CALCULATED SKEET LEADS

Dear Technoid:

I am trying to locate some data on skeet target speed. I have some information from an excerpt from the NSSA Gun Club Manual that was in the February 1996 Skeet Shooting Review. That article stated that the high house target measures 45 - 46 mph and the low house is 47 - 48 mph. These speeds were measured with a radar gun as close to the house as possible.

What I am trying to find is the target speed at other locations, such as the crossing point and at the 60 yard stake. Do you have any information on this? I have talked with Eric Beckmann at NSSA and he does not have any additional information.

As you can probably guess, I am trying to calculate skeet leads. I have good information on field layout and shot ballistics. I am trying to account for all of the factors, such as gun speed (match the target), where the target is broken, shell velocity, shot size, etc. This is fairly easy to do with a spreadsheet and if the calculations are made in small increments it will be accurate. I realize that these calculations are only applicable to the sustained lead method, but this is how I shoot skeet.

Do you have any idea how Ed Scherer determined his leads in his video?

Regards,

Jim

Dear Jim:

I think that you are wasting your time. If you break all your targets at the center post on the skeet field, all your leads are exactly the same from every station. No kidding. They are. If you break at the center stick, the bird is always traveling at the same speed and the shot always has to go 21 yards regardless of which station the shot comes from (except 8). Mechanically, the lead has to be the same. Obviously, the lead that you SEE at each station is different, but not the actual lead. Think about it. It has to be so. No matter how you go about it, you are going to end up trying to calculate something very subjective- a tough job.

When Ed and I chatted about his specific lead charts (I would always kid him and ask whether he gave his students a yard stick), he just said that some beginning shooters needed the reassurance of a fixed number when discussing leads before they got the hang of things. I would be the last person to argue with Ed's considerable training success, but he never did fully explain to me how he arrived at those numbers. I think that he made them up based on what he saw, not on any calculations.

In my coaching (two summers coaching International Skeet at the US Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs), I never knew of an elite shooting athlete who measured lead in terms of inches or feet. Everyone used space and light. I am not against aiming and measuring- Dryke,

Carlisle and Clark certainly did enough of that- but they didn't do it in feet and inches. They used their training to imprint the amount of space and light that they needed to see. This differs for each shooter- even when they are sustained lead shooters. People see lead differently. Four feet to lead to you may not be the same as a perceived four feet of lead to me. Many coaches like to use feet and inches because the new shooter can readily understand the concept, but that isn't the way that you actually shoot. Or rather, actually shoot if you shoot well.

I never spent any time with American style skeet and perhaps the premounted gun and slower targets encourage a different kind of shooting, but I doubt it. Like American style skeet, IntSk is a sustained lead game (except second shot on doubles) and at Olympic and World Champion levels is shot with almost the same amount of precision. No one ever got a gold medal by running out there with a ruler.

Still and all, the Technoid loves you for wanting to get, well, so technical. You are clearly a born experimenter. Welcome to the club.

Best regards,
Bruce Buck
Shotgun Report's Technoid