

Station 5

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 April 1991.

Footwork will make or break my skeeter friends at Station 5, that elusive long lead shot. Have a friend observe your head movement as you attempt this shot. If the head sways excessively just as the shot is fired, trouble could develop. The head should swivel, but not sway. Imagine a small fence post placed vertically between your back and shooting coat. Now, rotate around this fence post as you fire on high 5, making sure there is no side sway. Your navel should be facing the low house opening as you call for the high house target. The left handed skeeter's navel should face the high house opening.

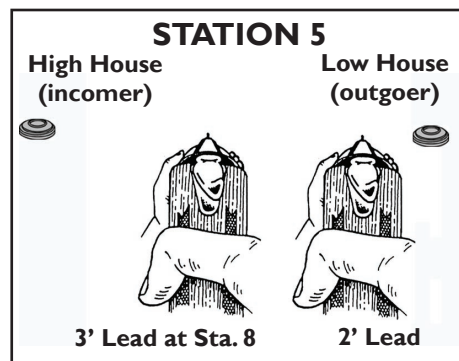
The front knee should be slightly bent with the back knee firm. As the swing starts, the first movement of the body is to turn the front knee to the right or the direction the target is being thrown. We are trying to eliminate what I refer to as "arm" shot, whereby only arms are moved when executing the shot.

Some years ago the Canadian star Barney Hartman observed my style and noted with interest the arm shot and the resulting head sway. He suggested I use the entire body, starting from the ankle, then the knees and hip in executing the shot. Later that day I practiced this movement in front of a full length mirror and eventually my entire body took part in the shot. There was an immediate improvement in the swing. It was smoother and it continued as the shot was fired. My head turned as I followed the target. It did not sway.

There's a "sweet spot" where high 5 should be smashed and it's past the target crossing point at Station 8. In my shooting schools I erect a stake 10 feet past the target crossing point at high 5 and do not allow my students to attempt a shot past the stake.

A three foot lead is required. Cut a board a board three feet long and lay it standing on edge horizontally on the skeet pad and parallel to Station 5. Put it where you will fire the shot just past Station 8. Now walk back to Station 5 and observe your board. Project the length of this board into the sky and tell yourself to lead high 5 the full length of the board. Better yet, have a friend hold up the board as high as this person can reach so you can visualize what the lead looks like in the sky.

Muzzle should be over the hold point (a stack of targets placed 17 feet out from Station 1, but also placed under the



flight of target) and eyes should be cast backward toward the skeet house. Bend that front knee and keep the muzzle height a foot below the target flight so you start the swing immediately as bird emerges. Careful now on starting the swing on the call; you are better advised to start your swing as the bird emerges. Usually there is a delay (the rule allows a full second)

so be extra careful to start swing just as target appears.

Later that day I practiced this movement in front of a full length mirror and eventually my entire body took part in the shot. there was an immediate improvement in the swing.

If you happen to be a swing through shooter, it will take a super effort to change your old habit of allowing the bird to be past the muzzle before the swing is started. Swing through shooters tend to point the muzzle

closer to target opening—moving the hold point further out to my hold point will help to start muzzle as the bird appears so as to set up that three foot lead. Properly executed, the three foot lead is set up by holding over the hold point 17 feet out and starting muzzle swinging as soon as target appears. It's amazing how that three

foot lead is built right into the swing if the swing is started just as target emerges.

This station is a perfect example of a maintained lead shot. All I ask of my readers are three things: 1) place muzzle over hold point; 2) gaze back toward the opening as you call; and 3) start the swing immediately as bird emerges. The rest will fall into place. If swing of muzzle is the same speed as the target, if head is firmly in place on the comb, if swing is maintained as trigger is pulled and finally, if you have a three foot lead, the target will break each and every time—no kidding.

How do you think the hotshots break all those 100s? There is no mystery to it. When we see the correct lead, if head is jammed on the comb and the tubed over-under we all shoot is kept moving, the target will break.

Speaking of the tubed over-under, at one of my shooting schools a skeeter who had never shot a tubed over-under mentioned that skeet was a game of fads and that the tubed over-under was just a passing fad. WRONG! Believe me, they are not a fad and they've been around for 20 years and they will be around another 20 years in the future. Until you shoot a case of shells through a 28 gauge tubed over-and-under, you just haven't lived.

Look at the victory list of the tubed over-unders at both the World Shoot and the yearly high averages if you want more convincing. I shudder to think of how many more world championships the great Alex Kerr would have won had he been shooting my light weight K-80 tube set 40 years ago.

A "spotter" is a knowledgeable skeeter who can tell where an errant shot went on high 5. Engage one if you can as it will save you a case of shells. Missing is no fun, but if a high 5 is missed without knowledge as to where the missed shot charge went, that is even worse. A good spotter, although hard to find, can certainly help you to get back on track.

Unfortunately, there are four ways to miss high 5 and that includes shooting in front (very common), behind, over

and under that elusive rascal and before you are really zeroed in, you will miss it all four ways. The last thing I tell myself as I call for high 5 is to start the swing by making my bent front knee turn to the right, freezing my head on the comb and leaving it there for a full second as target is smashed. This works.

Here is another tip on high 5. Start on high 7 and shoot a few shots, then move to high 6, increasing lead until it is hit consistently. Now move a yard left of high 6 station, increasing lead until target is hit. Move another yard to left and continue shooting. Keep moving a yard to left and shoot (and hitting) until you are on Station 5 and hitting. That is called sneaking up on high 5 and it is effective.

We would be better off if low 5 was eliminated from the skeet field. I call it the insidious target. It kind of sneaks up on you so be alert when it appears. Place your muzzle over low house hold point (17 feet out), eyes into the opening. Loosen the hand holding the forearm and start

smoothly as bird appears. Low 5 takes a two foot lead and it should be broken five feet before the target crossing point. The bird is usually rising and it is very easy to shot under, so make certain your muzzle rises with this rising target. Constant lead it if you can, but if your muzzle is dead as shot is fired, move muzzle a foot toward low 5 target opening to insure a smooth swing as trigger is pulled. I learned years ago to blend this shot. A blend swing through shot combined. Yes, I start my swing as target appears, but as I pull the trigger I am increasing the lead ever so slightly to prevent a stopped muzzle as shot is fired. This is a very safe way to shoot the low house 5 target.

A loose left hand (right hand for you lefties) as target emerges will insure a smooth swing on low 5. On the last field of a 10 target match, it is easy to tighten up the grip on the forearm, thus losing the smooth swing so very necessary to hit this toughie, so stay loose. A devil-may-care attitude will help here and finally, keep eye on the target until it breaks.