

## **SASS FIREARMS COVENANTS**

**01/12/2006**

SASS Cowboy Action Shooting™ competitions are divided into three separate types of matches: main, team, and side matches. The rules regarding SASS approved firearms depend upon the type of competition in which you are participating.

Original and replicas may be used in competition provided they are in good, safe working order. In each of the respective sections, allowed modifications are listed. Just because a manufacturer designs a part or firearm for this sport or just because a firearm was available, does not necessarily mean it is legal for competition. Changes made to firearms by replacing parts or modifications of existing parts do not necessarily mean they are legal for competition. Only the modifications listed here as allowed are approved, all others are illegal. As any firearm related sport can be inherently dangerous, SASS does not recommend or suggest the modification of any firearm or the removal of any safety device. Participants in this sport accept responsibility for the use of their firearms and do not depend on SASS or any of its affiliated clubs or members to make that judgment for them. Please consult with the firearm manufacturer prior to any firearm modifications. Firearms must operate as intended by the original pre-1900 designs they depict. Firearms must function in a safe manner.

SASS recognizes the desire to enhance firearm performance. Firearm manufacturers, importers, gunsmiths, and the membership as a whole must use caution in any quest to develop mechanisms designed to enhance the operation of firearms for SASS Cowboy Action Shooting™. Any firearm modification not referenced in this Handbook is considered prohibited. Parties interested in having modifications considered for approval and inclusion in the SASS accepted modification text can request a Firearms Modification Consideration application from SASS.

A stage disqualification is issued for each stage in which a non-SASS legal firearm is used.

### **ALL FIREARMS**

- All firearms must be designed to fire by use of an impact mechanism such as required by centerfire primers, rimfire primers, or percussion caps. All other firing mechanisms are illegal.
- Internal modifications not listed here that cannot be seen in any way while the firearm is at rest (action closed) are allowed provided they do not affect the external operation or directly conflict with one of the modifications listed here.
- Modifying the firing, cocking, chambering, or levering mechanism in any way that changes the process from an entirely manual operation to any other style operation (e.g., blow-back operation, gas operation, or recoil operation) is expressly prohibited.
- The use of exotic metals, such as titanium, or polymer-based materials for cylinders, receivers, external frames, or barrels is prohibited. Brass and aluminum may be used for grip frames.
- All firearms may be repaired and/or restored to their original condition.

### **Internal Action Work**

- All internal parts may be smoothed, re-profiled, or replaced with parts similar to the originals.
- Springs of the same or different type may be changed and/or lightened.
- Chambers may be polished and/or chamfered.
- Bolt angles may be changed.
- Head-space may be adjusted.
- Inertia cocking shotgun mechanisms may be changed to mechanical cocking mechanisms.
- Automatic ejectors may be disabled on shotguns. (Automatic ejectors are not allowed on side by side or single shot shotguns)

### **Hammers**

- Hammers may be replaced but must maintain the basic external contour, size, features and spur height of the original hammer.
- The hammer spur may not be re-contoured, widened, narrowed, modified to change the angle, polished smooth, bent either up or down or lowered in any way.
- Internal parts of the hammer may be changed (e.g., to allow for a half-cock notch on a revolver).
- Bisley style revolver hammers may only be used when mated with a Bisley style grip frame.
- Hammer stops may be added.
- The hammer travel on any revolver may be shortened.
- Rear sight notches cut into the revolver hammer may be widened.
- The hammer spur groove may be re-cut with a file.

### **Barrels**

- Barrels or chambers may be re-bored, lined, or sleeved to any of the approved calibers or gauges for that particular firearm provided industry safe limits are maintained.
- Original barrels may be replaced with new barrels of correct styles (e.g., round, octagon, half-round) for that particular model firearm.
- Barrels may be shortened and/or crowned.
- Compensating ports are not allowed.
- Counter-weighting devices are not allowed.
- Rifle barrels must maintain a length greater than 16 inches.
- Rifle barrels may be altered to accept mounting hardware for an alternative tube magazine configuration and capacity appropriate to the model of firearm being altered.
- Barrels may be altered to accept period style sights as described within the Sights Section.
- Shotgun barrels may be shortened but must remain greater than 18 inches long.

- Shotgun barrels may have internal choke tubes installed provided they do not extend beyond the muzzle.
- A leather hand guard may be fitted to the barrels of a side-by-side shotgun.
- Shotgun barrel forcing cones may be lengthened.
- Shotgun barrels may be back bored.
- No heavy competition or “Bull Barrel” is allowed.
- The angle of the revolver barrel forcing cone may be modified.

### **Triggers and Trigger Guards**

- Triggers and trigger guards may be profiled to narrow their width.
- Triggers may be set back.
- Trigger stops may be added.
- Trigger shoes are not allowed.
- Shotgun trigger guards may be wrapped with leather or other natural material (maximum of ¼ inch thickness).
- Bending the trigger guard on side by sides so triggers are more exposed is not allowed.

### **Stocks and Grips**

- Stocks may be replaced by shorter or longer length stocks provided they maintain the approximate original stock shape and contour that was factory available for that model firearm. A carbine style stock may be interchanged for a rifle stock and vice-versa.
- Period style checkering or carving is allowed on fore-stocks, butt-stocks, and revolver grips.
- Laser engraving is allowed.
- The factory butt-plate may be replaced with a period style, permanently fitted or lace-on recoil pad, or changed to a butt-plate style that was generally available from the original manufacturer.
- A piece of leather or similar natural material may be attached to the butt-plate or butt stock. Leather on a rifle’s or shotgun’s fore-end or grip surface is NOT allowed except as a temporary repair.
- Contemporary rubber grips, modern target grips, grip tape, and the like are not allowed.
- Grips of simulated or natural materials are acceptable provided they are not customized to constitute a “target” grip. That is, they must be of the same basic profile and scale as grips found on original firearms of the cowboy era.
- Revolver grips must conform to the grip frame. They may be beveled up or down at the bottom but may not overlap or hide the grip frame.

## Sights

### All Firearms

- Sights must look like sights available during the cowboy era, Bead, blade, simple post or otherwise approved front sights (such as the XS Cowboy Express) made of materials such as steel, iron, ivory, faux ivory, brass, gold, pewter, copper or silver are allowable.
- Rear and front sights may be “blacked”. Colors other than those of the materials referenced above or any day glow materials are not allowed on either front or rear sights.
- All rear sights may have their openings adjusted.
- The front sight may be raised or lowered to bring point-of-aim and point-of-impact into alignment.
- The back of the front sight may be serrated.

### Rifle

- Tang mounted rear sights may utilize changeable “peep” apertures and eye-cups.
- Modern style click-adjustable barrel or receiver sights are not allowed.
- No bolt or receiver-mounted sight is permitted.
- Dovetails may be milled in the barrel for sight replacement.
- Hooded and Beech style front sights are allowed.
- Front sights may include a single color bead or insert of steel, iron, ivory, faux ivory, brass, gold, pewter, copper, or silver.
- Rear sights may utilize an insert made from the same materials and color as the rear sight to allow easy sight adjustment.
- Ramp style front sights are allowed if original to the firearm.

### Revolver

#### Traditional Category Revolvers

- Traditional category revolvers may only use traditional style, barrel mounted, fixed metallic foresights of a simple blade, bead, or post configuration.
- Beaded post front sights or inserts are not allowed.
- A simple open-notched rear sight cut into the frame, hammer, or latch mechanism is the only rear sight allowed.
- Ramp style front sights are not allowed.
- Allowed Exceptions: Original open-top cartridge revolvers, cap and ball revolvers, cartridge conversion revolvers, and their modern-made replicas may have either a dovetail front or rear sight, and they must conform to the types commonly found on the originals. Any other revolver by whatever manufacturer or model that has either a dovetailed or screw-adjustable front or rear sight, whether movable or adjustable, is a Modern category revolver.

#### Modern Category Revolvers

- Modern category revolvers may have dovetailed or adjustable rear sights and/or dovetailed front sights.

- Beaded post front sights or inserts are not allowed.
- The rear of Modern revolver front sights may be reshaped (such as rounded).
- Modern revolver REAR sights may be replaced with commonly available sights of the same size and type. Modern replacement targets sights such as the Bomar and Millett type sights are not allowed.
- Modern revolver FRONT sights must remain original width and may not be undercut.
- Ramp style front sights are allowed if original to the firearm.

### **Shotgun**

- Front sights may be bead or simple post types typical of the era.

### **Cosmetic Embellishment**

- Period style tacks, carving, engraving, checkering and inlays are allowed on stocks and grips provided they do not constitute any kind of radical or target type grip enhancement.
- Receiver, frame, grip frame, cylinder, or barrel engraving is permitted provided it does not constitute a grip enhancement.
- No portion of the grip frame may be checkered or stippled.
- A light bead blasted finish may be applied to the exterior of any SASS firearm.
- Metal surfaces may retain their natural color or be blued, browned, plated (such as nickel, gold or silver), blacked, color case hardened or aged to a patina type finish.

### **Screws**

- Factory screws may be replaced with socket head cap or other type screws.

### **Revolver Ejector Rods**

- Colt style bullseye or crescent ejector rods may be installed.

### **Frames and Receivers**

- Frames and receivers may be drilled and tapped (such as to accept approved type tang sights).
- The ejection port on a slide action shotgun may not be lengthened or widened.
- Ruger Blackhawk frames may be modified by removing the rear sight assembly, welding up the sight cutout, re-contouring the frame top strap, and cutting a new sight notch to replicate a Colt SAA frame. The reconfigured frame must be mated with a conventional Ruger Vaquero type barrel and the original grip frame assembly.
- Percussion revolvers may be converted to accommodate cartridge-firing mechanisms common to the period. They may also be modified by adding a recoil shield and undercut hammer.

### **Revolver Grip Frames**

- Birdshhead grip frames and grips may be installed on any SAA, its modern replicas, or Ruger Vaqueros but may not be used with Bisley style hammers.

- Grip frames may be replaced or “rounded.”

### **Levers**

- “John Wayne” style levers may be substituted on rifles for the standard factory lever.
- Levers may be wrapped with leather or other natural material (maximum of ¼ inch thickness).
- With the exception of the “John Wayne” levers, any replacement lever must maintain the same basic contour as the original lever.
- The lever may be cut and welded provided the basic exterior contour is not changed.
- All lever action rifles must have a lever travel distance of not less than 4 1/8 inches when measured as follows:

With the action closed measure three inches back from the back edge of the trigger at the point where it enters the frame. Mark this point on both the bottom of the buttstock and the lever opposite the buttstock mark. Open the lever to its maximum extension and measure the distance between the two marks.

Exception: The Browning BL-22, in .22 caliber, is a legal rifle for the Buckaroo Category and is a legal rifle for .22 caliber rifle side matches.

### **Feed Mechanisms**

- The carrier mechanism in rifles may be lightened or replaced.
- The lifter mechanism on a rifle may be replaced or welded.
- The rifle carrier mechanism may be changed to more positively hold rounds (especially useful in side ejecting rifles).
- A “two-shot” drop system for lever action shotguns may be added.

### **Firing Pins**

- The length of the firing pin may be extended.
- The visible contour of firing pins or firing pin extensions may not be altered.

### **Revolver Cylinder Base Pins**

- The cylinder pin head may be shortened.
- A screw may be used to secure the base pin.

### **Recoil Reducers**

- Internal recoil reducing devices may be added to shotguns only.

### **Shotgun Break Action**

- Internal mechanisms to guarantee side-by-sides do not close accidentally may be added or modified.
- The open angle for side by sides may be increased.

### **Revolver Cylinders**

- Centerfire and rimfire cylinders may have no less than five and no more than six chambers.
- The front of the cylinder may be beveled.
- Un-fluted cylinders may be fluted.
- Lead in grooves may be cut or extended.
- The revolver may be altered to allow the cylinder to spin in either direction.
- Cylinders may be re-bored, lined, or sleeved to any of the approved revolver calibers provided industry safe limits are maintained.

### **Replacement and Interchangeable Parts**

- Parts may be interchanged or replaced from one firearm to another firearm of the same frame size and SASS shooting category if the part or parts can be exchanged without major external modification to either the firearm or the part. The only external modifications allowed would have to be accomplished with simple hand tools (e.g., hacksaw or file) and not by machining, welding, grinding, or major re-contouring or external shaping of any parts. Some examples of this rule are: the exchange of a Single Action Army grip frame with an 1860 Army grip frame and vice versa, the exchange of a Bisley Grip frame and hammer assembly on a Vaquero or SAA, the exchange of a Ruger Super Blackhawk hammer with a standard Ruger Blackhawk hammer, and the exchange of an 1873 rifle lever with an 1866 rifle lever. You could not replace the hammer on a Ruger Vaquero with a Ruger Super Blackhawk hammer because you would be moving a part from a Modern category revolver to a Traditional category revolver. You could not replace the hammer on a Ruger Vaquero with a Ruger Single Six hammer because you would be moving a part from a small frame revolver to a large frame revolver. You cannot rework a Ruger Bisley hammer to fit on a Vaquero because that is a change to the hammer profile of a Vaquero. These are just a few examples, but other similar changes are also illegal.
- The external portion of all replacement parts must have the same basic contour as the original parts.

## **RIFLES**

Rifles or carbines used in the main and team matches must be original or replicas of lever or slide action rifles manufactured during the period from approximately 1860 until 1899 incorporating a tubular magazine and exposed hammer. Rifles with box magazines may not be used. Certain shooting categories require a specific type of rifle and ammunition to be used. Please see the shooting categories for further information

### **Rifle Calibers**

- Must be center-fire of at least .32 caliber and not larger than .45 caliber.
- Must be in a caliber commonly available in revolvers. (Examples include, but are not limited to, .32-20, .32 Magnum, .357 Magnum, .38 Special, .38-40, .44-40, .44 Special, .44 Magnum, and .45 Colt.) The only allowed exceptions are the .25-20 and .56-50. No rifle calibers such as .30-30 or .38-55 are allowed.

## **SHOTGUNS**

Any side-by-side or single barrel shotgun typical of the period from approximately 1860 until 1899 without automatic ejectors, with or without external hammers, having single or double triggers is allowed. Lever action, single barrel, tubular feed, exposed hammer shotguns of the period are allowed, whether original or replicas. The only slide action shotgun allowed is the Model 1897 Winchester shotgun, whether original or replicas. Certain shooting categories require a specific type of shotgun and ammunition to be used. Military configurations are not allowed (i.e., trench guns). Please see the shooting categories for further information.

### **Shotgun Gauges**

- Side-by-side, single barrel, and lever action shotguns must be centerfire of at least 20 gauge and no larger the 10 gauge.
- Slide action shotguns must be centerfire of at least 16 gauge and no larger than 12 gauge.

## **REVOLVERS**

Original single action revolvers manufactured prior to 1899, their approved replicas and the SASS approved modern category revolvers are the only revolvers approved for use in SASS main match competition. The rules relative to SASS approved revolvers depend upon the competition category in which one participates. Examples of SASS approved revolvers for each category are listed elsewhere in this Handbook. Sights are a major factor for determining in which category a revolver may be used. Certain shooting categories require a specific type of revolver and ammunition to be used. Please see the shooting categories for further information

No more than two main-match revolvers may be carried to the firing line.

### **Revolver Calibers**

- Must be centerfire calibers of at least .32 caliber and no larger than .45 caliber.
- Must be in a caliber commonly available in revolvers. Examples include, but are not limited to, .32-20, .32 Magnum, .357 Magnum, .38 Special, .44 Magnum, .44-40, and .45 Colt)

**ANY MODIFICATION TO MAIN MATCH FIREARMS NOT SPECIFICALLY LISTED ABOVE IS EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED!**

## **OTHER APPROVED FIREARMS**

Any firearm that does not meet the above criteria must be approved at the Territorial Governors Summit prior to use. The following additional firearms have been approved for use:

- Small frame model P revolvers such as the Cimarron Firearms Lightning, Uberti Stallion and Ruger Single Six .32 H & R Magnum.
- Henry Big Boy Rifle (not legal in Classic Cowboy/Cowgirl Categories).
- US Firearms Omni Potent Revolver.
- Marlin 1894 Tube Feed Rifle — .32 H&R Magnum.