

# COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™

## SASS WILD BUNCH Handbook



Compiled and Edited

By

The Wild Bunch

**First Edition**

**January 2009**

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# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY .....	1
SPIRIT of the GAME .....	2
SELECTING an ALIAS.....	2
CLOTHING and ACCOUTERMENTS.....	2
SASS FIREARMS COVENANTS.....	3
ALL FIREARMS.....	4
COSMETIC EMBELLISHMENT .....	4
1911 PISTOL REQUIREMENTS.....	4
TRADITIONAL CATEGORY MODIFICATIONS.....	4
MODERN CATEGORY MODIFICATIONS .....	5
RANGE OPERATIONS .....	6
RIFLE REQUIREMENTS.....	7
HAMMERS, TRIGGERS, AND TRIGGER GUARDS .....	7
BARRELS .....	7
STOCKS AND GRIPS.....	7
SIGHTS .....	7
LEVERS .....	8
FEED / LOADING MECHANISMS .....	8
FIRING PINS.....	8
RANGE OPERATIONS .....	8
SHOTGUN REQUIREMENTS.....	9
HAMMERS / TRIGGERS AND TRIGGER GUARDS .....	9
BARRELS .....	9
STOCKS AND GRIPS.....	9
SIGHTS .....	9
RECOIL REDUCERS.....	9
RANGE OPERATIONS .....	10
HOLSTERS, CARTRIDGE BELTS, and BANDOLEERS .....	10
AMMUNITION .....	11
CATEGORIES.....	11
MODERN.....	11
TRADITIONAL .....	12
SIDE MATCHES .....	12
SHOOTERS AND FIREARMS .....	12
SCORING AND TIMING .....	12
FAILURE TO ENGAGE .....	13
RANGE OPERATIONS .....	13
STAGE CONVENTIONS.....	14
SAFETY PRACTICES .....	15
OUTLAWED .....	20

## SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

### Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

## SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

The Single Action Shooting Society is an international organization created to preserve and promote the fast growing sport of Cowboy Action Shooting™ and SASS Wild Bunch Matches. SASS endorses Regional matches conducted by affiliated clubs and annually produces END of TRAIL, the World Championship of Cowboy Action Shooting & Wild West Jubilee™.

SASS Wild Bunch Action Shooting is a multifaceted amateur shooting sport in which contestants compete with firearms typical of those used in the taming of the Old West just after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: 1911 semi-auto pistols, lever action rifles, and 1897 pump shotguns. The shooting competition is staged in a unique, characterized, Old West style.

Contestants shoot in several one-to-three gun stages (courses of fire) in which they engage steel and/or cardboard targets. Scoring is based on accuracy and speed.

The truly unique aspect of SASS Wild Bunch Action Shooting™ is the requirement placed on authentic period or western screen dress. Each participant is required to adopt a shooting alias appropriate to a character or profession of the late 19th century, or a Hollywood western star, and develop a costume accordingly.

Your SASS shooting alias is exclusively yours. In the tradition of the Old West cattle brand registries, SASS prohibits one shooter duplicating another's alias. There is only one Tex, one Kid Curry, and one Loophole Pettifogger.

SASS affiliated clubs are required to respect the sanctity of SASS members' aliases and shooter numbers, using them in their articles for publication in *The Cowboy Chronicle* and giving them preference over local club members who are not SASS members and are using a duplicate alias.

American history buffs and serious shooters alike agree the use of vintage firearms, authentic costuming, unique targets, and fast action make Cowboy Action Shooting™ one of the most interesting of all shooting sports for both spectator and contestant.

This Handbook includes the specific rules, regulations, and general guidelines adopted by the Single Action Shooting Society. The SASS Range Operations Basic Course and SASS Range Officer Training Course offer an in-depth interpretation and further clarification of these rules along with applicable penalties. The very latest version of the Shooters Handbook can always be found on the SASS web site, [www.sassnet.com](http://www.sassnet.com). It is the intention and hope of SASS these requirements will serve to preserve and protect Cowboy Action Shooting™ from the gimmickry and technical gamesmanship that have had such a negative effect on other shooting disciplines. The founders of SASS believe END of TRAIL and club and annual matches are as much an opportunity for fun and fellowship as they are shooting competitions.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

### **SPIRIT OF THE GAME**

As the game of SASS Wild Bunch Action Shooting™ has evolved from Cowboy Action Shooting™, our members have developed and adopted an attitude towards their participation we call “The Spirit of the Game.” Competing in The Spirit of the Game means you fully participate in what the competition asks. You do not look for ways to create an advantage out of what is or is not stated as a rule or shooting procedure. Some folks would call The Spirit of the Game nothing more than good sportsmanship. Whatever you call it, if you don’t have it, Cowboy Action Shooting™ is not your game.

A “spirit of the game” infraction occurs when a competitor willfully or intentionally disregards the stage instructions in order to obtain a competitive advantage (i.e., taking the penalty would result in a lower score or faster time than following the instructions) and is not assessed simply because a competitor “makes a mistake.” In such a case, in addition to any penalties for misses, a 30-second failure to engage/Spirit of the Game penalty is assessed. Shooting ammunition that does not meet the power factor or minimum velocity is also a “spirit of the game” infraction. Two “spirit of the game” penalties within a match will result in a Match Disqualification.

### **SELECTING AN ALIAS**

Every SASS member is required to select a shooting alias representative of a character or profession from the Old West or the western film genre. Your alias may not in any way duplicate or easily be confused with any other member’s alias. SASS headquarters is the final arbiter of whether an alias is acceptable or not.

These rules are enforced in accepting a new alias for SASS registry:

- It must be “printable” before a wide audience.
- No duplications are permitted.
- If it SOUNDS the same, it is the same.
- Adding “too,” “II,” etc. is not acceptable.
- “Ranger” could become “Texas Ranger” but not “The Ranger.” “John Henry Chisum” could be modified to “Jack Chisum” but not “John H. Chisum” or “Jon Henry Chisum.”
- Historical names may not be modified to make them different. “Wyatt Earp” and “Marshal Wyatt Earp” are considered the same.

The SASS Alias Registry changes daily. Telephone, fax, or email the SASS office to confirm the availability of your alias choice.

If an acceptable alias is not selected, the member’s SASS number will be used. All subsequent name changes are subject to a “name change fee.”

### **CLOTHING AND ACCOUTERMENTS**

SASS Wild Bunch Action Shooting is a combination of historical reenactment and Saturday morning at the matinee. Participants may choose the style of costume they wish to wear, but all clothing must be typical of the late 19th century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century cowboy and

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

military. Emphasis is put on period US military from 1900 to 1916. Period western dress is allowed such as Pike, Dutch, Lyle, or Tector in the closing scene of the Wild Bunch movie (e.g., Western style pants with suspenders, and long sleeve western shirt). Vests are optional. Jeans are not allowed. Boots must be SASS legal. Hats must be worn and must be made of felt, no straw hats. Mexican dress is also appropriate

SASS puts a great deal of emphasis on costuming because it adds so much to the uniqueness of our game and helps create a festive, informal atmosphere that supports the friendly, fraternal feeling we encourage in our competitors.

All shooters must be in costume, and we encourage invited guests and family also to be costumed. **Shooters must remain in costume at all match events: dinners, award ceremonies, dances, etcetera.**

ALL clothing and equipment MUST be worn appropriately, how it was intended, and how it would have been worn in the OLD WEST or as seen on B-Western movies and television.

## SASS FIREARMS COVENANTS

SASS Wild Bunch Action Shooting competitions are divided into two separate types of matches: main and side matches. The rules regarding SASS approved firearms depend upon the type of competition in which you are participating.

Original and replicas may be used in competition provided they are in good, safe working order. In each of the respective sections, allowed modifications are listed. Just because a manufacturer designs a part or firearm for this sport or just because a firearm was available, does not necessarily mean it is legal for competition. Only the modifications referenced here as allowed are approved. All others are illegal. As any firearm related sport can be inherently dangerous, SASS does not recommend or suggest the modification of any firearm or the removal of any safety device. Participants in this sport accept responsibility for the use and/or modifications of their firearms and do not depend upon SASS or any of its affiliated clubs or members to make that judgment for them. Please consult with the firearm manufacturer prior to making any firearm modifications. Firearms must operate as intended by the original designs they depict. Firearms must function in a safe manner.

SASS recognizes the desire to enhance firearm performance. Firearm manufacturers, importers, gunsmiths, and the membership as a whole must use caution in any quest to develop mechanisms designed to enhance the operation of firearms for SASS Wild Bunch Action Shooting. Any firearm modification not referenced in this Handbook is prohibited. Parties interested in having modifications, parts, or firearms considered for approval and inclusion in the SASS accepted modification text can request a Firearms Modification Consideration application from SASS. Written receipt of acceptance from SASS will be the ONLY source of approval. Unless referenced within these Covenants, any modifications, parts, or firearms used without this approval are illegal.

A stage disqualification is issued for each stage in which a non-SASS legal firearm is used.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

### **ALL FIREARMS**

- All firearms must be designed to fire by use of an impact mechanism such as required by centerfire primers. All other firing mechanisms are illegal.
- Internal modifications not referenced here that cannot be seen while the firearm is at rest (action closed) are allowed provided they do not affect the external operation or directly conflict with one of the modifications listed here.
- Modifying the firing, cocking, chambering, or levering mechanism to long guns in any way that changes the process from an entirely manual operation to any other style operation (e.g., blowback operation, gas operation, or recoil operation) is expressly prohibited.
- All firearms may be repaired and/or restored to their original condition.
- Replacement parts may be made from materials other than the original unless such material is specifically prohibited.
- All parts may be smoothed, reprofiled, polished, deburred, or replaced provided they are not prohibited in these Covenants.
- Factory screws may be replaced with socket head cap or other type screws.
- Frames and receivers may be drilled and tapped (such as to accept approved type sights).

### **COSMETIC EMBELLISHMENT**

- Period style tacks, carving, engraving, checkering, inlays, and other such embellishments are allowed on stocks and grips provided they do not constitute any kind of radical or target type grip enhancement. (See specific requirements for pistols.)
- Receiver, frame, grip frame, or barrel engraving is permitted provided it does not constitute a grip enhancement.
- No portion of the grip frame may be checkered, stippled, serrated, or otherwise modified to constitute a grip enhancement.
- A light bead blasted finish may be applied to the exterior of any SASS firearm.
- Metal surfaces may retain their natural color or be blued, browned, plated (such as nickel, gold, or silver), blacked, color case hardened, aged to a patina type finish, or jeweled.

### **1911 PISTOL REQUIREMENTS**

Full size single stack steel frame 1911 style semi-auto pistol in .45 ACP caliber. No more than one main match pistol may be carried to the firing line.

#### **TRADITIONAL CATEGORY MODIFICATIONS**

- Barrel length must be five inches. No barrel porting or compensators or other recoil reducing devices allowed.
- Barrel with standard barrel bushing. No Bull barrels allowed.
- Magazine wells may be beveled, but may not be oversized, extended, or flared.
- Only non-adjustable “military style” dove-tail rear sights and blade type front sights allowed.
- No sight inserts or colored sights allowed. Sights must be black or blued.
- Stainless steel is permitted. Stainless pistols may have stainless sights.

## SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

### Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

- Grips must be GI-style wood or plastic grips. Other natural materials are allowed but no rubber grips. No target style or thumb rests allowed.
- Only rear slide checkering or serrations. No front slide checkering or serrations.
- No external “rib” allowed on top of slide.
- Magazines must be standard length and cannot hold more than eight rounds. No extended base pads on magazines.
- Only standard grip safeties. No beavertail style grip safeties.
- Standard length magazine release. May not be extended or oversized.
- Standard thumb safeties only. May not be extended.
- Standard slide release. May not be extended.
- Standard recoil spring and guide. No full-length guide rods allowed.
- Short or long solid trigger permitted. No match triggers allowed.
- Flat or arched mainspring housings permitted.
- Lowered and flared ejection port is allowed ONLY if factory original. Standard ejection ports may not be modified.
- Checkered front strap or trigger guard not allowed.
- Standard spur type hammer only.
- Lanyard loop is optional.
- Internal accurizing and action tuning is allowed.
- Thumb and grip safeties must function correctly.
- 
- Note: “Standard” in all cases means Standard Military Specs.

#### **MODERN CATEGORY MODIFICATIONS**

- Barrel length must be at least five inches. No barrel porting or compensators or other recoil reducing devices allowed.
- Barrel with standard barrel bushing. No Bull barrels allowed.
- Magazine wells may be beveled, but may not be oversized, extended or flared.
- Adjustable or non-adjustable dove-tail rear sights and blade type front sights are allowed.
- Sights may not be optical or fiber optic. Colored inserts or dots are permitted.
- Stainless steel is permitted.
- Grips must be wood, plastic or other natural materials. No target style grips or thumb rests allowed.
- Front and rear slide checkering or serrations allowed.
- Extended beavertail grip safeties allowed.
- Magazines must be standard length and cannot hold more than eight rounds. No extended base pads on magazines.
- Magazine release may be extended but not oversized.
- Thumb safeties may be extended and be ambidextrous.
- Slide release may be extended.
- Full-length recoil spring guide rod allowed.
- Lowered and flared ejection port allowed.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

- Match trigger allowed.
- Lanyard loop is optional.
- Lightweight competition hammer allowed.
- Checkered front strap and trigger guard allowed.
- Flat or arched mainspring housing allowed.
- Internal accurizing and action tuning is allowed.
- Thumb and grip safeties must function correctly.

### **RANGE OPERATIONS**

- The 1911 must be restaged safely at the end of each shooting string with the slide locked open, unless the 1911 is the last firearm used. It may contain an empty magazine or no magazine when restaged. (Failure to comply, SDQ. Per SASS rules, the shooter has until firing the next firearm to correct without penalty.)
- Magazines may be loaded at any time.
- Magazines shall be loaded with only five rounds. (Overloading, MSV)
- Dropped loaded or unloaded magazines may not be picked up until the course of fire is completed. (Failure to comply, MSV)
- Movement is allowed with the 1911 in hand with the slide closed on an empty chamber with no magazine or a loaded/empty magazine until the pistol is first charged during the stage.
- When moving with the 1911 in hand, after the pistol has been charged, the slide must be locked open and the trigger finger must be outside the trigger guard. (Trigger finger, MSV; slide closed, SDQ)
- Changing magazines on the move is allowed as long as the slide remains locked open and the trigger finger remains out of the trigger guard until at least one foot reaches the shooting position. (Trigger finger, MSV; slide closed, SDQ)
- At the end of the course of fire the 1911 must be shown clear on the firing line. Under the supervision of the TO or other match official, the magazine is removed, slide cycled if not locked open, and the chamber checked. Then the slide is closed to battery, and the hammer is dropped before holstering. (Failure to comply, SDQ)
- Operations at the loading table:
  - A magazine will be inserted in the 1911, the slide NOT cycled, and the pistol reholstered. (Magazine not inserted, NO CALL; slide cycled, SDQ unless corrected before leaving shooter's hands)
- On the firing line:
  - Unless specifically instructed otherwise, a live round will be chambered in the pistol on the clock when needed in the firing sequence.
  - All reloads shall be from slide lock. (Failure to do so, MSV)
- Operations at the unloading table:
  - The already cleared pistol shall remain holstered.



# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

### **RIFLE REQUIREMENTS**

Rifles or carbines used in the main and team matches must be original or replicas of lever or slide action rifles manufactured during the period from approximately 1860 until 1899, incorporating a tubular magazine and exposed hammer. Rifles with box magazines may not be used. Rifle must be in .40 caliber or larger.

#### **HAMMERS, TRIGGERS, AND TRIGGER GUARDS**

- Hammers may be replaced or exchanged with hammers designed for the same firearm.
- Triggers may be profiled to narrow their width.
- Trigger position may be adjusted.
- Trigger shoes are not allowed.

#### **BARRELS**

- Original barrels may be replaced with new barrels of correct styles for that particular model firearm.
- Barrels may be shortened and/or crowned.
- Barrels must maintain a length of at least 16 inches.
- Barrels may be altered to accept mounting hardware for an alternative tube magazine configuration and capacity appropriate to the model of firearm being altered.
- Barrels may be altered to accept period style sights as described within the Sights Section.
- Barrels must be made of steel or iron only.
- Visible counter-weighting devices are not allowed.
- Compensating ports are not allowed.

#### **STOCKS AND GRIPS**

- The length or style of stock may be altered or replaced (e.g., a carbine style stock may be interchanged for a rifle stock and vice-versa).
- Checkering, carving, or laser engraving is allowed on fore-stocks, and buttstocks.
- A permanently fitted, non-adjustable, lace on, or slip on recoil pad is allowed on the buttstock of rifles.
- Buttplates may be changed to a buttplate style that was generally available from the original manufacturer.
- A piece of leather or similar natural material may be attached to the buttplate or butt stock.
- Grips or stocks of simulated or natural materials are acceptable provided they are not customized to constitute a “target” grip or stock. That is, they must be of the same basic shape as grips or stocks found on original firearms.
- Contemporary rubber grips, modern target grips, grip tape, and the like are not allowed.

#### **SIGHTS**

- Tang mounted rear sights may utilize changeable “peep” apertures and eyecups.
- No bolt or receiver mounted sight is permitted.
- Dovetails may be milled in the barrel for sight replacement.
- Beech style front sights and sight hoods are allowed.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

- Front sights may include a bead or insert of steel, iron, ivory, faux ivory, brass, gold, pewter, copper, or silver. The bead or insert shall be the color of the material.
- Rear sights may utilize an insert of the same color as the rear sight to allow easy sight adjustment.
- Ramp style front sights are allowed if original to the firearm.
- Modern style click adjustable barrel or receiver sights are not allowed.

### **LEVERS**

- “John Wayne” style levers may be substituted on rifles for the standard factory lever.
- Levers may be wrapped or padded with leather or other natural material.
- Filler “blocks” or other such mechanisms designed to prevent all or drastically limit movement of the fingers within the lever loop are not allowed.
- With the exception of the “John Wayne” levers, any replacement lever must maintain the same basic contour and size as the original lever.
- The lever may be cut and welded provided the basic exterior contour and size is not changed.
- The exchange of an 1873 rifle lever with an 1866 rifle lever is allowed.
- All lever action rifles must have a lever travel distance of not less than 4-1/8 inches when measured as follows:

*With the action closed, measure three inches back from the back edge of the trigger at the point where it enters the frame. Mark this point on both the bottom of the buttstock and the lever opposite the buttstock mark. Open the lever to its maximum extension and measure the distance between the two marks.*

### **FEED / LOADING MECHANISMS**

- The carrier and/or lifter mechanisms in rifles may be lightened, welded, modified, or replaced.

### **FIRING PINS**

- The length of the firing pin may be extended.
- The visible contour of the rear portion of firing pins or firing pin extensions may not be altered.
- Friction reducing devices such as roller bearings are not allowed on the rear portion of firing pins or firing pin extensions.

### **RANGE OPERATIONS**

- Rifles must be loaded with the correct number of rounds at the loading table with the hammer fully down on an empty chamber. (Overloading, MSV)
- Rifles are always staged muzzle down range, loaded, with the action closed and hammer fully down on an empty chamber, unless otherwise instructed. If vertically staged the muzzle must be tilted down range.
- After the shooting string, rifles are made safe with muzzle down range and action open and empty.
- Must be check cleared at the unloading table. (Not following Loading and Unloading procedures, SDQ)

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

### SHOTGUN REQUIREMENTS

Any 1897 Winchester pump in 12 gauge, original or replica. Civilian or Military style is allowed.

#### HAMMERS / TRIGGERS AND TRIGGER GUARDS

- Hammers may be replaced or exchanged with hammers designed for the same firearm.
- Shotgun triggers may be profiled to narrow their width.
- Shotgun trigger position may be adjusted.
- Shotgun trigger guards may be wrapped with leather or other natural material.
- Trigger shoes are not allowed.

#### BARRELS

- Original barrels may be replaced with new barrels of correct styles for that particular model firearm.
- Shotgun barrels may be shortened and/or crowned.
- Shotgun barrels may be altered to accept mounting hardware for an alternative tube magazine configuration and capacity appropriate to the model being altered.
- Shotgun barrels must maintain a length of at least 18 inches.
- Shotgun barrels may have internal choke tubes installed provided they do not extend beyond the muzzle.
- Shotgun barrels must be made of steel or iron only.
- Visible counter-weighting devices are not allowed.
- Compensating ports are not allowed.

#### STOCKS AND GRIPS

- The length or style of stock on a shotgun may be altered or replaced.
- Checkering, carving, or laser engraving is allowed on fore-stocks, buttstocks, and grips.
- A permanently fitted, non-adjustable, lace on, or slip on recoil pad is allowed on the buttstock of rifles and shotguns.
- Buttplates may be changed to a buttplate style that was generally available from the original manufacturer.
- A piece of leather or similar natural material may be attached to the buttplate or butt stock.
- Grips or stocks of simulated or natural materials are acceptable provided they are not customized to constitute a “target” grip or stock. That is, they must be of the same basic shape as grips or stocks found on original firearms.
- Contemporary rubber grips, modern target grips, grip tape, and the like are not allowed.
- Leather on a pump shotgun’s fore end or grip surface is not allowed.

#### SIGHTS

- Front sights may be bead or simple post types.

#### RECOIL REDUCERS

- Internal recoil reducing devices may be added.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

### **RANGE OPERATIONS**

- Shotgun magazines may be loaded with up to the correct number of rounds for the target sequence. Any additional rounds needed must be loaded from the body or other specified staging position. (Overloading, MSV)
- Loaded shotguns must be staged with the action closed, hammer down on an empty chamber. (Failure to comply, SDQ)
- Unloaded shotguns may be staged with the action open.
- The shotgun magazine will be loaded after closing the action and lowering the hammer on an empty chamber. (Failure to load, NO CALL; overloading, MSV; closing action after loading, SDQ unless corrected before leaving shooter's hands)
- Must be check cleared at the unloading table. (Not following Loading and Unloading procedures, SDQ)
- 

ANY EXTERNAL MODIFICATION TO ANY FIREARM NOT SPECIFICALLY REFERENCED IN THIS HANDBOOK IS EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED!

### **HOLSTERS, CARTRIDGE BELTS, AND BANDOLEERS**

- All pistols must be carried in a safe holster capable of retaining the firearm throughout a normal range of motion.
- Ammunition required for reloads during the course of any stage must be carried on the shooter's person in a bandoleer, cartridge/shotshell belt loop, pouch, holster, or pocket or be safely staged as required by stage instructions. Rifle and pistol ammunition may not be carried in a shotshell loop. No ammunition may be carried in the mouth, ears, nose, cleavage, or any other bodily orifice.
- Bandoleers, cartridge belts, and pouches must be of traditional design (e.g., bandoleers must be loose and not secured in any way to prevent movement). Modern drop pouches, combat style shotgun loops, wrist or forearm bandoleers, and such are not allowed. Pouches shall have a flap and must carry their contents loose, with no special provisions to organize the contents for rapid retrieval. Leather belt slide ammo loops are acceptable; however, shotgun shell slides may not be worn over shotgun belts. Shotgun loops must be in a single row.
- Cartridge loops must not have a metal or plastic liner. However, the entire loop may be made of metal.
- Shotgun ammo loops may not accommodate more than two rounds per loop, and rifle/pistol ammo loops shall accommodate only one round per loop.
- Ammo belts must be worn so all ammo is positioned at or below the belly button.
- Shotgun ammo loops must conform to the shooters contour (i.e., not tilt out from the belt).
- Cartridge loops mounted on a firearm's stock or forearm are not allowed.
- Holsters and magazine pouches must be of traditional or military design and made from traditional materials, (e.g., canvas or leather).
- The holster must cover the entire length of the barrel and completely cover ejection port. No open front speed holsters allowed.
- If a holster has a flap or strap they need not be closed during competition.
- No metal or plastic "competition" type equipment allowed.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

- No shoulder or cross-draw holsters may be used during competition.
- Magazine pouches must be worn on the opposite side of the body from the handgun.
- Magazine pouches must be worn vertical.
- Magazine pouches can hold either one or two magazines.
- At least two inches of the magazine must be covered by the magazine pouch.

### AMMUNITION

The minimum standard for center-fire smokeless ammunition used in all SASS Wild Bunch Action Shooting competitions is not less than a minimum power factor of 150. The maximum velocity standard for pistols is 1000 fps. The maximum velocity standard for rifles is 1400 fps. Not meeting ammunition standards is a Spirit of the Game Penalty.

Power factors are simply calculated by multiplying the bullet weight times the velocity and then the resulting number is divided by 1000. Some examples are as follows:

200 gr bullet traveling at 750 fps has a power factor of 150:  $(200 \times 750) / 1000 = 150.00$

250 gr bullet traveling at 800 fps has a power factor of 200  $(250 \times 800) / 1000 = 200.00$

- Shooters may be held responsible for damage caused to a target or injury to personnel due to “bounce back” because of inappropriate ammunition. This major safety violation is grounds for “instant disqualification” and ejection from the match.
- Pistol and rifle ammunition may not be jacketed, semi-jacketed, plated, gas checked, or copper washed. It must be all lead. Molydisulfide coated bullets or equivalent are acceptable.
- Pistol and rifle ammunition must be of “single projectile” design. “Multiple projectile” bullets are illegal.
- Ammunition with bullets recessed below the case mouth is disallowed.
- Pistol and rifle ammunition must have a minimum bullet weight of 180gr (11.66 grams).
- Shotgun shot size must be number six lead birdshot or smaller for all events (no steel or plated shot).
- Magnum and high velocity shotgun shell loads are not allowed.
- Shotgun shells shall not be sized down by the use of any die not manufactured for the specific gauge.
- Shotgun Shell shall not be scored (ringed) as to cause the shot-shell case, wad, and shot column to be shot from the firearm as one projectile

### CATEGORIES

SASS Wild Bunch Matches recognize two basic shooting categories based on the 1911 pistol. The two categories are Modern and Traditional. Requirements are as follows:

#### MODERN

- Modern and Traditional style pistols are allowed.
- May be shot in any shooting style.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

- Any legal rifle or shotgun may be used.

### **TRADITIONAL**

- Only traditional style pistols are allowed.
- Must be shot one handed unsupported. Weak hand may be used for loading, racking slide, and in case of malfunctions.
- Any legal rifle or shotgun may be used.
- Other category variations may include Ladies categories, Traditional Category using any shooting style, and so forth.

## **SIDE MATCHES**

### **SHOOTERS AND FIREARMS**

- Four shooters on a team. One each as Pike, Dutch, Lyle, and Tector.
- Firearms for Pike: 1911 pistol and 1897 shotgun.
- Firearms for Dutch: SASS Cowboy Action Shooting™ main match revolvers and 1897 shotgun.
- Firearms for Lyle: 1911 and SASS main match rifle.
- Firearms for Tector: SASS Cowboy Action Shooting™ main match revolvers and SASS main match rifle.
- 
- Side Match may be shot by all competitors with their main match costuming but to be true to the characters of the movie the following is a recommendation:
- 
- Pike: Dark pants, light colored long sleeve shirt, dark vest, SASS legal boots, and hat.
- Dutch: Dark pants, light colored long sleeve shirt, dark vest, SASS legal boots, and hat.
- Lyle: Dark pants, light colored long sleeve shirt, NO vest, SASS legal boots, and hat optional.
- Tector: Dark pants, light colored long sleeve shirt, dark vest, SASS legal boots, and hat.

## **SCORING AND TIMING**

SASS matches are scored based upon elapsed shooting time and added penalty points for missed targets. Each stage is scored individually and, in most club matches, the total combined score for all stages fired is ranked for place of finish, either over all or by category.

At END of TRAIL, the World Championship, rank scoring is used. Rank scoring is recommended when all the stages in a match are not of approximately the same duration and degree of difficulty. The alternative to rank scoring is scoring based upon total time (total raw time plus penalties).

Overall winners, often including both the top male and top female competitors, are traditionally recognized at SASS matches. The “best score” for the main match stages determines the overall winner.

## SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

### Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

Rifle, pistol, and shotgun targets must be engaged with the appropriate type firearm. A “miss” is defined as the failure to hit the appropriate target type using the appropriate type firearm. Missed targets are scored as five-second additions to the competitor’s raw time for the stage (at annual matches and above).

Procedurals are unintentional “mistakes” where the competitor engages the stage in a manner other than the way it is supposed to be shot. Procedurals are scored as ten-second additions to the competitor’s raw time for the stage, no more than one per stage.

Minor safety infractions occurring during a course of fire that do not directly endanger persons result in a ten-second penalty being added to the shooter’s time per occurrence for that stage. “Minor” safety infractions are occurrences such as failure to open a long gun’s action at the conclusion of a shooting string or failure to return a handgun to its holster at the conclusion of a shooting string.

Major safety infractions result in the shooter’s disqualification from the stage or the match. A second Stage Disqualification in the match will result in a Match Disqualification. “Major” infractions include a dropped gun, an accidental discharge that impacts within ten-feet of any person (an impact within five-feet is a match disqualification), violation of the 170 degree safety rule, “sweeping” any person with the muzzle of a firearm, and similar acts that have high potential for personal injury.

In the event a competitor feels a range officer’s ruling is in error, the ruling may be politely and immediately appealed to the Range Master/Match Director. The Range Master/Match Director will consider the appeal on grounds of policy and rules interpretation only, and their decision is final. At major matches special protest juries comprised of Territorial Governors may be empanelled to aid the Range Master/Match Director in making a reasonable judgment.

### **FAILURE TO ENGAGE**

A “failure to engage” occurs when a competitor willfully or intentionally disregards the stage instructions in order to obtain a competitive advantage and is not assessed simply because a competitor “makes a mistake.” A Failure to Engage applies only to non-shooting situations such as refusing to rope a steer, throw a stick of dynamite, or otherwise make an attempt to complete any other non-shooting procedure written within the stage instructions. In such a case, in addition to any penalties for misses, a 30-second failure to engage/Spirit of the Game penalty is assessed.

### **RANGE OPERATIONS**

SASS Wild Bunch Action Shooting™ is not intended to be a precision shooting competition. Small targets and long distances take the “action” out of the game and make it more discouraging for newer shooters.

Both experienced and inexperienced shooters want hits on their targets. Some folks just hit (or miss) a little faster than others. Too many misses, or the perception the targets are too difficult to hit, discourage folks from continuing to play, especially the less proficient shooters.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

Ask any experienced SASS Wild Bunch Action Shooter, and she or he will tell you there is no such thing as a target too big or too close to miss!

A more detailed guide to match design is available in the SASS Match Directors Guide.

Metal and paper targets of generous size are used. Reactive targets such as pepper poppers and falling plates are used when practical to enhance shooter feedback and spectator appeal. Targets are set at close to medium range. There are no absolute rules, but we suggest the following distances, by firearm, if using a target approximately 16" X 16":

Pistol – 7 to 10 yards                  Shotgun – 8 to 16 yards                  Rifle – 13 to 50 yards

SASS matches above the club level are “no alibi” matches. Once the first round goes down range, the competitor is committed to the stage and must finish the stage to the best of his or her ability. Reshoots/restarts are not awarded for ammunition or firearm malfunctions. However, if there is a range failure (failure of props, timer, or the range officers) beyond the competitor’s control, a restart may be granted. On a reshoot/restart, the competitor starts over clean, carrying only accrued safety penalties forward. Restarts shall be allowed for a competitor to achieve a “clean” start up to the point at which the first round goes down range. Multiple restarts by the same shooter, that in the judgment of the R.O are seen to be taking advantage, will not be entertained as they are not in the spirit of the game.

The role of the Range Officer is to safely assist the shooter through the course of fire. Coaching and constraining the shooter from unsafe acts are expected when appropriate, minimizing procedural and safety penalties whenever possible. Proper coaching or no coaching at all is not considered RO Interference and therefore will never be grounds for a re-shoot.

Failure to stage guns or ammunition at the designated position(s)/location(s) is the fault of the competitor and scored as a procedural unless the competitor is able to correct the situation, unassisted, while in the process of completing the stage under time.

It is expected the Range Officers will be the responsible parties for observing and resolving all safety related matters occurring in the loading, unloading, and firing line areas. However, any shooter who observes a safety infraction not seen by the Range Officer(s) should call the infraction to the Range Officer’s attention, at which time the matter will be resolved.

## STAGE CONVENTIONS

Stage Conventions or standard range behaviors are a list of practices every shooter is expected to know and follow on every stage. These stage conventions should be followed in all SASS matches unless otherwise directed in stage descriptions.

1. All knockdown shotgun targets may be reengaged until down.
2. All knockdown targets (shotgun, rifle, or pistol) must go down to count.
3. All staged guns shall have their barrels pointed safely down range. All long guns initially staged on a horizontal flat surface shall be staged lying flat where at least the rear of the trigger guard is on the staging area. All handguns initially staged on a horizontal flat surface must be staged with the entire handgun lying flat on the staging surface.
4. Shooters may not start a stage with ammunition in hand.
5. Long guns will be discarded open and empty with their barrels pointed safely down range.



# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

6. Pistols are shown clear on the firing line at the end of the stage prior to holstering.
7. Safe gun handling is the shooter's responsibility. The 170-degree safety rule is in effect.
8. If no starting position is given the shooter shall stand fully erect with pistol holstered, hands at the side not touching any firearm.
9. Cowboy port arms is defined as standing fully erect with the butt of the long gun at or below the waist of the shooter, the muzzle at or above the shoulder, and the long gun held with both hands.
10. Interpersonal Conflicts WILL NOT be tolerated.

## SAFETY PRACTICES

### FIRST, LAST, AND ALWAYS

Our sport, by its very nature, has the potential to be dangerous and a serious accident can occur. Every participant in a SASS match is expected to be a safety officer. Each shooter's first responsibility is for his or her own safe conduct, but all shooters are expected to remain alert for actions by others that are unsafe.

Any Range Officer or shooter may confront any participant about an observed unsafe situation, and it is expected the matter will quickly be corrected and not repeated. Any argument concerning the correction of a safety related matter can be expected to result in that shooter being ejected from the range.

Illegal equipment penalties are not awarded backwards. If a shooter is found to have illegal equipment, no penalty will be assessed for the stage(s) already completed.

If a Range Officer elects not to penalize a shooter that has not complied with a rule, the effect is penalizing all other match participants that did comply.

1. Every firearm must be treated with respect! Covering or sweeping an individual or group with the muzzle of an empty gun will result in a Stage Disqualification. Covering or sweeping an individual or group with the muzzle of a loaded gun will result in a Match Disqualification. Handling guns away from the firing line should be avoided but, if necessary, should be limited to safe areas.
2. Long guns will have their actions open with chambers and magazines empty and muzzles pointed in a safe direction when being carried to designate loading area and to and from the unloading area for each stage. Chambers and magazines must be empty and actions open for all firearms transported at a match. Muzzle direction is important between, before, and after shooting a stage. A muzzle must not be allowed to "sweep" the other participants between stages, or when moving the firearms from the gun cart to the loading tables. The muzzles of all long guns must be maintained in a safe direction (generally "up" and slightly down range), even when returning to the unloading table. A holstered pistol (loaded or empty) with the hammer fully down on an empty chamber is considered safe and may not be interpreted as sweeping another shooter while safely secured in the holster. Failure to manage safe muzzle direction, even though no individual is swept, is grounds for Stage Disqualification, and for repeated offenses, Match Disqualification.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

3. All firearms will remain unloaded except while under direct observation of a designated person on the firing line or in the designated loading and unloading areas. Failure to adhere to loading and unloading procedures will result in a Stage Disqualification. Leaving the unloading table without clearing all firearms is failure to adhere to unloading procedures and will result in the penalty being assessed on the stage where the infraction was committed.
4. No cocked loaded pistol may ever leave a shooter's hand (Stage Disqualification). This also means from one hand to the other.
5. The 1911 must be restaged safely at the end of each shooting string with the slide locked open, unless the 1911 is the last firearm used. It may contain an empty magazine or no magazine when restaged. (Failure to comply, SDQ; per SASS rules the shooter has until firing the next firearm to correct without penalty.) At the end of the course of fire the 1911 must be shown clear on the firing line. Under the supervision of the TO or other match official the magazine is removed, slide cycled if not locked open, and the chamber checked. Then the slide is closed to battery, and the hammer is dropped before holstering. (Failure to comply, SDQ)
6. De-cocking may not be done to avoid a penalty if cocked at the wrong time, position or location. NO gun may be de-cocked on the firing line except by pointing it down range and pulling the trigger or while under the direct supervision of a stage officer. The penalty for de-cocking is a Stage Disqualification.
7. Once a pistol is cocked, either the round under the hammer must be expended or the action must be locked open and the chambered round ejected in order to return the pistol to a safe condition. Once a rifle is cocked, either the round under the hammer must be expended or the action opened in order for the rifle to be returned to a safe condition. Shotgun shells may be removed without penalty to return the firearm to a safe condition.
8. If a firearm is shot out of sequence or from the wrong position or location, the shooter will be awarded a single procedural penalty. In this situation, if the shooter elects or is forced to miss an appropriate target due to unsafe angles or target availability, a round may be reloaded to avoid a miss penalty (the dreaded "Double Jeopardy" of a procedure and a miss). This does not mean a shooter may reload a rifle or pistol at any other time to make up a miss. Rifle rounds may be reloaded to replace unfired, ejected rounds.
9. Safe conditions of firearms during a course of fire are as follows:
  - Pistol
  - Safe for movement in hand prior to the first charging.
    - Slide closed on an empty chamber with no magazine or loaded/empty magazine.
  - Safe for movement in hand after the first charging.
    - Slide locked open, empty magazine or no magazine.  
Safe to leave the shooters hand.
    - Slide locked open, empty magazine or no magazine.
  - Safe for re-holstering.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

- Slide closed on an empty chamber with no magazine. Only after RO Inspection at firing line.
  - Rifle
    - Safe to leave the shooters hands.
      - Empty, action open
      - Hammer fully down on an empty chamber or spent round, action closed (restaged for further use)
    - Safe for movement rifle in hand only
      - Hammer fully down on an expended round, action closed
      - Action open, round on carrier or in chamber
  - Shotgun
    - Safe to leave the shooters hands.
      - Empty, action open
    - Safe for movement shotgun in hand only
      - Action open, round in chamber or on carrier
      - Hammer(s) fully down on empty chamber(s) or expended round(s), action closed.
10. The shooter with firearm in hand shall never be allowed to move with a live round under a cocked hammer. Movement is defined the same as “traveling” in basketball. Once the firearm is cocked, one foot must remain in place on the ground until the firearm is made safe. This means with the pistol you may move or restage with the slide locked open, an empty magazine or no magazine in the pistol. You may move with a rifle or shotgun when the action is open, hammer down on empty chamber or expended case. If restaging the rifle, the action must be closed and hammer down either on an empty chamber or expended case. Shotguns may be restaged only if open and empty. 1st violation will result in Stage Disqualification; 2nd violation will result in Match Disqualification. This includes leaving the loading table with a cocked loaded firearm.
11. Any discharge that hits the ground or stage prop from five to ten feet from the shooter, while on the firing line, will result in a Stage Disqualification. Any discharge that hits the ground or stage prop less than five feet from the shooter while on the firing line, any discharge at the loading or unloading areas, any discharge off the firing line, or any discharge that is deemed unsafe will result in a Match Disqualification.
- Note: Match directors have the latitude to place props so shooters must negotiate them. In doing so, Match Directors may declare props expendable or shootable without penalty.
- When drawing a pistol from its holster, the pistol shall not be cycled and cocked until it is at a 45° angle down range. (MSV)
12. A round over the berm is always a bad idea but is worse on some ranges than others. Local match regulations establish the appropriate penalty, up to and including a Match Disqualification.
13. Rifles may be “staged” with the magazine loaded, action closed, hammer fully down on the empty chamber (not on the “safety” notch), as long as the muzzle is pointed in a safe

## SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

### Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

direction—adheres to the 170° safety rule, and the muzzle is never on the ground. Note: When the muzzle is “on the ground,” the barrel will normally be “up-range” from the receiver, violating the 170° safety rule.

14. Shotgun magazines may be loaded with up to the correct number of rounds for the target sequence. Any additional rounds needed must be loaded from the body or other specified staging position. (Overloading, MSV) Loaded shotguns must be staged with the action closed, hammer down on an empty chamber. (Failure to comply, SDQ) Unloaded shotguns may be staged with the action open. Shotguns may be opened and rounds removed or replaced without penalty.
15. Long guns will have their actions left open and the magazine/barrels empty at the conclusion of each shooting string. A 10 second minor safety penalty will be assessed if the firearm is not cleared and opened. This condition may be corrected prior to the next round being fired. If the long gun is the last firearm used, it must be cleared prior to leaving the shooters hand(s) at the unloading table. This does not apply to guns shot out of sequence and made “safe” and then restaged.
16. A live round left in the chamber constitutes a Stage Disqualification. A live round left in the magazine or on the carrier, as well as an empty round left in the chamber, magazine, or on the carrier of the gun in which it was loaded, constitutes a 10-second Minor Safety violation. Malfunctioning guns still containing rounds will not warrant penalties so long as the malfunction is declared and the gun made safe (handed to the Range Officer or placed on a prop with the muzzle in safe direction). At this point, the firearm is still loaded, everyone knows it, and the firearm can be handled in an appropriate manner.
17. All shooters must demonstrate rudimentary familiarity and proficiency with the firearms being used. While monthly club matches are certainly an excellent training ground, SASS matches are not the forums in which to learn basic firearms handling. Basic firearms safety and rudimentary proficiency training are more appropriately learned under non-match conditions. SASS matches can then be used to mature the learned skills.
18. Any unsafe gun handling in the course of a draw from the holster will result in a Stage Disqualification. A second offense will result in Match Disqualification.
19. The 170° safety rule means the muzzle of the firearm must always be straight down range +/- 85° in any direction. If a competitor “comes close” to breaking the 180° safety plane, the 170° safety rule has been violated, and the competitor is at fault. The shooter must be given the ability to draw and holster from a straight hang holster without penalty.  
  
Any gun that breaks the 170° safety rule will result in a Stage Disqualification.
20. Any unloaded gun dropped during a stage will result in Stage Disqualification. Dropped unloaded guns away from the line will be a no call. A shooter is forbidden from picking up a dropped gun. The Range Officer will recover the gun, examine it, clear it (if necessary), return it to the shooter, and assess the penalty. A dropped loaded gun is a Match Disqualification. An open, empty long gun that slips and falls after being set down and does not

## SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

### Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

break the 170° safety rule or sweep anyone will result in either a “Prop Failure” call or a 10-second Minor Safety Violation, depending upon the circumstance.

As long as the shooter has contact with the firearm, it is considered as still in their control. No call should be made until the firearm comes to rest—wherever that may be. Then determine the condition of the firearm at rest and whether or not the 170° safety rule was ever broken on its way to its final resting point in order to assess the correct penalty (if any at all).

21. Ammunition or magazines dropped by a shooter in the course of loading or reloading any firearm during a stage or “ejected” is considered “dead” and may not be recovered until the shooter completes the course of fire. The round must be replaced from the shooter’s person or other area as required by stage description, or if the round is not fired it is counted as a missed shot.

For example, if a round of shotgun ammo is dropped while loading, the round must be replaced from the shooter’s person or other area as required by stage description or counted as a miss. No attempt may be made by the shooter, or any other person, to pick up the dropped round for use on that stage. Shooters trying to recover a dropped round prompts loss of muzzle direction control. Once the dropped round leaves the shooter’s hand or control, it is considered to be a dead round. Stop the shooter if he tries to recover the dead round. It is a 10-second Minor Safety Violation if the shooter retrieves the round during the stage.

Staged rounds that are dropped back where they were staged are NOT considered “dead.” For example, if a round is staged in a box on a table, and it is dropped back into the box, it may be picked up. If it falls onto the table, it may not be picked up. Rounds safely “placed” onto a prop from their original loading area are not considered “dropped” rounds as long as recovering these rounds does not create loss of muzzle control.

22. The Unloading Officer MUST inspect all long guns before they leave the stage. Rifles and shotguns must have their action cycled for the Unloading Officer and chambers inspected. All pistols, must be inspected by an RO on the firing line prior to holstering.
23. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the range area for all persons, shooters, guests, range officers, and others until all shooting is over for the day and firearms have been stored. You must also take into consideration the rules of the specific range in this matter and respect those rules. A violation of this rule will result in Match Disqualification.
24. No shooter may ingest any substance that may affect his or her ability to participate with a maximum state of awareness and in a completely safe manner. Both prescription and non-prescription pharmaceuticals that may cause drowsiness or any other physical or mental impairment must be avoided. A violation of this rule will result in a Match Disqualification and ejection from the range.
25. Hearing protection is highly recommended and eye protection is mandatory in and around the shooting areas. While small, period glasses look great, full protection, high impact glasses are strongly recommended. Eye protection is mandatory for all shooters and spectators within direct line of sight of steel targets.

# SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

## Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

26. All loading and unloading shall be conducted only in the designated areas.
27. Dry firing at the loading table is not allowed and will result in a Stage Disqualification. Dry firing is allowed only at designated safe areas. Dry firing is defined as the act of bringing the gun into a shooting position, cocking the hammer, and pulling the trigger as if to cause the gun to fire normally.
28. Only registered competitors may wear firearms.
29. If a competitor has a firearm malfunction that cannot be cleared on the line, the firearm may not be removed from the firing line/unloading area until the firearm has been cleared. A Match Disqualification will be awarded to the shooter if the shooter leaves the firing line/unloading area with the firearm unless under the direct supervision of a Match Official.
30. The minimum standard for center-fire ammunition used at State, Regional, National, International and World Championship Competitions is not less than a minimum power factor of 150 and no bullet weight may be less than 180 grains. The maximum velocity standard for pistols is 1000 fps. The maximum velocity standard for rifles is 1400 fps. (SOG) Failure to stage guns or ammunition at the designated position(s) or location(s) is the fault of the competitor and scored as a procedural unless the competitor is able to correct the situation, unassisted, while in the process of completing the stage under time.
31. Ammo on belts must be worn just above the pistol belt at or below the belly button. Shotgun slides may not be worn over a shotgun belt.
32. Competitors shall unload each of their firearms at the designated unloading area and have them visually inspected to make sure all chambers are empty. Rifles and shotguns must be cycled to verify their magazines are empty. Any firearm taken to the firing line must be checked, whether or not they were used, and only one main match pistol may be taken to the line.
33. Competitors arriving at the designated loading area with uncleared firearms after completing a stage within the same day will be assessed a Stage Disqualification penalty on the previously completed stage.
34. Competitors shall not leave the designated loading area with a loaded firearm unless they are proceeding to the stage as the next competitor to begin the stage.

## OUTLAWED

The use or presence of any outlawed item is a Stage Disqualification.

- Modern shooting gloves.
- Short sleeve shirts (Male competitors only)
- Short sleeve tee shirts, long sleeve tee shirts, and tank tops for all competitors. Long sleeved Henley type shirts with buttons are acceptable.
- Modern feathered cowboy hats (Shady Bradys). Straw hats.
- Designer jeans

## SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

### Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook

- Ball caps
- All types of athletic shoes or combat boots no matter the material from which they are constructed.
- Nylon, plastic, or Velcro accouterments.
- The displaying of manufacturer's, sponsor's or team logos on apparel. Manufacturer's labels on such apparel or equipment are acceptable.
- 
- SASS wants our participants to be safe, have fun, develop their competitive shooting skills, and enjoy the rich traditions of the Old West. We ask you join us in the friendly spirit of competition and preservation of our heritage.

**SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY**

**Wild Bunch Shooters Handbook**

**SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY**

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