



Silver Spoon Bowmen

Beginners Guide to

“Your First Shoot”



The Archery GB Club Development Programme

This document has been put together to give a quick guidance for those archers considering shooting competitions. It is not detailed and is intended as a beginners guide. Some of the information includes my opinion arrived at after a few years of shooting. Anyone thinking about entering competitions should really take the opportunity to speak to Lynn, Dan, Sam, Jim, myself and Barry, or someone else who has shot competitions recently. Approaching Geoff Barham for an insight into competitions, or the Judges perspective would be worth doing too.

Why shoot competitions?

Why not? Competitions are an opportunity to test your skills. Start with local Club shoots, they are very friendly and they are good for socialising, there are plenty within a radius of 25 miles, they are generally shorter rounds with shorter distances. Remember your first score is your current personal best. As with many things within archery you are in competition with yourself. Don't be scared, all of us, however old or experienced had to start somewhere

What do I need

A long list, some of which are obvious, I will split it into two parts

Part 1. Shooting Equipment

At least **8 (preferably more) arrows** fletched and nocked the same. If you are shooting a Metric round you will need to identify each individual arrow. If shooting Imperial rounds GNAS also require identification. This is normally done by writing or sticking small letters and numbers to the arrow shaft below the fletches. Please don't write your name on the fletch as they come off.! You may damage the odd arrow possibly lose one in the grass, so you need some spares, outdoors you generally shoot either 6 arrows or 3 and 3 depending on the round.

Spare knocks, To match the ones on your arrows, think carefully about your nock colours, they need to be bright and hopefully visible, as it is difficult to see fletch colour through binoculars or a telescope at over 60 yards.

Spare string, with knocking point (in case yours breaks or serving becomes loose) also it must be shot in and have a nocking point fixed in the same place as the string that it's replacing

Spare tab, in case you drop yours and cannot find it. Your replacement also needs to be shot in and not brand new.

For compound archers, a **spare release aid**, even this sometimes this doesn't help as an experienced archer had two release aids fail at the Thorsby Trophy in 2010. So it does happen.

A set of **Allen keys**, because things do vibrate loose. Don't forget there are Imperial and Metric Allen keys, Generally you will need a set of both to fit everything on your equipment as there are bound to be a mixture with different parts.

A **tool box or bag** to put all your bits and pieces in, which will quickly become home to **scissors, screwdrivers, a fletching jig, fletches, glue, dental floss or brass nocks, knocking pliers, a small towel** to wipe the wet off the bow grip and limbs when it rains etc .

Part 2. Personal Equipment

Decent footwear which **under GNAS and Fita rules must not be open, so no sandals**. Footwear must be worn at all times-not just when actually shooting

For Record/ Rose/ Fita Star events or those with specified clothing requirement on the entry form **approved club clothing or green and white clothing or clothing that does not have names on it other than sponsors, manufacturers or the competitors**. The clothing rule regarding colours was amended in 2011 and we will have to see how the Judges interpret them. Silver Spoon Bowmen Clothing is green and white. Shorts and skirts should not be too short, you should be able to touch the bottom of the leg with your hands when your arms are straight down your sides. No denim or camouflage is allowed

Decent waterproof clothing and boots. You should shoot in it prior to competition to make sure it doesn't foul your equipment by, for example the sleeves flapping in the wind. This doesn't need to be green or white. Wet feet are uncomfortable and you are going to be on them all day.

Hat, cap and sunglasses. Again check that the hat brim, cap peak does not foul your bowstring. If you wear sunglasses, check that the frames are not impinging in your field of view when you sight.

Shelter or tent, to keep you and your equipment out of the weather, wind, rain or sun.

Chair because you need to relax sometimes as you will be on your feet all day.

Umbrella, this will at least help keep your score sheet dry or provide shade the day the sun shines.

Food and fluid to keep you going through the day, some shoots do not offer refreshments. You will be out in the fresh air for many hours and it is easy to dehydrate.

Sun cream, you will burn otherwise. Most shooting venues are open without shelter.

A **couple of pens**, as you will be required to score at sometime. When you do, you will be doing the other archers scores on your boss as well. If your maths is not good, take a **calculator**. **Arrow puller** because if you are not scoring you are likely to be pulling arrows, traditionally the archer who is shooting "C" on the second detail usually does the scoring, however negotiations do take place as more often than not someone will prefer to score than pull.

Once you get above 60 yards you cannot see your arrows clearly on the target and some of us closer than that! Sooner or later you will need a set of **binoculars or more likely a scope**. Whatever you get, make sure it is waterproof or you buy a cover. The **tripod** you buy must be the best you can afford as it has to be rock solid.

Your GNAS/ Archery GB Membership Card or temporary receipt

What distance should I shoot?

The simple answer is what distance are you comfortable at. If you are a novice, that is, someone in their first year of shooting, you should only shoot at a distance where you expect to get the majority of your arrows on the boss in practice. When you feel confident then move to a longer distance, you will know when that time comes. Don't worry if you are an adult and are shooting with juniors at first, archery does attract people of all ages. Tournament organisers and fellow archers know that beginners are of all ages and they usually start at shorter distances.

To make it slightly more complicated, Juniors have age distances, for example a junior boy under 16 years of age maximum distance is 60 yards. Just because there is a maximum distance it doesn't mean a junior has to shoot that distance or cannot shoot further or shorter. So shoot what you are comfortable with. The only time when age distances become an issue is with awards. The last page of this document sets out the age/sex/distances for juniors as of April 2010 when the current ages were set.

What Awards?

There are a number of awards available to all archers and I do not intend to cover all of them here. I will cover just three, The Six Gold End award, GNAS Rose Awards and Fita Stars.

A Six Gold End Award is awarded if an archer shooting a recognised competition or club target day competition shoots 6 arrows into the gold in one end at one of their longest two distances. So for a Senior gentleman 100 or 80 yards or 90 or 70 metres. For Senior ladies 80 or 60 yards plus the metric distances. This is where Junior age group distances come in. For U16 Junior Gent the distances are 60 or 50 yards plus the metric distances but for Junior Ladies under 16 it is 50 or 40 yards. Knowing your distances as a junior is important.

GNAS Rose Awards are awarded for obtaining over certain number of points in the York, Hereford or Bristol rounds. They start at 800 and increase by a 100. These can only be won at shoots awarded "Rose Status". There are generally several locally each summer. Our August Silver Spoon Trophy Shoot one, the County Champs at Boston in June another. Again the distance you shoot to obtain them is age related like the Six Gold End award.

Fita Star Awards are awarded in the same way as the GNAS Rose Awards over the Metric distances. It is fair to say there are less Fita Star events than Rose events with the only one in Lincolnshire being the Lincoln Double Fita star held over two days in June. Fita Stars and WRS have to be shot with traffic lights and timing. You can only

get Fita Star awards if you are shooting Senior Distances. Fita awards are also awarded at record status indoor events during the winter. These are Fita 18 or 25 and the awards start when you achieve 500 points or more. The indoor awards are not age governed as everyone shoots the same distance.

All the awards listed are small metal badges.

(If you do not shoot your correct distances then there are no awards, that applies to seniors and juniors)

Competition Awards

Awards presented at competitions, vary club to club. Some have trophies, some award only medals, some do both. If a Trophy is awarded, generally it is presented to the winner of a particular round who **must** return it to the Club hosting the event the following year.

The awarding of gold, silver and bronze medals is down to the tournament organisers and is dependant upon how many people are shooting a particular bow type and / or round. For example, if only four people are shooting a Gents Recurve York round it is likely only gold and silver medals would be awarded. This is just a rule of thumb, as I say, it depends upon the club. Where there is a large variation, is with juniors. Some clubs, notably Friskney award gold, silver and bronze medals to every age/bow type/round. Some clubs however, and that includes ours, award medals by sex and bow type across all age groups based upon final scores. So for example a Compound Junior Boy U 16 shooting a Bristol 2 may win his personal Bristol 2 but finish second in the “ Bristols” competition with 1100, if a Junior Boy Compound U14 shooting a Bristol 3 shoots 1101. If you want to be a contender rather than a participant knowing your age distance is important when you enter a competition.

If a competition says its Rose/ Fita Star World record status or Record status does that mean it is for experienced archers only?

No, all it means is that in the case of Record status any person who shoots a national record can put a claim in. With regard to Rose / Fita WRS status it's purely one where successful archers can claim the relevant Rose/ Star if they reach the correct points.

Tournament organisers just fill in the bosses they have on a first come first served basis. They are interested in filling the bosses and so breaking even at least with the costs of running the shoot.

I know what distance I want to shoot but what round?

The choice of round is bewildering and downright confusing at the start but you soon get used to them. It doesn't help that Yorks, Herefords and Bristols are effectively the same rounds but just the distances change. For example a York is 6 dozen arrows at 100 yards, 4 dozen at 80 yards and 2 dozen at 60. The Hereford is the same number of arrows at 80/60/50, a Bristol 2 at 60/50/40 and so on. You were all given a laminated card with the different competitions on just find the distance you want and apply for that. For example, the entry form for a St George will also say Albions/Windsors

available, that's 3 dozen at the longest distance, three dozen at the middle one and 3 at the shortest. Find the St George on the card which will show 3 dozen at 100, 3 at 80 and 3 at 60 and the "lesser" competitions will be shown next to it. Remember your age and gender distances. A Lady can shoot a York or a St George starting at 100 yards but would no doubt be in a competition with herself. The Ladies start at 80 yards.

(If you do not shoot your correct distances then there are no awards, that applies to seniors and juniors)

Where do I find the entry forms?

On our website, silverspoonbowmen.org.uk, other clubs websites, by asking Lynn or I, Ryan, Lisa or Steve or when you go to shoots you will sometimes be offered them.

It says on the entry form as regards shooting "Method 1" applies, What does that mean?

The GNAS Rules are in a green book that includes most of the rules governing archery in this country. The rules of shooting are a chapter within the book. Method 1 and 2 govern how many arrows you shoot in one go in GNAS Imperial competitions, i.e. Yorks, Windsors, Warwicks etc.

Method 1 means that an archer will shoot 3 arrows, retire from the shooting line to allow the next detail to shoot 3 arrows and then return to the line to shoot the last 3.

Method 2 means the archers will shoot 6 arrows, one after another. Fita's (or metric rounds) are always shot as Method 2. The difference between Method 1 and 2 is only really important if you struggle with shooting six consecutive arrows, for example, if you have just upped your poundage or are returning from injury. However, Method 2 has stricter timing and also less actual shooting time, so if people are slow it's worth avoiding. It is only a requirement at a Record Status tournament. There is a motion before GNAS to remove the Method 2 and make it six arrows without the complex timing.

Just to complicate matters even further, some metric rounds change the face size at the two shortest distances and then only 3 arrows are shot, scored and collected at a time.

I've sent my entry off, how will I know if I have got a place?

Generally if you don't get in it is because the shoot is full and the organiser will contact you by telephone or email dependent upon what means you have indicated for the purpose. Some clubs send you a target list by email or ask if you haven't got email for you to send a stamped self addressed envelope so they can send you one. Some publish the target list on their website. Some don't do anything, My rule of thumb is that if I hear nothing I am in.

What else do I need to do before the day?

Get sight marks for all the distances you are going to shoot that day. You only get 6 sighters at your longest distance and not subsequent ones.

Is anyone else from the club going, perhaps you can car share or at least travel in convoy if you have never been before?

How long is the journey going to take? I always allow extra travelling time and aim to arrive an hour before assembly/sighters. That way I can get set up, have a chat with people I haven't seen for a while and then settle into competition mode. What's that? – for me an attempt to concentrate on my own shooting.

What do I do when I get there?

First thing, book in with the organiser, who will normally be seated at a table with a clipboard. At Record/ Rose/Fita Star Award competitions you WILL be asked to produce your GNAS/Archery GB Membership Card or Temporary Receipt.

They will tell you what number boss you are on and what letter on that boss. So you could be told Target 6 D, which means you are on target 6 on the second detail. A and B will be the first detail, A on the left of the mark for that boss on the shooting line, B to the right. C and D the second detail with C to the left (probably scoring remember?) and D to the right . If you are not told directly there will be Target Lists posted prominently.

What next?

Take your kit down to where your target is. If you are there early you may have a choice of where to pitch your tent. There will be, unlike at club nights, three lines ahead of you running across the field. The one nearest the targets will be the Shooting line, the one further back the Waiting line and the last one back from that the Tent line. Make sure your tent is pitched back from the last line. The only things allowed forward of the most rearward of the lines are archers and their equipment meaning bows and scopes. You are only allowed forward of the second line when you are shooting and forward of the first line when collecting arrows.

Can I leave my scope on the line?

Scopes MAY now be left on the line in all competitions, if they interfere with other archers or there is not enough room for archers to shoot with the scopes on the line you will be asked to remove them.

What now?

Try and find out from the target list or from the score sheets, that will be placed prior to shooting on the shooting line, who you will be shooting with. Introduce yourself. It

is during this period you will negotiate who is actually going to score, what colour nocks you have and if you can share scopes. If you are a novice tournament archer, tell them, the majority will then guide you through the shoot, we have all been there ourselves and know it can be intimidating. If you find you are on with someone who wants to be difficult, let them get on with it and do what you think is best. That is very unlikely though and I can only think of two occasions in the last 6 years that I have met someone like that. The chances of meeting another two if there are four of you on the boss are remote. Find out where your place on the line is and if you use foot markers place them.

I'm ready, the tent is secure, my equipment is all ready, I've even remembered to set my sights at the correct distance and applied my sunscreen. What happens next?

Have you been to the loo? Some toilets are a fair walk from the shooting lines and you may not get the chance to make that call of nature before the end of the first distances to be shot and that could be six dozen arrows or several hours later.

Have you warmed up? That is just as important as what you do for practice plus, an additional benefit-it gives you the opportunity to think about shooting your first arrows and going through your shot routine before you even pick up your bow

The Judge/Judges will sound a whistle or horn and all the archers will gather. There is usually a welcome by the tournament organiser telling everyone where the toilets are and /or what refreshments are available. The Judges will then formally state what the competition is, remind people to turn their mobile phones off or onto silent. They will let you know about signals to commence shooting, collection etc. These vary between imperial and metric rounds and whether or not the ends are being properly timed. For example at a Fita Star there will be a traffic light system and an electronic clock counting down on the field in front of you. Someone will ask if its shooting 3's or 6's and it should be the one advertised. If the entry doesn't say method 2 it should be Method 1. Someone usually asks about scopes on the line so listen to what is being said.

I've survived Sighters and even got some on, what next?

Scoring (i) you call out your scores in the way you have been taught i.e. in 3's, highest to lowest. You do not touch them when pointing at them. Record your own score separately, this is for two reasons, (a) to check against the scorers scorecard later and (b) for personal reference. If the competition bug bites you WILL want to know how you have done in a particular round before. Remember if it is touching the next higher colour including the line between the colour call the score for the higher colour. If someone is calling a higher colour and you don't think their arrows is touching, politely disagree. Either one of two things will happen, they will recall lower or the Judge will be called to make a decision. That is what they are there for. Once the scoring is complete you help pull them if you aren't scoring. If it's a Metric round you mark the arrow position on the target face with black pen prior to doing so.

Scoring (ii). You have been given the job of doing the score sheets on your first shoot. Don't panic and take your time. When an archer calls out their arrows repeat their arrow values. If they miss call and you have written it on the score cards **don't alter it** - call a Judge and tell them what has happened. The archer will be asked to recall the arrows and the Judge will write the values on the score sheet in red pen. You can alter adding up and totals if (and more likely when) you make an arithmetical error.

(If at the end of the shoot you check your score sheet against the official sheet and it is wrong i.e. you have some 9's where the official sheet has 7's you cannot change it, the 7 stands)

Can I take photographs?

Yes, but you have to sign when you book in on the competition day that you are going to do so. Normally you will be issued with a badge so other archers know you have authorisation. There is more to it than that but as the issues usually involve the photographing of juniors, the rules should be self evident. If in doubt ask the organiser when you book in, for adults just think "When and where would I not want a camera pointing at me".

Etiquette & Rules.

Do not walk up onto, or leave the shooting line when an archer on the next target is at full draw.

If you miss, don't make a fuss, verbally or in any other way. It happens to everyone, and will no doubt happen to you again, it's just that everyone else doesn't need to, or want to know.

If you have equipment failure, step back from the line and raise your bow or your arm in the air. The Judge will come and see you and give you time to repair the equipment.

If an arrow is observed to rebound from a target, you should draw the attention of the Judge to the fact after having shot your sixth arrow (or third if shooting in ends of 3 only) by retiring two paces from the shooting line and holding your bow above your head. If it is an Imperial round you get to shoot another arrow marked by the Judge, if Metric the Judge will check the target face for an unmarked hole.

You have a hanging arrow on the target, or the fellow archer in your detail has one. Bring the fact to their attention when they are not at full draw, stop shooting and again attract the attention of the Judge. They usually stop shooting and retrieve/score the arrow.

Broken arrows sometimes cause some discussion. The simple rule of thumb is. If it is broken through being hit by another arrow on the boss i.e a "Robin Hood" that's accidental and you are not expected to replace it. Likewise if an arrow totally buries

itself underground and you accidentally stand on it the same applies. However, should you act carelessly, for example not look where you are going and stand on someone's arrow which is in plain sight then there is an expectation that you should at least offer to pay.

What do you do when the archer shooting next to you continually enters your personal space, perhaps by swinging their long rod across or loading their bow sideways? I'm not talking about the occasional clash of long rods but persistent behaviour. This can be off putting but also dangerous. Firstly, ask them politely to stop as they may be unaware they are intruding. If that fails to stop them bring it to the attention of the Judge who will intervene. The rules are on your side. Each archer has 80 c.m. of space in a corridor in front of them as they face the target that is theirs to shoot in.

When you have finished shooting your arrows on one end don't start talking loudly with someone behind the line, be courteous to those still shooting.

Do help to look for arrows when someone misses. It may be yours next time

Do help to move the bosses at change of distance.

Don't be afraid to ask a Judge, they might look scary, but they are there to try and help, most have shot bows at some times, and they usually have dealt with most problems.

Other Stuff.

Try and read the rules at sometime, FITA do not issue rulebooks in printed form any more so theirs can only be found on their website <http://www.archery.org/>. GNAS are considering going the same way, their rulebook can be found on their website ArcheryGB, follow the links through Operations, to Library, to Shooting Documents

If you are scoring-Do check through the score card for all the archers on your target at each distance break. It makes final checking easier, don't forget to eat/drink/ go to the toilet and change your sight for the next distance.

DON'T FORGET TO CHANGE YOUR SIGHTS, no it is not a mistake, I've put it on twice because we have all forgotten at least once.

After your last competitive arrow has been shot don't start noisily dismantling your equipment have respect for those still shooting.

At the end of the competition make sure you sign for your score and the scorer countersigns. If you have been the scorer remember you can't write your own scores down but can add them up. Just don't sign as the scorer, get some one else to do that and sign as an archer.

Make sure all the final boxes are filled in i.e. Total Hits, Golds, Score. On an Imperial round if there are an even number of hits, the total score should be an even number and vice versa if an odd number of hits. If the score card is incorrect it may be

disqualified. If after you sign it you find you have scored more than you have signed for, it is too late. That's why most archers keep their own scores as well.

THE OFFICIAL SCORE CARD TAKES PREFERENCE

If you have shot a Six Gold End at the relevant distance or wish to claim a Rose/Fita Star there will be someone with the host club sitting with an awards sheet for you to claim. Awards must be claimed on the day.

Finishing up.

Did you enjoy yourself, yes, then take a minute to catch the organiser after the award ceremony to say "Thank you". In the same vein if there was something that you thought could have been done better, politely explain what that was. Tournament Organisers are usually archers themselves who have taken time out of their own shooting to run the competition for others. They want their visitors to have a good experience, they will usually welcome feed back, good, bad or indifferent (if it is given sensibly and in the right manner)

If you enjoyed it, tell others when you get back to the club, it might encourage others to go with you next time. Tell me, you never know especially if you are a junior, you might have broken a club record.

And Finally..

I cannot hope to cover every eventuality in this document. More detailed guidance regarding awards, technical matters, equipment is available to download from the Archery GB website at <http://www.archerygb.org/ArcheryGB/index.cfm/library/important-documents/>. However, I believe I have covered the basics and cast some light on competitive shooting. Remember, competitive does not mean just competing to win, it can mean many things to different people. It may be competing to win, it may 'just' be beating your own personal best or more mundanely getting every arrow on the boss with no misses. Whatever way you see competitions they are just another opportunity to shoot, you are the winner every time if you make the effort to take that opportunity. If you want to know more, just ask (but not if I'm at full draw) The age /distances follow below. Buy a rule book.

To Barry Molsom for prodding me to carry on with this and doing the first critique, to Geoff Barham for checking I'd got the rules right, for Steve, John, Lisa, Amy, Henry, Darren and newbies Geoff and Nick for trying it out on them- Thanks, I hope it was worth it.

John

Amended 11/06/11.

Rounds for Juniors: 2010

New age categories and distances: Bristol & Metric Rounds

Boys	Round	Distances	Girls
Under 18	Bristol I	80,60,50yds	--
Under 16	Bristol II	60,50,40yds	Under 18
Under 14	Bristol III	50,40,30yds	Under 16
Under 12	Bristol IV	40,30,20yds	Under 14
--	Bristol V	30,20,10yds	Under 12

Boys	Round	Distances	Girls
Under 18	Metric I	70,60,50,30m	--
Under 16	Metric II	60,50,40,30m	Under 18
Under 14	Metric III	50,40,30,20m	Under 16
Under 12	Metric IV	40,30,20,10m	Under 14
--	Metric V	30,20,15,10m	Under 12

The introduction of new age groups for junior girls at under 14 & under 12 has an effect on all girls aged under 14 years.

Please refer to the rules of shooting (amended April 2010) for the full details of rounds and distances applicable to these new age groups.