

Benchrest Match Standard Operating Procedures

for the MGAC 600-yard Range

Overview

Manatee Gun and Archery Club (MGAC) regularly hosts Benchrest Matches. These Matches are conducted on the MGAC 600-yard range. Benchrest Matches are planned and scheduled monthly. During Benchrest Matches, the MGAC 600-yard range is closed to guests and club members who are not participating in the Benchrest Match.

Benchrest Matches are conducted using the established Benchrest Organization's Match rules and range safety protocols. The Match rules and safety protocols may be modified and changed from time to time. The MGAC Match Director is responsible for keeping these documents available and providing copies as required.

Competitors participating in Benchrest Matches must register with the Match Director. The Match Director will ensure that all registered competitors have a signed current MGAC Club waiver and have paid the required MGAC range fees. The Match Director will keep records of registered competitors for the period of one year.

Safety Operation Procedure

The Benchrest Match is conducted on the closed 600-yard range. Only competitors who are approved by the Match Director may participate in the Match. The Match Director will conduct a safety briefing prior to the Match. The Match Director will enforce all Match safety rules with the assistance of at least two MGAC-qualified Range Safety Officer. (RSOs).

Rifle Safety

All Bolt-Action rifles must have their bolts removed unless the competitor has been instructed by the Match Director to insert the bolt in the rifle. The command to insert the bolt into the rifle will only be given when the competitor is on the shooting bench and ready to engage the Match targets. At the completion of the Match shooting period, the Match Director will command *"Show me the bolts."* All competitors must at that time remove the rifle bolt and lift their hand holding the bolt over their head so that the Match Director can assure that all rifle bolts have been removed. The competitor must then case the bolts and wait for further instructions. The casing of the rifle's bolt provides the same level of safety as the casing of the rifle done on the main line. Failure to follow the safety protocol of casing and uncasing the rifle bolts will result in the competitor being disqualified from the Match and potentially being asked to leave club property.

Rifle Uncasing and Casing

All Bolt-Action rifles must be uncased and cased with the bolt removed. There is no exception to this rule. If a rifle case is opened and the rifle in the case has a bolt in it, the competitor must immediately remove the bolt prior to taking the rifle from the case.

All Semi-Automatic rifles must be uncased and cased with the safety mechanism engaged, magazine or sled removed, bolt locked to the rear, and an Empty Chamber Indicator (ECI) inserted in an empty chamber.

All rifles must be cased and uncased on designated safe work benches which will be provided by MGAC.

During the movement of all uncased Bolt-Action and Semi-Automatic rifles to and from the bench, muzzles must always be pointed in a safe direction (straight up).

All Bolt-Action rifles on safe work benches must have their bolts removed and empty chambers. All Semi-Automatic rifles on safe work benches must have the safety mechanism engaged, magazine or sled removed, bolt locked to the rear, and an Empty Chamber Indicator (ECI) inserted in an empty chamber.

The safe work benches provided by MGAC are for the staging of Match participants' rifles prior to and between relays. Competitors may repair or clean their rifles on these safe benches between Match relays.

If a competitor experiences a technical issue that requires the reinsertion of the bolt (trigger check, shoulder bump back, dummy check, etc.) they must first contact a Match RSO who will direct them to a place where the bolt can be reinserted into the rifle under the supervision of the RSO.

At no time may a bolt be reinserted (Bolt-Action) or locked in the forward battery position (Semi-Automatic) on a safe work bench.

Target Servicing

Many Benchrest Matches require multiple relays of competitors, and during the Match there will be a need to change targets between relays. At the conclusion of the relay, the Match Director will order the following commands: *"Cease fire, show me the bolts, and clear the bench."* Prior to the command to *"Clear the bench"*, all Bolt-Action rifles must have their bolts removed, and all Semi-Automatic rifles must have the safety mechanism engaged, magazine or sled removed, bolt locked to the rear, and an Empty Chamber Indicator (ECI) inserted in an empty chamber.

Once the Match Director and Match RSOs have determined that all rifles are safe, the Match Director will instruct the target detail to go down range to service the targets.

After the order to *"Clear the bench"* has been given, all competitors who have just completed the course of fire are required to remove their rifles from the shooting bench and place them on the safe work bench. During the movement of all uncased Bolt-Action and Semi-Automatic rifles to and from the bench, muzzles must always be pointed in a safe direction (straight up). These competitors must also remove their non-rifle shooting equipment from the shooting bench. Once the shooting benches have been cleared, the Match Director may order the next relay's competitors to bring their safe rifle with the bolt removed and other equipment to the shooting benches, with muzzles pointed in a safe direction (straight up). All bolts must be cased during this time.

Once the Target Detail returns from down range, the Match Director will begin the next relay's course of fire instruction which will include inserting the rifle bolt.

Semi-Automatic Rifles

There may be times that Semi-Automatic rifle shooters will be competing in Benchrest Matches. These types of rifles make it difficult for the competitor to remove the rifle's bolt as required for Bolt-Action rifles. The Match Director will make every effort to establish a dedicated shooting bench for these competitors for the entire match. This will eliminate the need for these competitors to move their rifles.

- Dedicated Shooting Benches:

If Semi-Automatic rifle competitors are provided with a dedicated shooting bench, then the competitors will be required to case and uncase their rifles at the shooting bench. Rifle Safety for a Semi-Automatic rifle will be accomplished by the competitor engaging the safety mechanism, removing the magazine or sled, locking the bolt open, and placing an Empty Chamber Indicator (ECI) in an empty chamber. Since these rifles will not be moved during the Match, these competitors will not be allowed to handle their rifles during the target servicing period.

- Non-Dedicated Shooting Benches:

If dedicated shooting benches are not available for Semi-Automatic rifle competitors, then these competitors will be required to move their rifles during the Benchrest Match, and the following safety procedures must be followed:

- The first time a competitor uncases his/her rifle, it must be on the shooting bench. A Semi-Automatic rifle cannot be uncased behind the shooting line.
- During the movement of uncased Semi-Automatic rifles to and from the bench, muzzles must always be pointed in a safe direction (straight up).
- If the competitor must remove their rifle from the shooting bench during the match, the competitor must make their rifle safe by engaging the safety mechanism, removing the magazine or sled, locking the bolt open, and placing an Empty Chamber Indicator (ECI) in an empty chamber.
- The competitor is to remain at the shooting bench until a Match RSO inspects the rifle and directs the competitor to move the rifle to a safe work bench.
- Semi-Automatic rifle competitors are not allowed to work on, clean, or handle their rifle while on the safe work bench. If the Semi-Automatic rifle competitor has an issue and needs to clean or work on their rifle, they must contact a Match Director who will direct them to a place where the work can be done under the supervision of the RSO.
- At the completion of the last shooting period, the Semi-Automatic rifle competitor will case their rifle on the shooting bench.

Approved by the Manatee Gun & Archery Club Board of Directors on 11/08/23