



Introduction

Welcome to the 2026 Summer & Fall 4-H Shooting Sports Season! We are very happy to have so many youth participating in the program and know that there are many moving parts. This document is intended to provide a brief outline of what the season will look like, but as always, feel free to reach out should you have additional questions.

2026 – General Season Updates

- State Shoot registration will open at 7:00 a.m. CT/ 6:00 a.m. MT on August 5 to allow for staff to be in the office to answer questions as needed.
- Reminder from 2025:
 - Muzzleloader pistol is coming to state. All Muzzleloader certified instructors that have not attended a training must attend a new Training to be Muzzleloader pistol certified before they can coach.
 - Changes in Muzzleloader: Go to 2 hr. lines. You register for Bulls time and Novelties separate. Bulls will now go to 40 shots from 20 so will be 80 minutes of live fire. Cost will be \$40 for a full round, both bulls and Novelties and \$20 separately. This is both Rifle and pistol.
 - Rifle will be 20 shots per bull target, 20 shots for Novelty targets, 10 on bottles, and 10 on Critters. Target #s is Rifle TG2406 Critter TG0901 Bottle TG2127
 - Pistol Will be 20 shots per bull target, 20 shots Novelty targets, 10 on Bottles, and 10 on fun target Target #s are Bulls TG2415 Fun target TG2419 Bottles TG2427.
 - Pistol sights will be following the Kentucky pistol rules except rear adjustable sights are allowed. Checkered Grips are OK, Remove 2150 from the current pistol rules.
 - For both Rifle and pistol, you must drop a rod down the barrel a min of 2 times.

2026 – Important Summer/Fall Season Dates

- July 1 - End of Match 4, safety test scores due
 - Match 4 scores due to the state 4-H office the day after the match close (July 2) by 9:30 a.m. CST
- July 15 – Deadline to enroll in 4-H to compete at the Fall State Shoot
- August 1 - End of Match 5
 - Match 5 scores due to the state 4-H office the day after the match close (August 2) by 9:30 a.m. CDT
- August 5 – State Shoot Registration Opens in FairEntry 7:00 a.m. Central Time/6:00 a.m. Mountain Time
- September 1 - End of Match 6 (Includes skeet)
 - Match 6 scores are due to the State 4-H Office the day after the match close (September 2) by 9:30 a.m. CDT
 - State Shoot entry closes 11:59 p.m. CT/10:59 p.m. MT (September 2)
- September 10 – Fall State Shoot teams due to the state 4-H office by 3:30 p.m. CT.
- September 9 – Staff will need to remove any entries for youth that will not be participating to avoid being charged by September 9th at 1:00 p.m. CT/12:00 p.m. MT
- September 11 - 13- Fall State Shoot in Mitchell, SD
- September 29 – Fall State Shoot ribbon orders due to the State 4-H Office
- November 1 – Fall shooting sports season payments due.

2026 – Fall Season Costs

- Qualification Matches Fees:
 - Individual Fee: \$10/ score submitted.
 - Team Fee: \$10/ team submitted.

- State Match Fees:
 - Individual Fee: \$20/ entry submitted.
 - Team Fee: \$10/ team submitted.

Participation Requirements:

1. All youth must be enrolled in 4-H prior to starting practice.
 - The waiver, insurance and code of conduct forms are necessary, and are included in the 4-H enrollment paperwork.
 - Youth starting the shooting sports program late in the season must still be enrolled before attending practice, and for sure be enrolled in 4-H Online by the end of Match 4 (July 15) to compete at State Shoot in the Fall.
2. Tests scores must be submitted for all discipline areas (Muzzleloading and Shotgun).
 - A listing of youth and pass/fail status will be due by July 1 (end of Match 4) for summer/fall season (70% on a written test is passing).
 - Youth must have a passing score submitted before they may schedule any shooting timeslots per discipline they plan to participate in e.g. If they intend on signing up to shoot shotgun at state, they will need to have passed a shotgun safety test. (If they don't, their registration will be removed until their score is turned in).
 - If you miss the deadline, you will be requested to turn in copies of your tests prior to youth being eligible to sign up for state shoot.
3. A youth must submit a Match Score to compete in that discipline at state.

Volunteer Coach Requirements:

1. Must become a registered 4-H volunteer
 - The application can be found here: <https://extension.sdstate.edu/volunteer-policies-forms>
 - Become familiar with the process and guides on above page.
 - Complete interview process at the county office.
 - Must complete and pass a background check through the SD Board of Regents selected company.
 - Must be enrolled in 4-H Online and do so yearly!
2. Must go through shooting sports youth development training
 - Up to 3 hours
 - Only required one time with no recertification, as of this point.
3. Go through a discipline training (9 hours of discipline training minimum)
 - A person can only get certified in one discipline at each training. During the next discipline training, they could get certified in a second discipline, etc.
 - Discipline areas
 - » Rifle – (BB Gun, Air Rifle, 22 – CMP and 3-P)
 - » Pistol – (Air and 22)
 - » Archery – (Recurve and Compound)
 - » Shotgun
 - » Muzzleloading
 - » Hunting Skills
 - » Coordinator
 - » Western Heritage
 - Must teach at least once every three years to maintain certification.
4. Go through recertification training every 7 years
 - This is for each discipline you choose to be trained in and wish to maintain that certification.
 - To do this you will need to:
 - » Attend a refresher training (Logistics of this process will be available in the fall of 2026)
 - » Attend another full certification in the discipline area (9-hour training)
 - » Acquire 100 Recertification Points (details in Recertification document on SS website)

5. Follow and adhere to county specific policies and procedures (these are specific to each county)
 - May include local dues
 - May include other event duties

County Office Responsibilities:

1. Ensure that youth participating in Shooting Sports are enrolled in 4-H and are registered through 4-H Online! In the past there was grace given to those that did not enroll prior to trying to sign up for fall shoot, but that will not be the case this year. Any youth that is not enrolled prior to starting practice will be ineligible to compete in the state shoot for the respective season.
2. Ensure youth are enrolled in the Shooting Sports Disciplines they intend to qualify in (archery, BB Gun, Rifle, etc.) in 4-H Online.
3. Emergency Plans – Due to the state 4-H Office yearly before practice starts
 - Summer/Fall Plans for Shotgun & Muzzleloader
 - Appendix I of the Non-Student Minors on Campus Policy must accompany your Emergency Plan
4. Equipment Inventory – Due by July 1 to the State 4-H Office.
 - If your summer/fall inventory was combined with your spring, there is no need to turn in an additional inventory
5. A list of youth who have passed a safety evaluation for each discipline they compete in by the end of Match 4, must be submitted to the State 4-H Office (There is a template available for new programs).
6. Verify that your county coaches are active volunteers and have paid any county dues that are required to maintain volunteer status.
7. Double check by September 9th that all youth that have registered will be competing in spring shoot to avoid being charged for those unable to attend.
8. DO NOT delete entries. If you have entries that are in the wrong class or plans have changed, and people are no longer coming, move the entry to the County Only class and press save. Once it is in that Class, it can then be deleted. If you skip moving it to county only and delete, the spot disappears and does not repopulate. That causes lines to not be filled, and because times can be at a premium, we want as many spots available as possible.

2026 Match Score Submission

2026 match scores will be submitted via an excel document. The excel sheets (Team and Individual) will be due to State 4-H Office via email (sdsu.4h@sdstate.edu) by 9:30 a.m. (CST) on the day after the ending date of the match (due July 2, August 2, and September 2). If scores are not submitted on time (Team and Individual), they will not be accepted, NO EXCEPTIONS. There were two excel documents sent for the spring season to county 4-H offices, county 4-H staff and all level 1 instructors, one for teams and one for individuals, that have the format for the score submissions. Each discipline (Shotgun, skeet, Muzzleloader, etc.) will have its own sheet on that document. The county office or a local SS Coordinator can submit the document. Please only submit one document for your county. Work together with your county 4-H staff to determine who will handle these responsibilities.

Enrollment Verification and Safety Test Completion

This process will need to become a cooperative effort of the Shooting Sports leaders and the county office. SS Coaches will need to make sure that they are communicating with the county office. Coaches should be communicating the following:

- ☐ Names of participants (this should be done regularly, not only after the first night)
- ☐ Each participant's safety evaluation status (pass/fail, %, etc..) for each discipline

The county offices should verify the enrollment status of youth participants and communicate this back to the coaches. Together, coaches and county office will ensure all youth are enrolled for the current year in 4HOnline before practice starts and any scores are submitted.

State Shoot Registration

State Shoot registration will continue to be done through Fair Entry. State match registration will open at 7:00 a.m. Central Time / 6:00 a.m. Mountain Time on August 5 and will Close on September 2 11:59 p.m. Central Time / 10:59 p.m. Mountain Time. *Please note that August 1 is a Saturday and we want to ensure staff will be working when the event opens to help answer questions.

State Match teams will need to be submitted to State 4-H Office by 5:00 pm Central Time on September 10, 2026. You can use the team match submission spreadsheet to do this. Please indicate on the spreadsheet that these are your state teams.

Final Thoughts

There are no rules about what parents do with their Cloverbuds at home, but they cannot be on the line during a regular 4-H practice. A person is NOT allowed to make their own decision on this. It is an insurance issue. If you allow Cloverbuds on the firing line during 4-H practice or any 4-H event, you are NOT insured if there is an accident and your status as a volunteer will be in jeopardy.

Matches serve multiple purposes. They are to set a minimum qualification level for participation at state shoot and as an in-season opportunity to compete against peers involved in the SS program throughout the state. It is acceptable to compete in every match or to only choose to compete once. For counties that work up budgets for their programs and include match and state fees in your registration cost, I encourage you to give families the option to compete in multiple matches, but to make them aware that there is a cost associated with that competition. Matches allow for team and individual competition and those competitions are awarded.

I would encourage your programs to look at expanding their opportunities. 4-H Shooting Sports does a great job of introducing youth to shooting and teaching them valuable safety lessons. Within each discipline there is some opportunity to progress through different types of tools and to learn to master different competitive opportunities.

If you have questions on expanding your county program into other areas, I encourage you to reach out. If I can't help you, I can find people to put you in contact with that may be able to tell you about other opportunities for our youth. Shooting is a lifelong activity and 4-H shooting sports are a great way to get youth introduced and to help them find that spark that will keep a flame burning for a lifetime!

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