What’s Your Call?

By Dr. King Heiple

Whether in practice or shooting in a registered match, we have all at times been caught behind an abnormally slow squad. At a one-field club you probably know the guys and try to avoid the times and days they shoot! But in a registered shoot, it can be quite an annoyance and sometimes hard to avoid.

One weekend John Prompt and his squad were shooting in the Briley Louisiana Open with a normal schedule of a flight every hour and 20 minutes. The squad in front of them for all four guns, the 12, 20, 28 and .410 took between 1 hour 45 to 1 hour 50 minutes per flight! Very annoying to say the least.

Four of the five shooters on the squad were “1 shell loaders” for singles and none of them approached the pad with a shell in hand. They all seemed to have a very deliberate set up; they never went straight from Station 8 to Station 1 for the next round and several even made a trip to their car between rounds!

Maybe we should be immune to getting a bit stressed by this but our weekend shooting suffered some because of this and management did not seem to be interested in doing anything about it. Do you think there is anything we could have done to help the situation?

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KH: We do have a rule which should have helped this *Rule III-B-7: Slow Squads. It is suggested that shoot management use substitute fields when breakdowns or unusually slow shooting squads are disrupting the normal sequence of squads. Under normal conditions, a squad should complete a round in 20 minutes, including breaks between rounds. Squads using more time cannot object to being transferred to a substitute field.*

But at clubs with only several fields or a sold out program, management may be stuck with little ability to shift them to another field. So what could you have possibly done if there was not any empty field to move them to? I can think of several options which I would try and probably in this order.

First, I think the referee should have been called into play after the very first round of the very first flight if it took 1 hour 45 minutes. If you were aware that their squad had started on time but took that long, you certainly would have been justified in speaking to their referee (but only after they had finished the round) and urged him/her to make a serious effort to speed the squad up for subsequent rounds.

Then, if this pattern continued so that by the end of three rounds they were almost a full round behind, it would have been the time to go to management again. The least they could or should have done is change the field assignments for the following gauges so that you followed that squad only for that one flight so that no other squad had to follow them more than once during the match. If management wouldn’t even do that for you I see little option but to vote with your feet and dollars and be sure that they were aware of this consequence.

Query: We had an odd objection at a recent shoot. One of my friends was having a bit of a problem with his gun and when shooting reloads he also will occasionally have a defective ammunition problem.

In the first round of the 20 gauge flight, he had two gun malfunctions with his semi-automatic—a failure to fully chamber the shell. In the second round he had an ammo malfunction on Station 1—a dented primer but no discharge. Then on Station 4, another gun malfunction again with a failure to fully chamber shell.

Then on Station 6 the second bird of the double was another defective ammo with another dented primer without firing. He started to reload to shoot a proof double but one of the squad spoke up and asked, “Isn’t that a lost target? He’s already had two malfunctions. One ammo and one gun. Wasn’t that his third?”

KH: It’s odd how we make assumptions in situations where we haven’t experienced the problem before. I can only surmise that the questioner just hadn’t seen anyone have three malfunctions in one round before. But his mind incorrectly remembered only something about “Only two allowed.” It is quite clear from our rule book that the number of gun malfunctions allowed and defective ammunitions allowed are listed and scored separately!

*Rule III-D-6. Gun Malfunctions: Number Allowed. Only two malfunctions of any one gun in the same round or shoot-off round shall be allowable. The third and all subsequent malfunctions of the same gun shall be excessive. However, when more than one person is using the same gun in the same round, this rule shall apply to each person separately*

*Rule III-A-12-d. Defective Ammunition: Number allowed - A shooter will be allowed only two instances of defective ammunition from the first box of shells used in that round. After two instances of defective ammunition in a round or a shoot-off round, a shooter may obtain a FACTORY box of ammunition and is then allowed two additional instances per box of FACTORY shells in that round. If shells are not changed in a round after two ammo malfunctions have been ruled, the third and all subsequent occurrences in that round will be excessive. EXCEPTION: If a shooter is provided a proof shell by the referee and defective ammunition is ruled on that proof shot, that instance will not count against the shooter as defective ammunition.* wyc? #241