



How to be a great PRVC Posse Leader and Timing Officer

21 TIPS AND A LOT OF SUB-TIPS

Deputy Roger Rapid, SASS#96080



Our shooters are our most important asset. In addition to ensuring their safety, we want attendees to enjoy coming to PRVC and participating in our events. Stage scenarios may be something they'll think about, but the indelible memory for our shooters is how the stages were run and how well the posse was pulled together and orchestrated by the Posse Leader. At the end of the day, your role as a Posse Leader is vital to the success of our club!

For clarification, the Posse Leader is the one in charge of the posse for the day. He or she reads the scenarios and is the one to make any final decisions, if necessary. The Timing Officer (TO) is the one who is working the clock and who is in charge of the stage at any given time.

Remember that your primary responsibility is to *assist the shooter in the safe completion of the stage*. You also need to ensure that all SASS rules are met. As Posse Leader you have ultimate responsibility for the operation and management of the posse.

Posse Leader / Timing Officer attitude is critical to having a good match.

These 21+ tips will help you be a great Posse Leader and TO. After you read them, you may think "pheeew, that's a lot of stuff!" Yes, maybe it's a tall order, but do as much as you can and all else will fall in place.

The following tips include both safety and coaching suggestions. The safety tips are *very important* - the coaching tips are *suggestions*. Some shooters do not like to be coached, and more importantly, it is the shooter's responsibility to be prepared and ready and able to shoot the stage properly. Coaching is more acceptable at one of our monthly matches and would be out of place at state and regional matches. At the very least, these are good tools for you to have to use if needed.

Here you go:

1. Poll the posse to determine whether they want to shoot *when ready* or *drop two* (drop two is where everyone shoots in order, but the first two shooters go to end of list after each stage).



This shooter got too close to the stage prop making it necessary for the TO to stand on the shooter's weak side.

2. Ensure you have loading and unloading table officers. If you are running a small posse and are short-staffed, have the shooters at the loading table check each other, but always ensure that you have an unloading table officer.

3. Ask for spotters - ensure that you have three.

4. Read the stage scenario **EXACTLY** as it is written - don't interpret as you go. Then go through it again if any areas need further explanation. Ask if there are any questions.

- Pay particular attention to the scenario's starting position - you'll probably be asked "where are the hands?" each time a shooter comes up.

- If there is only one posse, you can make an adjustment to the scenario if the target set-up doesn't match the scenario, or if there is a problem with how the scenario was written. However, if there is more than one posse, you must stick to the script to ensure a consistent match shooter-to-shooter.

- Go downrange to demonstrate a target sequence if shooters are unclear about scenario.

- Ask if shooters want to see demo of the popper target (if used).

5. Ensure that the range is clear before calling up a shooter. When your support folks or shell pickers are down range, stand in one of the doorways where you have good visibility of the down-range

staff. Standing in the doorway or with one foot past the firing line is also a good reminder for you not to call the next shooter until you are clear, too.

6. Check that targets are set, poppers loaded, shotgun targets upright.

7. Call the next shooter.

- Make the call a fun one, calling shooter by his or her alias, if known.

- Watch that shooters walk and step up on platforms safely, and carry guns safely.

8. Inventory the shooter's gear:

- Does he/she have both pistols?

- Does he/she have appropriate number of shotshells in their loops?

- Are the hammers fully down on pistols and on their long guns?

9. Inventory the shooter—is he or she ready or do they appear puzzled? If the scenario is complicated, or shooter appears confused, ask if they want you to review the scenario.

- If this is a first-time shooter pay particular attention to their gun handling and holstering.

- If unsure about shooter's composure, ask if he/she is ready to shoot or would rather shoot later.

10. Check staging of rifle and shotgun.

- Ensure that shotgun actions are open.

- Are long-gun trigger guards no further out than edge of table?

- Is the correct long gun on the correct table or staging?

11. Ensure that spotters are ready. Good idea to yell "spotters please!" or "spotters ready!" or similar.

- Evaluate the support of your spotters and ensure that they are focused.

- If a spotter is busy talking to someone rather than spotting, give the stick to someone else who can spot..

12. Wait until shooter is ready.

- Have them say the line OR ask if they are ready ("Shooter Ready?")

- Check that the shooter is at the correct ready position (hand location, etc.).

13. While it is recommended to stand on the shooter's strong side, it is most important to watch the shooter's hands. Much depends on shooter's size and direction they are going to move to the next shooting position.

- Stand clear of their movements.

14. Hold timer near their ear, but behind shooter's head where they cannot see it. If they are looking down at their holster, they might see your hand where they can anticipate the beep by watching your hand or finger movement.

- Some shooters will tell you which is their "good ear."

- Some shooters who are hard-of-hearing will ask you to tap them on the back when you release the button.

15. Clearly yell "Standby!"

16. Release the button about two seconds after the "Standby." Example: Standby" (Mississippi) **BEEP**.

NOTE:

On the PACT CLUB timers we use at PRVC, the "beep" sounds when the button is released. On POCKET PRO timers used at 5 Dogs and some other ranges, the beep sounds when the button is pressed.

17. Watch shooters hands...

- That they are holding the guns safely.

- That they don't break the 170°.

- That they return pistols to leather safely.

- That they sequence from target to target according to scenario.

- Be ready to call "LEFT" or "CENTER TARGET" (or similar) if they appear to sequence improperly. However, it is the shooter's responsibility to engage the correct target - you are responsible for calling Procedural (P) penalties if they do not engage them properly. (Your spotters may assist you by confirming a P.)

- Count number of SHOTS FIRED, not hits or misses. Ensure that 5 shots are fired in each pis-

tol and that 10 shots are fired in the rifle. (Hits or misses are the spotters responsibility.)

- Listen carefully - be ready to call “STOP” if you hear a squib.

- Be looking for the possibility of a round being jacked out of the rifle and ready to yell “JACKED ONE OUT!” if needed.

- Take control of the gun if squib occurs, hand it off safely or have shooter ground it. (At PRVC we ask that someone - not a spotter - safely moves the malfunctioned gun to the unloading table.)

- Be ready to call “ONE MORE” if only 4 shots are fired from pistols or only 9 from rifle.

- Be ready to call “THAT’S TEN” if shooter levers rifle for the 11th shot.

- Be ready to call “DOWN” or “ONE MORE” if shooter appears to hesitate at shotgun targets.

18. Hold timer up so that microphone is facing down range.

- Don’t hold timer hand behind you.

- Do not put your fingers over the timer’s microphone opening.

19. At end of the string:

- Call the time out immediately upon completion of the shooting string. Call it out loud enough for everyone to hear it. Do this before getting input from the spotters on how well the shooter did. (Be aware that if you accidentally bang the timer on something, it will record the noise as the next hit and deliver an improper time to the display, so call the time out promptly.)

- Compliment the shooter as needed (“Great job, Wyatt!”)

- As you are walking to scorer, collect the MISS information from spotters.

- If one spotter believes it is 3 misses, and two spotters believe it is 2 misses, then it is 2 misses (always in the shooter’s favor)

- Show the timer’s display to the scorekeeper. Get an acknowledgement from him or her that they understand the time, misses, and any penalties.

- If you can, check what the scorer is writing down or entering in the system.

20. Ensure that all pistols are holstered and long guns are raised before allowing someone to go down range.

21. Some miscellaneous rules and things to consider:

- If rifle goes down with lever closed, you have some hard choices to make:

- If you know they shot 10 rounds, let them continue to the next gun. If you know they shot 9 rounds, and think there is one still in the rifle, call them back BEFORE they pick up the next gun. Once they pick up the next gun, they can no longer return to the rifle to pick it up and fire the last shot.

- At the end of the stage, if the rifle’s action is closed ONLY the shooter can pick up the rifle and prove that it is clear.

- When lever is opened and chamber is empty, all is well.

- When lever is opened and empty case is ejected, a Minor Safety (MS) applies.

- When lever is opened and live round is ejected, it is a Stage Disqualification (SDQ).

- You can provide spotters with info on misses, but only spotters can call the hits and misses.

If they think it is a HIT, it is a HIT
If they think it is a miss, it is a HIT

If they see and know it is a miss, it is a miss

- Edge hits may require further evaluation and input from you (but you should have been watching the gun).

- If shooter fumbles with some delay before first shot goes down range, yell “STOP” and allow them a RESTART (but if they continue to fumble on subsequent stages, just let them continue).

- If you clearly impeded a shooter’s sequence or process, you can allow them a RESHOOT (with Posse Leader’s approval).

- Shooter can pick up a dropped round, but preferably from table – not a good idea to try to pick one up from the ground.

- Learn how to use all the features of the PACT CLUB timer. See PRVC’s document “CLUB Timer - how to.”

- Make it fun!