



Collierville High School Trap Team



2022 Informational Series #1: Trap Overview
8/24/2022

CHS TRAP OVERVIEW

The Collierville High School Trap Program is designed to teach the importance of safe firearms handling, responsibility, leadership, teamwork, and to promote healthy competition. This program is available to all Collierville High School (CHS), and Collierville Middle School students (grades 6 and above) and runs generally from October to July of each year.

The CHS Trap Team is a competitive club sports team which competes in the shotgun clay target disciplines of American trap, skeet and sporting clays. The CHS Trap Team athletes are **Tennessee Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP)** and **Amateur Trap Association (ATA)** members. We have 5+ local competitions in addition to the Tennessee State Competition and National SCTP Competition.

Trap is an incredibly popular sport, particularly for hunters looking to practice before the start of a big season or for new firearm enthusiasts looking to get some time in with moving targets instead of stationary bullseyes. It remains one of the safest sports for young athletes and can become a lifetime activity.

Trap can sometimes confuse beginning athletes and parents, so this guide is the first part of several in a series designed to give the novice student athlete (and parent) general information to get started. Once you have the basics, you can branch out on your own and hopefully be able to better locate the information that you are looking for in further detail.

These guides are not meant to be a comprehensive or exhaustive list of information. The information contained in these guides are provided for informational purposes only, and should not be construed as expert, professional or authoritative content on any subject matter.

WHAT IS TRAP

There are several different forms of regulated competition in a clay target program called disciplines. These can roughly be divided into three main groups: Sporting Clays, Trap and Skeet.

For anyone new to shotgun sports, there is one thing that all the different styles or types have in common. All of them involve the athlete breaking a disc of clay (or bird) thrown at high speed with a shotgun.

Trap is all about judging the speed and direction of the clay then moving with it. The goal of trap is to break clay targets that are traveling away from the shooter. These targets are thrown in the air at varying angles using an oscillating machine from a trap house.

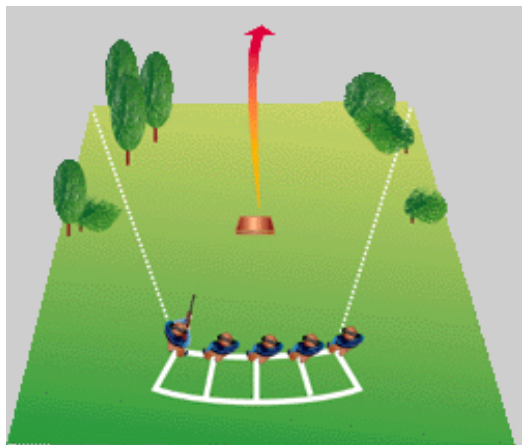
A **round of trap** includes **25 targets** with 5 attempts taken at each of 5 stations arranged in an arch 16 ft from the trap house. A squad consists of 5 athletes, one on each station and alternately. After 5 shots at a station the squad rotates to the next station.



Collierville High School Trap Team



2022 Informational Series #1: Trap Overview
8/24/2022



How it works:

- Five-person squad
- Single machine throws target away from shooter
- Machine rotates randomly left-to-right
- Each person shoots one shot in succession
- After 5th shot, squad rotates to the right and starts again
- Squad leader shoots first regardless of position
- Once the shooter has shot 25, this completes the “Round”
- Competitions usually are 4 consecutive rounds (100 shots)

IS TRAP SAFE?

Understandably a parent’s first concern about any sport is safety. If you are a parent who knows little about firearms, your perception probably is—that firearms can be dangerous if not handled properly. For anyone, no matter how young or how old, who wants to learn how to handle firearms, **understanding the rules of firearms safety is the first and most important requirement.** Coaches have been trained that safety is the foremost important factor in this sport and develop safety as a culture.

GENERAL TIPS FOR SAFE FIREARM HANDLING

- Treat every firearm as if it were loaded.
- Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction.
- Keep the firearm unloaded when not in use.
- Keep your fingers off the trigger.
- Don’t rely on your firearm’s “safety” device.
- Always wear eye and ear protection.
- Know your target and what is beyond it.

Collierville High School’s Trap program, as well as the STCP in other schools across the county, may be the safest sport for student athletes when compared to other high school sports. Though the instruments of this sport can be dangerous, when compared to other individual or group sporting activities (football, basketball, tennis, swimming, driving, biking etc.) trap sports are quite safe.

SAFETY CERTIFICATION

Each student-athlete must pass a safety certification before becoming active in the sport and safety equipment is mandatory.

- **Hunters Safety Education:** Each first-time student-athlete must pass a state department’s hunters education course and receive their certificate. Hunters’ safety education has shown that firearm-related



Collierville High School Trap Team



2022 Informational Series #1: Trap Overview

8/24/2022

accidents have decreased by over 50% with the biggest decrease occurring over the last 20 years by becoming educated about firearms.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TRAP SPORTS?

School athletics teach students morals and teamwork that are extremely beneficial in the “real world.” In being part of a team that goes through the same obstacles and challenges with the same dedication and commitment, student-athletes are provided a unique community in which they learn how to work together to achieve success.

In addition, athletics teach the student how to manage their time more wisely since one to three hours are spent on practices and skill exercises every school day, athletes have no choice but to be mindful of time-constraints—a skill essential in both college and life.

Trap is not only a brilliant sport for keeping your child active, but it also builds self-esteem, confidence, as well as develop lasting friendships. The challenge of trap is the test for accuracy, and often speed, with specially designed targets that are moving over varying distances.

- **Physical:** There are many physical benefits to taking up sports. Increased strength, stamina, balance, hand/eye coordination and fine motor skills are just some of the benefits. Shooters who are active and in good condition can improve their scores faster and often are able to perform better in competition.
- **Mental/Visual Acuity:** All sports require intense, short bursts of concentration to achieve good form. Visual skills provide intelligent information to shooters concerning where targets are located, what details and characteristics constitute the target, as well as target speed and direction of movement. These are necessary to create a repeatable process that leads to consistent speed, aim, and accuracy.
- **Discipline:** In a sport where success depends almost entirely on dedication and practice, trap is pivotal for developing skills such as self-discipline. Discipline is necessary to fire one shot after another with consistent and proper technique.

With all these combined benefits, it will come as no surprise that trap sports are one of the longest standing competitive sports.

CONCERNING TEAM FEES AND RECURRING COSTS

The coaches and returning members of the Collierville High School Trap Team look forward to a great year. We encourage everyone that is interested to come out and give trap a try. As with many scholastic sports, there are initial and ongoing fees that are involved during the course of a single season. These costs can be found on the CHS Trap Team website and may vary slightly year to year due to rising or falling prices on various factors.

The team is guided with assistance from the CHS Trap Team Booster Club. It is a tax-exempt organization located in Collierville, Tennessee. Support is shown in many ways, including volunteering time, raising money, and contributing funds to better enhance the team or organization's performance.

The purpose of the CHS Trap Team Booster Club is three-fold: to provide all possible support to the students of the CHS Trap Team; to promote community awareness of the accomplishments and activities of the CHS Trap Team; and to ensure funding for equipment, fees, travel and other needs.



Collierville High School Trap Team



2022 Informational Series #1: Trap Overview
8/24/2022

INITIAL ANNUAL TEAM FEE

The initial fee for the team includes:

- Tennessee Scholastic Clay Target Program (TNSCTP) fees
- Shelby County Scholastic Clay Target Association (SCSCTA) fees
- Team Uniforms
- Competition fees
- Initial Clays Account deposit
- Booster Club expenses

ATHLETE RECURRING COSTS

- **Clay Account:** This is a pre-paid account with a primary purpose of paying for the clays used throughout the season. Clays are charged by the "round", or 25 clays. Practices and competition events contain a minimum of 4 rounds or 100 clays. The account will be charged after each event, and when the balance is low a notification will be sent requesting to refill the account. Athletes will not be allowed to practice if their clay account is not maintained.
- **Ammunition:** The athlete is responsible for providing ammunition for each practice and competition. Practices and competition events contain a minimum of 4 rounds or 100 shot shells. Ammunition can be bought locally or online. Depending on the time of year, and other factors, ammunition prices can fluctuate greatly and sometimes be in short supply therefore there is a need to plan and ensure that the athlete has enough shot shells for the season.
- **Equipment:** The individual athlete is responsible for all equipment (and maintenance), safety equipment (safety glasses, hearing protection), trap gear (such as shell pouches, etc.)
- **Travel and Food:** The CHS Trap team does not provide travel (or lodging) to or from practices and competitions.
- Initial Fees: \$675
- Recurring Costs
 - Clays Accounts November-July: \$1070
 - Shot Shell Cost: Varies. Average 2022 prices are \$11.00 a box.
 - Cases, or flats, are sold as 10 boxes of 25 shells (250 Shells)
 - A rule of thumb is that an athlete may use as many as 20 flats through the season.
 - Travel/Lodging/Food: Varies
 - Equipment Costs
 - Shotgun: From \$400 and up. Prices vary on type, gauge, brand, youth/adult, etc.
 - Shotgun Maintenance: varies
 - Safety Equipment: \$50-100

NOTE: THE FIGURES ABOVE ARE ESTIMATES. INITIAL FEES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON VARIOUS FACTORS. WITH RECURRING COSTS: DUE TO WEATHER, SOME PRACTICES MAY BE MISSED ENTIRELY OR NOT ALL CLAYS OR AMMUNITION WILL BE USED. FURTHER, ATHLETES MAY ALSO NOT BE AT ALL PRACTICES OR COMPETITIONS. SOME "RECURRING COSTS" ARE ONE-TIME PURCHASES. AMMUNITION PRICES AND AVAILABILITY ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT ANY TIME. WITH THESE CONSIDERATIONS THE ACTUAL COST MAY VARY.



Collierville High School Trap Team



2022 Informational Series #2: Shotgun Overview
8/24/2022

CHS TRAP OVERVIEW: SHOTGUNS

This guide is written with the first-time parent/student as the primary focus. Having a foundational knowledge of the varied aspects of trap will allow you to make informed decisions, and let you grow into the sport without the headaches. You're making a big investment, and you may not yet have the experience to feel confident about your choice.

Please note: This guide is meant to provide recommendations as guidance rather than concrete advice and approach your new purchase with an open mind.

Purchasing a shotgun can be complicated for those new to firearms. There is much information on the internet concerning the different categories, types, and models that are used, especially in clay sports. You may be offered all sorts of advice by well-meaning friends and fellow enthusiasts who may confuse you further with all the terms, brands, and sometimes biased information that worked for them – but, ultimately, may not work for your athlete.

In this guide we will cover the following:

- Categories and gauges of shotguns
 - Action type (Semi auto, break)
 - Chokes
- New, used, or “grandpa’s trusty field gun”?
- Gun fit
- Barrel length

Again, just the topics above alone are enough to start any major debate for hours on end. This guide is not meant for that, but to give you a starting point. The “best” shotgun for one person can be the “worst” for another. You and your athlete are the only ones that can determine what works.

From this point on, the guide assumes the following: **The CHS trap team uses a 12 gauge shotgun, that has a smooth barrel (not rifled), and has interchangeable chokes.** A 20 Gauge shotgun may be used in certain circumstances. Consult the Collierville Trap Team coaches for this information.

SHOTGUN OVERVIEW: CATEGORIES AND GAUGES OF SHOTGUNS

In general, a shotgun fires ammunition which ejects a spray of multiple lead pellets. Unlike a rifle’s barrel, shotguns have a smooth bore to accommodate a range of pellet sizes. **With some exceptions, almost all categories of shotguns can be used in trap.**

This topic alone can be the hardest to overcome. During your research, you will see many categories out there such as:

- Self-defense or tactical
- Upland/Overland
- Sporting



Collierville High School Trap Team



2022 Informational Series #2: Shotgun Overview 8/24/2022

These terms are designed to steer you toward a specific use, and how the firearm may be configured. The configuration may have differences in the stock, barrel length, barrel rib, sights (single, multiple), etc. This can be VERY misleading. Often these terms are also used as advertising tools. The category term used can also mean the difference in price of several hundred dollars. Think of it this way: Adding the word “smart” to any consumer device automatically affects the purchase price.

Therefore, focus on the *action* of the shotgun. When you hear the “action” of a gun being referenced, it means the operational design of the gun. How a shotgun loads, fires, and ejects a spent cartridge is the action of the shotgun. There are three types of shotgun actions that serve as the primary feature to delineate one type of shotgun from another.

BREAK ACTION SHOTGUNS



A break-action shotgun typically features, either, one or two barrels, and an over-under (O/U) or Side-by-side (SBS) barrel configuration. A break-action shotgun hinges at the breech, where you load a fresh cartridge and remove spent cartridges.



PUMP OR SLIDE ACTION SHOTGUNS

A slide action shotgun is so named for how the athlete cycles a round into the chamber. The slide sits underneath the shotgun barrel and ejects a cartridge each time it is pumped laterally, along the barrel. It manually reloads a fresh cartridge into the chamber, while ejecting the used cartridge, making it resistant to jamming or malfunctioning.



SEMI-AUTOMATIC SHOTGUNS



A semi-automatic shotgun is the type of shotgun with the highest fire-rate. It cycles spent and new cartridges in a similar way as pump-action, but you don't have to manually cycle like a pump-action. Instead, semi-auto shotguns use the residual energy and gasses to automatically cycle the cartridge, each time you pull the trigger.

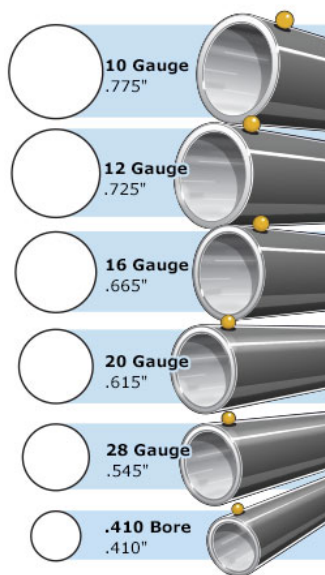


WHICH ACTION SHOULD BE USED?

This is another highly debatable topic that falls under many factors, and again should only be determined by you and the student athlete. All of the different actions have pros and cons to their use (e.g., weight, recoil, shotshell capacity, etc.). Many trap athletes use these different action shotguns to great success. A beginning athlete should use the action type that falls in conjunction with the *fit* (discussed later). Each action type may have different safety requirements on the trap field, however no action type is preferred or required.

GAUGES OF SHOTGUNS

NOTE: AMMUNITION WILL BE DISCUSSED SPECIFICALLY IN ANOTHER GUIDE.



Shotguns are classified by gauge, which is a measure related to the diameter of the smooth shotgun bore and the size of the shotshell designed for that bore. Common shotgun gauges are 10-gauge, 12-gauge, 16-gauge, 20-gauge, and 28-gauge. The smaller the gauge number, the larger the shotgun bore.

- Each gauge of shotgun shoots only shells of the same gauge. For example, 12-gauge guns use only 12-gauge shells.
- The gauge of a shotgun is usually marked on the rear of the barrel, and the gauge of a shell is marked on the shell as well as on the factory box.
- CHS Trap allows 12 gauge only and should be chambered to accept 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ shot shells.

CHOKES

It is also important to know if the shotgun has interchangeable chokes or fixed chokes prior to acquiring a shotgun for trap. But what is a choke?



When a shotshell is fired from a shotgun, the pellets leave the barrel and begin to spread or scatter. The farther the pellets travel, the greater the spread of the group of pellets (shot) both in length and diameter. This spread is called the shot string. To control the shot string, shotgun barrels have a choke that will affect the shot pattern when the shot string hits the target.

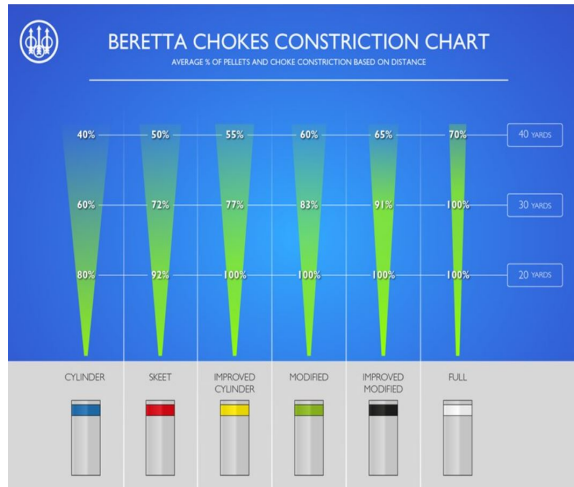


Collierville High School Trap Team



2022 Informational Series #2: Shotgun Overview

8/24/2022



- **Choke:** The degree of narrowing at the muzzle end of the shotgun barrel
- **shot pattern:** The spread of shot pellets after they hit a non-moving target
- **shot string:** The three-dimensional spread of shot pellets after they leave the barrel

There are various types of chokes used in clay sports. These are often chosen based on the type of competition/practice being performed (e.g, Sporting Clays, Trap and Skeet), as well as the preference of the athlete. Changing chokes will become more prevalent with experience of the student athlete.

**** Remember: Interchangeable chokes are required for the CHS Trap Team.**

Do you need to worry about learning how to use the chokes? No. Not for a first-time athlete. Often the interchangeable chokes that comes with the shotgun will be the only thing needed if it is new. As the athlete advances, they will learn the advanced aspects of the types of chokes (Modified, Cylinder, Improved Cylinder, etc.) and how/when to use them. This will not be discussed here.

SHOTGUN ACQUISITION FIRST STEPS: BUDGET

Trap like some other school athletics can be an expensive sport. The shotgun is just the first step. For those new to the sport, a good honest approach with yourself and student is the key point to success.

There are several factors into determining the first shotgun used in trap. The first, and most obvious, is price! Shotguns can range from *free* to \$24,000 or more.

The choice is ultimately that of the parent and student athlete. Often how the gun looks, brand name, used vs new, and price can influence the first gun. Keep in mind, in most cases, the adage “you get what you pay for” **does not always apply**. Correlation to brand name or price will not make the novice an Olympic athlete right away, transversely a budget firearm *has* made Olympic athletes attain success.

Bottom Line: start by narrowing down your options. Decide what you can sensibly afford to spend, remembering that there will be other initial and recurring costs with the firearm itself, such as ammunition.

MOST IMPORTANT: The “fit” of the firearm to the athlete is paramount. **What works for a parent, may not work for the athlete.** People come in all different sizes, and strength. Sometimes the firearm can be too long (length from the trigger to the end of the stock at the shoulder), or too heavy. For example, it may have too long of a barrel length that increases weight. There are many factors in fitting the firearm to the athlete. See the section below concerning this.



Collierville High School Trap Team



2022 Informational Series #2: Shotgun Overview
8/24/2022

FAMILY OR FRIEND SHOTGUNS: FREE

Let's start with *free*. Shotguns that aren't free can start at about \$250 used. Shotguns that aren't used can start around \$400. A "free" gun can help reduce cost.

This can be a family gun, a gun loaned from a friend, etc. Taking this option, sounds great... but still has some considerations:

- The firearm must be available on a continual basis for the athlete to practice and compete with.
 - Switching different firearms during the season can have a negative impact on skill, and accuracy.
- The age/use/maintenance of the gun may play a factor
- **FIT** may be neglected due to the easy availability.

USED SHOTGUNS

When you buy a new gun, the condition isn't even a question. On the other hand, when you buy used, the condition is the only question.

But do not shy away from the used rack. In many cases, there's a good chance of finding a used shotgun in good condition. For the first time used shotgun buyer, always consult an expert in the field, such as a gunsmith or trusted person knowledgeable about shotguns.

Used shotguns also have another benefit. As they are cheaper in cost, if the athlete decides that clay sports is not something they wish to continue – your investment is low. The shotgun can be sold again to recoup some of what you paid for it.

Transversely, if the athlete "out grows" the gun and looks for an upgrade – then the same methodology applies. The original gun could be sold to offset the cost of the "new" gun.

NEW SHOTGUNS

A new shotgun condition is already known. It's new and right from the manufacturer. However, buying the cheapest new shotgun on the rack could have drawbacks. For a variety of reasons, some of these guns may be unsuitable for the task at hand.

- Research the various shotguns in your price range. Know the functionality, and reliability of each of them.

Your athlete will fire more rounds in one year than most folks will shoot in a lifetime, and the firearm may not stand up to this type of use. This is where you must do your homework.

- Ensure that the firearm doesn't have a track record of breakage, manufacture maintenance or warranty claims on low shot counts, or other issues that seem "abnormal" to other shotguns in the same class.



Collierville High School Trap Team



2022 Informational Series #2: Shotgun Overview
8/24/2022

GUN FIT

It cannot be stressed enough to look for firearm that “fits” your athlete best. There is an incomprehensible number of components to fit but as a simple comparison: Think about your first bicycle, your second, third, etc. Each bicycle had to fit with seat height, feet to the pedal, and handlebar reach. With the wrong size bicycle, you could probably ride it, but it wasn’t fun.

It’s this simple: **if the firearm doesn’t fit then they won’t shoot straight.**

The problem is, finding a gun that fits is easier said than done. All of the athletes are not the same size, shape or height. Therefore, each firearm fits differently to the athlete.

At this early stage in your athlete’s career they will be newly learning, or still finding their style. This includes refining techniques and learning a consistent gun mount. As they continue to develop and improve, requirements will change. Some options are below:

- Many guns are available with an adjustable stock (comb, cast, length of pull), it may be worth paying a little extra.
- There are aftermarket kits that can be used to adjust the stock without altering it.
- There are competent gun fitting specialists who can help commercially.
- A gunsmith can alter your stock’s measurements, adding or reducing cast and comb height

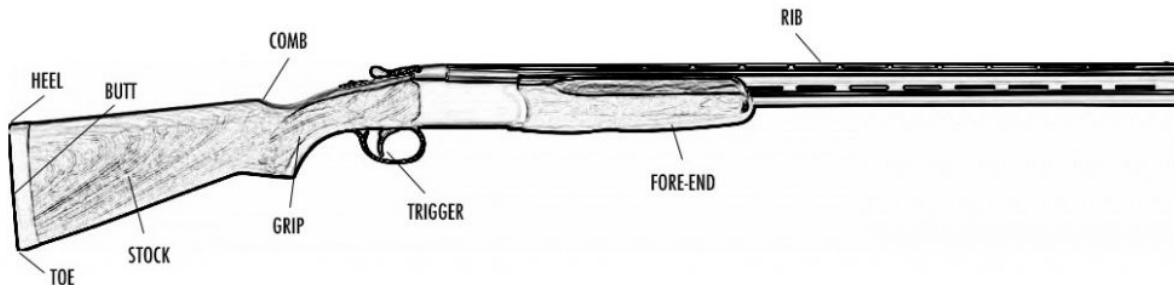
For the new athlete - the following basic information on how to assist in adjusting the firearm fit for the athlete at home (or in the store) is for informational purposes only, and not exhaustive information. Consult a professional where applicable.

GUN FIT: PHYSICAL PARTS

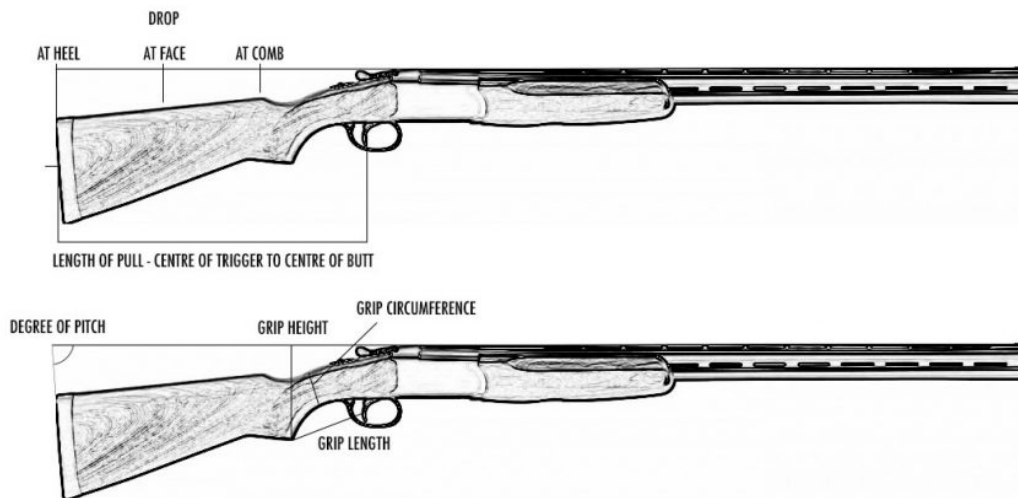
- Knowing the physical parts of the shotgun are important to gun fit
- The measurements between those parts are just as important.



Physical Parts of the Shotgun



Measurements Between Parts



LENGTH OF PULL

This topic is the first and foremost consideration for the first-time athlete. *Drop and cast*, though important, are secondary considerations.

Length or the shotgun length of pull (LOP) is the measurement between the center of the trigger and the center of the butt. Typically, this will range anywhere from 14 1/4" to 15 1/2" for a gun designed to be used by an adult.



Collierville High School Trap Team



2022 Informational Series #2: Shotgun Overview
8/24/2022

A sign that the length is too long is if when mounting the gun, you can't mount the gun into the shoulder pocket but instead it ends up being mounted on the end of your arm.

Another check is to hold the gun by the grip with your bicep by your side but forearm and hand at 90 degrees— if the butt just touches the bottom of your bicep, the length isn't likely to be too far away from where it needs to be. If it doesn't touch the bottom of the bicep, it may be too short for you and if it's too long then it will be immediately obvious. It's worth noting that this is only a quick check and should be used as a rough guide only.

If the stock length is too short, you're likely to feel more recoil and have less control when handling the gun.

YOUTH GUNS

Depending on your athlete and their physical characteristics – simple math will dictate that an adult firearm will not fit them. Therefore, there are youth guns on the market that will accomplish the goal.

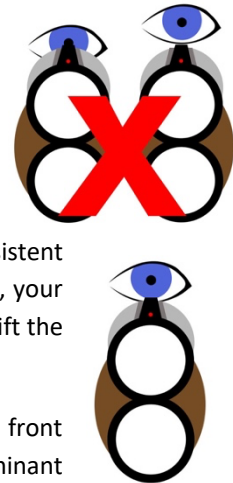
Note: There is a common conundrum when buying a youth gun. Kids grow. Fast. There is a temptation to buy an adult gun that they grow into and save some money. Keep in mind, if they are not provided the proper equipment, the potential for frustration and leaving the sport is magnified.

DROP

NOTE: These are ballpark guidelines to fitting the shotgun with drop and cast. Again, everyone is different, and the athlete will not know for sure where the actual drop and cast is until using the firearm at a pattern board or during practice.

Drop is the measurement that will determine whether your shot pattern lands higher or lower than desired. A stock that is too high can cause you to shoot high and a stock that is set too low can cause you to shoot low. With a low stock, you can also experience inconsistent high and low patterns because of the need to raise the head – when the drop is excessive, your eye will see the top lever which will put you off the target with a natural reaction being to lift the head for a clearer view of what you're looking to shoot.

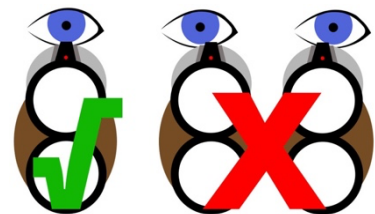
You can go to the trouble of measuring the gun's drop or you can simply mount your gun in front of a mirror (of course it should be proven empty and safe first) and look at where the dominant eye sits in relation to the rib. The iris should sit central and directly on top, like this:



CAST

The cast of the stock is simply the measurement between the central line of the gun and the central line of the stock's butt. Cast can be applied in either direction and is referred to as 'cast on' when the butt ends up being left of the gun's central line and 'cast off' when the butt ends up being to the right of it.

The purpose of cast is to ensure that when the gun is mounted in the correct position, the eye sits centrally over the rib without the need to roll the head to put it there.





Collierville High School Trap Team



2022 Informational Series #2: Shotgun Overview
8/24/2022

BARREL LENGTH

This is a complicated topic, and there are **many** opinions. For the purposes of this section – we will keep it simple:

For the first time athlete, worry about the FIT of the shotgun first. This may often dictate the length of the barrel.

*In all cases of shotgun barrel length – this is based on the **physical characteristics**, and personal style of the athlete as they advance in the sport. Not: what “works for everyone”, what the “experts” say, or what the “trend” is at the time.*

For a new athlete, with all other factors being equal (shell, load, etc.), there is no appreciable advantage in a shotgun with a 32-inch or 34-inch barrel length over one with a 28-inch or 30-inch barrel. In recent years, the trend has been toward longer barrel lengths **without regard to the size and height** of the athlete or balance of the shotgun.

The proportionality and balance of your shotgun should be your primary criteria for determining barrel length. A shotgun that is properly balanced puts the center of gravity of the gun between your hands, so you are able to move the shotgun naturally and efficiently to the target with less physical effort. If the athlete is shorter in stature (under 5’10”) or have a length of pull (LOP) of 14¼ inches or less, you might want to consider sticking with the smaller length barrels.

WRAP UP

As you can see there is a lot that goes into a shotgun purchase, but it doesn’t have to be stressful if you have an idea of what to look for.

- Keep it simple, don’t overwhelm yourself with internet research and “friendly advice”.
- Get your athlete out to a local store and try out various shotguns for fit and see the various action types firsthand.
- Always consult with the team coaching staff concerning your athlete and the shotgun being used.
- Remember not to stress the process. Have fun with it, and your athlete will as well!