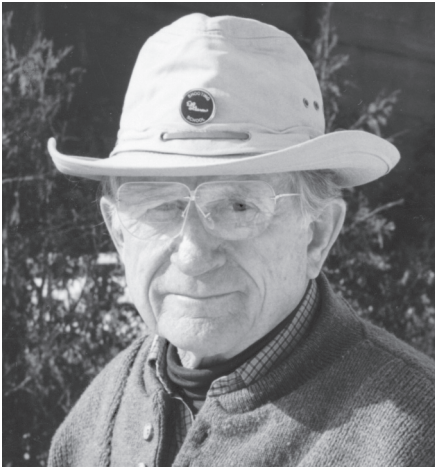


# Station 4

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 March 1991.*

A great share of shoot-offs are won or lost on this station, thus Station 4 moves to the forefront as a critical station. All the basics of proper footwork, smooth swing, seeing the correct lead as trigger is pulled and head remaining frozen on the comb must be properly executed here or all is for naught.

Let's start with the footwork. The right handed shooter faces his navel at the low house opening whereas the portsider faces the high house. Bend the front knee slightly, leaving the back knee firm. Put no more than 60 percent of your weight on the front foot. With a friend watching, do a dry fire shot at this high house target. The friend should check for a swaying

head. Properly executed, the front knee starts the swing by turning to the right and the entire body follows. As trigger is pulled, the head firmly in contact with comb of stock, must remain frozen. There should be no side sway, just a turning motion of the body. This insures a level swing. Excessive side sway of the head allows the right shoulder to drop and the errant shot could be under the target.

## Missed by Under Shooting

As I travel from Boston to Los Angeles and from Calgary to Dallas each year teaching fledgling skeeters the finer points of this great skeet game, I am amazed at how many skeet targets are missed by shooting under them. One year at the World Shoot, I couldn't buy a solid hit on high 5 and broke the worst score in my entire shooting career on the 250 12 gauge event.

Two weeks later at my home club, Vic Reinders, the famous Hall of Fame trap shooter and an excellent skeet coach, saw me missing high 5.

I was dropping or rolling my shoulder as shot was fired. My level swing was absent because I had faced in too far to the high house. Moving my feet to the right, with

navel looking into the low house opening, corrected the problem. High 4 can cause the identical problem when feet are improperly placed.

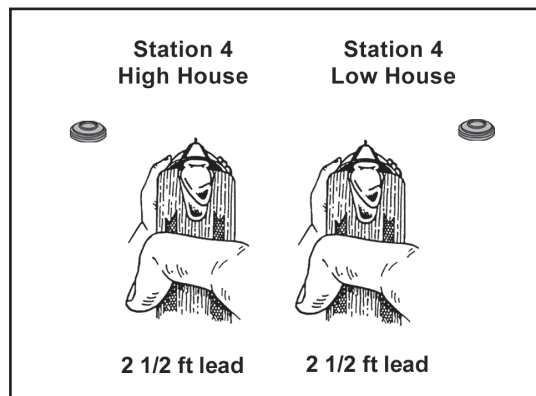
**The key then, is being alert, starting muzzle just as bird emerges and seeing a 2 1/2 to 3 foot constant or maintained lead.**

High 4 should be broken at or just slightly before Station 8 with 2 1/2 to 3 feet lead.

Here's a problem plaguing this shooter for years. At times I fail to start muzzle swinging as target emerges. Muzzle is pointed over my hold point (over a stack of targets placed 17 feet out from the high house, but also placed under the flight of the target) with height of muzzle perhaps a foot under the flight of the target.

With a clear sky where target is outlined against the sky as target emerges, eyes are cast half-way back from muzzle and target opening so as to properly see and start with the target

as it emerges. A cluttered background, such as trees or a hillside, might require you looking right in the target opening. In



spite of this procedure, occasionally that high house “zipper” gets the jump on me and I’m in trouble. The only way to hit high house is to chase the target with the muzzle swinging faster than the target.

How else would you ever catch that high zipper? I pull the trigger when I see the lead I usually see when I shoot the constant lead method, but guess what now happens. Yes, I shoot ahead because the faster muzzle speed causes the errant shot to be in front. The key then is being alert, starting muzzle just as bird emerges and seeing a 2 1/2 to 3 feet constant or maintained lead.

### How to Maintain the Lead

If you, as a rank beginner, are having trouble seeing the properly maintained 2 1/2 to 3 feet lead, try this. Point muzzle closer to target opening and swing through this shot as trigger is pulled and it will take less lead. You’ll probably hit it more often with this method initially and that’s fine. However, as your experience level increases, move the hold point out to try to maintain a larger lead than you saw on the swing through shot. The top All-Americans, including this skeeter, constantly lead that baby.

A right handed shooter puts more effort into the high house swing than the low. It’s a matter of pushing the muzzle and this seems to take more effort than the low house, where the muzzle is pulled. Also, on the low target, the gun is pulled into the cheek, thus the comb seems to stay in contact with cheek as shot is fired. Not so on that high 1 as we tend to push the cheek away from the comb as shot is fired. It behooves you on the high house to face navel toward the low house opening as you call.

### The Proper Hold

Now here’s something skeeters should be aware of and this applies to all the shots at 3, 4 and 5. If muzzle is over hold point, and if the swing is started just as target emerges (careful now, don’t start on the call, start as you see target emerge) there will be little need to adjust lead. The lead will be proper.

Over the past decade this teacher has found the proper hold point to insure the proper lead. That marker, placed 17 feet out, will give you the proper maintained lead if you start muzzle as bird emerges.

This writer demonstrates how perfectly my method works on low 3 and I make many a believer. I get on my knees with student standing over me, watching. My gun is over hold pint on low 3 (17 feet out). As bird emerges, I’m looking right in the opening. I start muzzle moving immediately as target emerges, hold that 3 feet lead until target gets to Station 8 and smoke the target. There was no adjustment made for the lead because the hold pint gave me that built in lead. Neat, eh? The key is starting the muzzle just as target emerges.

Hold point low 4 is over the marker, eyes into the opening. There is too much clutter in the low house background, so our gaze is directed into the opening to catch the emerging target. Shoot the target about 6 feet before Station 8 with a 2 1/2 - 3 feet lead. We call that the slot or as my British friend, John Bidwell, says, “the sweet spot.” Again, if you’re brand new and can’t quite cope with the maintained lead, move muzzle closer to opening and try some swing through shots there. As your skeet level increases, gradually move out the hold point so lead can be maintained.

### Maintained Method Easier

Why do the greater share of All-Americans use maintained lead instead of swing through? For this interesting reason. We shy away from the swing through shot because the lead is constantly changing. In shooting a skeet target with the constant or maintained method, it is easier to memorize the lead because it doesn’t keep changing as the trigger is pulled. It is constant because muzzle speed and target speed are identical. Then and only then,

will you really get zeroed in on the long lead required on Station 3, 4 and 5.

On Okinawa way back in World War II days when I was a fledgling skeeter, I had a paint bucket (a LARGE paint bucket) full of shells at my disposal each day. I’d stand on Station 5 and shoot the high house for 15 minutes, expending 100 or so shells on that target alone until I memorized what that sight picture looked like. Using the maintained or constant lead

method, I memorized every lead on the skeet field.

### I start muzzle moving immediately as target emerges, hold that 3 foot lead until target gets to Station 8 and smoke the target.

How-ever, you must remember that virtually all I did for six months after the hostilities had ceased was shoot skeet. I had

three projects that occupied my mind. Number one was to fly the mail to some of the outlying islands about once a week. Number two was to date the Red Cross gals and nurses who outnumbered us as all the men had gone stateside and number three was to shoot at 500 skeet targets a day, five days a week. Yes, I found a cache of 150,000 12 gauge shotshells on Okinawa and by the time I got around to going stateside (why rush) I had whittled over 50,000 shells from that cache personally. Yes, I learned those leads with all that shooting!

Shooting low 4 in the slot or sweet spot sets you up for the doubles at 4, but we’ll get to that in a later issue. Suffice to say, learn to hit it soon. In doubles there is no time to tarry on this shot.