

Station 1

By Ed Scherer



Ed Scherer was a popular columnist on instruction for Skeet Shooting Review during the 1980s and 1990s. He passed away in 1995. The following is a print from December 1990. His complete series of articles, station by station, can be found at mynssa.com.

Looking at the sky above your front sights is the key to hitting high one. This allows you to see the departing bird sooner. Should you be looking at the front sight instead, it will take you longer to pull the trigger, and it could cause a miss. Ophthalmologist I have taught agree that eyes focused at infinity (the sky) see the departing bird quicker than if eyes are focused on the front sight. So, rule number one on high one is to look above the barrel. Above means four inches higher than your front sight.

Where to point the muzzle is the next consideration. Some shooters prefer a higher muzzle and just as trigger is pulled, there is a slight downward movement of the gun. Another method may be applied

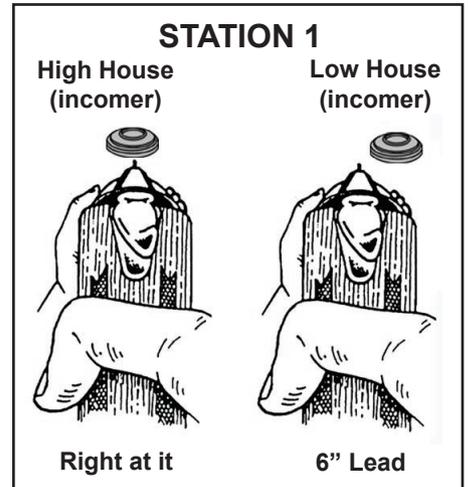
and it is something this writer learned from our sporting clays friends. They hold a lower muzzle and actually come up on the bird as shot is fired. Observe some of the top notchers in skeet who hold lower muzzles and you will note coming up on a target has one great advantage. The bird never drops out of sight below their barrel.

John Bidwell, the great British sporting clays gunner and coach, wrote about coming up on outgoing targets in the *Sporting Clays Magazine* and he has my curiosity aroused. On a windy day, it will pay off so give it a try. It works for this writer.

Anytime your muzzle is higher than a 45 degree angle with the ground on the high ones, it is too high. If there is a tail wind pushing the target down, it will disappear under your muzzle and that's when the head comes off the stock to see where the target has gone. A lifted head will cause you to shoot over the departing target.

What is a good angle to hold the muzzle? I'd say 30 degrees above level of the ground at high one is correct.

There is a spot five yards before the target crossing point that seems to be the best place to break high one. Have a friend watch as you shoot, having that person stand to the right of Station 2 and tell you where you broke the target. Be sure to



break the single the same place as the first shot in doubles. We tend to rush the first shot in doubles.

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Head must be frozen on the comb as the shot is fired. This is a very unforgiving shot as there is little muzzle movement and that could spell trouble. Pull the trigger, count one second by saying "one thousand one" and then take head off stock as you dismount. That little trick will win you many a championship and it works on other

skeet stations too. If you can't freeze your head on the stock as the gun fires, the gun recoils too much and you'd better solve that problem soon.

Low one is my testing ground for an eye check. If you are a one-eyed shooter and are trying to keep both

open, the shot will be missed as you will be way ahead. Cut it back, cut it back, cut it back. With that second eye open, it will amaze you at the small lead. A constant lead no wider than the target itself is all that is needed. On the single, I'd like to see you break it half way between Station 8 and the high house. On the second shot in doubles, take it just a little later, but cut that lead back even further as the target has slowed up. If you are a right-handed shooter with both eyes open and if the left eye is the master or dominant eye, you will continue to miss shooting ahead. The only solution is to patch the left eye, switch shoulders, or close the left eye on firing. Low one is also tricky under the lights as night targets are black underneath, making them difficult to see.

Other shots are not affected as much as high one if the target height is incorrect. It is important target height be checked before starting the round of skeet. Ask the club to "hoop" the target before starting to assure a target with proper height. Nothing is more devastating than practicing a higher than normal high one shot at your home club and then arrive on sight and shoot a lower target. With a higher high one, the muzzle is invariably moved up also, adding to your woes as the lower target emerges.

Do this for a starter. Get a practice field of your own and with a friend in the high house, shoot two boxes of shells on the departing high one target, but between shots have your friend vary the height of the high house target. That little exercise will simulate targets with a tail wind or a strong southerly head wind. One will be up, the other down but practicing and hitting those irregular high house one targets gives confidence to hit any high house thrown. I think you will find that coming up on that target works, as target is never below your barrel.

Now try coming down on that de-

parting high house, using a slightly higher muzzle. You will probably need another box of shells to complete the test as to which muzzle height to use but think of it this way. You are exploring a new and better way to break the target (maybe) and if moving up on the bird is better, then perhaps this is the way to go. If you are one who has been coming up on the departing high one, maybe you should leave well enough alone. My chief concern is for the person, your writer included, who for years has held a fairly high muzzle and has come down on the target as shot is fired. These shooters seem to have more problems on the irregular targets.

Let's check foot position on Station 1. Feet should never be more than a foot apart, the front knee

That little exercise will simulate targets with a tail wind or a strong southerly head wind.

slightly bent with no more than 60 percent of your weight on the front foot, please. If you will have your navel looking right into the low house and your left foot pointing where you would like to break the target, you will be in good shape if you are a right-handed shooter.

A left-handed shooter should have his navel facing out towards the fields where the target lands 90 degrees to the left of where the right handed shooter has his navel pointed. The right foot and toes of a left handed shooter should be pointing toward the breaking spot.

Do you have a white knuckle grip on the forearm? I'd like to see you loosen up that grip, ensuring a smoother swing. Remember, in skeet the swing is the thing.

This concludes the reprint of Ed's series on shooting the targets by each station. Articles may be found on myssa.com.