

10 Handgun Metallic Silhouette

A brief description

The sport of Handgun Metallic Silhouette is one in which pistols are used to knock down metal targets at a variety of distances. It originated in Mexico in the early 1950s and by the early 1980s, competitions were being organised around Australia. Handgun Metallic Silhouette offers a variety of calibres, firearms, distances and shooting positions depending on the category and competition. Handgun Metallic Silhouette is one of only two competitions in Australia, which allow calibres greater than .38.



The target

Handgun Silhouette targets are metal cut-outs in the shape of animals and are made of varying thicknesses depending on the distances and the calibres being used. A steel stand is set into the ground and the targets placed on it. The targets are set out in banks of five. In the Big Bore matches, the chickens are placed at 50m, pigs at 100m, turkeys at 150m and rams at 200m. Targets for the smallbore matches are scaled-down versions of their centrefire counterparts. The ranges, at which the Smallbore targets are placed, are likewise scaled down. Chickens are placed at 25m, pigs at 50m, turkeys at 75m and rams at 100m.



Ammunition

While the .44 Magnum and .357 Magnum have traditionally been the most popular calibre for the Big Bore revolver match, the development of lighter-recoil calibres with sufficient energy are becoming more common in the Production category. The 7mm TCU based on the .223 Remington case, for instance, appears to meet the requirements of high energy and low recoil. Silhouette shooters tend to load their own ammo for the centrefire matches. Apart from economic reasons, it gives them a choice of loads for different ranges. Silhouette rimfire ammunition must be standard velocity to reduce damage to targets. .22 Magnum and hot loads such as 'Stingers' are not permitted.



Dress rules

Although no specific rules relate to dress, there are rules regarding accessories such as gloves, elbow pads and shooting mats. Eye and hearing protection is, of course, a must and there are rules relating to shooting glasses and eyeshades.



AUSTRALIAN
Shooter
THE MAGAZINE FOR SPORTING SHOOTERS

Scoring

To score a hit, the targets must simply be knocked off their stands. However, they must be shot in the correct order and within the time limit. Normally, each shooter has a scorer recording the shots and making sure the shooter abides by the rules.



Spotting scope

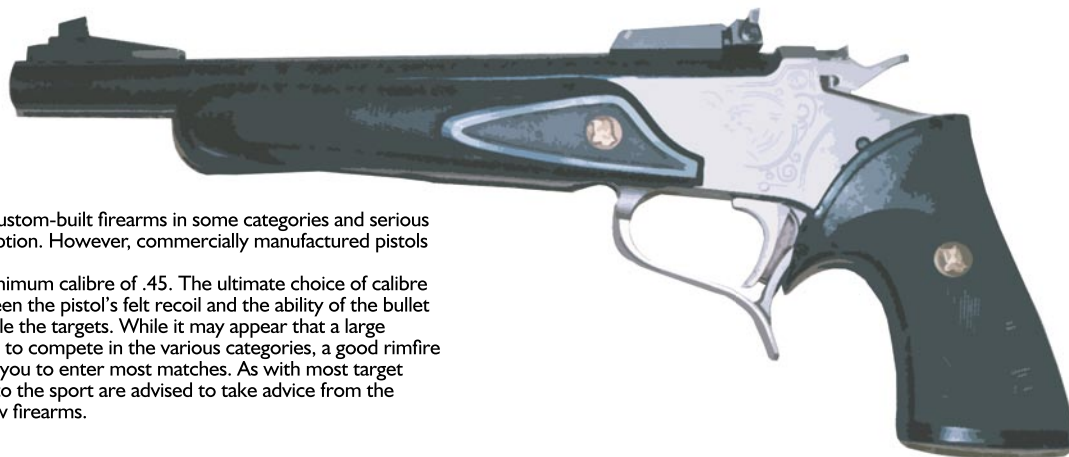
Each shooter will have a scorer to mark the score sheet and if requested will 'coach' the shooter. Scorers may also use a spotting scope to assist the shooter by calling the fall of shot.

The matches

There are three official handgun silhouette competitions: Smallbore - using .22 rimfire pistols; Big Bore - using centrefire pistols; and Field Pistol - which is similar to the Big Bore event but can only be fired from the standing position and other conditions regarding size of targets, types of pistols, sights and distances used apply.

The range

The Metallic Silhouette range is set up with the targets at their appropriate distances from a common firing point. Most SSAA branches can accommodate the 100m Smallbore and Field Pistol events, however, the 200m centrefire ranges are not as common because of the large amount of land required to contain both range and safety zone.



The categories

There are several categories of Handgun Metallic Silhouette depending on the type of handgun used. They are: Revolver category - using only revolvers produced by the manufacturer; Production category - any handgun weighing not more than 1.8kg and a barrel length of no more than 273mm; Standing category - any handgun from the Revolver or Production categories but fired from the standing position only; and Unlimited category - which allows any handgun weighing no more than 2.04kg and with a barrel no longer than 381mm.

The pistols

The rules allow shooters to use custom-built firearms in some categories and serious silhouette shooters choose this option. However, commercially manufactured pistols are very competitive. Centrefire pistols must have a minimum calibre of .45. The ultimate choice of calibre comes down to a trade-off between the pistol's felt recoil and the ability of the bullet to retain sufficient energy to topple the targets. While it may appear that a large number of handguns are required to compete in the various categories, a good rimfire and centrefire revolver will allow you to enter most matches. As with most target shooting disciplines, newcomers to the sport are advised to take advice from the experts before committing to new firearms.

Shoot Handgun Metallic Silhouette

Every state has a Silhouette discipline chairman and most branches shoot Handgun Metallic Silhouette in one form or another. The SSAA's Guide to Shooting in Australia has information relating to individual branches' activities. Alternatively, contact your state office for details.

Competitions

Each year there are State and National championships as well as National and State postal competitions.