

COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING

Cowboy action shooting (CAS, also known as western action shooting, single action shooting, or cowboy 3-gun) is a competitive shooting sport that originated in Southern California in the early 1980s. Cowboy action shooting is now practiced in many places with several sanctioning organizations including the Single Action Shooting Society (SASS), Western Action Shootists Association (WASA), and National Congress of Old West Shooters (NCOWS), as well as others in the U.S. and other countries. CAS is a type of multi-gun match utilizing a combination of handgun(s), rifle, and/or shotgun in a variety of "Old West-themed" courses of fire for time and accuracy. Participants must dress in appropriate theme or era "costume" as well as use gear and accessories as mandated by the respective sanctioning group rules.



FIREARMS

CAS requires competitors to use firearms typical of the mid-to-late 19th century: single-action revolvers, lever-action rifles chambered in pistol calibers, and side-by-side double-barreled shotguns (also referred to as Coach Guns – with or without external hammers, although automatic ejectors are not allowed), or pump-action shotguns with external hammers (similar to the Winchester 1897). Winchester 1887 lever-action shotguns and Colt Lightning slide-action rifles are also allowed in competition. Both original and reproduction guns are equally acceptable. All CAS handguns must be "single-action", meaning that the hammer must be manually cocked before each shot can be fired. Competition in a CAS match generally requires four guns: two revolvers, a shotgun, and a rifle chambered in a centerfire revolver caliber of a type in use prior to 1899. Some CAS matches also offer side events for single-shot "buffalo rifles", derringers, speed shotgun, and other specialty shooting. Replica firearms are available from companies such as Ruger, Colt, Uberti, Pedersoli, Stoeger, Chiappa, Pietta, Armi San Marco and U.S. Fire Arms Mfg. Co.

ALIAS

Participants must select an alias out of the Old West or have an "old west flair". Aliases are registered with the sanctioning body so they are unique to the participant. Many find it necessary to be creative in selecting an alias (such as the banker who shoots under the alias "The Loan Arranger") as virtually all historical names such as Wyatt Earp and Butch Cassidy have long since been claimed. Registered names cannot sound the same as another registered name.



COSTUME

Competitors are required to wear an Old West or Victorian era style outfit and apparel. One exception to this is that safety glasses and hearing protection must be worn when shooting. Depending on the standards of the sanctioning organization, clothing may be historically accurate for the late 19th century or may just be suggestive of the Old West. Some groups allow for costumes similar to that worn by characters in a western B-movie, such as Hopalong Cassidy or a television series like Gunsmoke. In SASS-sponsored Wild Bunch shooting, the required dress is military clothing of the early 20th century, Western clothing typical of that time (such as that worn in the film *The Wild Bunch*) or Mexican period dress.



COMPETITION & SCORING

Competition involves a number of separate shooting scenarios known as "stages". Stages are always different, each typically requiring ten revolver rounds (shooters generally carry two single-action revolvers), nine or ten rifle rounds, and two to eight shotgun rounds. Targets typically are steel plates that ring when hit. Sometimes reactive targets such as steel knockdown plates or clay birds are used. Misses add five seconds to the competitor's time; safety violations and other procedural violations add 10 seconds.



Shooters compete one at a time against the clock. Most matches are scored simply by "total time" minus bonuses and plus penalties. Other matches are scored by Rank Points. Shooters are timed using electronic timers which record the duration for each stage to one hundredth of a second. The timer starts when the Range Officer pushes the button which beeps to signal that the shooter may proceed. The timer has a built-in microphone and records the time when each loud noise (shot) happens. When there is no more noise, the timer continues to display the final time which is the raw score. Each shooter's "raw" time for the stage is increased by five seconds for each missed target and ten seconds for any procedural penalty incurred. The fastest adjusted time wins. Targets shot out of proper order incur a procedural penalty, though only one procedural penalty can be assessed per shooter per stage. In "Rank Point Scoring" the top shooter of a match is determined by adding up each shooter's ranking for each stage, with the lowest score winning. For example, if a shooter placed first in every stage in a 10-stage match, the shooter's score would be 10 (a 1 for each stage) and would be the lowest score possible. There is some controversy as to whether "Rank Points" or "Total Time" is a better system.