must be carried *open* and *unloaded*. No shooter having shot on one station may proceed toward the next station in such a way as to interfere with another shooter or match officials. It will be assumed that you are shooting the bottom barrel first. If not, you must inform the referee prior to the start of the round. Release triggers are normally not used and must be declared to the referee prior to the start of each round.

This seems like there is a lot “special” rules in the Olympic game, but do not worry, you will quickly master them. They are there to make the game go quickly and safely. Now that you have read and understand the ground rules of Olympic trap you are ready to proceed to the special techniques needed to become successful. In the next issue we will cover the stance and gun mount fundamentals of the Olympic trap.