Bowling Pins Frequently Asked Question (FAQ)

Why should I check out a bowling pin shoot?

It's fun knocking pins off a table in head-to-head competition. And you get to shoot every kind of gun you own, except full auto.

Do I need any special equipment?

No. Eye and ear protection, a gun and ammo suited to the type of competition that night, and a gun case or holster/scabbard for your gun in which to bring it to the line.

When do you shoot?

The 2nd and 4th Thursday nights of the month, March through September, at 6 pm. We will also have three (3) '9mm Novice' nights that shoot the 3rd Thursday of the month, May, July, and August.

What does it cost?

$3. Juniors shoot free.

How does it work?

Five pins are set up on tables, with a steel drop plate on the ground alongside the table. The course of fire is to clear the 5 pins from the table, and then hit the steel drop plate, as quickly as possible. The competition is head-to-head – whoever drops their steel plate first, wins that round. The trick is to knock each pin off the table with a single shot – otherwise you will be chasing a lower profile (and possibly spinning) target!

What do you shoot?

On the 2nd Thursday of the month, we shoot centerfire handguns – you name it: revolvers and autoloaders, modern guns and classics, irons or optics.

The 4th Thursday of the month is 'something else' – e.g., centerfire revolver, rimfire pistol, rimfire rifle, centerfire long gun (rifles and shotguns), centerfire subcompact handguns, combo centerfire handgun/centerfire long gun. On rimfire nights, we shoot pin tops, setting 9 pin tops on the table and using a lighter steel drop plate. On the '9mm Novice' nights – any handgun chambered for 9mm Luger.

What's a '9mm Novice' night?

A chance for shooters – especially shooters who may only have a 9mm – to compete against each other using similar equipment. '9mm' means 9mm Luger. 'Novice' means someone who has not won a centerfire handgun pin shoot at the ARPC. The pins are set further back on the table, to make clearing pins with a 9mm easier.

What's a 'Centerfire Subcompact' night?

A chance to shoot 'mouse guns' – subcompacts, typically in 380 or 9mm. We shoot pin tops at 10 yards with a full-size drop plate We use a box to qualify the guns, 7 inches x 6 inches x 1½ inches. If the gun fits in the box, it qualifies. The objective is to shoot true subcompacts, excluding some of the newer 'subcompact' model variants that have grown to compact size or larger.

How much ammo should I bring?

On centerfire nights, we load 6 rounds for each head-to-head matchup, with 12 rounds in reserve. On rimfire nights, we load 10 rounds, with 20 rounds in reserve. The shoots are double-elimination – you keep shooting until you lose twice, or win. So it depends on how many shooters we have each night – and how well or poorly you shoot. On most centerfire handgun nights, two boxes of cartridges are plenty.

Are juniors welcome?

Yes – especially on the rimfire rifle night, when they get their own class and compete against each other. On other nights, this is evaluated on a case-by-case basis, factoring in maturity, shooting experience, and parental supervision – contact the discipline director in advance to discuss. A parent or legal guardian needs to be present and sign the youth liability waiver, unless shooting under 4-H membership and leader oversight.

Any restrictions on guns or ammo?

Since we shoot in a bay – basically a steel box with one open side – we ask shooters to be sensitive about noise levels. No muzzle brakes, which are defined as any device with ports that direct gas sideways or downwards. (Porting that directs gas upward is okay.) No short-barreled magnums. No armor-piercing or steel-core ammo

– they're hard on the pins, harder on the steel drop plates, and can present a safety issue with the steel plates.

We ask that Power Factor (PF) for handgun ammo be kept under 300, to save wear and tear on the equipment. (Power Factor = Bullet Weight in grains x Velocity in feet per second, divided by 1000). To put that into context, most national pin competitions are shot with loads delivering a PF of around 200, such as a 45 ACP 230 grain bullet at 900 fps. A PF 300 load would be a 44 Magnum 240 grain bullet at 1250 fps.

Anything else to know?

Please be on time or be early! Our mandatory safety briefing starts at 6:00 pm. You need to be present at the safety briefing in order to shoot. In past years this has sometimes been an issue; we had extra ROs available to brief latecomers in a few cases, but want to avoid these situations in future.

What's the schedule for 2027?

March 11 – Open Class (CF) Handgun

March 25 – Centerfire Revolver

April 8 – Open Class (CF) Handgun

April 23 – Rimfire Handgun

May 13 – Open Class (CF) Handgun

May 20 – 9mm Novice Handgun

May 27 – Rimfire Long Gun

June 10 – Open Class (CF) Handgun

June 24 – Subcompact Centerfire Handgun

July 8 – Open Class (CF) Handgun

July 15 – 9mm Novice Handgun

July 22 – Centerfire Long Gun

August 12 – Open Class (CF) Handgun

August 19 – 9mm Novice Handgun

August 26 – Centerfire Revolver

September 9 – Open Class (CF) Handgun

September 23 – Centerfire Long Gun & Open Class (CF) Handgun