

## JEFFERSON COUNTY SHOOTING SPORTS 2014-2015

Everyone enrolled in Shooting Sports, except for those only enrolled in the Archery Discipline, MUST complete the Basic Safety Course before participating in any of the shooting disciplines. The date for the Basic Safety Course has not been established, so watch for more information in the December newsletter. Typically it is held over the Christmas school break.

We are often asked what the minimum ages to enroll in the Shooting Sports disciplines are. The Countywide Shooting Sports Leaders have provided the following information for your review and use while enrolling: Our program typically follows the age guidelines set by the state for participation in our various shooting sports disciplines. The more advanced the shooting discipline, (equipment, skill, and also the degree of "danger" with the equipment), the higher the age is set.

Here are the State Match participation 4H-age criteria (these are hard and fast for the State Match participation) followed by our Jefferson Co. project guidelines and policies:

- BB Gun: 4H-age 9-14. (BB Gun is the only discipline with an upper age limit short of aging out of 4H. Participation requires successful completion of our Basic Safety Course)
- Air Rifle: 4H-age 9-18 (We require participation in our Basic Safety Course and our BB gun project for at least one year for shooters under the age of 14 in 4H-age. The degree of difficulty for Air Rifle is much harder than BB gun and shooters must also be proficient in BB gun to advance to Air Rifle. For shooters 14 and up in 4H-age, we require the Basic Safety course for firearms and firing line safety.)
- Air Pistol: 4H-age 12-18 (We require participation in our Basic Safety Course, with most Air Pistol shooters coming in after they start shooting Air Rifle)
- Archery: 4H-age 9-18 (We start new shooters on bare bow low poundage recurve bows to teach archery fundamentals. Our club provides the basic equipment needed. 7-8 year olds are welcome to attend practices, but are not eligible for competition.)
- Hunting Skills: 4H-age 9 through 18 (Note that in order to participate at the State Match in Hunting Skills, the Juniors (4H-age 9-12) must also participate AND qualify in at least one Shooting Sports discipline for which they are eligible, typically BB or Archery. For Seniors (4H-age 13 to 18 for Hunting Skills) to attend the State Match, they must also participate in Archery, Small Bore Rifle, and Shotgun projects, shoot at least one recognized qualifier match in each of these disciplines, AND qualify in at least one.)
- Shotgun: 4H-age 12 through 18 (we strongly suggest completing our Basic safety course and/or hunters education)
- Muzzle Loading Rifle: 4H-age 12-18 (we strongly suggest completing our Basic safety course. Participation in Air Rifle is very helpful to build shooting skills)
- Small Bore (.22) Rifle: 4H-age 12-18 (we require our basic safety course AND participation in BB and air rifle with proficiency in air rifle before going to .22 rifle)
- Small Bore (.22) Pistol: 4H-age 13-18 (we require our basic safety course AND participation in Air Pistol for at least a year before advancing to .22 pistol)

This should help members and parents properly fill out enrollment cards. If it seems like nearly everything in our Jefferson County Shooting Sports is based on successful completion of our Basic Safety Course, followed by active participation for one year, or more, in our BB Gun program, it is. We teach the fundamentals of SAFE GUN HANDLING, SHOOTING ON A CONTROLLED FIRING LINE, and MARKSMANSHIP skills in the Basis Safety Course and the participants actively practice these skills to become SAFE and ACCURATE shooters. These skills HAVE to be mastered before one moves on to more advanced disciplines that are also potentially much more dangerous if something goes wrong. By the time our members become good at BB gun for at least a year, if not more, depending on their age and their skills, then they can think about moving up the ladder in more advanced shooting disciplines, such as Air Rifle and Air Pistol. It is a graduated process for the younger shooters, and if they want to really be successful in the more advanced disciplines, they will take the time to build the skills and the safe gun handling earlier in their 4H shooting careers, starting with BB Gun, which as you know, is very competitive and not beneath anyone.

Anyone interested in Shooting Sports is encouraged to attend the Project Fair on Tuesday, November 18, from 6:30-8:30 pm. Instructors will be present to discuss the different disciplines, safety, show equipment, and answer any questions you may have. The session is free-please register with the office by Friday, November 7th. The registration form can be found in the November newsletter.

If you have any questions, please contact Rod Deeken at rod.deeken@gmail.com.