

MAKING CORRECTIONS

I have a student who asked the following question: In a sporting clays tournament how do you make corrections after having missed a target or two when the presentation is one that I have not seen before? What steps should the shooter take to determine the cause of the miss?

The proper time, and therefore, the best time to make a correction of this nature is **BEFORE YOU TAKE THE FIRST SHOT!**

HUH????????

Please repeat multiple times. The best time to make this correction is before I take the first shot.

HELP!!!!

It is human nature, when put in a new position, is to panic, and revert to a fight or flight mindset. In shooting this results in looking carefully at the gun instead of the moving target, yanking the trigger, lifting the head, falling off balance, and an assortment of body movements more akin to directing an orchestra than hitting clay discs.

Did I mention that a resounding flinch can also fit into this scenario?

In order to correct the malady we must treat the cause, not the symptoms.

Here is how.

Before you step into the station you should have already decided precisely where you are going to look for the target, place your muzzles, and kill the target. **EVERY TIME.**

We teach that the shooter should first decide where in its flight the target appears easiest to break **FOR HIM/HER.** Fix your feet accordingly so that you are in mid-swing, if possible, at the “kill point.” Then set up your “hold point” back toward the trap so that the target cannot beat your eyes and rush past you.

Then move your eyes toward the trap so that the target comes into your vision. If you do this the target will seem to be a bit slower as it comes into view. Rarely should you look directly at the trap for the target.

Now, how does all this satisfy a need to make corrections? Are you ready?

When you set up the kill point, hold point, and your eyes, you must do so with the added

job of remembering exactly where you set each up.

By doing this you will very quickly learn how to make adjustments. If the target beat your eyes you simply move your visual pickup point a smidge away from the trap for the next presentation.

If the target beats your gun by rushing past before you can get on it you move your hold point a bit further from the trap. If you find that the target appears too fast you are holding too close to the trap. I usually suggest doing this in “one barrel width” distances. It can be amazing to see how much of a difference $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch can make in your ability to slow down a moving object.

When you take the first shot you will know how it felt if you will only ask yourself this question. Did the target handle me or did I handle the target?

Most competitors ask the wrong questions.....and their friends (?) are all too willing to tell the shooter where he/she missed. Never mind that these onlookers are standing aside and twenty feet from the shooter. They always seem to determine that the miss was behind.

By memorizing EXACTLY where you plan to kill the target, hold the gun, and look for the target, you can make any correction necessary to make the next presentation a more likely success.

Think of it this way. A compass does you little good on a cloudy day AFTER you are lost. It is imperative to check your direction BEFORE embarking into unknown hunting areas. You cannot count on the sun being available continuously.

So it is with targets. By deciding prior to calling “pull” where you will look for the target, set up your gun to intercept the target, and, finally, where you are going to break the target, you will have a “road map” with which to make adjustments any time the flying object in front of you fools you. As you get better at setting up you will find it easier to make adjustments after the target is in the air.

By the way, the place to put this concept into your life is in training sessions. You must make a plan for these or you will continue to wander in the woods without that compass.

The second question posed above will be answered if all the steps laid out in this missive are followed.

One final tip....always settle on what your goal is each time you go out to shoot. Come to a decision before you fire the first shot whether you are training, practicing, or playing.

If you don't you will end up playing and calling it practice or training. More on how to do

these activities in a later communication.

Until next time, enjoy your shooting games

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