

FIELD ARCHERY

BASIC NOTES & INSTRUCTION

The following notes are designed as a basic guide for the beginner to Field Archery. By “beginner” it is not meant beginner to archery in general. These notes are aimed mainly at those who already have some experience of Target Archery and wish to try Field.

It is hoped that you will already have achieved a reasonable accuracy with your bow on the Target line before attempting Field Archery. Cheshire has several members who are experienced Field archers and your first attempts at this form of shooting would be better done under their guidance.

Please contact the Field Officer if you wish to be put in touch with someone who can give you an introduction to this form of shooting.

FIELD ARCHERY ASSOCIATIONS

By paying membership fees to the club you are automatically a member of the Grand National Archery Society/Archery GB (GNAS/AGB). This entitles you to enter any tournament run by GNAS/AGB affiliated clubs under GNAS/AGB or FITA/World Archery (FITA/WA) rules, whether it be a field or target tournament.



As well as the GNAS/AGB there are two other organisations who are concerned only with Field Archery. They are the English Field Archery Association (EFAA) and the National Field Archery Society (NFAS). To enter an EFAA or an NFAS shoot you would need to be an individual member of that particular society. All three societies, GNAS/AGB, EFAA & NFAS have their own rules and regulations, rounds, methods of conducting shoots, scoring, classification systems etc.

These notes only cover Field Archery as practiced under the GNAS/AGB.

PREPARATION FOR FIELD ARCHERY

Any archer can take up Field Archery but to get the most from this side of the sport it is essential to have had plenty of practice already on the target archery range.

As the target faces in Field Archery are considerably smaller than those for target archery a certain standard of accuracy is required.

There is no reason why people should be labelled either “field” or “target” archers, there is no need to give up one for the other. Both types of archery have something to benefit the other.

Field archery is not just flinging arrows any old how around a wood. The discipline of the target line is essential to become a good field archer. On the other hand, the adaptability needed for Field is a great help on the target line especially, for example, in bad weather or on uneven ground. A good field archer takes his/her side of the sport just as seriously, and is just as dedicated, as a good target archer.

EQUIPMENT FOR FIELD ARCHERY

How many times have we heard people say “oh, but I’ll need an old or cheap set of arrows for Field archery” or “but don’t you have to shoot Field without sights?”. Both of these notions are completely wrong.

People also always assume they will lose or damage all their arrows at their first attempt at Field Archery. This does not have to be the case especially if, as mentioned before, you have become reasonably accurate at Target before attempting Field.

Do not be tempted to bring out an old set of arrows, you will be less likely to hit the target if they are already bent or if your bow is no longer tuned for them.

Use exactly the same equipment for Field as you do for Target unless, of course, you particularly want to change to another style. The only thing you must make sure is that your equipment complies with the rules laid down for the style you choose to shoot.

BOW STYLES FOR FIELD ARCHERY.

In most cases you need not alter any of your equipment for Field Archery, you can use the same equipment as you would on the target line (Longbow is one exception). There are, however, more bow styles recognised in Field so if you wish to change, the opportunity is there. It should be pointed out though that you shouldn’t change style to barebow or longbow thinking it an easy alternative - it isn’t. Nor should you think that not using a sight gives you an excuse to miss the target - it doesn’t. A good barebow archer will put in excellent scores and unless you put in a lot of time and effort to learn a new style you may very easily become disheartened. Unless you mean to take a new style seriously, stick to what you are accustomed to on the target line. Safety is also an issue. If you cannot shoot a style safely then please do not shoot it at all.

Basic notes for bow styles allowed in GNAS Field are as follows:

RECURVE

(sometimes referred to as FREESTYLE)

Recurve bow with ring sight, shot with the fingers i.e. the usual target recurve equipment.

COMPOUND UNLIMITED

Compound bow and all the usual attachments that are allowed in Target archery.

BAREBOW

Recurve bow with no sight, shot with the fingers. An arrow rest and pressure button are allowed. Stabilisers, clicker, attachments and marks on the string or limbs are not.

COMPOUND LIMITED

Compound bow. Release aids and scope sights are not allowed. An ordinary ring sight or multipin sight is permitted as is a level, peepsight and pressure button.

TRADITIONAL

Recurve bow with no sight, shot with the fingers. An arrow rest is allowed but not a pressure button. Arrows must be made of wood. The same anchor point and finger position must be used throughout a tournament.

COMPOUND BAREBOW

Compound bow with no sight and no release aid. Generally the same rules apply to compound barebow as to recurve barebow except that one stabiliser, no longer than 12 ins overall, may be fitted.

Longbow

Fairly obvious really but there are a lot of rules for this class and they do differ from the target rules!

American Flatbow

The bow must be shot using the ‘Mediterranean’ loose and the same anchor point and finger position must be used throughout the tournament.

Rules for all bowstyles are included in full in the GNAS/AGB “Rules of Shooting”. If you choose to shoot any style other than your usual target style it would be advisable to read the official rules. This is especially important for any of the styles that don’t allow sights - it seems to be a curious fact that the less you have on a bow the more complex the rules are. It’s very relevant if you shoot Longbow target to check the differences for Field.

- Whichever style you choose to shoot it is important that your arrows carry either your name or initials.
- Binoculars are allowed but aids for estimating distance are not.
- No notes or memoranda may be used that might assist in improving scores, other than extracts from the Rules of Shooting.
- You should be prepared with a range of sight marks in metres. You will need a sight mark for every 5 metres from 5 to 50 metres for archers without sights and 10 to 60 metres for archers with sights. Note: maximum distances for juniors depend on age and gender. You should check these out if they apply.

ATTENDING A FIELD SHOOT

This may seem an unnecessary item to include but when you arrive at your first Field tournament you will feel much more confident if you know what to expect. Procedures are different to those at Target shoots.

- The first thing to point out is that there is no break for lunch during GNAS/AGB field shoots and, as it is usually impossible to return to your car, you will need to take everything you might want with you eg. waterproofs, spare tab, spare string, odd tools, superglue, your lunch etc. A field tournament can take up a whole day in some cases, depending on the round being shot, the terrain, the weather and the general shooting speed of some groups. Remember that you will have to carry whatever you take with you so, although you don’t want to be short of essential items, don’t over-burden yourself. Be sensible about what you take and what you carry it in.
- GNAS dress regulations do not apply to Field so you can put on as many layers of clothing as you like and can comfortably shoot in. You may need to make allowances for the fact that the weather could change dramatically during the course of a day’s shooting. The rules actually advise archers to wear bright, visible colours and stout footwear is also recommended.
- Unlike target tournaments, target lists are not supplied before the shoot. On arriving at a Field shoot you should register as usual and here you will be given your score cards and told the target number you are to start on. A whistle is usually blown to assemble all archers. Up till then you are allowed to shoot on practice butts. These will be separate from the course and set up especially for this purpose. For safety they should be under the control of a judge or tournament official.
- When the whistle blows for assembly you will get the usual welcome from the organisers and the senior judge will mention anything he thinks archers will need to know concerning the shoot. You will usually find that pegs with target numbers are used at the assembly point so that everyone assembles in the groups they are to shoot in. These groups are then led out to their targets on the course.



Another whistle will then be blown to indicate when it is safe to start shooting. This ensures that all groups start shooting at the same time and that no-one is left wandering about in the wrong place on the course.

Ideally if all archers shoot at the same pace, the next target becomes free as you arrive to shoot it. Obviously this is not always the case and some hold ups are inevitable. If the group in front are still shooting your next target, behave as you would on the target line and don't disturb them unduly.

- You should also be extra vigilant about safety on the course. Do not start to shoot until you are sure the target is clear. If the group in front is just moving off from the target give them a little time to get out of the way. Be aware that their route may take them around the back of the target. You should also be aware of archers in the group in front who may be searching for arrows behind the target. If this is the case they should have left a senior archer in front of the target to alert you. It is acceptable to look for lost arrows as long as it does not



A group scoring their arrows at the target.

cause a hold up. If arrows cannot be found it is also acceptable to write a small note on the corner of the target to indicate where you think it might be i.e "X7 blue fletchings - high right". It may then be found by a subsequent group who are also searching for lost arrows, or, by the tournament organiser.

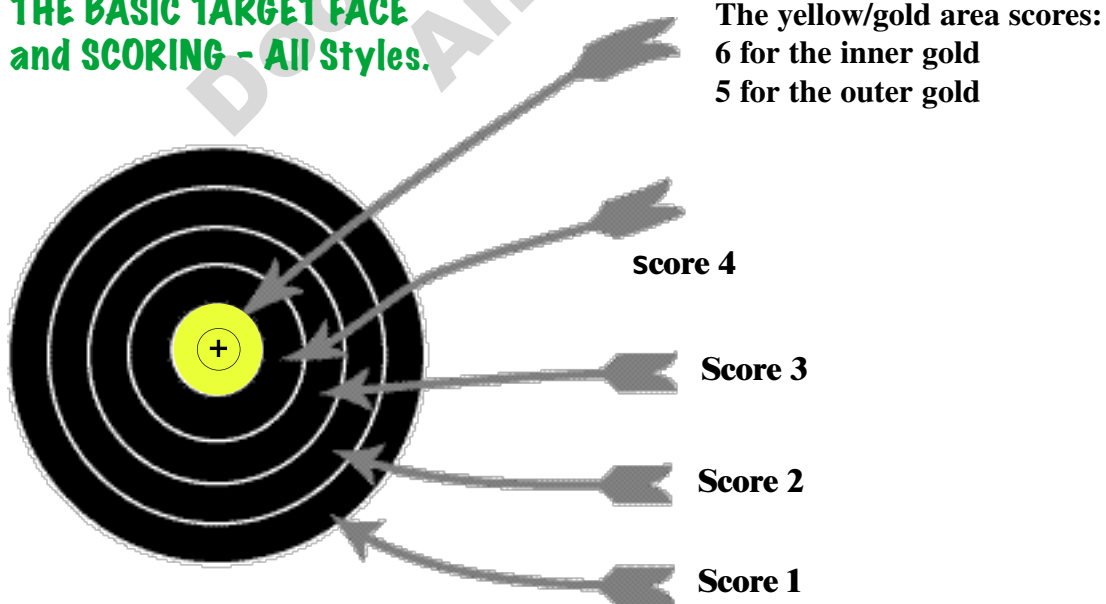
- Groups can consist of 3 to 6 archers but 4 is most usual. Two archers in the group will be scorers and the other two will pull the arrows.
- A double scoring system has been used for many years in Field archery and it is usually very efficient. Each scorer will have, and complete, a separate set of score cards for the shooting group. As the scores are called, both scorers will write them down and the totals and running totals should be completed and confirmed **at every target**.
- Binoculars can be used at any time during the shoot. Technically it is against the rules to spot for other archers but in practice this does not mean it doesn't happen. Most field archers are generous enough to help out their fellow archers especially those who are beginners. It is not unusual for the offer to spot to be made and it is very rare for anyone in a group to object, however, it is a good idea to get used to using your own binoculars for the day that you find yourself in a seriously competitive group.

FIELD ROUNDS & FACES

There are several Field Archery rounds listed in the GNAS/AGB Rules of Shooting although some are rarely, if ever now, put on by tournament organisers. The main rounds that you are likely to be offered are the **Marked and Unmarked FITA/WA Field** rounds. If these are shown as having **Arrowhead** status this is similar to a Target FITA having Star status. If this is the case arrow holes need to be marked and, at the end of the shoot, Arrowhead awards can be claimed in the same way as target Stars. For the purpose of this leaflet we will concentrate on these rounds only. You are advised to check out the others in the GNAS/AGB Rules if you are interested.

FITA FIELD ROUNDS - Marked and Unmarked.

THE BASIC TARGET FACE and SCORING - All Styles.



The basic target face remains the same for both rounds. The face is black with a yellow/gold centre “spot”. The black scoring areas are divided by white rings and, as in target, the arrow shaft must cut through to the higher scoring area to get that score. 6 zone scoring is used and a miss should be recorded as ‘M’.

INFORMATION COMMON TO BOTH THE FITA MARKED & THE FITA UNMARKED ROUNDS

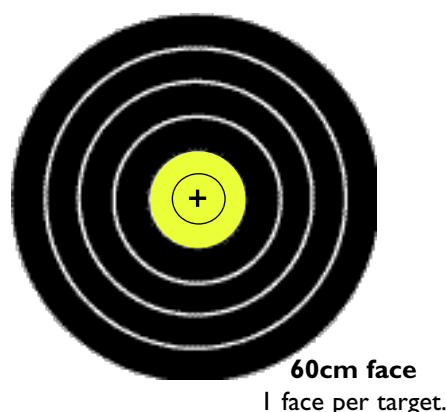
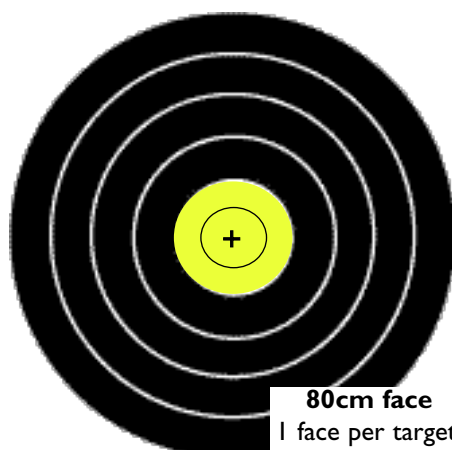
There will be a single shooting peg, red for archers with sights and blue for those classes without. There may also be white pegs for younger juniors. In field, both feet must be behind the peg when shooting and it is necessary to imagine a shooting line through the peg, parallel to the target.

Ideally there would be 4 archers to a group and, if so, the shooting pattern would be as follows. Archers will usually shoot in pairs, the pair who shoot first on one target will shoot last on the next and so on. If, on the first target, you shoot from the left hand side of the peg then you would continue to shoot from the left hand side at every target on the course. If you start on the right you stay on the right.

Tournament organisers have the option of putting on 24 or 28 target rounds although 24 is now becoming the norm for selection purposes. Most Field tournaments are 2 day events, one round being shot on each day. If space is restricted and there is only room for one course the unmarked round will usually be shot on the first day. The organisers then remeasure the course for the second day when the marked round will be shot. If there is space for two courses to be put out together this obviously means there is potential to allow more entries to the shoot. It is possible in this case for the organiser to split up the styles and use both courses on both days. If this happens it may be that you end up shooting the marked round on the first day and the unmarked on the second.

There are four face sizes used in both the marked and the unmarked FITA rounds. The same faces are used for both the marked and the unmarked distance rounds.

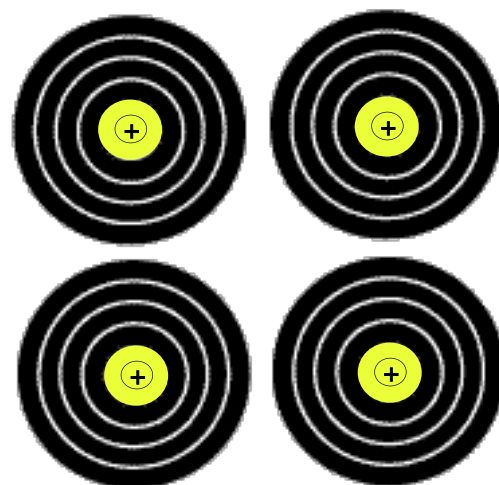
3 arrows are shot at each target.



Obviously shooting the single larger faces is straightforward - just aim for the "spot" and score accordingly.

**40cm faces. 4 faces per target.
Known as the "Four Face".**

Each archer has their own target face and will shoot all their arrows at that one face. If you shoot first you would aim at the top target on the side you are shooting from, if you shoot last you would aim at the bottom target on your side. Arrows hitting the wrong faces do not score.

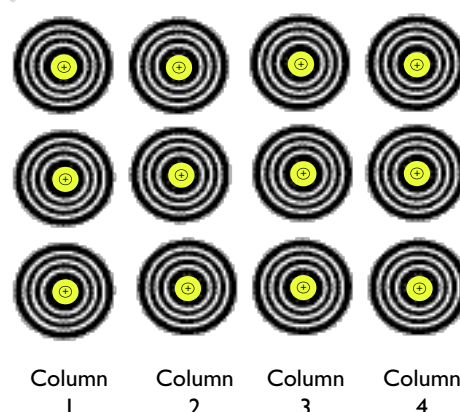


**20cm faces. 12 faces to a target.
Known as the "Bunny".**

When the first two archers shoot, the archer on the left would shoot column 1, the archer on the right would use column 3. When the last two archers shoot, the archer on the left would use column 2 and the one on the right would shoot at column 4.

It doesn't matter which order the targets are shot in, top to bottom, however, two arrows in the same target will result in only the lowest scoring one counting. Arrows hitting targets in the wrong column do not score.

Columns are numbered on the diagram opposite only to aid this explanation, they would not be numbered on the course.



SHOOTING DISTANCES

There will be red shooting pegs for Recurve and Compound archers with sights and blue shooting pegs for the classes without sights. Juniors need to be aware of the peg colours for their age and bowstyle as these can vary from the seniors. White pegs may also be used for some junior age groups.

The following is based on rounds of 24 targets. In both the marked and the unmarked rounds six of each of the four target sizes will make up the 24 targets.

MARKED ROUND

This round consists of targets set at the following distances.

No of targets	Face size	White Pegs	Blue pegs	Red pegs
6	20cm	5 - 7 - 10m	5 -10 -15m	10 -15 -20m
6	40cm	10 - 15 - 20m	15 - 20 - 25m	20 - 25 - 30m
6	60cm	15 - 20 - 25m	30 - 35 - 40m	35 - 40 - 45m
6	80cm	20 - 25 - 30m	40 - 45 - 50m	50 - 55 - 60m

The marked distance round is obviously the one that is most straightforward. You will arrive at the shooting peg and the distance will be marked on it. Although the chart above makes perfect sense to those who are

familiar with Field it is not always clear to the beginner. For example, although the “No of targets” column adds up to 24 targets there are only 12 separate distances shown in total for each of the different coloured pegs. You will find that there are two targets somewhere on the course at each of the set distances. For example if you are shooting Recurve “Freestyle” from the red pegs you will find 2 bunny (20cm) faces at 10m, 2 bunny faces at 15m, 2 bunny faces at 20m (6 bunnies altogether) and so on. Note though, that targets are randomly set out around the course wherever the organiser wishes to put them.

UNMARKED ROUND

This round consists of targets set between the following distances.

No of targets	Face size	White Pegs	Blue pegs	Red pegs
6	20cm	5 - 10m	5 - 10m	10 - 15m
6	40cm	5 - 15m	10 - 20m	15 - 25m
6	60cm	10 - 20m	15 - 30m	20 - 35m
6	80cm	15 - 25m	30 - 45m	35 - 55m

The unmarked round is always the one that those who are new to Field fear most. Contrary to popular belief however, the tournament organiser cannot just put targets at any old distance. As can be seen from the chart above there are restrictions on the distances that each face can be set at. For example there will be six bunny faces in total on the course. If, for example, you are shooting Recurve “Freestyle” from the red pegs you will find that, although they are all of unspecified distance, none will be shorter than 10m or longer than 15m. Apply this to the other face sizes using the appropriate distances and it doesn’t seem so bad does it?

PRACTICE FOR FIELD ARCHERY

Obviously every club does not have a wood available to them for practice but don’t let this stop you. Get a reliable set of sight marks on your target range, if possible using the correct size Field faces. This way you will become familiar with the smaller faces used in field and their design.

Even if you do have access to a wood you could find the terrain you have been practicing on is completely different to what you encounter at your next Field shoot.

All sorts of allowances must be made to shoot uphill, downhill, across slopes, over water etc. and it was not the intention to give specific rules in these basic notes. Every archer’s bow will react slightly differently for a variety of reasons eg. draw weight of the bow, spine of the arrows, whether the bow is compound or recurve. You will learn more from actually shooting your bow in varying conditions than from learning rigid rules. The secret is to know your bow and how it will react in certain conditions. This only comes from experience and the more Field shoots you attend the more experience you will gain.

One thing to remember. When entering your very first Field Shoot contact the organiser - before the day please !! - and tell them that you are new to Field. They will make sure that you are placed in a group with archers who know what they are doing and who can look after you.

As mentioned at the beginning of these notes, we have only covered the very basics of Field Archery to get you started. These notes are by no means comprehensive. You are advised to read the sections on Field Archery in the GNAS/AGB “Rules of Shooting” and the FITA/WA Handbook.

I hope you have found these notes helpful and of interest.

**Ann Shepherd
Revised 2017**