

# Junior **SHOOTING SPORTS**

**A gun safety, education, and marksmanship program that provides the basic elements of:**

- Safety
- Education
- Enjoyment
- Competition

**THE AMERICAN LEGION  
Junior Shooting Sports Program  
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**THE AMERICAN LEGION**  
is a member of the  
United States Olympic Committee

## THE AMERICAN LEGION

a program of the National Americanism Commission



# THE AMERICAN LEGION

## WHAT IS THE AMERICAN LEGION JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS PROGRAM?

It's a three-part program that combines the Basic Marksmanship Course, Qualification Awards, and Air Rifle Competition.

During the past decade of this program's continued fast growth, thousands of male and female junior shooters have participated, with a perfect safety record of no reported gun-related injuries.

Participants in The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program can be of any gender, through the age of 18. Handicapped youth are encouraged to participate.



## BASIC MARKSMANSHIP COURSE

The Basic Marksmanship Course is a comprehensive instruction package for the beginning shooter that has little or no marksmanship experience. The course insures understanding by the student and easy use by the instructor. Gun safety and marksmanship fundamentals are taught through a balanced mix of short lecture or discussion followed by hands-on activity. The package of instruction and support materials include:

- **INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE** - Detailed information for the instructor to teach the course.
- **STUDENT HANDBOOK** - Now in its third edition, this popular handbook is a comprehensive reference text for beginning shooters, thoroughly covering the fundamentals of position shooting.
- **LEARNING TOOLS** - Six quizzes and a final exam.

## QUALIFICATION AWARDS

If an effective job is done presenting the Basic Marksmanship Course, most graduates will want to keep improving their marksmanship skills. The National Rifle Association and the Civilian Marksmanship Program provide **MARKSMANSHIP QUALIFICATION COURSES** for **AIR RIFLE**. These courses offer personal skill developments ladder where individual shooters work to achieve established performance standards. Marksmanship Qualification Courses offer family fun and enjoyment that can last a lifetime. Junior shooters may enroll in these programs upon graduation from the Basic Marksmanship Course.

## COMPETITIVE SHOOTING

Is not a sport, which gives an advantage to individuals of great size or strength. Physical fitness and stamina are important, but it is mental toughness and self-discipline, which determine success. Competitive shooting is also one of the few sports where men and women can compete as equals. It is truly a sport which is **OPEN TO ANYONE** willing to practice and to test his or her shooting skills on the firing line.

**THE AMERICAN LEGION JUNIOR POSITION AIR RIFLE TOURNAMENT** is an annual tournament that begins with postal matches to determine state and/or regional champions. The next stage is a Qualification Round (also a postal match) to determine shooters who will earn expense paid trips to compete in the National Championship. The National Championship is a shoulder-to-shoulder match held during the summer, and is conducted at the Olympic Training Center/USA Shooting Range Facilities in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This is the same facility that our Olympic shooters train and practice on.

For more information, consult the current American Legion Junior Position Air Rifle Tournament Official Match Program.

## THE SHOOTING SPORTS – A PERSPECTIVE

Today, the shooting sports are an important recreational activity in America. Nearly 70 million people own firearms, with over half of all U.S. households containing at least one firearm. Tens of thousands of competitors participate in matches from neighborhood tournaments to the Olympic Games. More than 20 million hunting licenses are issued annually in the United States, generating vast sums for the conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Marksmanship is a proud part of our national heritage. Our forefathers fought the Revolutionary War to gain their freedom as individuals and independence as a nation. Just a few years later the United States of America was called upon to defend its newly won independence in the War of 1812.

In both of these wars, skilled American riflemen played a deciding role. It is easy to understand why Americans were skilled marksmen during the Revolutionary period. They had to know how to shoot accurately to

put food on the table and for their own protection. Marksmanship skills have been valuable national assets.

There is still a need for these skills. Today there is another call for expert marksmen in the exciting sport of competitive shooting. In recent years, the United States has been a dominant force in international shooting competition.

You are starting a sport that can, with study, practice, and hard work lead your junior shooters all the way to the Olympics.

Competitive marksmanship does not require great physical size or strength. Even though physical fitness and stamina are important, mental qualities determine whether a shooter will ever become a champion. Being able to concentrate completely on a task and being able to relax under pressure are two of the mental keys to success.

## WHAT IS SHOOTING?

### **Shooting is a skill sport**

Skills learned in shooting are valuable in other aspects of life. Learning to be a safe shooter teaches responsibility. Learning to hit a difficult target teaches self-discipline and self-control. Learning to hold a firearm steady and hit the target teaches concentration. Knowing that the shooter alone is ultimately responsible for his or her performance teaches self-reliance and enhances individual esteem.

Shooting tests how well one can control his or her body in using a firearm to hit a target. It's hard to imagine being able to control one-self so well as to almost always hit a target the size of a typed period from 10 meters away, but in shooting that is what your participants will learn to do.



Precision athlete: Emily Houston of Burke, Va.  
Photographer: Price Chambers

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## ***Shooting is a participation sport***

No one has to sit on the sidelines and watch; everyone can take part. This active involvement is important because sports are fun when young people can participate personally instead of watching others. Persons with physical disabilities also can take part in shooting, often right alongside other shooters in matches.

## ***Shooting is an Olympic sport***

The summer Olympics have rifle, pistol and shotgun shooting events. The winter Olympics have a biathlon event that combines cross-country skiing and shooting. Shooting is the third most popular Olympic sport. Only two sports - track and boxing - regularly have more participating nations.

Shooting also offers international championship events in the Pan American Games, World Shooting Championships and Shooting Championships of the Americas.

## ***Shooting is a safe sport***

Injuries are so rare in target shooting that accident records are not even kept. Shooting is safe because it has a strict code of safety that all shooters follow. Like water safety training, the firearm safety training associated with a shooting activity is of lasting value, even if the young people don't develop an ongoing interest in the shooting sports.

## ***Shooting is a lifetime sport***

Persons of all ages participate successfully in shooting. Children as young as eight or nine can learn to shoot using BB guns and lightweight air rifles.

## ***Shooting is an exciting sport***

There's a special thrill in being able to hit a target the shooter isn't sure can be hit. It is fun to see shooters' abilities improve. The challenges of preparing shooters in your club to compete against other shooters throughout the nation make every practice session an exciting event.

## ***Shooting is a sport for girls and boys***

Boys and girls compete equally in shooting. Recent national junior championships and The American Legion Junior Air Rifle National Championships have been won both by girls and boys.

## **GETTING STARTED, A 10-STEP CHECKLIST**

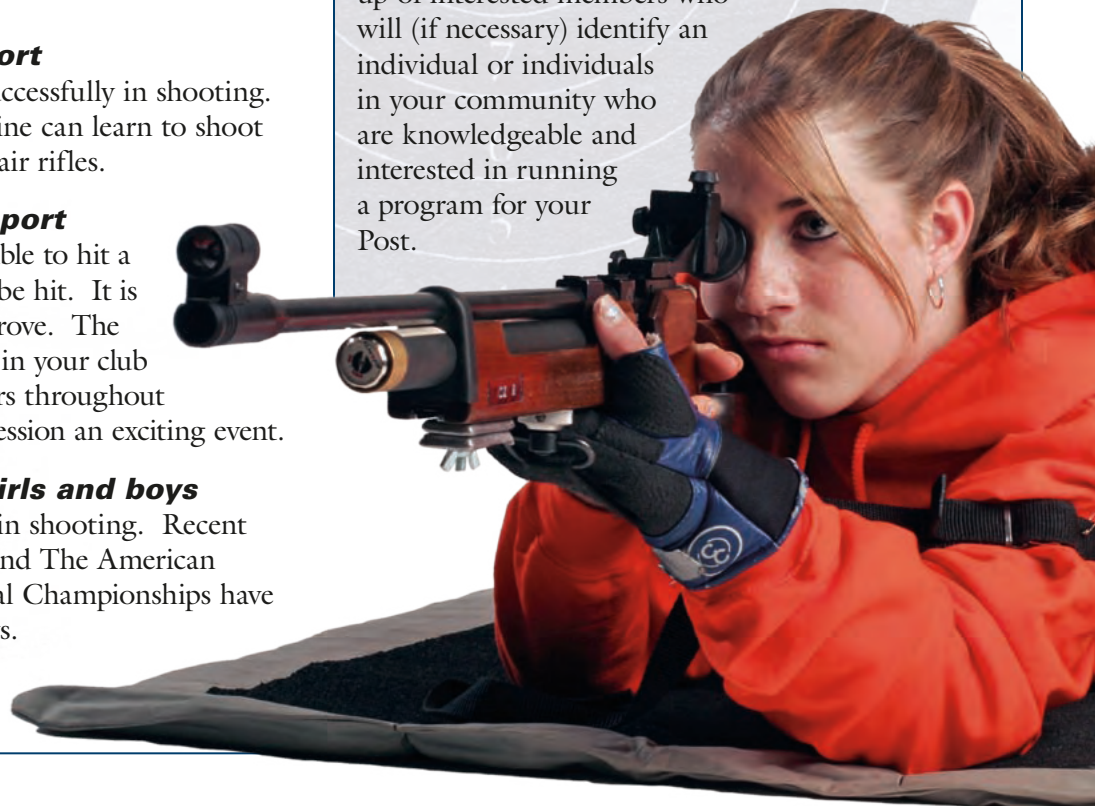
### **1. Determine Your Goals**

You may already have some goals in mind. Here are some suggestions:

- a. To provide an opportunity for young people to learn firearm safety and basic marksmanship.
- b. To introduce the shooting sports to community members and to educate them about shooting.
- c. To provide participants in an existing youth organization an opportunity to achieve objectives related to the shooting sports, e.g. Boy Scout merit badges, 4-H awards, the Law Enforcement Venturing qualification program.
- d. To use the shooting sports as a vehicle to help young people develop leadership, discipline, concentration, sportsmanship, and responsibility.

### **2. Identify Your Leadership**

Your Post probably already has a structure set up to develop committees for special projects. It is probably a good idea to appoint such a committee made up of interested members who will (if necessary) identify an individual or individuals in your community who are knowledgeable and interested in running a program for your Post.



*Competitive shooting is one of the few sports where men and women can compete as equals.*

The shooting club adult leader should be qualified to instruct the basics of gun safety and marksmanship. Other volunteers from the Post should be encouraged to take part as assistant instructors in what is generally a once a week session. It is strongly recommended that at least one of your instructors complete a NRA certification course if he or she is not already certified.

If your club becomes involved with competitive shooting, in addition to your gun safety instruction, it is recommended that at least one of your instructors take a USA Shooting/NRA/CMP Coach certification course.

Keep in mind that a shooting club is a great way to get Post members involved in a Post activity regardless of age or physical ability.

A shooting club can also be a great Post membership recruiting tool!

### **3. Affiliate with The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program**

This is probably the easiest part. Simply complete the application form and return it to the address found on the form.

After receipt of your form, you will automatically be sent (at no charge) the Junior Club Leader's Administrative Manual complete with the Basic Marksmanship Course. The manual will also include the *Shooter's Guide to Position Air Rifle* and a form for ordering additional guides and other program materials.

Enrollment in the program automatically places you on the program mailing list and you will periodically receive information including the Official Match Program and target set order form for each year's

American Legion Junior Air Rifle National Championship tournament.

### **4. Check on Your Insurance Coverage**

It is critically important that you make certain that you have liability coverage. Many existing Post insurance policies will cover most activities you hold in your Post home. If you plan on locating the operation of your club in some other facility, you will need to check their insurance coverage. If your Post coverage is not adequate, you may wish to look into an additional rider to your own policy or investigate some specific shooter's coverage.

There are several companies that offer shooter's insurance:

- Lockton Risk Services, Inc.  
P.O. Box 410679  
Kansas City, MO 64141-0679  
(919) 676-9150
- Carpenter Insurance Service, Inc.  
134 Holiday Court, Suite 300  
Annapolis, MD 21401-7059  
(800) 472-7771  
[www.carpenterinsurance.com](http://www.carpenterinsurance.com)

Please be advised that the National Headquarters of The American Legion does not endorse either company. We are providing this information to assist you in your efforts to obtain proper coverage.

### **5. Selecting Your Facilities**

One of the great advantages of firing airguns is that a range can be set up just about anywhere. Most meeting areas in most Post homes can serve as an airgun range. Depending on the number of firing points you wish to have, there are some minimum requirements.

The range itself will need to be at least 10 meters (33 feet) deep. You will, of course, need some additional room for the shooter's position and some space behind the targets for backstops and pellet traps. You should protect the walls with some type of covering (many Posts have used a canvas tarp or furniture

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*A Junior Shooting Sports Club can be a great Post membership recruiting tool!*

moving quilts). You should allow about 4 feet of width for each shooter.

Other equipment you will need include safety glasses for each shooter, pellets, target traps (which can usually be made cheaply) and rifles. You may also want to have mats for shooters to use for prone firing. Spotting scopes are another popular accessory.

## **6. Obtaining Equipment**

Rifles are of course, your primary concern with regards to equipment. There are sporter air rifles available that sell for around \$250-\$350. You can contact Daisy Manufacturing, P.O. Box 220, Rogers, AR 7275; telephone 800-643-3458 or Crosman Corporation, Routes 5 & 20, East Bloomfield, NY 14443; telephone 800-7AIRGUN for further information and a product catalog.

Pellets can usually be purchased at any sporting goods store including most of the large discount chains.

Order forms and catalogs for most equipment are included in the Junior Club Leader's Administrative Manual that is sent to you when you affiliate.

## **7. Funding Your Program**

Each Post has a different situation with regards to their available funds. You may already have funds set aside for the Post's youth activities. Most Posts need to come up with additional ways to raise money for club operations. There are several options.

At least in the beginning, you may wish to have participants pay some of the cost in the form of a registration fee or club member fee. You may

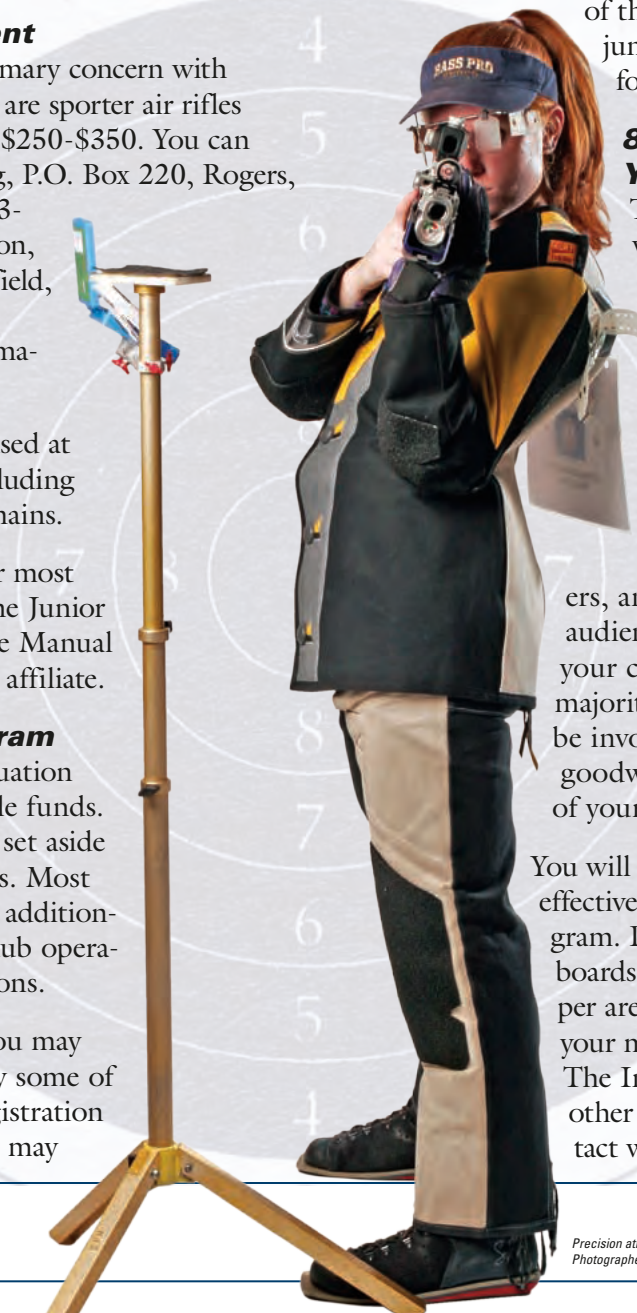
ask the shooters to purchase their own targets and pellets. Many times local businesses or local shooting clubs may wish to make donations to the good of the club. Local community leaders can be very helpful in soliciting funds. Many Posts dedicate proceeds from specific Post functions to raise money for the club. Once you have your club established you might want to hold an "adult" match with entry fees going to the club operating fund.

The NRA Foundation and the Friends of the NRA also offer grants to junior clubs. Contact the NRA for additional information.

## **8. Promoting Your Program**

The first audience you will want to interest will be your participants. The second group will be the parents of these potential shooters. Still a third group will be made up of individuals who are in a position to provide assistance and support for the program, such as business people, community leaders, and school officials. A fourth audience is the general public of your community. Even though the majority of the community may not be involved with your program, their goodwill is important to the success of your efforts.

You will need to determine the most effective way of promoting your program. Posters on school bulletin boards or items in the school newspaper are a good way to communicate your message to the young people. The Internet and a Post website are other potential sources to make contact with potential participants.



Precision athlete: Emily Houston of Burke, Va.  
Photographer: Price Chambers

For raising money, a letter to local businesses or a presentation before local community groups would be appropriate.

The general public can generally be reached through newspaper articles, radio announcements, or Internet Web Sites. This type of publicity is frequently the result of news releases (sample news releases as well as other promotional ideas are included in your Administrative Manual).

### **9. Recruiting Participants**

Numerous groups have existing youth programs, which can provide you with a readily accessible pool of potential recruits. Examples of some of these groups are school athletic departments, police athletic leagues, Boy Scout Councils, 4-H clubs, S.A.L. Squadrons or simply the children and grandchildren of your Post and Unit membership.

Remember that you can be more successful in your recruiting efforts if you explain that gun safety is the foundation of your program, and that shooting activities complement many other youth activities.

Keep in mind that in order to have a successful program, you must constantly seek new members. In addition, you must ensure that the program can be adapted to meet the various needs of its young participants.

### **10. Other Ideas and Suggestions**

Included in your Junior Club Leader's Administrative Manual will be applications for affiliation as a Junior Club with Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP), USA Shooting (USAS), or the National Rifle Association (NRA).

CMP Junior Rifle Clubs are supported with .177 caliber pellets and the sale of selected precision and sporter air rifles. The CMP also has a qualification system with awards. For additional information contact the Civilian Marksmanship Program, P.O. Box 576, Port Clinton, OH 43452-0576; telephone 888-267-0796. ([www.odcmp.com](http://www.odcmp.com))

USA Shooting was established in 1994 by the United States Olympic Committee to serve as the National Governing Body for Olympic-style shooting in the United States. USAS training and competition programs focus on the shooting disciplines and events that are part of the Olympic Games program. For additional information contact USA Shooting, Attn: Youth Coordinator, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5764; telephone 719-578-4670. ([www.usashooting.com](http://www.usashooting.com))

The NRA provides Marksmanship Qualification Courses for Air Rifle. These courses offer personal skill developments ladder where individual shooters work to achieve established performance standards. For each level of success, a sew-on patch and certificate of achievement are presented. Marksmanship Qualification Courses offer family fun and enjoyment that can last a lifetime. For additional information contact NRA Youth Programs, 11250 Waples Mill Rd., Fairfax, VA 22030-9400; telephone 703-267-1596. ([www.nrahq.org](http://www.nrahq.org))

You may wish to take advantage of some of the opportunities offered by these shooting sports organizations, in both gun safety and competition as an affiliated club.

*It is critically important that you make certain to have liability coverage.*



**2007 American Legion Junior Shooting Sports National Champions: Precision Champion, Dempster Christenson, 17 of Sioux Falls, SD (left), Sporter Champion, Noel Maxwell, 13, of Bowling Green, KY (right).** — photo: Sean Crosier

**YES! WE WANT TO AFFILIATE WITH  
THE AMERICAN LEGION JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS PROGRAM.**

***There is NO affiliation fee. Complete and return this form.***

<b>Adult Leader:</b> <input type="text"/>	
<b>Team/Club Name:</b> <input type="text"/>	
<b>Address: Street/City/State/Zip</b> <input type="text"/>	
<b>Home Telephone:</b> <input type="text"/>	<b>Work Telephone:</b> <input type="text"/>
<b>E-mail Address:</b> <input type="text"/>	
<b>Sponsoring Post:</b> <input type="text"/>	
<b>Address: Street/City/State/Zip</b> <input type="text"/>	
<b>Signature of Adult Leader:</b> <input type="text"/>	<b>Date:</b> <input type="text"/>
<b>Signature of Post Commander:</b> <input type="text"/>	<b>Date:</b> <input type="text"/>

Return to: The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program • P.O. Box 1055 • Indianapolis, IN 46206

