

THIS SERIES OF INSTRUCTIONAL ARTICLES FOR MID-CLASS AND CLUB SHOOTERS IDENTIFIES THE MOST MISSED TARGETS, WHY AND HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SCORES.

In my last article we analyzed the teal shot, this issue we look at the quartering target – also high on the most missed list (most of the time in front).

A true quartering target comes across the shooter at an angle of 45°. As the angle changes the target description changes – from quartering to quartering away, or

quartering crosser. In addition, a quartering target (in all its varieties) can be going away or incoming.

As the quartering angle changes, so should the perceived lead – a quartering crosser will always need more lead than a quartering away bird (see Fig. 1). Your lead should also change based on your break point – the earlier you shoot the quartering target the more lead is required. (see Fig 2).

Quartering targets often appear to be traveling fast due to the angle that they cross the shooter – the same speed target going away or crossing never seems to be going as fast. For most mid-class shooters, this can very often result in a fast swing starting too close to the trap, trying to beat the target. The result is that the fast moving gun gets on to the target too quickly and with very little control. Before you know it, the gun passes the target, resulting in too much lead and the target is missed in front.

So what's the remedy? Let's have a quick re-cap. Remember, most targets are missed because your hold point is wrong. With all targets we must first see it as a clear target not a flash or blur.

So, do your home work before you get on the stand. Have a good look at the target and make up your mind where your sweet spot to shoot it will be. This will determine your stance, looking always to be balanced at the point of break.

Next we need to find the visual pick up point, that point where the target is seen clearly and crisply. When we get in the stand with the pick up, hold and break point already established, our stance will be correct. As I have said, this target is usually moving a lot slower than it appears, so we must keep the gun under control.

THE MOST MISSED TARGETS

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FIG 1: AS THE QUARTERING ANGLE CHANGES, SO SHOULD THE PERCEIVED LEAD – A QUARTERING CROSSER WILL ALWAYS NEED MORE LEAD THAN A QUARTERING AWAY BIRD.

FIG. 2: THE EARLIER YOU SHOOT THE QUARTERING TARGET THE MORE LEAD IS REQUIRED.

short, simple and under control. As you pull off the target, the brain has already calculated the forward allowance required so just be instinctive – if you feel the target is going to break, go with it and pull the trigger. Don't check – just do it! Ninety-nine times out of a hundred the brain has got the lead right.

You the shooter must be in control not the clay. If you jump the target and end up too far in front, the reaction will be to stop the gun causing a miss behind. If you try to check the sight picture the only thing you can make a comparison with is the muzzle, causing the gun to slow down or even worse, stop. A smooth controlled swing is all that's needed for quartering targets. ■

QUARTERING TARGETS OFTEN APPEAR TO BE TRAVELING FAST DUE TO THE ANGLE THAT THEY CROSS THE SHOOTER – THE SAME SPEED TARGET GOING AWAY OR CROSSING NEVER SEEMS TO BE GOING AS FAST. FOR MOST MID-CLASS SHOOTERS, THIS CAN VERY EASILY RESULT IN A FAST SWING STARTING TOO CLOSE TO THE TRAP, TRYING TO BEAT THE TARGET.

To achieve this crucial control, mount the gun into the break zone. This does two things: one you can check that you are balanced or adjust if you are not; two, it establishes a positive mental attitude. You are not saying 'I might hit this target' but instead 'this is where I am going to hit the target.'

Then wind back from the break zone just a little, but not as far as to your visual pick up point. It may be just a yard or two from the break point – the precise point is determined by your reaction time. This part of the set up also achieves something – muscle memory – telling and showing the body the movement required.

Now call and let the target come to the gun. Let it run up the side of barrels, then move with the

target to establish speed and direction. When this has been achieved pull away and shoot.

The picture you should try and imagine is that the clay is the body of a partridge or quail. Lock on the body and then pull away to knock the wing off in the direction of travel – that is the wing as you see it (Fig 3).

L-R quartering: Right wing.

R-L quartering: Left wing.

L-R quartering Incomer: Right wing.

R-L quartering Incomer: Left wing.

Throughout your swing you should be in control, by moving *with* the target and not adopting an uncontrolled chase. The less you move the gun the less things can go wrong.

To sum up: keep your swing

FIG 3: THE PICTURE YOU SHOULD TRY AND IMAGINE IS THAT THE CLAY IS THE BODY OF A PARTRIDGE OR QUAIL. LOCK ON THE BODY AND THEN PULL AWAY TO KNOCK THE WING OFF IN THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL.

