



MISSOURI YOUTH HUNTER  
EDUCATION CHALLENGE  
(MoYHEC)

RULES & REGULATIONS

Safety Is Shooting's Most  
Important Rule

**MISSOURI  
YOUTH HUNTER EDUCATION CHALLENGE (YHEC)  
RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Updated July 1, 2021

In cooperation with the National Rifle Association of America, Education and Training Division, 11250 Waples Mill Road, Fairfax, Virginia 22030.

**CAUTION:** The procedures and techniques outlined in this publication may require special abilities, technical knowledge, or safety considerations. The sponsor of the Missouri Youth Hunter Education Challenge, the National Rifle Association of America, their agents, officers, and employees accept no responsibility for the results obtained by persons using these procedures and techniques and disclaim all liability for any consequential injuries or damages. Mention of technical data or products does not necessarily mean they have been tested by the Missouri Youth Hunter Education Challenge or the National Rifle Association staff and does not constitute endorsement or verification.

Local restrictions may apply to some techniques, procedures, and products in your area. It is your responsibility to check local laws and regulations before proceeding.

These rules and regulations are subject to change or modification at any time due to safety considerations or site requirements.

**EVENT SAFETY RULES**

- Actions of uncased firearms must always be open except when on the firing line, ready to fire.
- Guns are to be unloaded except when on the firing line, ready to fire.
- Arrows will not be nocked until on the firing line.
- All firearms must have a safety device with the exception of traditional muzzleloaders. The safety will remain on at all times except when ready to fire.
- All firearms will be pointed and bows drawn in a safe direction at all times.
- Know and obey all range commands.
- Only one shell or cartridge may be placed in a firearm at a time, unless otherwise specified in the rules for the activity or by the event director.
- Participants must wear adequate eye and ear protection while on the firing line.
- Firearms and bows not in use should be placed in a gun or bow rack at the activity or stored in a secure place. Those participants opting to utilize vehicles as a means of storage are solely responsible for their safekeeping.
- All firearms should be cased when traveling to and from shooting event sites.

## **NRA FIREARM SAFETY RULES**

***The fundamental NRA rules for safe gun handling are:***

- Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.
- Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Always keep the gun unloaded until ready to fire.

***When using or storing a gun, always follow these NRA rules:***

- Be sure the gun is safe to operate.
- Know how to safely use the gun.
- Use only the correct ammunition for your gun.
- Wear eye and ear protection as appropriate.
- Never use alcohol or drugs before or while shooting.
- Store guns so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.

Be aware that certain types of guns and many shooting activities require additional safety precautions.

Protection of your sight and hearing are YOUR responsibility. Wear adequate eye and ear protection while on the firing line as the shooter, official, or spectator.

## **ARCHERY SAFETY RULES**

***The fundamental rules for safe archery/bow handling are:***

- Do not nock an arrow on the bowstring until ready to use.
- Always keep the bow with a nocked arrow pointed in a safe direction.
- Never draw a bow with nocked arrow until ready to shoot.
- Always keep field points or broadheads (not allowed in YHEC) covered until ready to use.

***When using or storing a bow, always follow these rules:***

- Be sure the bow is safe to operate.
- Know how to safely use the bow and its equipment.
- Use only the correct arrows and equipment for your bow.
- Never use alcohol or drugs before or while shooting.
- Store bows and other archery equipment so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.
- Never dry-fire a bow.

Be aware that certain types of archery equipment and many shooting activities require additional safety precautions.

## MISSOURI STATE YHEC EVENT REGULATIONS

- Safety will be the first and foremost consideration during all YHEC activities.
- Participants and spectators assume all risk of personal injury or property damage.
- Participants violating any safety rule will be given one warning and then disqualified from further participation should a second infraction occur. If the safety violation is severe, the participant may not receive a warning.
- Participants will provide their own firearms, bow and arrows, eye and ear protection. Compasses will be available for loan to participants who do not have their own.
- Individuals or team members may not participate for one another in any activity.
- Adult sponsors or coaches may not coach a participant while the participant is involved in any activity.
- Participants are expected to exhibit behavior above reproach at all times. All participants and parents/guardians must sign a release regarding behavior before the state event.
- Some championship events take place only on one day. It is your responsibility to complete the events on the day or days offered and before posted closing time.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

*The following Code of Conduct will be adhered to at all times by all participants, instructors, coaches, sponsors, spectators, and volunteer staff.*

1. Neither alcoholic beverages nor illegal substances will be allowed on the premises during the YHEC schedule of events. Participants will not possess nor use tobacco products.
2. No participant, instructor, coach, family member, or any other person associated with participating contestants, may go to, evaluate, or observe an event before participation in the event.
3. There will be no filming or videotaping of any event or site for the intent of showing participants the event layouts.
4. No electronic communication equipment, including cellular phones, may be used by participants, sponsors, or coaches during participation in any event.
5. Parking of vehicles will be in assigned areas only.
6. Ammunition for all firearm events must be under the direct supervision of the staff, adult coach, or sponsor.
7. Participants, parents, sponsors, or coaches will not be allowed on any event site after the daily close of an event without the express consent of the NRA State Coordinator.
8. Participants will exhibit behavior above reproach at all times.
9. Participants will cooperate with all requests and regulations made by Missouri YHEC staff.

**Violation of this Code of Conduct will result in immediate disqualification and/or permanent expulsion of individual or team involved with the Missouri YHEC program.**

## **YOUTH HUNTER EDUCATION CHALLENGE EVENTS**

The Youth Hunter Education Challenge events are:

- Shooting events: Hunting Archery Challenge  
Hunting Muzzleloader Challenge  
Hunting Shotgun Challenge  
Light Hunting Rifle Challenge
- Responsibility events: Hunter Responsibility Exam  
Hunter Safety Trail Challenge  
Hunting Orienteering Challenge  
Hunting Wildlife Identification Challenge

Some events may not always be scheduled for the annual Missouri State Youth Hunter Education Challenge Championship. Every attempt will be made to schedule all eight challenges at state events.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Participation in the Missouri State Youth Hunter Education Challenge Championship is open to any person who is less than 19 years of age on or before August 1st, who has successfully completed a hunter education course in North America.

Divisions:

- Intermediates (8-10 years of age) – Knowledge Challenges Only
- Junior (11-14 years of age)
- Seniors (15-18 years of age)

Categories:

- Individual
- Teams (five participants in the same division)

All participants will furnish copies of the following documentation to state sponsors prior to the registration cut-off date: A. Birth Certificate and B. Hunter Education Certification.

All participants are required to participate in all events at the state championship event, except Intermediates. Failure to participate in all challenges will result in disqualification and ineligibility for awards. Any remaining team members' scores will be unaffected.

Pursuant to NRA regulations, any Missouri YHEC participant is eligible to attend the NRA International YHEC if he or she participated in the most recent Missouri YHEC Regional or State event.

## HUNTING ARCHERY CHALLENGE

The participant will move through a multiple point archery course in a natural setting. The course is designed to simulate shooting situations encountered while bow hunting.

The Hunting Archery Challenge will be conducted with participants taking shots at animal type targets varying in distance from 5 to 40 yards. Targets will be life-size with scoring areas directly over the vital areas of the animal.

**Scoring:** Each participant will shoot a total of 30 shots each worth 10 points if inside the inner most scoring ring, 5 points for the outer most scoring ring (vital area) and 3 points for outside the vital area. Challenges must be made on the range before the next arrow is pulled. The Hunting Archery Challenge has the maximum possibility of 300 points.

**Archery Equipment:** Only hunting-type compounds, recurves, or long bows will be permitted. Bows may be equipped with hunting type sights. Self-adjusting sights are permitted. Participants may use only one bow throughout the activity (exception - bow malfunction).

**Restrictions:**

- Extended sight bars that measure further than 6 inches from the back of riser of bow to front of sight.
- Manually adjustable sights may have no more than 6 sight pins or to be adjusted to no more than 6 sight positions.
- Sights with lenses, with or without magnification.
- More than one stabilizer.
- Stabilizers over 12 inches in length.
- Range finders.
- Crossbows.
- Broadheads, blunts, shocker, bludgeon, or other non-target points.
- Spotting scopes.

## HUNTING MUZZLELOADER CHALLENGE

The Hunting Muzzleloader Challenge will be conducted with participants shooting at targets varying in distance from 20 to 75 yards. Participants will shoot from one to three positions. No muzzleloading rifles or ammunition will be provided at the state event. Participants must provide their own.

**Scoring:** Participants will shoot up to 12 shots, counting as a hit if touching the line or inside the target area, zero points for outside the target area. The Hunting Muzzleloader Challenge has a maximum possibility of 300 points.

**Equipment:** Any flintlock, percussion, disk, musket cap, or 209 primer type muzzleloading rifles .54 caliber or smaller will be permitted. Inline actions are permissible. Only pure lead projectiles may be used, either round ball or slugs. Plastic tipped projectiles or plastic bases are acceptable. Muzzleloaders may have a set trigger, not to be set until ready to fire. Muzzleloaders may be equipped with sporter-type thumbhole stocks (non-adjustable). Slings not to exceed 1½ inches in width are acceptable. Sights will be open with no optics. Muzzleloaders may be loaded with single projectile patched round balls or a factory manufactured type lead bullet. Participants may only use one muzzleloader throughout the event with the exception of muzzleloader malfunction.

**Restrictions:**

- Shooting mats.
- Telescopic sights.
- Range finders.
- Binoculars, monocular, or spotting scopes.

- More than 60 grains (volume) of black powder, Pyrodex or approved black powder substitute per load.
- Any jacketed bullet.
- Kneeling rolls.
- Adjustable thumbhole stocks.
- Calibers larger than .54.
- More than one shooting position per shooting sequence.
- Adjustable type competition shooting slings.
- Wooden ramrods.

## HUNTING SHOTGUN CHALLENGE

Hunting Shotgun Challenge participants will move through a multiple station Hunter's Clays course designed to simulate hunting conditions and situations. The layout will depend on the available topography. Shooting stations may depict bird flight, running animals, and shooting obstacles. The Hunting Shotgun Challenge will be conducted with participants taking shots at clay targets. Sizes of clay targets may vary depending on different situations.

**Scoring:** Each participant will shoot a total of 30 shots, each worth 10 points for a hit (dead target) and zero points for a miss (lost target). The Hunting Shotgun Challenge has a maximum possibility of 300 points.

Scoring will be done by designated YHEC officials. Only legal targets will be scored and the score judge will be the sole judge of whether or not a target is broken. Officials may ask assistance from the trap operator or a range official if they feel their assistance is required. The scorer will call "lost" for any target determined to be missed. Any challenge to the call must be made immediately by the participant. The score judge will then make the final decision with assistance from the trap operator and/or the range official.

Only targets with a visible piece broken off will be scored "dead". Dusters, targets deflected or redirected in flight (but with no visible breakage) will be scored "lost".

Based on the scorer's judgment, should a target hit an obstruction (i.e., tree or limb) before the participant has had ample time to fire, a new target will be thrown. However, should the participant have ample time (in the scorer's judgment), and fails to do so before the target hits an object near the end of its path and breaks, the target will be scored as "lost".

**Shotguns and ammunition:** Any 12-, 16- or 20-gauge shotgun will be permitted. Double targets will be thrown in some instances; therefore, the shotgun should be capable of holding two shells. YHEC officials will furnish all ammunition (except for 16 gauge). Shooters with 16-gauge shotguns must provide their own ammo.

Participants may not change choke tubes at any time during the event. Adjustable butt plates or cheek pieces may not be adjusted during the event. Participants may use only one shotgun during the event with the exception of a malfunction. No practice shots are allowed.

**Shooting procedures:** Each participant may or may not be allowed to see one legal target from each trap prior to shooting the activity at the station. Only participants and scorer will be allowed on the station or firing line while shooting each station. The scorer will hand the ammunition to the participant as required.

Each shooter will begin in the "ready position" when calling for the target. The gun must be off

the shoulder with the top of the butt plate below the top of the armpit. The shotgun may not be shouldered until after the target is visible. In other words, in case of a delay pull, the participant cannot call for the target and immediately shoulder the shotgun. Repeating, the shotgun must not be shouldered until the target is visible.

**A Legal Target:** A legal target is a whole clay target that is thrown from the trap in a prescribed manner within five-second time limit after the participant calls for the target.

**An Illegal Target:** An illegal target is a target broken by the trap or another obstruction. Illegal targets will be re-thrown for the participant, regardless of whether or not the participant fires at the target.

***Malfunctions:***

The following occurrences will be considered malfunctions and new targets will be thrown:

1. Ammunition malfunction.
2. Trap or trap operator error of failure.

The following malfunctions will not be allowed and targets will be scored “lost”:

1. Participant error.
2. Failure to load firearm.
3. Failure to release safety.
4. Failure of shotgun to fire (other than defective ammunition).
5. Failure of shotgun to reload.

Should a shotgun break through no fault of the participant, another shotgun may be borrowed and the activity continued. However, if the breakage occurs during the firing at a target, and the target is missed, it will be scored as “lost”. No practice with a borrowed shotgun is allowed.

***Restrictions:***

- Release triggers.
- Shot larger than #7 ½ or smaller than #9.
- Scopes or electrically illuminated-type sighting devices.
- Ventilated rib greater than ½ inch in height or width.

## **HUNTING RIFLE CHALLENGE**

The Light Hunting Rifle Challenge will be conducted with participants taking shots at targets varying in distance from 15 to 75 yards. Participants will shoot from three positions.

- Short-Range will have a distance of 30 yards or less. Participants will shoot from a standing position with no props permitted at these distances.
- Medium-Range will have a distance of 60 yards or less. Participants may use any shooting position except prone.
- Long-Range will have a distance of 75 yards or less. Participants may use any shooting position.

***Scoring:*** Each participant will shoot a total of 30 shots, 10 at each position worth 10 points for a hit on the appropriate target area. A participant will be allowed seven continuous minutes per position or distance. The Hunting Rifle Challenge has a maximum possibility of 300 points.

***Rifles and Equipment:*** Only standard type .22 caliber rimfire rifles, designed primarily for hunting, will be permitted. All action types, except fully automatic, will be permitted. The rifle may not exceed 8½ pounds in weight, excluding sling and magazine. The rifle must have a



minimum trigger pull of 2 pounds (907 grams). Rifles may be equipped with a hunting sling not to exceed 1½ inches in width. Non-adjustable thumbhole stocks are permitted. Sights will be open, peep with standard front post or bead, or hunting scopes of nine-power magnification or less. Participants may use only one rifle throughout the activity except in case of gun malfunction. Another .22 rifle may be borrowed for the purpose of finishing the activity but no sighting-in will be allowed. All ammunition used in this event will be .22 long rifle. Participants will supply their own ammunition.

***Restrictions:***

- .22 Magnum rifles
- .17 rimfires
- Clothing with extra padding, stiffness, or shirt cup for the purpose of assisting the shooter in remaining steady.
- Competition shooting mats.
- Adjustable competition type sling swivels.
- Kneeling rolls.
- Adjustable thumbhole competition stocks.
- Palm rests or forearms of stocks exceeding 2¼ inches wide or 2¼ inches deep as measured from centerline of bore.
- Scope or optics greater than or capable of more than nine times (9x) magnification.
- Range finders.
- Peep sights with rear aperture less than two millimeters.
- Binoculars, monocular, or spotting scopes.
- More than one shooting position per sequence.
- Shooting sticks.

## **HUNTER RESPONSIBILITY EXAM**

The Hunter Responsibility Exam consists of broad-based hunting and conservation information. Participants will complete a written examination that includes 50 to 60 questions (multiple choice, true or false). The exam will be based on the Missouri Department of Conservation Hunter Education Program Student Manual.

**Scoring:** Participants will be asked to answer all or as many questions possible in the allotted amount of time. Participants must answer all test questions with no assistance from other participants, written material, or coaches/sponsors. Students will have 60 minutes to complete the test. The maximum possible score of the Hunter Responsibility Exam is 300 points.

***Restrictions:***

- Hunter Education books.
- Written, taped or transcribed information and reference materials.
- Communication between participants, coaches, or other individuals excluding event staff.

## HUNTER SAFETY TRAIL CHALLENGE

The Hunter Safety Trail Challenge will be conducted with participants moving through a multi-station, pre-determined trail designed to simulate actual hunting conditions and situations.

Participants may be tested and scored on the dos and don'ts of firearm and archery safety as well as "shoot and don't shoot" situations encountered in a hunting environment. Stations may include, but are not limited to, hunter game situations, target identification, landowner relationships, first-aid, and safe gun handling.

**Scoring:** Participants will travel to various stations, each worth a score for a correct response or answer. Incorrect answers or responses will be scored as zero points. The Hunter Safety Trail Challenge will have a maximum possibility of 300 points.

**Restrictions:**

- Written materials of any kind.
- Taped or transcribed information.
- Communications between participants, coaches, sponsors, or other individuals excluding event staff.

## HUNTING ORIENTEERING SKILLS CHALLENGE

Participants will be required to demonstrate knowledge using a map and compass on a field course, performing certain tasks at skill stations, and answering questions relating to land navigation, maps, map symbols, and other related skills. The maximum score for the Hunting Orienteering Skills Challenge is 300 points.

**Scoring:** The participants may be scored in three or more skill areas including field navigation, distance estimation, and map/compass knowledge.

**Restrictions:**

- Calculators.
- Orienteering books or literature.
- Encyclopedias.
- Any written or taped materials.
- Electronic or battery powered equipment including GPS.
- Measuring devices including rangefinders.
- Communication between participants, coaches, sponsors, or other adults excluding event staff.

Resource material for this event can be taken from *The Hunter's Guide* (NRA publication), *Be An Expert With Map And Compass Orienteering Handbook* by Bjorn Kjellstrom, and *Your Way With Map and Compass Orienteering* by John Disley, available at or through your local bookstore.

## HUNTING WILDLIFE IDENTIFICATION CHALLENGE

Participants will identify 30 wildlife encounters in a field station or natural outdoor setting. Each correct identification will be worth 10 points and an incorrect score will be worth zero. The Hunting Wildlife Identification Challenge has a maximum score of 300 points.

Participants may be asked to observe and identify both game and non-game animal species. Wildlife signs including skulls, furs, feathers, antlers, horns, tracks, or other, will be identified from 1 to 50 yards.

**Restrictions:**

- Wildlife identification books or literature.
- Encyclopedias.
- Written, taped, or transcribed information.
- Electronic equipment.
- Communication between participants, coaches, sponsors, or other individuals excluding event staff.

**SCORING CRITERIA**

Correctly answering a predetermined number of questions, making a certain number of hits in a prescribed target area or correctly completing a prescribed activity accumulates event points. The maximum possible point score for each event is 300.

**TIE BREAKING CRITERIA**

Ties for all categories, individuals and teams will be broken for award purposes. The following criteria will be used. In the event of a tie, the individual or team with the highest level of achievement in the Hunter Responsibility Exam will be declared the winner. If a tie remains, the individual or team with the highest level of achievement on the Hunter Safety Trail will be declared the winner. Should a tie remain the individual or team with the highest combined level of achievement in the four (4) responsibility events (Hunter Responsibility Exam, Hunter Orienteering Skills, Hunter Safety Trail and Hunting Wildlife Identification) will be declared the winner. The final tiebreaker will be based on a combined score of the four (4) shooting events, Hunting Shotgun Challenge, the Hunting Rifle Challenge, Hunting Muzzleloader Challenge and the Hunting Archery Challenge. Should individuals or teams tie in the Hunter Responsibility Exam, the tie breaking formula will start at the second criteria level (Hunter Safety Trail Challenge).

**CHALLENGES**

Challenges concerning the value of shots as scored must be made immediately by the participant and will be resolved at each event. When shot value scores cannot be determined between the participant and the volunteer scorer, the event manager will make the final determination. Only participants may challenge, and all challenges must be made during the challenge period on the activity site. The challenge period is immediately before the next participant comes to the station or firing line or as outlined in the specific event regulations.

**PROTESTS**

Protests must be filed in writing within 30 minutes of the occurrence by the participant and be brought to the attention of the state event director. If the individual receives no satisfaction, the written protest may then be submitted to the YHEC Protest Committee for review, consideration, and final decision. The protest committee will be comprised of four members (YHEC state event director and three assigned adult YHEC volunteers).

**ALIBIS**

Only range, trap, or ammunition malfunction will constitute an alibi. Alibis will not be allowed for firearm, arrow or bow malfunction. In the event of a firearm or bow malfunction, the participant may borrow a firearm or bow and continue the activity. No practice or sighting-in will be allowed for borrowed equipment once the activity has begun.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The Missouri State Youth Hunter Education Challenge Championship will be held annually at a site and date to be determined by the State YHEC Committee. For more information, you may contact the NRA Missouri State YHEC Coordinator: