



SIMULTANEOUS PAIRS

By Roger Hill

SIMULTANEOUS PAIR SECRETS SHARED

SHOOTERS OFTEN PANIC WHEN FACED WITH A SIMULTANEOUS PAIR – BUT THE KEY IS TO KEEP COOL. ROGER HILL HAS SOME TIPS

Out of all the targets we have covered, one scenario that has been overlooked is the often-forgotten simultaneous pair. For some reason a lot of course builders seem to shy away from them, tending to opt for the on report pair instead. These are considered the more testing target combination but simultaneous pairs can be equally as testing if presented correctly. It must be said, though, that a few more simultaneous pairs are being thrown now than were in the past, so now is a good time to take a look at them.

First of all, for those of you who have not come across many simultaneous pairs, the rules are slightly different from on report pairs. When shooting on report, if the second target is a no-bird on release the pair is shot again, but the first target is already established as killed or lost. With a simultaneous pair or following pair, if the first target is killed and the second target is a no-bird, then no score is established and the pair must both be shot again.

As mentioned there are two types of pairs, following and simultaneous. Simultaneous can be thrown from two traps at the same time or from a double arm trap. A following pair is thrown from the same trap and can sometimes be clays of two different sizes from the same trap (standard/midi, midi/mini, or standard/mini). These combinations can be particularly tricky as although they are being launched from the same trap their flight lines will be completely different. So take time to make sure you read each one of these targets correctly (the height and speed will be very different). Don't be caught out by reading the first one and

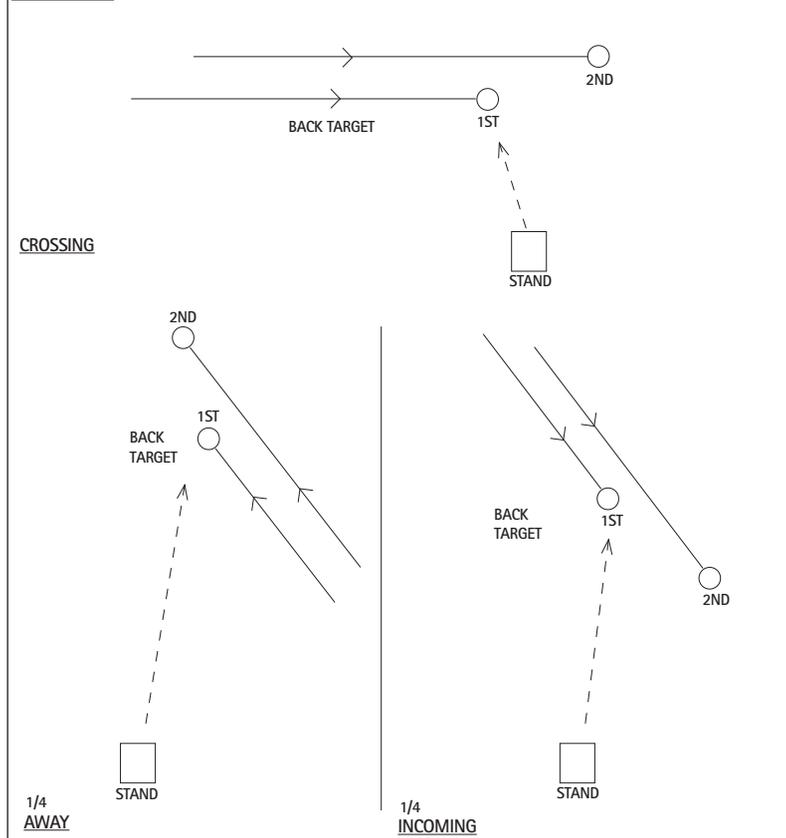
thinking the second target will be on the same flight line – it won't.

A lot of shooters panic when confronted with simultaneous pairs. Don't let yourself be intimidated by the situation, start panicking and rush your shots. Look at the pair in another way – turn it into a positive. A simultaneous pair is only two single targets released at the same time. You can only shoot them one at a time and you cannot shoot the pair until you have shot the first target (there is no such thing as half a pair). Get yourself into a

positive frame of mind on these pairs. I call it playing the 50% rule. Say to yourself: 'I am going to guarantee 50% of these targets. I am going to use both barrels on the first target if I have to, and I know I can break the first target if I have two shots at it'. (There is nothing in the rules of English Sporting to say that you cannot shoot at the same target twice, and this also applies to on report pairs).

So this should be the first part of your training on all pairs: simultaneous, following and on report pairs. Always

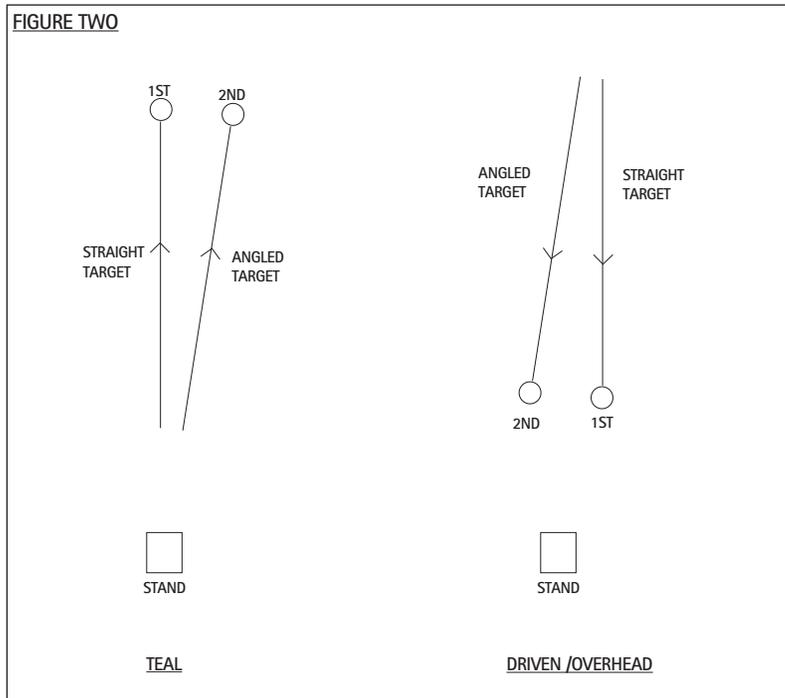
FIGURE ONE





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second barrel missed first targets; after all you are nearer to this target than the second as you are already on it. The other factor that comes into play is that second shots are always more instinctive. When learning this technique, the second shot must be quick, if not instant – a bit like a Trap shot taking his second barrel. It cannot be: 'bang – oh! I missed that, let's carry on and have another shot at it'. It must be "bang, bang!". This was covered in a previous article about Trap shooting complementing Sporting by speeding you up in taking the second shot at a target.

Figure one shows how we can tackle these pairs, with a pair of crossing or quartering targets (incoming or going away). Always take the back target first, as this will give you a natural swing onto the second target. If you take the front target first you then have to either stop the gun and wait for the second target causing a dead gun, or even worse you have the temptation to go back for the second target. You then have a gun that is travelling in totally the wrong direction. It takes a lot of discipline and control to let the lead target go past your muzzle pick-up point and wait for the second target. As I said earlier, when there are two targets in the air panic sets in and we rush to get the

first one we see out of the way. Don't. Be in control of the targets. Watch the first one pass, and then get to work on the second. Play the 50% rule; you are going to nail this target even if it takes both barrels. You will be surprised by taking this approach at how many first targets you start to connect with. Once you have broken the first target (the back one of the pair) you will be amazed how intuitive the second leading target becomes. It is there in front of your gun in your peripheral vision. The next thing you know you are on it and the job is done – another pair in the bag.

Second shots are always instinctive as you never have any time to think about them or make a conscious decision of what you are going to do. They are shot subconsciously and instinctively.

When you come across a pair of teal, going away or incomers and they are flying level with each other, always take the straightest of the two targets first (see figure two).

This will enable you to get the gun moving in one direction and not have to worry about the angle of the target. You will also be shooting the easier of the two targets first, giving you more confidence (still playing the 50% rule) and making you more instinctive with the second, trickier

target. Be positive with each target, but be very positive with the first target of the pair. Have the right frame of mind whatever happens with the first target. That is the key to shooting pairs. Most pairs are missed due to a rushed first target, thinking about the second and not having your mind on the first part of the job.

As we don't come across a lot of simultaneous pairs these days, they must be made a very important part of your training program. Put the hours into the training sessions; spend some time shooting a bit of Trap to speed up your second shot at the same target. Also shoot some Skeet doubles to overcome the panic of simultaneous pairs and to train yourself not to rush your first target of a pair. Train on grounds that have true pairs. When training on targets that are normally shot on report, try a few simultaneous pairs. Learn to read them as pairs – you may even have to shoot them the opposite way round. When at a shoot you come across simultaneous pairs spend that extra bit of time reading the targets. Know the exact line of the first target to be shot and once you have established this read the line of your second target (have you got to go up to it, down to it; is it faster or slower?). Another trick of course builders is to throw a midi and a standard from two traps, the midi trap behind the standard trap. You will see the standard first but then the midi will overtake it so what was the first target now becomes the second. If you leave this pair too long the standard will then overtake the midi and then again the lead target changes. It is vital with this combination of targets that you read them and establish a point at which you want to break them. Know which is your back bird at your first break point. Don't hesitate or it will all change!

Shoot safe, shoot straight.

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