

Steel Challenge Stage: Roundabout

Steel Challenge is the drag race of the shooting sports focusing on the delicate balance between speed and accuracy. In order to place well, you have to shoot all eight stages well or your competition will. In order to be proficient on all stages I am starting a stage breakdown series focusing on some tips and helpful hints on how to maximize your performance in your next match.

Let's start by examining The Steel Challenge Stage Roundabout, some say this is one of the top three fastest stages in Steel Challenge. So, what is the fastest order for this stage? The most popular and accepted option as we are looking down range and is shot 1-2-3-4-Stop Plate. This pattern does not differ for most with the type of division being shot; when shooting any gun from the low ready or from the holster the order is the same. There are other variations, which do not have an appreciable difference; typically what is comfortable to you will yield the best results. Some alternative patterns are; 3-4-1-2-Stop, or 4-3-1-2-Stop, etc. Some prefer 4-3-1-2- Stop when drawing from a holster because the first shot is faster and the transitions are almost as fast.

Here are some tips to be successful on this stage:

Tip #1: I prefer to have my index setup on the Stop Plate – right in front of me. I test this by pointing my pistol straight out and it will show me where the gun is pointed. I will also hold a rifle like a pistol and do the same check. This allows my body to wind up on my first shot and when I transition the gun fast, the height of the gun does not change.

Tip#2: For those who are starting at the low ready, take a few 'sight picture' repetitions to the first plate to make sure when you move the gun up the dot or front sight is on the middle of the target. This allows you to get the gun up fast and get a solid first shot.

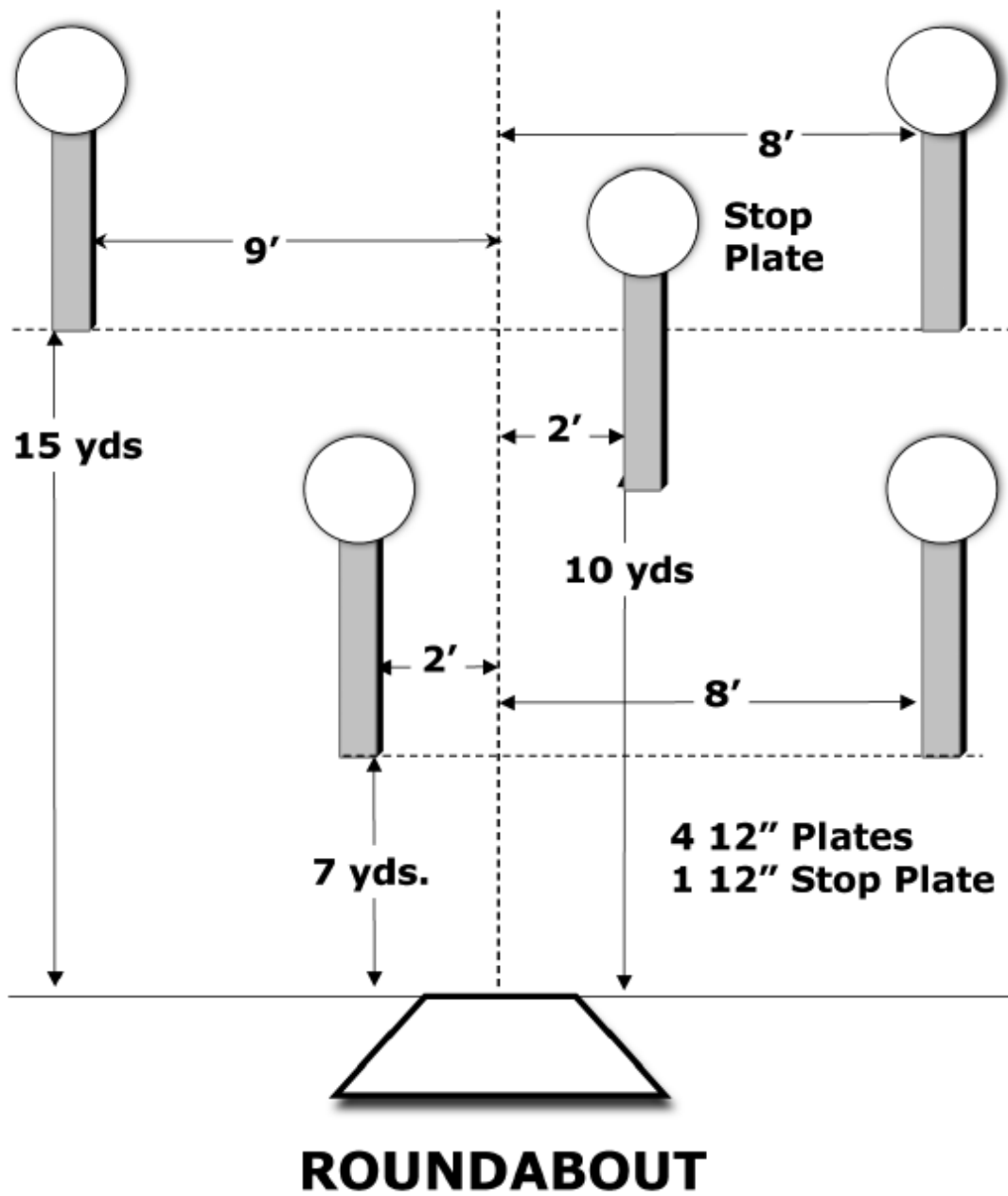
Tip#3: Break the stage into arrays. When I shoot this stage I break it into two-shot array. Array #1 is Plate #1 and Plate #2. Array #2 is Plate #3 and Plate #4. When you are standing in the shooting box, it is the same array shot twice; Back Front – Back Front. Breaking any stage down into manageable arrays is a proven and effective strategy in the shooting sports.

Tip#4: The most missed plate on this stage is Plate #3 if you shoot the stage as outlined above. This happens because when coming off of Plate #2 it is such a fast shot and Plate #4 is an equally fast shot we don't need as much of a front sight/red dot focus so we take the back plate for granted. Make sure you see what you need to see on Plate #3 before moving to Plate #4

Tip#5: Keep your eyes on the sight/red dot on this stage and don't take any plates for granted. When we walk up to this stage we know it is a fast stage and somehow our brain thinks if we look where we are going it is going to be faster. Although this may be true in some shooting situations, it is not in this one if you have a miss on any plate. With one miss, you have now made a quick stage to one you now have to survive and this is never a position we want to be in.

Tip#6: Don't think you shoot this stage Plates 1-2-3-4-Stop because it gives you an opportunity to come back through to Plate #3 if you miss it the first time around. You should never have a stage plan to make up missed shots. When you are trying to shoot in the sub-conscious you can't be consciously be thinking about anything or you will then be shooting consciously and this is not the fastest shooting. If you are thinking about it, the likelihood of you doing it exponentially increases.

Tip #7: Follow through on the stop plate. The concept of follow through when shooting in steel challenge on a stop plate means as you drive the gun hard to the stop plate, stop the gun on the stop plate as you are pressing the trigger. I advise students to count "One Mississippi" with the gun on the plate. This helps reinforce the concept of "calling shots".



Keeps these tips in mind the next time you step into the box in practice or in a match and watch your times fall! Stay tuned for more analysis of the other Steel Challenge Stages.

See you out on the range soon!

Steve