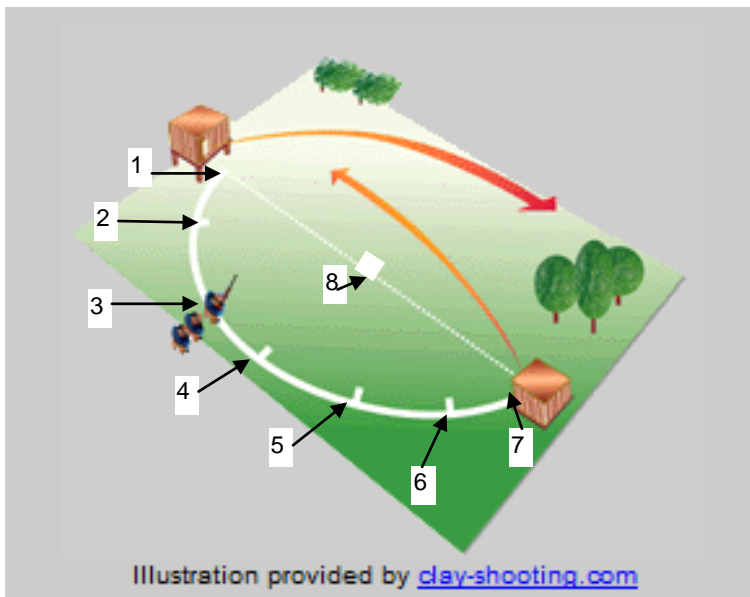


# Why choose Sporting Clays over Skeet?

The game of Skeet Shooting has been around in the US for many, many years and there is an ardent following of the game. Shooters are usually in teams of 4 or 5 and shoot at 25 targets each released from two clay pigeon trap machines facing each other.



The targets are released from opposite sides of a semi-circular field.

Shooters take turns at firing from 8 positions spaced around the half-circle.

Position 1 is next to the HIGH house, then work counter-clockwise, through 2,3,4,5,6 to 7 which is next to the LOW HOUSE, then position 8 is midway between the two houses.

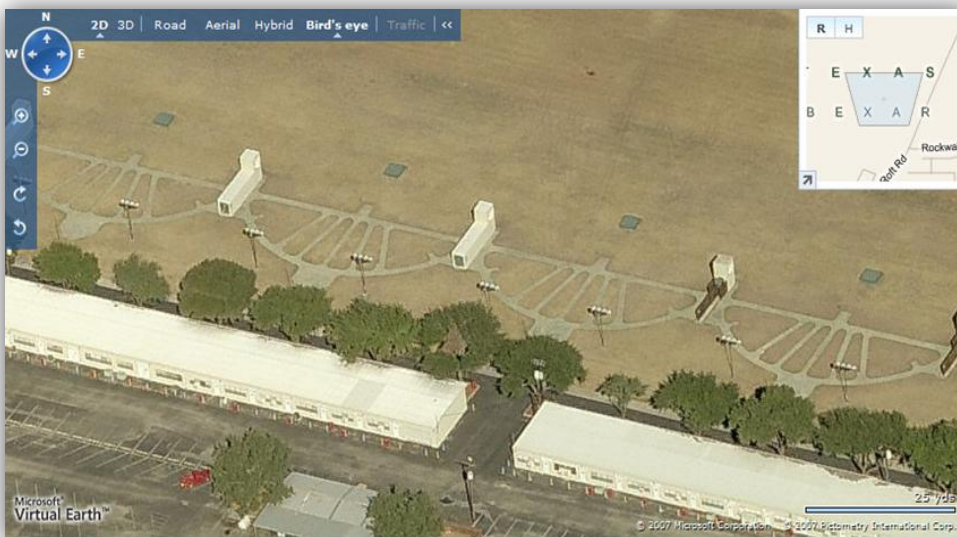
Target speed, flight path and distance are strictly regulated and are the same the World over. From Alaska to Japan, India to Israel, no matter where you go the game is exactly the same.

Further, the layout and dimensions are exact with 2.5cm and the field has to face NE in the Northern Hemisphere and SE in the Southern Hemisphere, to ensure the sun is behind the shooter's back and not in his eyes. Targets are released immediately the shooter calls "PULL" and the shooter has the option to refuse the target if it is  $\frac{1}{4}$  second late leaving the trap, or he thinks it flew wrong..

After 6 months of shooting skeet, a shooter should be shooting 25/25 (after all, they all fly exactly the same). If they miss a target, it is never their fault, excuses range from a "slow pull", "the target didn't fly the right path", "the trap needs to be re-adjusted", "a fellow shooter coughed", "a plane flew overhead at 20,000 feet."

One of the best places to buy a used Skeet gun is after a National Shoot, from a shooter who missed one of his 200 targets (8 games). The gun was to blame, not the shooter.

Many clubs have several layouts in a line, and shooters get to prefer one field over the other – my "Lucky Field" – "I can't shoot layout 3."



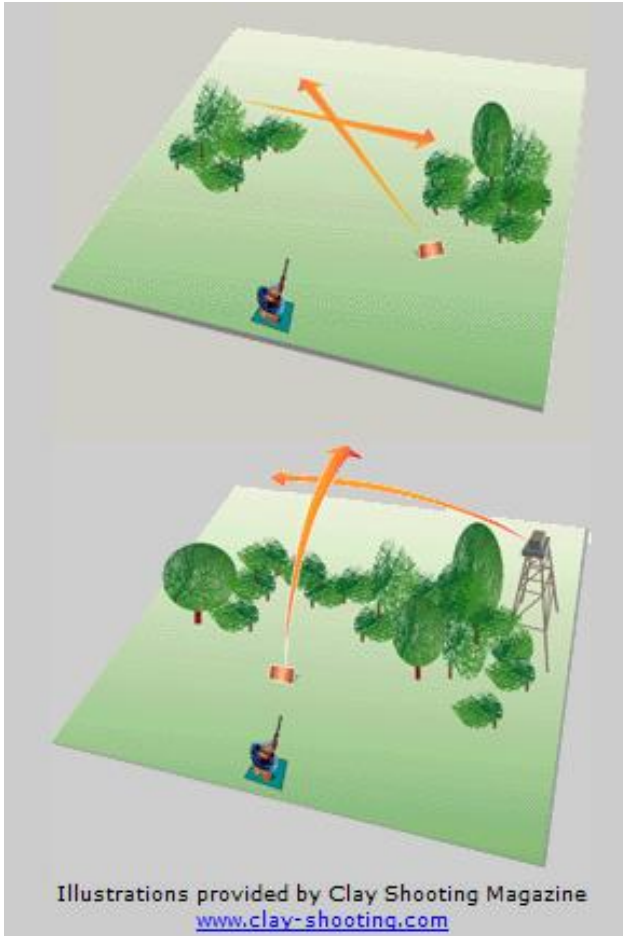
Because of the "challenge" that is always on a skeet shooter's mind, their main objective when attending a skeet shoot is to shoot all 25/25 targets.

The camaraderie comes second. If the skeet shooter misses several targets (having an "off-day") then he is not happy, and the group or team is not generally a friendly place to be.

I've always thought. "If a skeet shooter misses some targets, perhaps he should put his gun in his car before going into the clubhouse!"

Let's now look at an alternative. **Sporting Clays**

# Sporting Clays - Why is it so much fun?



Sporting Clays is a challenging clay target game designed to simulate field shooting. On a Sporting Clays course, shooters are presented with a wide variety of targets that duplicate the flight path of game-birds, such as flushing, crossing, incoming and other angling shots.

Courses are laid out in natural surroundings and typically include ten to fifteen shooting "stations" with shooters moving from one station to the next to complete the course. Each "station" presents shooters with a different type of shot. At a "grouse station," for example, shooters might face flushing "birds" that zip in and out of the trees. At a "decoying duck" station, incoming targets may float in toward the shooter.

Most courses make use of natural features such as woods and ponds to create a realistic setting for each type of shot. At any "station," targets may be thrown as singles, simultaneous pairs, following pairs (one target right after the other), or report pairs (the second target launched at the sound of the gun being fired at the first).

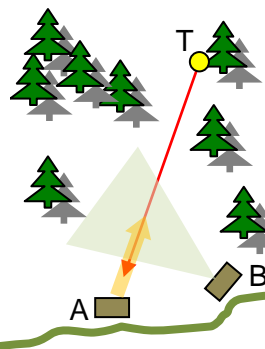
To further challenge shooters, target size may vary from the standard trap/skeet clay bird to the smaller "midi" and "mini" targets, or a flat disc shaped "battue" target. There are even special "rabbit" targets that are thrown on end and skitter across the ground.

With Sporting Clays there are no two courses the same. It doesn't matter which way the sun is shining or any nearby noise. Because targets vary so much, even on the same shooting range, the 10 – 20 stations will have greatly differing target presentations. A good score may be 65% and shooters endeavor to get better. If you miss a target so what? Try again. To prevent "boredom" setting in, many courses change their target presentations on a regular basis. Besides, as this is a game to teach you to be better at hunting live game, why would you want repetitive targets. Wherever you go in the World to shoot, you can be assured that no two targets, even stations will be the same – it's like shooting hundreds of different presentations – just like real hunting.

A group of Sporting Clay shooters are fun to be with. If a shooter misses a target, he'll possibly ask his colleague "Where did I go wrong, was I behind it, too low???" None of this sulking because he missed the 24<sup>th</sup> target, and blames his gun, or the target trajectory.

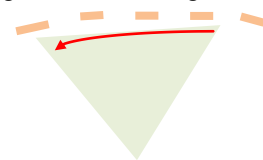
Further, a Sporting Clay course can be set / designed to give different levels of difficulty. Take this example.

Here we have a station with 2 shooting positions. (A + B)  
The target is incoming from the trap in the distance (T).



The shooter at "A" has an easy direct line to the target. All he sees is an incoming disk getting bigger and bigger.

The shooter at "B" has a hard shot because the target is crossing from his right to left. He has to follow by swinging his gun and "leading" the target.



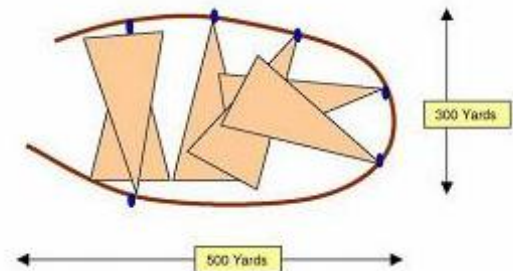
A course may have 12 – 24 even 36 stations around a circular track that starts at 1; the shooter can shoot all the stations finishing up at 36 back where he started. Look at the example below.



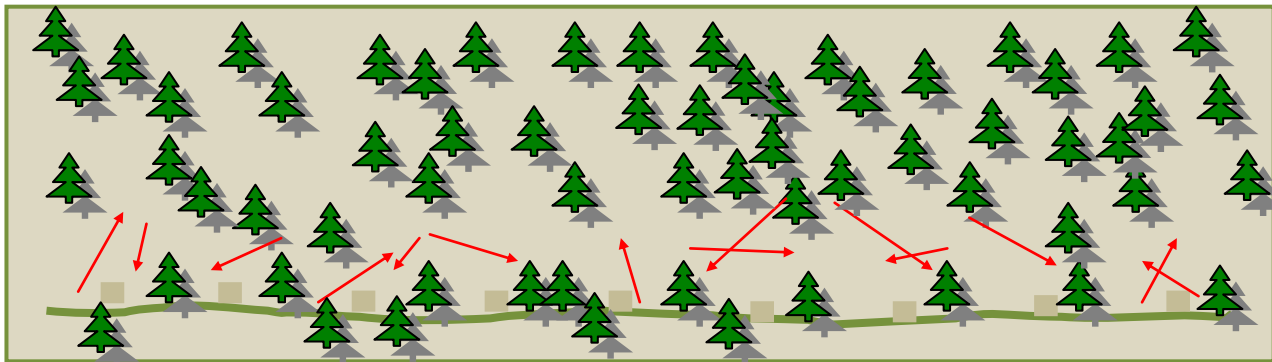
The international safety distance for all shotgun sports is 300 yards in direction of shot.

For the course shown left, there would have to be around 700 yards across and about 2000 yards long. If space is a restraint, the course can be “squashed” to make it more “round”.

Or you can overlap the safety areas by shooting inwards from 300+ yards apart.



If you have a long narrow strip of land, the course can be laid out similar to a multiple skeet field setup.



Whatever layout is chosen, shooters will enjoy the different target presentations and the varying challenges.

**Cost wise**.... A sporting clay trap costs around \$2400 - \$3000 depending upon the target it is throwing, so a station will cost around \$5800 in traps. Add a small deck, \$500, and a bit of landscaping.

NOTE: We want the ground left as rough as possible with as many trees and shrubbery left in place.

Compare that to a Skeet field setup....

The fields have to be flat, cleared of all obstructions and have a clear line of sight of at least 100 yards. There has to be two towers built, High House and Low House, to exact measurements and placing. The shooting positions are exactly placed to the 1/2". Average cost of a single Skeet field is \$25,000 to set up.

Six Skeet fields would cost \$150,000 --- 10 Sporting clay stations would cost around \$62,000

**Throughput: (MAXIMUM)**

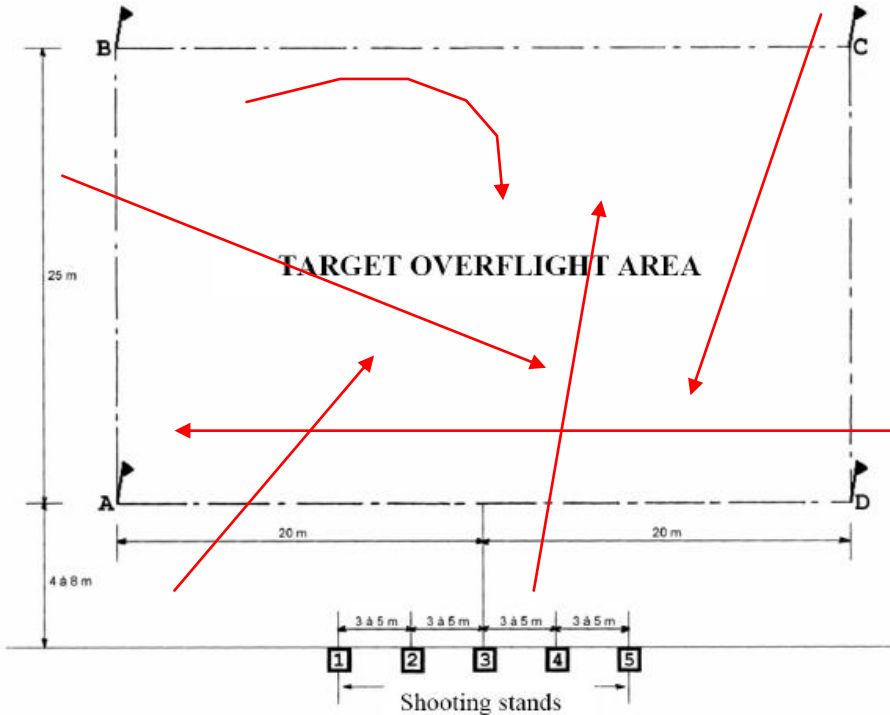
One skeet field handles 4 – 5 shooters every 30 minutes : Average charge \$5.00 for 25 birds  
 Six skeet fields handles 30 shooters every 30 minutes = \$150 every 1/2 hour = \$1800 per 6 hour day  
 Ten Sporting fields handle 50 shooters every hour: 50 targets average \$17 = \$5100 per 6 hour day

# COMPACT Sporting Clays – Called COMPAK

Compact Sporting Clays – sometimes called “Lazy Man’s Sporting” is a relatively new game developed by me, in the UK back in 1982. I brought it to the US back in the late 80’s, as a fun shoot. It only became a registered, defined game with rules a few years ago and is recognized the world over as COMPAK CLAYS

Rules are controlled by [FITASC - Federation Internationale de Tir aux Armes Sportives de Chasse](#)

The game uses Sporting Clay traps but confines the shooter(s) to a restricted small area. The field is 40 yards wide and 25 yards deep. There are five shooters standing at five shooting positions spaced 3 yards apart in a straight line. There are generally 6 – 7 traps used per field. See the definition diagram below.



The game was defined to fit onto a Skeet field, so that competitions could be held at many clubs throughout the country.

Shooters rotate from station to station taking a predefined selection of targets. (25 in all).

Traps are positioned to throw targets in any direction, the only rule is that sometime during their flight they must either land-in, or cross the 40' x 25'

**“Target Overflight Area”**

Flight path examples are shown left.

Before the COMPAK rules were established, many clubs, mainly Sporting Clays or Hunting Lodges created their own Compact games. The game of Compact Sporting has no defined rules and can be set anywhere.

My company, **Shooting Academy**, built the first Super Compact Shooting Deck at Nemaocolin Woodlands in 1998, and since then many clubs have followed the lead in designing elaborate shooting decks for the “Lazy Man’s Sporting Clays Game”.

This deck, allows for 5 shooters to shoot from various levels, and keep dry when it’s raining.



Traps are mounted in the roof, under the main deck and under the right uppermost deck. Eight other traps are spread around in front.



Following Nemaquin, I built several other decks, some for private clients who wanted their own "Shooting Paradise". See the examples below.....

These two photographs are the REAR and FRONT of the cabin deck. A room at the rear has a pot-belly stove and facilities to keep you warm. Again, there are various shooting positions.



The photos below are of a private cabin for a client in Idaho.



Rear of cabin



Shooting Deck



Target Field

This is a view from behind the first cabin, viewed from the tower that launches targets over the roof.



Since installing the first unit the client had so many friends come to shoot, we've now built a second unit.. Note the two towers for launching high birds.



See the photo to the left, he has three "Wobble" traps below the deck and one above the deck.

This guy likes shooting so much he has multiple traps on each of his compact layouts.



The photo right, shows the two compact layouts. The right one in the trees, has 16 traps and is located looking over a small valley. The one to the left has 10 traps and overlooks the berms in front which hide a flush of incoming targets.

A favorite game here is to line up 5 shooters then release all 16 traps at the same time!!.

# Ultimate Compact Sporting – Abu Dhabi

The ultimate Compact Buildings are the ones I designed for the Al Forsan Shooting Range in Abu Dhabi, UAE.  
I designed the whole shooting ground, including 36 Sporting Stations, 4 COMPAK decks, 6 Skeet Fields with Olympic Bunker overlays, 300 meter high power rifle and indoor 24 lane, 25m and 50m – rifle and pistol.



This Compact Sporting “Villa” (one of the four), backs onto the Sporting Clay Course behind.  
Note: The tower that services 4 Sporting Stations and launches targets over the roof of the “Villa”.



Handrails finished in stained hardwood.



Rear building has AC, restrooms and pantry.

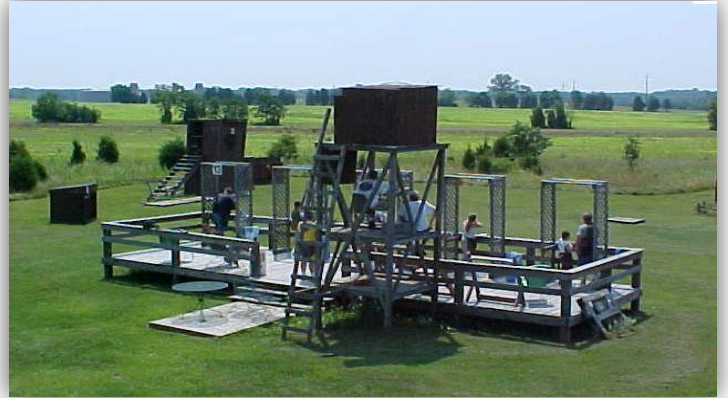


**As the land was reclaimed from the sea, and flat, we had to make our own hills.**



# What does Compact Sporting cost and what does it earn?

A Compact Sporting deck can range from a simple 30' x 8' deck with / without roof, to a complex unit where a "conference room / entertainment room" is available to companies for private parties.



Shooters love the various levels and target trajectories – different levels make each target different.



## Costings:

Obviously the sophistication of the deck determines its cost. Say, \$3,000 to \$100,000

Traps will cost the same regardless of deck design – assume 7 traps averaging \$2800 each - \$19,600  
Add controls at around \$1,800

The throughput is about the same as Skeet – 5 shooters in 30 minutes – 25 targets each.

Only.... With Compact Clays you charge \$10 - \$12 for the 25 targets

So, 5 shooters every ½ hour = 60 shooters per day = \$600 per unit. 6 Units = \$3600 (Skeet = \$1800)

BUT.... The main income comes from corporate entertainment. If you have a cabin attached then corporations will rent the unit for a 3 to 4 hour session for around \$3500 including guns, shells, targets, instruction and food. (Always include instruction as it slows down the number of shots and targets used).  
*[Although you may install 6 Compact layouts, you may only want 1 or 2 to have the conference ability.]*

Corporate entertainment is veering more towards shooting than golf. The reasoning is simple... If you take a group of clients to a golf course, they are spread out and you only get them all together at the end of the day. Plus, if there are clients who do not regularly play golf, they can be intimidated when they do bad... With shooting, the group stays together and enjoys each other's company. Even if a client hasn't shot before, he can easily be instructed to hit a target and his ego jumps a mile high. With golf, he'll need months of practice to be happy with his efforts. With shooting – you hit or you miss. Once you start hitting, you're hooked.

## Conclusion:

Skeet takes a great deal of flat land; it has to face the “correct” direction and has to be built to exact, expensive regulations. The game is recognized as inexpensive to shoot and shooters are generally very “picky” about the exact target presentation, speeds and target release timing. If conditions are not exactly right they become miserable. Further, a bad day skeet shooting is never their fault, the club is to blame – be it bad targets, slow pulls, noisy surroundings. At \$5 a game, the owner of a club has to “suffer” these shooters to make a reasonable return.

With Sporting Clays, there is a much more flexible clientele; they are more hunter orientated than competition orientated and accept the shooting conditions. They do not expect the targets to fly in exactly the same way as other grounds, and enjoy the variable targets, even the changes made each week so they have a new challenge each time they “play”. Shooting Sporting clays earns three times as much as skeet (\$17 as opposed to \$5) and is approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the setup costs. PLUS.... 100 times less moaning and objections to the target presentations..

Compact Sporting can be set up in the same area as skeet but does not require the clearing of land or precise building exactness.... The game can be played using simple shooting cages standing on the rough ground, or from a multi thousand \$ building. The charge is a little less than Sporting clays, being around \$10 - \$12 per round of 25 birds. The throughput is the same as skeet 5 shooters per 30 minutes. As with Sporting clays, Compact Clays require no hard and fast regulations for buildings or target presentations as in skeet. (AND ... No moaning or complaints.)

Further, with an expansion of a “conference room” at the rear of the compact deck, the income from letting it out to corporate groups, or just a group of shooters who want to celebrate a birthday etc, can escalate considerably.