

Mason-Dixon Clay Busters Trap Coaching Syllabus

First and foremost, ALL coaches have the authority, responsibility, and expectation to put an immediate stop to any unsafe action, in any setting—practices, competitions, and other events—at any time, and regarding any athlete, to include instances when firing must be stopped on the firing line.

Only registered Mason-Dixon Coaches along with a scorekeeper/target counter are to be on the field with the athletes.

Designated Mason-Dixon Coaches, at each field, will carry a ramrod. This will not only let the coaches respond to any barrel obstruction issues but, also identify them as the responsible coach of that field.

When performing demonstrations use seasoned and more advanced students for models and helpers when available. This will establish a more engaged group and team structure.

1. Safe Gun Handling
 - a. Always keep the gun pointed in a Safe Direction!! Never point a gun at anything you do not intend to DESTROY!!
 - b. Immediately open any shotgun you handle, to ensure that it is not loaded
 - c. Always carry a shotgun in a way that allows others to clearly see that the firearm is not loaded
 - d. Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
 - e. Always keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.
2. Eyes on, Ears in at all times on the field. Note: Dark sunglasses are not proper clay shooting glasses.
3. No semi-auto or pump action shotguns unless they are left or right handed to match the athlete.
4. Shell catchers are required on all semi-auto shotguns.
5. Coach proper field etiquette from the start.
 - a. Load one shell at a time. Drop shell in chamber while others are shooting but DO NOT close chamber until it is your turn.
 - b. Action should not be closed unless pointing down range.
 - c. Timing of action closing as to not launch additional birds.
 - d. Never travel off of post with shell in gun.
 - e. No resting barrel on foot.
 - f. Foot/Body position at each post.
 - g. Establish squad leader, their role and squad acknowledgment at start of each post.
 - h. Moving from post to post NOTE: Always turn clockwise to move to next post especially post 5 to 1.
 - i. Courtesy to squad members i.e. talking, gestures, fidgeting, and other distractions.
6. Use proper Shotgun Nomenclature / Parts
7. Check Gun Mount/ Gun Fit
8. Check for possible cross eye dominance and try adjustment methods if detected such as tape or dots on glasses.
9. Review Foot Position/ Stance/ Balance
10. Hold Positions, Vision Point (soft focus in field prior to “pull”) Flight path of bird, Track the target to the ground.
11. Emphasize Vision (It is not what you see, it is what you do with that information)
12. Watch for “barrel checking”, “head lift”
13. Pattern Shotgun (where shooters gun is impacting on target board)
14. Identifying the target. See the target as a clock, 12,3,6,9 not just orange to establish leads from post positions.
15. Point of impact/ Timing
16. Is athlete waiting too long and allowing too much distance of bird?
17. Is follow-through proper but not over exaggerated?
18. Is athlete staying in the gun (Stay in gun, follow target, broken bird)
19. Some athletes require less instruction than others. Try not to overwhelm them with too much information at once. If needed, focus on one area at a time on. Encourage athletes to practice problem areas on their own before the next practice.
20. If you're not sure what the problem is, it's best not to say anything. Consult other coaches for advice.