



## **The American Legion Department Washington**

### **Junior Shooting Sports Program**

#### **How to start a Program in your Post**

*(This Information Guide is compiled from the National JSSP)*

#### **A. What is the American Legion Department of Washington Junior Shooting Sports Program (JSSP)?**

The Department of Washington JSSP is modeled after the National Program and provides similar content as the National Program. The program emphasizes safe firearms handling and provides competitions for all interested youth under 18 years old (or high school seniors no older than 20) are welcome, regardless of gender or physical ability within the State of Washington sponsored by and/or affiliated with an American Legion Post in Department of Washington.

The program goals are to provide an opportunity for young people to learn firearms safety and basic marksmanship. To introduce the shooting sports to community members and educate them about shooting. To provide shooting competitions for existing and beginning shooting programs. To use the shooting sports as a vehicle to help young people develop discipline, concentration, sportsmanship, and responsibility.

The American Legion Department of Washington Junior Shooting Sports Program is governed by the rules outlined in the National Standard Three-Position Air Rifle Rule Book. For a copy go to: <http://thecmp.org/air/national-standard-three-position-air-rifle-rules/> ,

#### **B. A Perspective on the Shooting Sports.**

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 State and National Heritage. Skilled American riflemen have played a deciding role in all of our Nation's wars and conflicts.

There is 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.

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 keys to success.

### C. What is Shooting?

**Shooting is a skill sport.** Skills learned in shooting are valuable in other aspects of life. 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 the shooter alone is ultimately responsible for his or her performance teaches self-reliance and enhances individual esteem

**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 disabilities also can take part in shooting, often alongside other shooters in matches.

**Shooting is an Olympic sport.** The summer Olympics have rifle, pistol, running game target 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 is a safe sport.** Injuries are so rare in target shooting that accidental records are not even kept. Shooting is safe because it has a strict code of safety that all shooters follow.

**Shooting is a lifetime sport.** Persons of all ages participate successfully in shooting

**Shooting is a sport for girls and boys.** Girls and boys compete equally in shooting. Recent state and national junior shooting championships and the American Legion Junior Air Rifle State and National Championships have been won by both girls and boys.

#### **D. Checklist for Starting a Program at your Post Home.**

- 1. **Identify Your Leadership.** The shooting club leader will need to be qualified to instruct the basics of gun safety and marksmanship. Qualification to instruct can be obtained by completing a NRA, CMP or USA Shooting Instructor/Coach certification course. The following site is recommended: <http://thecmp.org/training-tech/coaching-resources/>
- 2. **Affiliate with the Department Junior Shooting Sports Program.** Simply complete the application form and return it to the current Department JSSP Chairman. Affiliation will automatically place your program on the Department JSSP mailing list.
- 3. **Check your insurance coverage.** It is critically important that you make certain that your Post has liability coverage if you are going to be conducting marksmanship instruction at 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 Post policy or investigate some specific shooter's coverage.
- 4. **One of the great advantages of firing air rifles is that the range can be set up just about anywhere.** Most meeting areas in most Post homes can serve as an air rifle range. Depending on the number of firing points you wish to have, there are some minimum requirements.
  - a. The shooting distance measured from the target to the edge of the firing line closest to the shooter must be 10 meters (33 feet).
  - b. The firing line and firing point must be marked so that the instructor and shooter can see it. The firing line is the front edge of the firing point. The firing point is the area immediately to the rear of the firing line that is designated for one shooter. The recommended minimum width of each firing point is 1.0 meters (39.4 inches). The recommended minimum length is 2.2 meters (88.6 inches).
  - c. There must be one firing point for each target set.
  - d. There must be ample room behind the firing point for the instructor to move freely.
  - e. The recommended total length of the range should be 14.2 meters (approximately 47 feet).
  - f. Equipment that will be needed includes backstops/traps, safety glasses, and hearing protection, kneeling roles, shooting mats, spotting scopes, pellets, slings and air rifles. All air rifles and equipment must comply with

paragraph 4.2 of the National Standard Three-Position Air Rifle Rule Book.

- 5. Sources for Equipment.

- American Target Company  
303-733-0433  
1328 South Jason Street  
Denver, CO 80223  
<http://www.americantargetcompany.com/>
  
- Civilian Marksmanship Program  
419-635-2142, ext. 1112  
P.O. Box 576  
Port Clinton, OH 43452  
<http://thecmp.org/>
  
- Champions Choice  
615-793-4066  
201 International Blvd.  
Laverne, TN 37086  
<http://www.champchoice.com/store/main.aspx>
  
- Champions Shooters Supply  
614-855-1603  
P.O. Box 303, 42 N. High St.  
New Albany, Ohio 43054  
<https://www.championshooters.com/>
  
- Daisy Outdoor Products/Special Marketing 800-643-3458  
P.O. Box 220  
Rogers, AR 72757  
[www.daisy.com](http://www.daisy.com)
  
- Crossman Corporation  
800-724-7486  
Routes 5 and 20  
East Bloomfield, NY 14443  
<http://www.crosman.com/>
  
- NRA-National Rifle Association  
11250 Waples Mill Road  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
<https://home.nra.org/>

- NRA Foundation  
<https://www.nrafoundation.org/grants/>
- Friends of NRA  
<http://www.friendsofnra.org/>
- 6. Funding Your Program.
  - a. First check with the Post commander because each Post has different situations regarding available funds. Funds may already be set aside for youth activities.
  - b. In the beginning participants may have to provide their own air rifles and equipment with the Post providing the instructor/coach, facilities and instruction.
  - c. Club member fees could be used to pay for targets and pellets.
  - d. Local businesses or local shooting clubs may wish to make donations to the good of the club
  - e. Many Posts dedicate proceeds from specific Post functions to raise money for their JSSP.
  - f. In all cases the goal should be for the Post to eventually provide everything.
    - NRA Grants...Friends of NRA Foundation
- 7. Promoting Your Program.
  - a. The first audience you will want to interest will be the participants. Good ways to communicate with young people include posters on school bulletin boards, items in the school newspaper, Internet and Post websites.
  - b. Other audiences you will want to interest are parents of potential participants, individuals who are in a position to provide assistance and support for your program such as business people, community leaders, and school officials, as well as the general public. Even though the majority of the community may not be involved with your JSSP, their goodwill is important to the success of the Post's efforts. These audiences can generally be reached through newspaper articles, radio announcements, or internet websites. This type of publicity is frequently the result of news releases.
- 8. Recruiting Participants.

a. Many groups have existing youth programs, which can provide a readily accessible pool of potential participants. Examples of some of these are school athletic departments, police athletic leagues, Boy Scouts, 4-H clubs, Army, Marine, Navy, and Air Force Junior ROTC programs, or simply the children and grandchildren of you Post membership.

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

c. 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.

- **E. An Alternative to starting a program at your Post is to sponsor an existing shooting program such as an Army, Marine Corps, Navy, or Air Force JROTC Marksmanship Team. 4-H clubs and the Boy Scouts may have air rifle teams as well.**

- 1. The benefits of sponsoring an existing shooting program are tremendous.

- a. The instructor is usually already trained.

- b. The program already has the required equipment and facilities.

- c. The program already has the participants.

- 2. This alternative gets the Post involved with the JSSP and may help the existing programs in obtaining new membership. The Post would need to provide assistance to the sponsored program by providing funds for targets, pellets, and repair/replacement of air rifles and equipment. Funds may also be required for entry, travel and billeting fees if a team member qualifies to compete at the National level.

- 3. Consideration should be given to providing some form of liability insurance for the instructor and participants due to the Post formally sponsoring the program.

- 4. All in all this would be a cheaper way of being involved with JSSP than starting a Post program from nothing

Point of Contact for the Department of Washington JSSP will be the current Chairman of the Junior Shooting Sports Program Committee.

## National Championship

The American Legion recognizes that guns are a part of sports and recreation in our society and strives to teach youngsters the proper use of firearms before accidents occur. The Legion hosts an annual national air rifle tournament that draws more than 1,200 contestants annually.

The annual Junior Air Rifle 3-Position National Championship is a shoulder to shoulder match that will be held at the USA Shooting Range Facilities at the Olympic Training Center, Colorado Springs, CO.

The American Legion Junior Position Air Rifle Tournament is an annual tournament that begins with postal matches to determine state and the top thirty competitors in the Precision and Sporter Categories

Competitors will shoot from prone, standing and kneeling positions in either of two categories, determined by rifle type: Precision and Sporter.

The National Champions in both categories receive college Scholarships generously donated by The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion.

Your club must be affiliated by A Post to fire rounds in the National Championship each year.