

# Introduction To 3D Archery

## Introduction

The term 3D archery generally refers shooting at 3 dimensional life-like targets made from self healing foam in situations which would mimic real life hunting experiences. Early use of the targets was primarily for bowhunting practice but over time, shooting clubs began setting up courses to challenge hunters which led to more competitive venues leading into what we know today as 3D archery. Most early targets where made to resemble deer but today, manufacturers like Rinehart and Mackenzie make all kinds of animals in various sizes – from skunks to giraffes and everything in-between including dinosaurs and aliens!



Whether you want to shoot for practice or plan on competing, 3D is a great way to enjoy the outdoors with friends and family while gaining valuable experience shooting your bow. Setting up a 3D venue could be as simple as a single target in your yard or as large as a national level event run by an archery organization such as ASA or IBO.

## Equipment Needed

Shoot what you have! There is nothing special needed to get started in 3D archery – just a desire to have fun! Bring a bow and field point tipped arrows – everything else including a sight and release are optional. When you attend an event, you may see high tech target rigs with long stabilizers but they are not needed to do well – many archers do extremely well with a recurve or longbow. Remember, as you start shooting 3D events, HAVE FUN! If you just want to practice – Great! If you want to be serious and compete – Great! No need to even keep score if you don't want to. You will likely be charged a fee for shooting regardless of whether you want to compete just to cover the ongoing maintenance of the targets you will be shooting at. If you have never been to an event like 3D before, be sure to ask about range safety and etiquette.

## **Organization of 3D Events**

There are many formats and rule sets which 3D events are run under so some basic information will be covered here. Depending on the hosting club, the format of tournament, the number of days which must be shot, and how it is organized can vary but all will use some form of the targets shown above and use the scoring areas imprinted on each. Courses can be done indoors or outdoors under a variety of shooting conditions.

For simplicity, a typical event will be described to help develop a base understanding of a typical event. Generally, the venue includes 20 to 30 targets which will be arranged at the discretion of the host club. For large tournaments, you may be required to shoot 2 consecutive days to post a combined score for ranking. Targets are placed in varying situations and at varying angles but in all cases, the scoring area is visible to the shooter. You may end up shooting from elevated platforms or hillsides to simulate a downward shot or you may shoot uphill though less common. Surroundings can vary from heavily wooded to open fields. Normally, the distance to the target must be judged by the shooter without any aids however some events now have known distance shoots or days when rangefinders can be used. The top competitive classes shoot unmarked yardage.

### **Indoor**

Indoor events may be shot from a single line where advanced and beginning archers shoot the same distances – only the shooting class will vary (you are grouped according to equipment type and skill level). You may shoot at targets as close as 2 or 3 yards up to 50 yards depending on where the event will be held. In addition, you may be required to shoot across the lane of the person next to you so be aware of where your target is in relation to the shooters around you.



## Outdoor

Outdoor events usually are done on a walk-through course with a group of 3 or 4 archers per lane. Think of the walkthrough being like golfing – your group completes one hole then moves on to the next hole. Depending on your skill level and the shooting class you registered under, you will be shooting from a specific stake placed on the ground at each shooting lane. For instance, young shooters may shoot from the closest stake (15 yards max) where open class and pro shooters may shoot from the farthest stakes (50 yards max) – note the stakes below. The stakes are used to ensure each shooter has the same opportunity and the shooter is required to touch the appropriate stake with at least one part of their body (generally a foot or leg). However you could kneel or lie down and shoot if you wish! If you are new to the sport or are with kids who cannot shoot 15 yards and are just out to practice, feel free to ask your group if it would be acceptable to walk up closer until you are comfortable. Though you cannot score the shot, you will not lose any arrows either!

Unlike indoor events, the outdoor events are shot in whatever weather event is going on – rain, wind, snow, heat – it can be interesting!

Turkey from the back stakes



Deer in the Woods

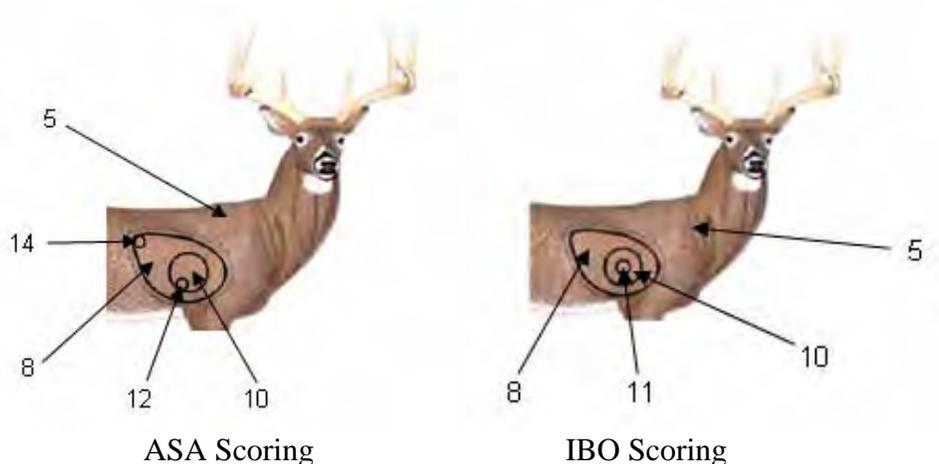
Kids having fun – all 10s or better!



## **Typical Scoring**

Similar to what you would expect in a hunting situation, a “high score” shot would be in the vitals section of the animal you are shooting at. There are primarily 2 scoring formats used: ASA which uses 14-12-10-8-5-0 scoring areas and IBO which uses a 11-10-8-5-0 format. Note that the ASA 12 and 14 rings are offset compared to the IBO marking. One arrow is shot at each target with a score being read where the arrow enters the foam target. This can sometimes confuse those new to 3D events when a target is placed on an angle to the shooter. For example, a deer target placed at a quartering away angle would pose the problem posed above. In a hunting situation, you would likely shoot at the deer so the arrow would enter about mid way between the front and rear legs however in 3D, this would result in a score of 5 or 8. In order to score a 10 or higher in 3D, the arrow would have to be shot as if you wanted to pass through the outer shoulder area. Since most targets have multiple scoring areas marked on them to extend useful life, be sure to ask which one is being shot. If no specific area is marked, assume the most “natural” kill zone would be used. When in doubt, feel free to ask someone.

**Here is an example of what the ASA and IBO scoring rings look like.**



Each target has its own set of scoring rings so it may be helpful to pick up a set of reference cards from Rinehart or Mackenzie. It is important to note that if the arrow even touches the next higher scoring ring it counts as the higher score. In most situations you will not be able to see the scoring rings from the shooting stakes so having a good set of binoculars or a reference card can be handy.

ASA has begun using a high and low 12 ring and sometimes the 14 ring is outside the 8 ring. It may seem odd that such a high scoring ring is in a zone where you would not want to shoot at an animal however it has to do with risk/reward for competitive shooters. The 14 ring is fairly small and a miss may result in an 8 or 5 score – the archer should be pretty sure of the range and his/her ability to hit such a small circle before committing to shooting at the 14 ring.

In the picture below, you can see all the arrows are in the ASA 12 ring and the other scoring rings are visible in this view (the 14 ring is very faint). Likely, you would not be able to see the imprinted rings from the shooting stakes and if you could, they would be very faint.



### **General Rules and Etiquette**

Each organization has its own set of rules and equipment restrictions so be sure to know what you are in for when shooting a sanctioned event as a competitive shooter. For instance, ASA requires a collared shirt at their shoots and IBO requires that their hunter class shooters use at least 4" vanes on all arrows. Actual stake to target maximum distances also vary depending on the format of the shoot. There are far too many rules to list but in a general sense, here are some basic things to consider.

1. Safety is of primary concern so know what you are shooting at and what is behind it. Be sure any children with you stay behind the current shooter at all times.
2. Be courteous to other shooters by not talking while other members of your group are at the shooting stake. Don't let kids goof around.
3. Don't spend too much time at the stake glassing the target or guessing yardage. Most 3D organizations set time limits on how long you can be at the stake to ensure the event moves along well. You should not need more than 1 -2 minutes once in position to shoot.
4. Since these events are meant to involve all genders and ages, be cordial and do not use foul language.
5. Typically 2 separate people keep score and one calls the shots. Cards are compared at the end to confirm no mistakes were made in adding up the score.
6. For outdoor events, bring something to drink and snack on – the walk through courses can exceed 1 mile in length and take several hours. You may also want to take an Allen wrench set and an extra release (if you use one). An umbrella is also nice if you care to take one on a rainy day.

7. If your group is moving slower than others, allow the groups behind you to “shoot through” to keep the event on track. If you are consistently being passed by groups of similar size, you are likely going too slow and should consider picking up the pace.
8. Group sizes are typically from 3 (min) to 5 or 6 (max) depending on the event. At large competitive events, you will not be permitted to shoot in a group which just includes your friends/family.
9. If you miss a target, don’t spend too much time looking for the arrow as it will back up the entire event. Just like hunting, misses do occur and arrows will be lost. Be sure to bring 8 or more arrows with you on the course.
10. Have Fun.....Don’t think you need to shoot perfect....just enjoy yourself.
11. If the event is large, a shotgun start may be utilized where groups are assigned to a specific target then the group walks out to that target. At a set time, the event organizer will utilize some kind of signal to let shooters know they can begin. This would only be used to start the event – after the group shoots the target assigned to start at, the group would proceed to the next numbered shooting lane (again – like golf – if you start on #5 in a shotgun start, your second hole would be #6).

### **Useful Links**

Archery Shooters Organization	<a href="http://www.asaarchery.com">www.asaarchery.com</a>
International Bowhunters Organization	<a href="http://www.ibo.net">www.ibo.net</a>
National Field Archery Association	<a href="http://www.nfaa-archery.org">www.nfaa-archery.org</a>
Mckenzie Targets	<a href="http://www.mckenzie3d.com">www.mckenzie3d.com</a>
Rinehart Targets	<a href="http://www.rinehart3-d.com">www.rinehart3-d.com</a>