

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Black Powder

Overview/Description of Discipline

- Both rifles and pistols using percussion or flintlock are welcome. Beginners are encouraged to participate. Friendly help from experienced shooters is always available. Participation in the local chapter of the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association (NMLRA) is encouraged. See the Match Director for details.
- Cross Stick Description: Two pieces of wood with a maximum dimension of 1 ½” thick by 2 ½” wide by 40” long bolted together approximately 4” from one end. They should be pointed on the long end to facilitate insertion into the ground. No padding or sandbags may be used on the cross sticks. A single thickness of light material or leather to protect the gun may be used.
- References to NMLRA Rules and Regulations appear in parentheses i.e. (1234).

Equipment Required

Firearms

- Any safe muzzle loading rifle or pistol with iron sights (open sights or peep sights) firing lead patched round ball with either black powder or an approved substitute.

Ammunition

- Lead patched round ball in traditional calibers.

Target

- Approved NMLRA targets at varying yardages.
- Provided by FWGC.

Ear & Eye Protection

- Must be worn at all times when the range is “hot”.

Clothing/Costuming

- No special costumes are necessary.

National Affiliate Organization

- NMLRA

Rules observed in addition to FWGC

- NMLRA
- NRA

Special local rules

- No black powder or substitutes will be allowed on the forward of the loading benches. No primers or priming devices will be allowed on the

- rear loading tables/benches. All loading of Muzzleloading will be done on the REAR loading tables/benches. Firearms will only be capped or primed when you are in your shooting position, ready to fire.
- All FWGC Range Rules will be observed.
- The Match Director will appoint a Range Officer for each match. The Match Director may act as the Range Officer if he/she so chooses.

Overall safety rules

- Spectators must wear eye and ear protection and must remain clear of the firing line while the range is “hot”. Children must be supervised at all times.

Firearm handling

- The entire range is a “Cold Range” unless deemed otherwise by the Range Safety Officer assigned for the Match. This means NO handling of Firearms until a “Hot Range” is called by the Range Safety Officer. However, per NMRLA rules, if a rifle is at the loading table a wet and dry patch may be applied providing that the butt does not leave the ground. The Range Safety Officer may also call for a “Hot Range” to allow for cleaning of guns between targets. Firearms are to remain unloaded between targets placement and while transporting from and to vehicles. While transporting muzzles will be pointed up above the shooter’s head (1080). While at the bench muzzles will be within a 170° cone related to the placement of targets and the berm.

Firearm storage

- (1085) “Rifle placement between relays”. The time between the commands of “Cease Fire” and “Commence Loading, You May Fire When Ready” is when the range will be declared “Cold” by the Range Officer. During this period competitors are allowed to go downrange and post and retrieve targets. During this period all rifles must be placed with the butt plate on the ground and the muzzle pointed up and leaned against the loading bench. All Muzzleloader pistols will be placed in racks with the muzzle up.

Loading areas

- Firearms loading will be done at the loading bench when the range is “hot”.
- (1100) “Loading Flintlock Firearms”. All flintlock firearms must be loaded with the Frizzen up and hammer down.
- (1130) “When to Load”. No firearm will be loaded or caps snapped until the command “Commence to Load” and “Fire When Ready” is given.
- (1130) “Swabbing Between Shots”. Swabbing between shots with a damp patch to eliminate the possibility of glowing embers igniting the next charge is required.
- (1220) “Powder Measure” A separate powder measure or holder will be used to carry the powder charge from container to muzzle of the gun. Charging directly from horn or flask or any other container directly into the muzzle is unsafe and is not permitted.

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- (1230) Open Powder Containers”. There will not be any open containers of powder on the firing line or loading benches.

Unloading areas

- (1150) “Loaded Firearm”. No loaded firearm shall be taken from the firing line.
- (1160) “Clearing Misfires” Extreme caution must be used including care to inform neighboring shooters. The pulling of a ball must be done in such a manner that there is no danger to persons or property. The Range Officer must be notified prior to any attempts to clear a misfire.

“Safe area”

- There is a dedicated area where any gun malfunction or repair may be dealt with. Firearms handling rules will be observed when transporting to and from the safe area.

Match Information

Prerequisite training required

- All new shooters will have basic safety rules explained to them before the match begins.

Match Director

- Is in charge and has the final word regarding issues of safety and competition.

Schedule

- See FWGC Calendar for match days and times.

Shooting categories

- Flintlock, Percussion, Greybeards, Men, Ladies, Juniors, single shot pistol, and cap and ball revolvers.

Shooting commands

- “Cold Range” – Range officer indicates that entire firing line is cold. No guns may be touched, and bolts are open and flagged.
- “Hot Range” – Range officer indicates that the firing line is “hot”, and all shooters can begin firing.
- “Commence to Load”
- “Fire When Ready”
- “Cease fire” – Can be called by any shooter. All guns will be unloaded per Range Officer’s instructions.

Starting position

- At the loading bench.

Firing position

- At the firing bench, or
- Cross stick matches must be fired from a sitting position. A piece of padding no thicker than 2” may be placed on the ground to protect the shooter. The rifle will be supported by the cross sticks, one shoulder or both hands.

Scoring procedures

- By target or aggregate per NMLRA Rules

Awards

- To be determined by Match Director.

Safety Violations

Major

- Accidental discharge will result in match disqualification. A FWGC Incident Report will be prepared by the Match Director and submitted to the Chief Range Officer.

Minor

- Handling of firearms while range is “Cold” may result in relay disqualification.
- Spectators are not allowed on firing line when shooting is in progress.
- All FWGC Range Rules must be observed.
- (1090) “Blowing Down the Barrel”. There will be no blowing down the barrel of any firearm in any manner that places the head or any part of the body over the muzzle. A flexible blowing tube may be used at the shooter’s option, providing the shooter’s head is not placed in front of the barrel.
- (1220) “Powder Measure” A separate powder measure or holder will be used to carry the powder charge from container to muzzle of the gun. Charging directly from horn or flask or any other container directly into the muzzle is unsafe and is not permitted.
- (1230) “Open Powder Containers”. There will not be any open containers of powder on the firing line or loading benches.
- (1040) “Smoking”. No person shall be allowed to smoke at any time on the loading benches or firing line.
- (1270/1280) “Safety Glasses and Hearing Protection”. Safety glasses with side shields and hearing protection are required.

Incident reports

- Will be filed on the club provided form for all injuries and all match disqualifications.

Fees and Sign-in

- \$5.00 Sign-in prior to 8:30 AM on match days.

Emergency procedures

- There is a telephone in the target stand shed which can be used to call 911. There is also a first aid kit in the shed. In the event of an emergency requiring police, fire equipment, or an ambulance the Match Director or assistant will designate someone to tend the gate and direct emergency vehicles. A FWGC Incident Report will be completed and filed for all injuries.

Practice

- Practice will be accomplished using FWGC Range Rules and NMLRA Rules and Regulations.