

SASS FIREARMS COVENANTS

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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. Only the modifications referenced 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 and/or modifications of their firearms and do not depend upon SASS or any of its affiliated clubs or members to make that judgment for them. Please consult with the firearm manufacturer prior to making 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 document is considered prohibited. Parties interested in having modifications, parts or firearms considered for approval and inclusion in the SASS accepted modification text may request a Firearms Modification Consideration application from SASS. Written receipt of acceptance from SASS will be the ONLY source of approval. Unless referenced within these Covenants, any modifications, parts or firearms used without this approval will be considered illegal.

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 referenced here that cannot be seen 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.
- All firearms may be repaired and/or restored to their original condition.
- Replacement parts may be made from materials other than the original unless such material is specifically prohibited.

- All parts may be smoothed, re-profiled, polished, deburred or replaced with like or different parts provided they are not prohibited in these Covenants.

Hammers

- Hammers may be replaced or exchanged with hammers designed for the same frame size (e.g., small frame revolver hammers may not be installed on large frame revolvers or vice versa).
- 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.
- Ruger Blackhawk revolver hammers may be replaced with Ruger Super Blackhawk revolver hammers as a Modern Category revolver only.
- Hammer stops may be added.
- The hammer travel distance on any revolver may be adjusted.
- Rear sight notches cut into the revolver hammer may be widened.
- Hammer spur grooves may be re-cut.

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.
- 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 must maintain a length greater than 18 inches.
- Shotgun barrels may have internal choke tubes installed provided they do not extend beyond the muzzle.
- A slide-on leather cover to protect the offhand from barrel heat is allowed on side by side shotguns.
- No heavy competition or “Bull Barrel” is allowed.
- Barrels must be made of steel or iron only.
- Visible counter-weighting devices are not allowed.
- Compensating ports are not allowed.

Triggers and Trigger Guards

- Triggers may be profiled to narrow their width.

- Trigger position may be adjusted.
- Trigger stops may be added.
- Shotgun trigger guards may be wrapped with leather or other natural material.
- Bending the trigger guard on side by sides so triggers are more exposed is not allowed.
- Trigger shoes are not allowed.

Stocks and Grips

- The length or style of stock may be altered or replaced. (e.g. a carbine style stock may be interchanged for a rifle stock and vice-versa.)
- Checkering, carving or laser engraving is allowed on fore-stocks, butt-stocks, and revolver grips.
- The factory butt-plate may be replaced with a permanently fitted non-adjustable or lace-on/slip 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.
- 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 as grips found on original firearms.
- Revolver grips must conform to the front and rear of the grip frame but may extend beyond the bottom surface.
- Contemporary rubber grips, modern target grips, grip tape, and the like are not allowed.
- Leather on a pump shotgun’s fore-end or grip surface is not allowed.

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.
- No bolt or receiver-mounted sight is permitted.

- Dovetails may be milled in the barrel for sight replacement.
- Beech style front sights and sight hoods 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 of the same color as the rear sight to allow easy sight adjustment.
- Ramp style front sights are allowed if original to the firearm.
- Modern style click-adjustable barrel or receiver sights are not allowed.

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.
- 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.
- Beaded post front sights or inserts 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.
- The rear of Modern revolver front sights may be reshaped (such as rounded).
- Ramp style front sights are allowed if original to the firearm.
- Beaded post front sights or inserts are not allowed.
- 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 may not be undercut.

Shotgun

- Front sights may be bead or simple post types.

Cosmetic Embellishment

- Period style tacks, carving, engraving, checkering, inlays and other such embellishments 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, aged to a patina type finish or jeweled.

Screws

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

Frames and Receivers

- Frames and receivers may be drilled and tapped (such as to accept approved type sights).
- 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, hammer and the original grip frame assembly in order to be allowed as a Traditional Category style revolver.
- Percussion revolvers may be converted to accommodate cartridge-firing mechanisms common to the period. They may also be modified by adding a narrow cap guard to the recoil shield and undercut the hammer (i.e. Manhattan modification). Modern percussion revolvers may have the frame contoured to approximate original type designs.
- The dimensions of the ejection port on a slide action shotgun may not be altered.

Levers

- “John Wayne” style levers may be substituted on rifles for the standard factory lever.
- Levers may be wrapped or padded with leather or other natural material.
- With the exception of the “John Wayne” levers, any replacement lever must maintain the same basic contour and size as the original lever.
- The lever may be cut and welded provided the basic exterior contour and size is not changed.
- The exchange of an 1873 rifle lever with an 1866 rifle lever is allowed.
- 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.

- Filler “blocks” or other such mechanisms designed to prevent all movement of the hand within the lever loop are not allowed.

Feed Mechanisms

- The carrier and/or lifter mechanisms in rifles may be lightened, welded, modified or replaced.
- A “two-shot” drop type system for lever action shotguns may be added.

Firing Pins

- The length of the firing pin may be extended.
- The visible contour of the rear portion of firing pins or firing pin extensions may not be altered.
- Friction reducing devices such as roller bearings are not allowed on the rear portion of firing pins or firing pin extensions.

Recoil Reducers

- Internal recoil reducing devices may be added.

Revolver Ejector Rods

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

Revolver Grip Frames

- Birdshhead grip frames and grips may be installed on any SAA or its modern replicas but may not be used with Bisley style hammers.
- Grip frames may be replaced, “rounded” or extended (e.g., the exchange of a Single Action Army grip frame with an 1860 Army grip frame and vice versa).
- Brass or aluminum grip frames are allowed.

Revolver Cylinder Base Pins

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

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.
- Cylinders must be made of steel or iron 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.

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.

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)

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 than 10 gauge.
- Slide action shotguns must be centerfire of at least 16 gauge and no larger than 12 gauge.

ANY EXTERNAL MODIFICATION TO MAIN MATCH FIREARMS NOT SPECIFICALLY REFERENCED IN THIS DOCUMENT IS EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED!

OTHER APPROVED FIREARMS

Any firearm that does not meet the above criteria must be approved. Parties interested in having firearms considered for approval and inclusion in the SASS accepted modification text may request a Firearms Modification Consideration application from SASS. Written receipt of acceptance from SASS will be the ONLY source of approval. Unless referenced within these Covenants, any modifications, parts or firearms used without this approval will be considered illegal.

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.
- Original or replica Nagant Revolver