

Steel Challenge Stage: Speed Option

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 Speed Option. This is a stage most local clubs do not setup frequently due to the distance of the stage as well as the width of the stage. So, what is the fastest order for this stage? The most popular and accepted option as we are looking down range and is shot 4-3-2-1-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 a lot of variants of shooting order and are acceptable. Some of them are; 3-4-2-1-Stop, 4-3-1-2-Stop, 3-4-1-2-Stop, etc.

Here are some tips to be successful on this stage:

Tip #1: I prefer to have my index setup on Plate #2. 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: Drive at the knees. For a stage with such a wide array of targets you need to really move your lower body to help keep your index 'square' as you progress from plate to plate.

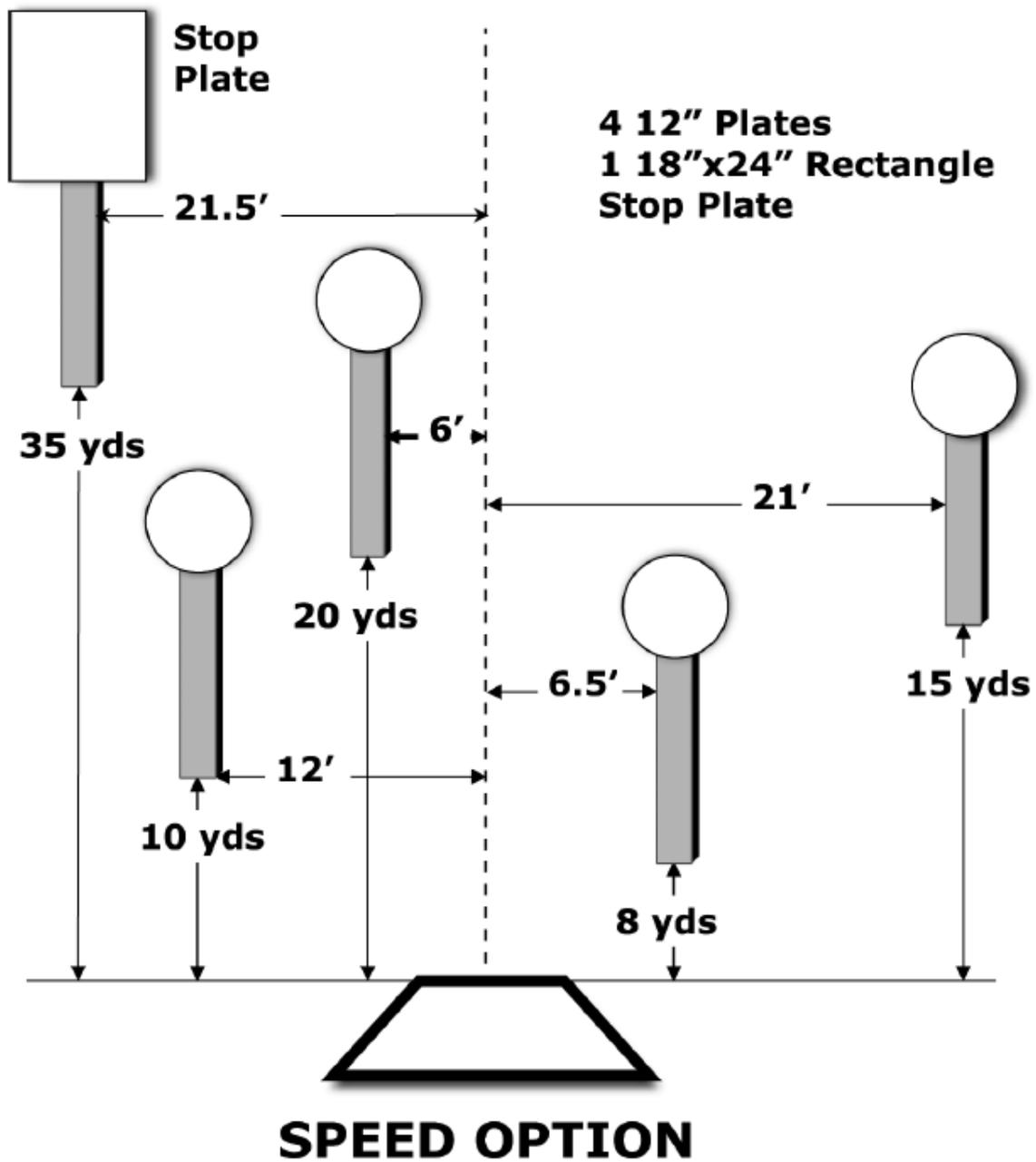
Tip#3: For those who are starting at the low ready, take a few 'sight picture' repetitions to the first plate to make sure when you move the gun up the dot or front sight is on the middle of the target. This allows you to get the gun up fast and get a solid first shot.

Tip#4: Practice your right to left transitions. On most Steel Challenge Targets it is easy to get complacent shooting the majority of the stages left to right. If you don't practice the right to left transitions it will show on this stage. The option of left to right shooting will cost you valuable time and therefore is not a viable option.

Tip#5: Plate #2 is the most missed plate on this stage, make sure you keep your eye on the sight/dot as you transition your gun to this plate. Make sure you get your hit and quickly move to Plate #1.

Tip#6: Don't take Plate#1 or Plate#3 for granted. Typically, 12" plates at 10 and 8 yards respectfully are fast shots, but you need to get your hits. When shot well, this stage can be as fast or faster than 5 to Go and Pendulum, but missing the 'easy' plates won't get you there.

Tip #6: Follow through on the stop plate. Of all of the Steel Challenge stages this is the stage it is the most important to follow through on the stop plate. This will help drive the gun to stay on the plate when you break the shot. At 35 yards, a slight movement of the gun will send a bullet off target. 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