

USAS Magazine Article

Have You Tried Progressive Position Pistol?

Progressive Position Pistol (PPP) appears to be a well-kept secret or a misunderstood opportunity for coaches to prepare junior athletes for Olympic pistol sports.

The USAS National Pistol Coach, Sergey Luzov is on the hunt for junior pistol shooters who aspire to make the US National Pistol Team and compete in the Olympic Games and other world championships. The future pipeline of high potential Olympic pistol athletes (especially women/girls) is down to a trickle which jeopardizes our ability to dominate the Olympic pistol events and win medals for the US in the future.

The PPP program is intended to introduce young pistol shooters to competitive pistol shooting and give them a natural progression into the Junior Olympic pistol competitions sponsored by USA Shooting (USAS) and the conventional pistol competitions sponsored by the National Rifle Association of America (NRA).

USA Shooting recognizes the need to get youth involved in competitive shooting at a younger age. One of the problems is that most air guns are too heavy for smaller, younger shooters. The PPP program creates an opportunity for youth to begin at an earlier age. There is no minimum age limit. How early a youth starts shooting pistol depends on the youth's ability to hold and shoot an air pistol safely as determined by an experienced pistol coach. Also, any person may compete in Progressive Position Pistol until 31 December of the year of his or her 20th birthday.

The Progressive Position Pistol Program is designed to 'progressively' develop junior pistol athletes from supported positions to the Olympic one handed unsupported shooting. PPP gives the junior athlete the opportunity to focus on and learn the foundational pistol skills with the opportunity to participate in competitions. This develops confidence, skills and knowledge at an early age.

The PPP match competition is a precision pistol event. Multi-shot pistols may be used, but only a single pellet may be loaded at any given moment. The pistols must be .177 caliber (4.5 mm), and use compressed air or compressed, non-flammable gas (such as CO2) for propellant.

The PPP program allows juniors to participate with minimal expense for equipment and ammunition. Similarly ranges can be set up in any large room that has a minimum of 43 feet in length (33 feet from firing point to target and approximately 10 feet behind the firing point for shooters and range officers/coaches). Conference rooms, some school rooms, gymnasiums, student activity centers, some climate controlled warehouses, etc. make excellent starting ranges.

There are three categories of competitors in the Progressive Position Pistol Program. They are defined by the shooting position used by the competitor. They are:

- Basic Supported
- Standing Supported
- International (One-Handed) Standing

Basic Supported

Minimum age: None (depends on the youth's ability to hold and shoot an air pistol safely as determined by an experienced pistol coach).

Maximum age: Thirteen.

The rules of the Basic Supported are written very broadly, so coaches can progress athletes incrementally within the position without being forced to go to the next position before they are ready. The athlete may be seated or standing, 1 or 2 hands on the grip.

Firm supports can include sandbags, kneeling rolls, etc. as well as any rest made of wood, plastic, etc. that can firmly support the butt of the pistol and the shooter's hands safely. Firm supports should be adjusted for height to insure an upright posture and level head position of the shooter.

Coaches should encourage athletes to progress to a one-handed position as soon as they can safely do so.

Standing Supported

Minimum age: None (depends on the youth's ability to hold and shoot an air pistol safely as determined by an experienced pistol coach).

Maximum age: Fifteen.

Athlete must stand, using one hand on the pistol grip. The T Stand provides counterbalance support between elbow and muzzle. The competitor's shooting arm must be fully extended, with the sights at eye level.

The T-Stand provides an infinitely variable amount of support of the pistol's weight and balance without totally dampening the shooter's movement. By design, it also provides a large range of adjustable vertical height so that the shooter can maintain proper body, head, arm, and wrist position.

The link below contains plans for building a simple, affordable version of the T Stand.

<http://www.usashooting.org/downloads/Z%20PPP%20Counterbalance%20T%20Stand.pdf>

International (one-handed) Standing

Suggested Minimum age: Thirteen (If parent, coach and physician agree a younger athlete is ready, this may be waived)

International air pistol rules apply. Unsupported standing with one hand on the pistol grip.

Coaches should encourage their athletes to progress to standing supported and then to one-handed unsupported standing as they become proficient with basic skills and their hands are large and strong enough to do so safely.

Coaches should attempt to help athletes obtain pistols that are appropriately sized and weighted for juniors. USAS currently sells the Air Arms Alpha Proj at a special discount for members and affiliated clubs (\$525). USAS also provides a special discount for the purchase of the Pardini K10 'Kids' target air pistol (\$895). Affiliated clubs can purchase these air pistols through the delayed payment plan. Both air pistols are featured in our online store. Specific details of each pistol can be found on the USAS website <http://www.usashooting.org/youthPistol.php>

Coaches are encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities to learn and develop their skills and learn effective techniques for working with young people. Coach certification and training is available through the NRA/USA Shooting/CMP Coach Education Program. Detailed information is available at: <http://www.nrahq.org/education/training/coaching/index.asp>

USAS will subsidize pistol coach certification courses with a minimum of six adults/participants that will start up and/or maintain a PPP program.

For more information about USAS junior shooting programs visit the following web page: <http://www.usashooting.org/youth.php> for the Youth Programs Overview, <http://www.usashooting.org/youthPistol.php> for pistol which includes PPP rules, T Stand construction plans, and competition information.

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