NSSA-NSCA Certified Instructors

By Barry Hartmann

We read and hear about NSSA-NSCA certified instructors but who are they and what makes them certified? Simply stated, NSSA-NSCA certified instructors are shooters that have shown a desire to teach other shooters how to improve their skills. These certified instructors have been trained by experienced instructors/shooters to teach the NSSA-NSCA standards and they have developed skills that are based on proven methods. These proven methods enable them to see possible errors in how shooters execute their shots and how to show shooters possible alternative methods that can improve their shooting skills.

Among the requirements for being any level instructor are: being a member of the NSSA or NSCA, having attained a specified shooting class for that level, shot a specified number of registered targets, having had a specific number of paid hours of teaching at the previous level, writing and orally presenting briefings, written papers that are suitable for publication in the *Skeet Shooting Review* and displaying an ability suitable to progress to the next level.

The levels of instructors are:

Associate—Beginning youth shooters

Level 1-- Beginning shooters

Level 2-- Beginning and Intermediate shooters

Level 3-- Beginning, intermediate and advanced shooters

Level 4-- Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced shooters

Instructors are trained and asked to teach only at the level they have been certified to teach.

Instructor Listing

The NSSA-NSCA website has listings of instructors from Level 1 to Master level (Level 4). These listings, are by the level of the instructors and by the state of residence.

Among the goals of the program are 1) to have a seamless training program that allows a shooter to go between various instructors and receive the same proven methods and, 2) to have at least one NSSA-NSCA certified shotgun instructor at every range.

Advantages

Certified instructors at shooting ranges have been seen to increase range income as both new and experienced shooters will use the instructors’ services. This increases shooting during the instruction as well as from practice after the instruction.

Instructing becomes a life of its own. The more you instruct the more you’ll enjoy it. Seeing students eyes light up when you show them another way to do things such as another hold point for hitting low 6 more consistently is satisfying to both student and instructor.

Progression

 When you get students that have not shot before, your work is cut out for you. In this situation you get the opportunity to train them in all facets of shooting including safe gun handling, stance, gun mount, foot positions, look points, hold points, break zones, the importance of the center stake and of course, following through and many other important aspects of the shotgun shooting sports.

One perk of teaching new students is the opportunity to work through organizations such as the Boy Scouts, the Future Farmers of America, the 4-H program and the Scholastic Clay Target Program. Through these and other groups I have met many great kids and great parents. Teaching these young people has been one of the most satisfying parts of my having been an instructor.

As your level of experience and training progresses, you are able to instruct more experienced shooters—ones that have had some amount of success in shooting. With these more advanced shooters you need to be able to analyze their shooting style and suggest possible means of resolving their individual problem areas. Usually, the more advanced shooter comes to the instructor with a specific problem or set of problems already identified.

Watching new or experienced students progress to a new level is intrinsically rewarding, their successes are a result of your efforts as well as theirs.

Classes

As you meet the requirements to move up to another level of instructor, you can make arrangements to attend a class to upgrade to that next level. These classes are normally held in San Antonio at the National Headquarters of the NSSA-NSCA.

One benefit of going to San Antonio to take instructor classes with the head instructor (Ralph Aaron is currently the head instructor) is that you get to work with several other shooters/instructors at, or above, your skill level. Other instructors have had experiences you may not have had and they may have different solutions to problems you have had. Another benefit is that other instructors may use training aids that you haven’t seen or used that can help you with your students.

Ralph Aaron shared one aid with us in class that gives new shooters a visual example of what leads actually look like. I modeled one like it and have used it with great success with new shooters. Another aid that I’ve used for many years identifies a shooter’s dominant eye with relative ease. And yet another helps shooters stop looking at their barrels. There are many different ideas that help solve the types of problems that instructors see.

Instructing reinforces the skill level of the instructor—the more you teach, the more you learn and the better your skills as a shooter and instructor. Instructors are constantly reading and looking for new and better ideas to help their students.

During the period that I’ve been an instructor, I’ve had the fortune to meet many interesting students and without exception I have also learned from them.

So, a certified instructor is trained to teach specific levels of shooters by other, more experienced expert teachers and expert shooters. Instructors continue learning throughout their teaching careers, teachers find satisfaction through their students’ successes, and, NSSA-NSCA certified instructors teach the proven methods they have learned through the program.

For more information go to http://www.nssa-nsca.org/index.php/nssa-skeet-shooting/training-information/become-an-instructor/