

Field Archery for the First Time

What to expect

Tournaments are open to all shooters. Whether you are a first-timer or an old hand, when you arrive you will be welcomed as if you were “one of the gang”. No memberships, qualifications, prerequisites or anything else required to participate. NCFAA membership is required when you plan to compete for tournament awards. See www.ncfaa-archery.org for membership information.

Expect to walk about 1.7 miles and shoot 112 arrows in about 4 hours for 28 targets. It is convenient to stop after 14 targets if you wish.

Most tournaments are scheduled to start at 10:00 am. Check the schedule for a few exceptions. For the most part, you are welcome to come early and start when you are ready. There is usually someone there to take registration by 8:00am. Entry fee for all but championship tournaments is \$10 for adults, \$5 for 14 and under.

Usually the registrar likes to shoot, too. So if you come much after 10:00, there may be no one there to sign you up. That's OK. Just go ahead and shoot. Sign up when you finish.

Be sure to sign an annual Waiver/Release form before you start. There is a printable form at www.yadkinfieldarchery.com under Range Rules if you would like to print one and bring it when you come.

Friends may shoot together, or if you come alone, you will be invited to join a group. Ideally groups consist of four people. Three or five per group is not uncommon.

After you have signed in, you may want to warm up or sight in at the practice range. When everyone in your group is ready, proceed to Target 1. You will notice a sign at each target listing different rounds and their yardages. Look at the target. If it is mostly white with a black dot in the center, you will be shooting a "Field" round. If it is mostly black with a white center dot, that's a "Hunter" round.

Shoot from the markers corresponding to the type of round you are shooting. "Field" markers are white with black numbers. "Hunter" markers are red. Cubs, under 12, shoot from the black markers. Youth, 12 - 14, shoot the adult markers unless the target is over 50 yards, then look for the blue marker.

At any time, if any of the distances are too long for your comfort zone, just step forward and shoot from where you are comfortable. For scoring purposes, shots taken from other than the assigned distances must be counted as zeros, but that is still better than losing arrows.

When the distance is 32 yards or less, there will be four target faces at each target. Before you start, decide among yourselves who will shoot the top target face and who will shoot the bottom target face. In a group of four, two people shoot top and two shoot bottom. Those that shoot bottom, step up to the marker and shoot first. One person stands on the left side of the marker and shoots the left target. One person stands on the right side and shoots the right target. After the first two shooters have both shot four arrows, they step back and allow the next two shooters in the group to shoot. If there are four target faces, the second two shooters will be shooting the top targets. At distances between 32 and 54 yards, there will be only two target faces per target. In this case, the persons shooting from the left side of the marker shoot the left target, and the persons shooting from the right side of the marker shoot the right target. At distances greater than 54 yards, there will be one target face at each target. Everybody shoots at the same target.

Look at the sign. If just one distance is listed for the round you are shooting, then shoot all four arrows from the same marker. If two distances are listed, shoot two arrows from the first marker, then step forward and shoot the remaining two arrows from the second marker. If four distances are listed, shoot one arrow from each marker.

If the sign lists one distance followed by "Fan", there will be four markers in a row, all the same distance from the target. Shoot one arrow from each marker. Shoot the left target from the two left markers, and the right target from the two right markers. All four shooters may shoot simultaneously on "Fan" targets, one from each marker, moving to the next marker after each shot. Remember, bottom shooters shoot the bottom target, top shooters shoot the top target when there are four targets.

When you come to the really short target, called the "bunny" or the "birdie", there will be 16 target faces arranged in a 4 x 4. Each archer picks a vertical column of four target faces and shoots one arrow in each face from top to bottom or bottom to top, your choice. Archers on the left pick one of the two left columns, archers on the right pick one of the right side columns.

On Target 15, bottom and top target shooters switch positions. Also if you shot from the left side on Targets 1-14, shoot from the right side on Targets 15-28, and vice versa.

Scoring

The center circle in each target counts as 5 points. Inside the center circle is a smaller ring containing a "x." Keep count of your "x's" separately in case of ties.

On Field targets, the white portion outside the five ring counts as 4 points. The remaining black portion of the target counts as 3 points.

On Hunter targets, outside the white dot up to the first ring in the black portion counts as 4 points. The outer black portion counts as 3 points.

An arrow only need touch the line to receive the higher point. Total maximum score for each target is 20 points. A perfect 28 target round is 560 points. Only a few people in the world have ever done that.

Animal Round

The third round that you may find on a field archery range is the Animal round. Two dimensional pictures of animals are used as targets for this round.

Each target has a “vital” zone in the center. The rest of the animal is outlined with a “wound” zone. Step to the yellow marker and shoot one arrow. If you score a vital or a wound hit, no additional arrows are shot. The vital ring scores 20 points. The wound ring scores 18 points.

There is a bonus dot inside the vital scoring area. Add one point to your score any time you hit the bonus dot.

If you miss the scoring area on your first shot, shoot a second shot. If there is more than one yellow marker listed on the sign, advance to the next marker for your second shot. A hit in the vital ring on your second shot scores 16 points. The wound ring scores 14 points.

If you miss your second shot, you may shoot a third shot. If there is another yellow marker, step forward to it. A hit in the vital ring on your third shot scores 12 points. The wound ring scores 10 points. If you miss your third shot, you must take a “0” and proceed to the next target.

The maximum score for each target is 21, and a perfect 28 target animal round is 588.

You will no doubt notice that there are a lot of things to keep in mind while shooting field archery. This is part of what makes the game so challenging. The good thing is that most all field archers are friendly and helpful. No one wants to see anyone else incur penalties. Helping each other avoid rule infractions is a common and courteous practice. If you see someone about to shoot from the wrong marker, say something! If you are not sure yourself, ask!

Most important is that you enjoy yourself. Field archery is a lot of fun! Warning! It can be addictive!