

13 Lever Action



A brief description
 Lever Action rifle shooting began in the late 1960s when SSAA members wanting to shoot black powder competition were having difficulty sourcing appropriate firearms. They soon became aware that there were many lever rifles with which black powder could be used. In 1976 the first National Lever Action Championships were staged in Brisbane (nitro powder by this time) with interest sparking in other states. Lever-action rifles are used exclusively for this event because they provide rapid recycling for the timed events. They are also historically and traditionally appropriate.



Categories

There are two broad categories in the Lever Action disciplines: Open and Classic Calibre. The most challenging is the Classic Calibre. Broadly speaking, any lever-action rifle with a wooden stock qualifies for this event.

Classic Calibre

The Classic Calibre Lever Rifle is a centrefire rifle as issued by the factory having a two-piece stock, tube feed magazine, open hammer and iron sights of the rear notch and front blade type. The targets are all contour targets (animal profiles) with score zones marked on vital areas from 10 to five. Some of the contour targets used are the small bear, buffalo head, pig, rabbit, feral cat, goat, crow, fox head and running fox. The competition is shot over distances of 100m, 50m and 25m using the positional stances of any field position, standing unsupported, sitting unsupported, standing post rest and sitting post rest. Timing for the course of fire can vary from five minutes to 15 seconds for five shots. A typical match would consist of 35 rounds with targets at 100m, 50m and 25m. Two targets that are always part of the competition are the small bear (100m any field position) and the fox head (50m standing unsupported) with five shots in five minutes for each target. The aggregate score for these two targets is the basis for the Classic Calibre Proficiency Medals and grading.



Open

The Open Lever Action Rifle category is divided into two separate events at National level, centrefire and rimfire, where competitors need two lever-action rifles. At state and club level, it is permissible to use either, as only one event is shot and is referred to as the Open event. The National Open events permit any lever-action rifle with a wooden stock. Any calibre or handload or wildcat are accepted. Pointed projectiles are not permitted in rapid-fire events. Peep, vernier and target sights, with the exception of those using optical inserts and/or rubber eyepieces, are permitted. The targets are usually a combination of the 50m ISSF Precision Slow Fire Pistol target and a number of animal profile targets. The competition is generally a 50-shot match. A typical course of fire for an Open event would be the 50m ISSF target (100m any field position), the 50m ISSF target, scoring seven to 10 only (50m standing unsupported) with five shots in five minutes for each target. The aggregate score for these two targets is the basis for the Classic Calibre Proficiency Medals and grading. The 50m ISSF target is also used for the rapid-fire events with the target for centrefire placed at 50m (five shots in 15 seconds) and the target for rimfire placed at 25m (five shots 10 seconds, scoring seven to 10 only). These three targets are shot twice and the other 20 rounds are made up by other contour targets with five shots at each in any time limit up to a maximum of five minutes per target. The rimfire category currently permits .22LR, .22 Magnum and .17HMR. The .22LR still reigns supreme on the national scene probably due to the extensive research and development over the years on target-quality ammunition. For centrefire, basically any calibre can be used for which there is a lever-action rifle available. The Classic Calibre lever-action rifle can also be used in the Open centrefire event.



Competitions

Apart from SSAA branch competitions, state and national titles are conducted annually.

Shoot Lever Actions

Each state has a Lever Action discipline chairman and many branches regularly shoot the match. The SSAA's Guide to Shooting in Australia has information relating to individual branches' activities. Alternatively, contact your state office for details.



Ammunition

The calibre must be one that was in production prior to the end of 1938. Jacketed or lead projectiles may be used, but no spire points are permitted for safety reasons. The rifle must be capable of cycling rounds from the magazine to the chamber. Examples of the calibres used are .30-30, .38-55, .32-40, .25-20, .218 Bee, .357 Magnum, .32-20 and .44-40. Wildcat cartridges are not permitted in the traditional or Classic section of lever-action competition.

Dress rules

Clothing specially designed for competitive rifle shooting such as shooting coats, trousers, gloves and boots that may provide artificial support to the shooter are not permitted. All competitors should wear normal hunting or field wear. Other shooting accessories such as rifle attachments, butt hooks, palm rests, spotting scopes, padded kneeling cushions or seats are also prohibited.

