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Clay pigeon shooting has different forms of sporting competition groups and discipline types.

Trap

Clay targets are thrown as singles or doubles from one or more traps situated some 15 metres in front of the shooter and are generally going away from the firing point at varying speeds, angles and elevations. The most common disciplines in this group are: Down-the-Line (DTL) Single Barrel, Double Rise, Automatic Ball Trap (ABT), Olympic Trap, Double Trap and Universal Trench.

Skeet

Skeet is a Scandinavian word, taken from the discipline originated in America. Targets are thrown in singles and doubles from 2 trap houses situated some 40 metres apart. These are at opposite ends of a semi-circular arc with seven shooting positions. Targets are thrown at set trajectories and speeds. The main disciplines in this group are English Skeet, Olympic Skeet & American (NSSA) Skeet.

English Sporting

The English Sporting discipline has the sport's biggest following. Targets are thrown in a great variety of trajectories, angles, speeds, elevations and distances and the discipline was originally devised to simulate live quarry shooting, hence some of the names commonly used on Sporting stands: Springing Teal, Driven Pheasant, Bolting Rabbit, Crossing Pigeon, Dropping Duck, etc. Disciplines in this group include English Sporting, International (FITASC) Sporting, Super Sporting Sportrap and Compak Sporting. Other disciplines only use standard targets, but in Sporting almost anything goes!

Down the Line

Commonly known as DTL, it is a popular clay shooting discipline. Targets are thrown to a distance of 45 to 50 metres at a fixed height of approximately 2.75m and with a horizontal 'spread' of up to 22 degrees either side of the centre line. Scoring of each target is 3 points for a first barrel kill, 2 points for a second barrel kill and 0 for a miss (maximum 75 points per round). Each competitor shoots at a single target in turn, without moving from the stand until he or she have shot all five targets. After they all move one place to the right, and continue to do so until they've all completed a standard round of 25 birds. Discipline variations include: Single Barrel, Double Rise and Handicap-by-Distance.

Universal Trench

A variation on the theme of trap shooting, sometimes known as "Five Trap". Upon the call of "Pull!" by the shooter, a clay will be released from any one of five machines, selected at random. The five traps are installed in a trench in front of the shooting stands and are all set at different angles, elevations and speeds. Horizontal angles can vary from 0 degrees to 45 degrees either side of the centre line and target distance is between 60 and 70 metres. Elevations can vary, as in other trap disciplines (except DTL), between 1.5 and 3.5 metres above ground level.

<http://www.philipmorrisdirect.co.uk/shooting/clay-traps/dept/>

Olympic Trap

This is one of the disciplines which forms part of the shooting programme at the Olympic Games. A trench in front of the shooting stands, conceals 15 traps arranged in 5 groups of 3. Olympic Trap targets are set to travel 75 to 80 metres at varying elevations and with a maximum horizontal angle of 45 degrees either side of the centre line. Shooters take turns to shoot at a target each, before moving in a clockwise direction to the next stand in the line. Targets for each shooter are thrown immediately upon his call and are selected by a shooting scheme that ensures all competitors receive exactly the same target selection in an unpredictable randomised order. These are sent from any one of the three traps directly in front of him. Scoring is awarded as 1 point per target killed, regardless of whether this is achieved with the first or second barrel. A simpler and cheaper to install variation of this discipline is known as AUTOMATIC BALL TRAP (ABT) where only one trap is used and target variation is obtained by the continuous oscillation of the trap in both horizontal and vertical directions in order to give the same spread of targets as in Olympic Trap. Similarly, targets are also thrown to a maximum of 80 metres.

Skeet

In this discipline, targets are released in a combination of singles and doubles, adding up to a total of 25 targets per round, from the High and Low trap houses on a fixed trajectory speed. Scoring is on the basis of 1 point per target killed, up to a maximum of 25. Variety is achieved by shooting round the seven stations in a semicircle.

In ENGLISH SKEET (by far the most popular of the skeet disciplines), the gun position is optional (i.e. pre-mounted or out-of-shoulder when the target is called) and targets are released immediately upon the shooter's call.

In OLYMPIC SKEET, the speed targets travel at are considerably faster and the release of the target can be delayed up to 3 seconds after calling whilst the gun in the down position is compulsory. There is also an eighth shooting station, midway between the two houses.

These are purpose made, spring loaded, flywheel or rotational devices especially designed to launch the different types of targets in singles or pairs at distances of up to 100 metres.

Machines vary with very simple, hand cocked, hand loaded and hand released types to the highly sophisticated. As well as a fully automatic variety which can hold up to 600 targets in their own magazine and are electrically or pneumatically operated. Target release is either by remote control by pressing a button or by an acoustic system activated by the shooter's voice. Target speeds and trajectories can be easily modified and varied to suit the discipline or type of shooting required.