



HORSE ARCHERY USA

HORSE ARCHERY SAFETY PROCEDURES

The general Rules for Competition and Training follow international standards set by The International Horseback Archery Alliance and are ratified in clubs around the world. For the purpose of Horse Archery U.S.A. it is required that all events, demonstrations or trainings have a physical barrier between spectators and competitors with horses. Only individuals who are active members in good standing are allowed in an area where they can come in contact with a horse or archery equipment. This includes, judges, referees, volunteers and foreign competitors. Any violation of this, the Safety Procedures or General Rules is done outside of HAUSA standards and is the actions of the individual or host. We are not liable for events hosted for other groups or clubs and individuals who are not in compliance with Safe Procedures or the General Rules. All club members and Affiliates are required to follow these minimum safety standard. They are required to know and understand them and keep up to date on amended changes for safety.

Basic safety in mounted archery needs to be taught and maintained in order that it continues to be part of the culture of the sport. Horseback Archery is one of the fastest growing sports and martial arts worldwide and it is picking up exponential momentum in North America as well. In many cases we are resurrecting it in the modern world and in some cases reverse engineering it to discover techniques and skills that were lost with our ancestors. Archery is widely known as one of the safest sports in the world. However, horses are prey animals who can be unpredictable. This can add inherent danger, therefore combining the two successfully requires safe procedures.

Ranges:

Both outdoor and indoor Mounted Archery ranges need to be set up with targets that have a safe backstop (a hillside or net), and or a safety area for stray arrows that is clear for a minimum of 50 meters behind and 15 meters to the side of the targets. These areas should be well marked with surveyor flags, paint, chalk, roped off or otherwise made clear. This area needs to be controlled so that

spectators and nonparticipants cannot walk in to the range or come in contact with horses. It is best if the target area is kept clear and if possible well mowed and also that it is cleared of rocks and debris. Holes and roots should be covered or well-marked. In rattle snake country keeping this area clear will reduce habitat where you are shooting.

The range must have a well-marked area for spectators and a lane for them to get to the seating area. There needs to be a barrier that is clearly visible and physical so that spectators are separated from the competitors. Horses should be kept away from the spectators. There should also be a return lane for the horseback archers to travel to the start that is a minimum of 2 meters from the course that riders are shooting from. Since horses are herd animals they can react to close proximity to one another or to distractions from score keepers, judges and photographers. As such, it is important that, while the Mounted Archer is running the course, all personnel and animals maintain that 2 meter distance from the track.

If photographers, judges or score keepers need to be in the target area they must stay 15 meters from any target and not behind one.

Scoring Arrows:

Most injuries in archery happen not during shooting but while retrieving arrows. For this reason ranges must have a 2 meter area around the target that is marked and only allows one person at a time to pull the arrows. That person can either pull all the arrows or just theirs. Behind this 2 meter line the score keeper or other archers must wait patiently. No arrow should be removed from the target until every arrow in the target is scored, recorded and double checked, only after this is completed should the arrows be removed. When pulling arrows one should look behind to make sure no one is in range, should a stubbornly-lodged shaft come suddenly free. Participants who are not pulling and scoring should look for missed arrows behind the targets, keeping in mind not to let horses led out in the target area by these participants to get too close together.

Once the scoring is completed the archers should stop looking for lost arrows and quickly get to the waiting area to begin shooting. Lost arrows can be looked for in depth after the days training is done or an event is over.

It is polite **etiquette** to clear the target area quickly and safely so that the archers can start their runs in a timely manner. This means that if tack needs to be adjusted or arrows need to be arranged that should be done in the waiting area, so that shooting may resume as soon as possible. It is bad form to make everyone wait to make adjustments that can be done out of the shooting area.

While 30 to 40 pound bows typically are used in horseback archery, the targets need to be adequate to stop arrows from bows ranging from 20 to 80 pounds. Plywood is never a good target butt. Also make sure to only use target material that is designed to stop arrows. Tightly packed hay bales or woven mats are traditional target butt materials.

Arenas:

When shooting in an arena it is important to be mindful of targets positions in regards to spectators or other animals. Arena targets should be set low to the ground so that, from horseback, missed shots land in the sand. The targets used in arenas should be set up so that the center of the target is never higher than 1 meter off the ground. It may be required to clear a section of the arena so that spectators are not in line with the direction that is being shot at. When setting up targets for such a venue it is important to imagine where stray arrows may land and to practice and make sure the location of the targets is safe when no one is present.

At times when shooting at indoor arenas or venues where the spectator areas are not elevated it may be necessary to require Flu Flu arrows. It is also possible to use net type targets that catch the arrow and in this instance blunted Flu Flu's are needed. Knock-down targets or loud gong type targets also work well in confined spaces and seeing targets fall or hearing the loud report of an arrow striking the target is very satisfying to both archers and witnesses. However, care needs to be

made that the horses are accustomed to the sound and movement in these events so the equines are not frightened.

Range Management

It's important to make sure when teaching, competing or training for Mounted Archery that someone is appointed as Range Marshal. Usually at trainings the Range Marshal will be the instructor, but at times when people are just meeting up to practice, one of them will have to be in charge of making sure that each rider only starts his or her run when it is safe to do so. This is especially necessary when both right-handed and left-handed shooters are training together to keep them from starting runs at the same time on a collision course.

The Whistle Method

As Range Marshal there are many ways to signal the next rider when to start their run; one such way that is a World Cup standard is the Whistle Method. With this method it is best if the marshal is on foot somewhere he or she can see both ends of the mounted track. It is possible to do so from horseback as well. However when the marshal is riding with the rest of those training he or she will need to be the first or the last rider in order to make sure they can be in position to direct the rest. (Keep in mind each rider should know which order they will take their runs).

Two whistle Blasts

Means to go to the waiting area

One Whistle Blast

Means the rider up can start his or her run. The Range Marshal will make eye contact with the rider and point in their direction. A flag, bright baton or even a flu flu arrow can be used to point at the rider who is to begin his or her run. If the marshal is not pointing at the rider she or he knows that the signal is for another competitor, possibly coming from another direction. Riders should never start on the course without making eye contact with the marshal.

Multiple Whistle Blasts

When four or more whistle blasts are sounded in rapid succession, the archer on the track must cease shooting immediately and bring his or her horse to a walk or stop.

Waiting Area

A mounted archery course, no matter where it is or how it is set up, should have a safe waiting area that is clear from spectators and stray arrows. There should be a place for the rider who is ready in the start position and also an on deck area for the next rider in the queue. (**Etiquette**) All the Horse Archers should know what order they are riding in and be in position in order to not hold up the rhythm or the training or event. This is also an etiquette issue.

(**Etiquette**) On some Horse Archery courses the archer is allowed to enter the track with an arrow nocked and ready to shoot. It is important the rider is mindful of not poking the horse with his or her arrow. When ready and waiting to go, the internationally accepted position is to have the arrow parallel to the leg and the tip pointed to the ground next to the ankle, or one may also rest the bottom limb of the bow on your leg with the arrow pointing out 90 degrees from the horse.

(**Etiquette**) Do not leave an area while someone is trying mount their horse. Always face your horse to the individual that is climbing on so that his or her mount does not feel the panic of being left behind. Also never run your horse up to or by a group with horses waiting. It may spook the waiting animals and cause an injury.

Time bonus

Horseback archery is a timed event. Each course will have a par time to finish in; this time depends on the course design. For example, on a 90 meter straight Korean course the rider is given 14 seconds to finish his or her run. In this case, time saved under 14 seconds can be added to the score and time over 14 seconds is subtracted from the score, provided the rider scored points with arrows on target. If no arrows hit a scoring ring, the score is zero despite the time. If the time is too long the difference is subtracted. No negative scores will be given for time penalties larger than the arrows scored on target. A zero is the lowest score that can be earned.

Some courses have a “hard par time.” In this case if the archer goes over the allowed time they receive a zero instead of points deducted. In other courses there is a time par to finish in and a disqualification time for taking too long.

The Maximum Speed Rule

The Maximum Speed Rule is for the safety of both riders and horses and states: “No time bonus points can be awarded for going faster than 10 meters per second.” So this means on a 90 meter track any time under 9 seconds will not contribute to one’s score. On a 150 meter track, no points are given for going faster than 15 seconds.

Equipment

Bows

Any traditional bow may be used for horseback archery. That means bows without wheels, pulleys, cams, multiple strings or cables. Some clubs or organizations restrict bows to those with primitive handles, however the NHAA wants to invite any type of traditional archer to become a Mounted Archer. Because Horseback Archery involves fast dynamic shooting, more primitive or simple arrow rests will allow for faster shooting.

For horseback archery, lighter bows are preferred to those used for hunting or flight shooting; typically about 10 pounds lighter is a good rule. Perfect form is crucial. While heavier traditional bows can be used, it is important to ensure that the draw of these bows does not impede form.

Arrows

Arrows should be held in the bow hand or in a safe quiver. Safe quivers are those attached to the back, waist or thigh. Ankle quivers, wrist quivers, arrows tucked in a belt and putting arrows in one’s boots is not safe and never permitted.

Arrows should be inspected for flaws or damage before being issued and they should be of proper spine for the bow being used.

Flu Flu arrows should always be used when shooting above the horizon. When shooting overhead such as in the Qabak blunted flu flu arrows are required.

Arm Guards should be issued to first time archers so people do not go away from their first lesson with that common forearm bruise that many experience from string slap. Make sure the archer knows to align his or her bow-hand elbow towards the horizon and never toward the ground.

A proper shooting glove should be issued to those wanting to shoot a three-finger Mediterranean release. Likewise, a thumb ring or thumb glove should be applied to those wanting to learn a thumb release.

Balanced Riding

The Zen of Mounted Archery is riding in rhythm and balance with one's horse. Cozmei Mihai is famous for pointing to his horse and saying "This is my body, I think of what I want it to do and it does it. I keep my mind sharp and clear and my horse becomes an extension of my body." As Horseback Archery grows there has been a trend in recent years for riding ever faster with less equitation. One only needs to Google Mounted Archery and he or she will see a myriad of photos of modern Horse Archers standing in the stirrups leaning out over the horse's neck and putting all of his or her weight on the animals forehead. One stumble and the results are foregone, catastrophic, for the rider and possibly with the horse as well. There is no reason for this to be perpetuated and HAUSA wants to make sure both horse and rider are in equal partnership. In Hungary the warm up section of every competition does double duty to warm up the athletes, both horse and rider, but also the judges use that opportunity to watch the riders to evaluate if they are a danger to either themselves or the horse they are riding. When a judge sees something he or she does not like they will politely discuss it with the competitor. If after 3 attempts the competitor cannot achieve a standard of basic riding safely to the satisfaction of the judges they will be scratched from the event.

HAUSA wants to encourage riders to be mindful of participating in Horseback Archery with balanced riding where the Archer and horse are a team that work together for safe and healthy growth of the sport and art.