

Llantarnam Archery Club

A Guide for Beginners

Welcome to Llantarnam Archery Club.

This Guide is intended to help you get started now that you have finished your beginner's course. It does not cover everything, but should get you started. If you have questions, just ask someone in the club. You will find that most are more than happy to help and explain things.

One special note concerning Juniors. For legal reasons, Junior Archers should always have a responsible adult (parent, guardian or nominated individual) with them when shooting in the club.

So, what does guide this cover?

- The transition to shooting in the club
 - Setting up and Clearing away
 - Finding a target
 - Calls and Control
 - Basic Safety Rules
 - Lines and Details
 - Shooting Line Etiquette
- Setting up your equipment
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The transition to shooting in the club

The first big difference one you finish your beginners course is that you will be on your own! There will no longer be anyone telling you which target to shoot on, or taking you to the line. However, the basic calls you need to listen for and act on are the same as those used on the beginner's course.

Some Basics

Firstly, a few terms that you may not have heard

Boss - The backing for targets, typically circular straw in LAC, sometimes foam

Target - A shooting position, usually two on a boss, or four in competition

Face - The printed "target", which comes in different sizes and styles

The most commonly used faces are

40cm FITA target	Used for FITA 18 indoors only
40cm Worcester	A Black and white 5 zone target
60cm target	Used for Portsmouth rounds indoors only
80cm target	Used outdoors for shorter distances
122cm target	Used outdoors for longer distances

There are also 3-spot versions of the 40cm and 60cm targets that only have the inner 5 scoring zones for which there are special rules.

End - A visit to the shooting line

An end comprises a number of arrows shot together before collecting them

Indoors, an end is normally 3 arrows (except in a Worcester shoot – 5 arrows)

Outdoors, an end is normally 6 arrows, but can be 3 arrows at shorter distances and in certain tournaments may be two sets of 3 arrows (but this is a complicated situation that can wait)

Round - The name for a competitive format.

Numbers of arrows shot, size of target, indoor/outdoor etc vary

Double Lining Sharing a target, by taking turns

Where there are not enough targets for everyone in a session (and there are only 16 indoors), it will be necessary to have more than one archer sharing a target. We have seldom had to triple line, but numbers this year may require it.

Setting up and Clearing away

The first thing for all new members is to recognise the need to set up the range and put it away after shooting.

ALL archers are expected to help with this, though anyone with a physical disability and juniors should avoid doing anything that places them or anyone else in the club at risk. Juniors should not normally handle the bosses, but could still help, especially outdoors, with putting out flags and ropes etc.

You should try to arrive in good time, no later than the start time of the session, to ensure that you can help to set up. If this is not possible, then you should try to stay to the end and help pack away. Archers who do neither, or regularly arrive late and just join in after the work is done are noticed and seldom popular.

Once the session time is reached, you should help to set up BEFORE putting your equipment together. If you want to be prepared, arrive early and set your equipment up before the session.

When the Last Line is called and completed, you should help to put away the targets BEFORE packing your own equipment. If you need to leave on time, consider stopping before the end to allow time to pack up your own equipment before Last Line is called. Again, this is just about being fair to all other archers in the club. If you plan to leave early, **and your target is no longer needed**, then please offer to put your target away.

Finding a target

As soon as the targets are set up, and your equipment is together, you are ready to shoot, but where?

Your first task is to find a target to shoot on. When indoors, we usually put out between 8 to 10 bosses with the boss in the right hand corner usually being reserved for our Compound Archers and so will typically have 3 spot faces on them. The rest are available for anyone, but there are some rules.

- First-come, first served. Pick a **spare** target and it is yours.
- Avoid "Double Lining" if it is not required – use a spare target first
- Once someone has started shooting on a target, you should ask them before joining their target, either on the adjacent target on the same boss, or double lining. There may already be someone who has asked to shoot on the target and is not yet ready.
- When double lining, try to avoid having two archers who take a long time sharing a target. One adult and one junior usually work well, but some juniors also take their time.

When outdoors, we will put out a range of different distances for people to shoot on. If there is a specific distance you want to practice, then you will need to mention this when we are loading the targets at the container to ensure we put out the right targets.

Calls and Control

You will recognise the basic calls from the beginner's course.

Responsibility for all calls (EXCEPT "Fast") rests with the Captain of Archers (Steve Edwards), or his/her nominated deputy, usually a senior club member (often Rob Britton). The Captain of Archers

is responsible for ensuring that the line is clear and no-one is in front of the shooting line before calling lines, and for ensuring that all archers have finished shooting before calling "All Gone".

No other archer should make this call under normal circumstances. Anyone taking on this role must accept responsibility for ensuring that it is safe to make the call.

Under NO ACCOUNT should a junior make any line calls, and parents are asked to ensure that this does not happen.

In competition, the calls are replaced by whistles (see later) and you should not normally move to the line as a second line archer until the whole first line is finished and a second whistle sequence is heard.

- **First Line/Next Line** You can approach the line and start shooting
 If you are double lining, you should alternate who goes first, and whoever's turn it is to go first should go to the line straight away to avoid delays.
 If you are shooting second on a target, be ready to take your target partner's place as soon as s/he finishes
- **All Gone** You can approach the targets to collect your arrows
- **FAST** Stop Shooting IMMEDIATELY - This is a safety call

 Remove any arrow from the bow

 Wait for an instruction to continue shooting.

Basic Safety Rules

There are a number of Dos and Don'ts that all archers should be aware of to ensure that everyone in the club remains safe. Repeated failure to adhere to these could result in you being asked to leave the club as safety is paramount. Archery is a dangerous activity if not controlled.

- Always keep the shooting line clear, including the area immediately behind it
 - There should always be a clear area – in competition this will be marked by an "Equipment Line" or a "Waiting Line" or both
 - In club, there is a nominal waiting line about 2m behind the shooting line. All equipment should be behind this, and all archers should retire behind this once they have shot
- All archers should remain behind the waiting line until "First Line" has been called
 - ON NO ACCOUNT should an archer ever move to the line before this has been called
- An archer should clear the line as soon as they have shot their last arrow, taking into account the rules of etiquette below.
 - This allows the Captain of Archers to have a clear view of when shooting is complete
 - If you are being coached, and discussion of your shooting is required, please move off the line and continue the discussion behind the waiting line
- ON NO ACCOUNT should an archer move forward of the shooting line to retrieve an arrow
 - If an arrow falls in front of the shooting line, or has rebounded from the target, it should be left. Normal practice is to always have a spare arrow in your quiver
 - If the arrow can be dragged back with the bow, without interfering with another archer, then this is permitted, but ...

- It is usually better to shoot a spare arrow and retrieve it after “All Gone” has been called
- Take care when pulling arrows to ensure that they are pulled safely
 - Pull arrows straight to avoid bending them
 - Ensure no-one is behind you in a position where an arrow could be pulled into them
 - Do not reach across other arrows to pull yours. It is generally better to agree to pull each other’s arrows and only pull from the side you are on
- Respond IMMEDIATELY to any call of “Fast”
- If you see any situation that could lead to another archer being hurt, you MUST CALL “Fast”.
 - Do not wait for someone else to do it – it may be too late
- NEVER nock an arrow on the bow before taking up your shooting position on the line
- NEVER turn with an arrow nocked on bow – accidental loosing of an arrow when not facing the targets is particularly dangerous
- NEVER raise and draw a bow, even without an arrow behind the shooting line
 - There may be situations where this is safe, with the archer facing the targets and with no-one between the archer and the targets, but it is generally to be avoided even then
- Ensure that you always draw your bow in a safe manner
- Avoid drawing while the bow is pointed at the ground
- High draws (with the bow pointing above the targets) are illegal and can lead to disqualification in competition – they are not safe
- Take care when joining the line or leaving it to avoid knocking into another archer or making contact with other bows behind the line
- Take special care if you bow is fitted with stabilisation and a long rod as these can swing into others very easily
- An Archer is responsible for their own safety equipment
- You should always wear an arm guard
- While not a safety item, a chest guard is also recommended to avoid snagging the string on loose clothing
- Wear suitable clothing that will not interfere with the path of the string
- If you have long hair, ensure it is tied back while shooting
- All mobile phones should be turned off or on silent while shooting to avoid distracting other archers
- The use of any electronic device for playing music etc is NOT permitted on the shooting line or while collecting arrows etc. This is to ensure that all safety calls are heard.
- Flip-flops, sandals and other open toed footwear should not be worn

Lines and Details

A “Line” is a set of archers shooting together. When double lining is needed, the archers sharing a target can be considered to be shooting in first and second lines

Alternation of lines is common in competitions, and is good manners when shooting in club. Take turns going first.

A “Detail” refers to competitions where there are more than one session (or detail). Archers will normally ask for the detail they would prefer.

Shooting Line Etiquette

- You should not talk or make audible noises when on the line
 - This can distract a neighbouring archer
- Never approach the line when the archers on either side of you are at full draw
 - Wait for them to complete their shot, then move quickly to the line
 - The same applies when you finish shooting. Before leaving the line, ensure that you will not distract a neighbouring archer
- If you are double lining,
 - You should alternate who goes first,
 - Whoever's turn it is to go first should go to the line straight away to avoid delays.
 - If you are shooting second on a target, be ready to take your target partner's place as soon as s/he finishes
- Avoid talking about negatives, for example, misses and poor shots
 - Some archers do not like this
 - It is generally considered good practice to only think and talk about positives
- You should always shoot 3 arrows per end when indoors (6 outdoors)
 - Shooting extra arrows is not fair to other archers

Setting up your equipment

Your equipment is an essential factor in shooting well. If you do not set it up the same way every time, you will not get consistent results, no matter how well you are shooting.

As a beginner, you should not jump into buying a bow too quickly, as it can be expensive to change bows or limbs, and this will be needed as you get stronger and better, especially for juniors who are still growing. The club has a selection of bows and limb weights that will allow you to progress as you develop strength and technique.

However, these setup tips apply just as much to the club training bows as to your own equipment.

Sight Marks

A "Sight Mark" is a setting for the sight on your bow that you have found correctly allows you to shoot consistently in the centre of the target.

You need to record the measurement mark on your sight once you have found a setting that works for you. This way, each time you come to club, you can set your bow and sight to the same settings as the last time you shot. Otherwise, you will miss the gold!

As a beginner, you may struggle to find your best sight mark until you can shoot good groups. However, as soon as you manage this, move your sight to move your group to the centre, and then record it.

Bracing Height, Nocking Points etc

The "Bracing Height" is a measurement of the distance from the string to rest. This is affected by the length of the string, and can be adjusted by putting more or less twists into the string. This is why your instructor should have been telling you to keep the ends of your string together when de-stringing your bow, and to avoid letting the string unwind. If the bracing height changes, the arrows will have more or less speed on loose, causing them to vary in height at the target. Check your bracing height is the same at the start of each session.

The “Nocking Point” refers to the position on the string where the arrow is nocked. This will also have an effect on the behaviour of your arrows, but is more complicated to set up. To begin with, do not worry about this, and ask advice from the coach or other archers when you are ready. Setting up nocking points accurately requires consistent shooting and specific activity on the target.

There are other setup issues, but these can wait until you are a little more proficient.

Scoring Basics

Scoring is what the sport is all about. You do not have to score every time you come to club, but it will allow you to measure how you are doing. In fact, there are plenty of reasons NOT to score when practicing, for example the coach may ask you to shoot on a bare boss (no target) or to perform some shooting exercises where scoring can distract you. However, here are the basics for scoring.

- Arrows must be scored (especially in competition) BEFORE anyone is allowed to touch them or the target face
 - This is because touching an arrow or the face can cause a movement of the arrow and affect the score
- Arrows are always recorded in order of value, highest first
 - If you shoot three arrows in a single end in the following order (5, 9, 1), they will always be recorded as (9, 5, 1)
 - If you shoot six arrows outdoors in a single end, in the following order (2, Miss, 5, 9, 8, 7) they will be recorded as (9, 8, 7, 5, 2, m)
 - This allows alterations to be obvious, avoiding cheating accusations
- In competition, one person will record the scores (normally the target captain)
 - Each archer in turn calls their arrows
 - Arrow values should be called in order, highest first

If you want help in scoring, please ask. Example score sheets, similar to those used in competition, can be provided and other archers can help you get used to scoring. The club will probably organise a practice session sometime to give newcomers practice with timings and scoring.

Monitoring Your Progress

It is always good to have some way to check if you are improving. Competitions provide the ultimate reality check, but archers need to monitor their own progress in practice as well.

Scoring

Scoring can be done unofficially at any time by any archer. All archers have a score pad of some sort, and we would recommend that you buy one for yourself. Keep your own records, so you can see how you are doing.

Most archers will use a combination of full rounds and half rounds for monitoring scores. The most typical examples would be a full Portsmouth Round (60 arrows at a 60cm face) or a half Portsmouth (30 arrows at a 60cm face).

Handicaps

Shooting at different distances, and on different sized faces, makes it difficult to know whether your score one day at 20 yards on a 60cm face is better than your score at 30 metres on an 80cm face.

Archery has a method for dealing with this, which provides a rating of the archer.

Each round (distance, face and number of arrows) has a handicap table that levels everything out. You can use these tables to calculate the standard that you are shooting.

You overall handicap is calculated as the average of your best three handicap scores in competitions. As a beginner, you will start with the maximum handicap of 100. As you improve, this will reduce.

The Records officer (in Llantarnam, this is Keith Brown at present) is responsible for calculating your official handicap, using scores achieved in competitions. The records officer will be able to explain the system more, if you have questions. S/he will also provide you with a handicap sheet from time to time.

Handicaps can also be used in handicap competitions to level the playing field and give everyone an equal chance of winning. This uses an allowance (or head start) for each archer, so that the archer who shoots nearest their best, or better, will win.

Classifications

As you shoot in competitions, you can achieve a classification. These should not be confused with handicaps, and can be more difficult to improve.

Indoor classifications run from A to H, with A being the highest standard, plus Unclassified. You will all be Unclassified to begin with. Outdoor classifications run from Grand Master Bowman, Master Bowman, Bowman, First Class, Second Class, Third Class and Unclassified. You will all be Unclassified to begin with.

The transition to Outdoor

Outdoor Setup

When shooting outdoors, there is an extra consideration. Unlike indoor shooting, where everyone shoots the same distance, outdoor shooting uses multiple distances, depending upon age category, round and each archer's need for practice and "Sight Marks".

When shooting outdoor, the first thing that needs to be sorted is which targets/distances are required. This needs ALL archers to be there on time in order to tell the committee/senior members what they would like. It is not fair to arrive late and then jump onto a target set up for someone else, or to cause multiple lines and delay shooting for everyone else.

If you do arrive late then you should, after checking for free spaces, consider putting additional targets out, but always ask first as having too many targets out adds to the effort of putting away, and this is harder work outdoors.

Archers often want to shoot multiple distances outdoors, especially when getting sight marks for competitions. This requires co-operation and flexibility, and relies on sensible target choices at setup.

If you want to shoot on a new distance, you must first ask if there is space, or if an archer already shooting that distance is prepare to swap.

Counting Arrows/Missing Arrows

One of the most important things when shooting outdoors is to know how many arrows you have in your quiver.

It is easy to lose count when shooting 6 arrows, and it is also easier to miss outside when shooting longer distances.

ALL ARROWS MUST BE FOUND AND ACCOUNTED FOR.

As we share the field with the school, an arrow left on the field represents a significant safety issue. We may lose our field if arrows are later found on the field.

Every archer is responsible for knowing how many arrows they start a session with, and for ensuring that they have them all at the end of the session.

If you miss the target, you should try to find it when you next go to the targets to collect arrows. If you are unable to find it, **TELL THE CAPTAIN OF ARCHERS** and ask for help in finding it. The club possesses metal detectors and rakes to help, though Rob's nose is often the best method of finding them!

ALL ARCHERS are expected to help find arrows, especially at the end of a session if one is still missing.

Age appropriate rounds and how to get ready for them

There are set distances expected for each archer, dependent upon sex and age.

Most competitions outdoors require each archer to shoot either 3 or 4 distances, starting with the longest, and then moving closer for the others. For example, a Gents York Round requires the archer to shoot 72 arrows at 100 yards, then 48 arrows at 80 yards and finishing with 24 arrows at 60 yards.

When you first shoot outdoors, you will only have been shooting 20 yards indoors. You will need to gradually increase your shooting distance to be ready to shoot in competitions. The following tips may be useful

- Make sure that you can shoot consistently (not missing) at each distance before moving to the next one.
 - It takes time looking for missing arrows outdoors, but everyone has them. Just make sure that you are ready before moving
 - Don't be embarrassed about missing. You must make sure that all your arrows are found for safety reasons. We all miss!
- You will need to move your sight (obvious, but you would be surprised how many archers don't do this!). Ask for help when moving to a new distance. Someone will help you select a good starting sight mark to get you on the boss.
- Carefully record each Sight Mark – you will need them
- There is nothing to stop you entering competitions using rounds that do not match your appropriate maximum distances. You may not get any medals, and juniors shooting under-age will not normally be counted for prizes or certain awards, but this is still a good way to build up to your proper distances

Adult Gents will shoot competitions up to 100 yards or 90 metres

Adult Ladies will shoot competitions up to 80 yards or 70 metres

Juniors shoot age appropriate distances where the maximum is as follows

Age	Junior Gent	Junior Lady
U18	80y/70m	60y/60m
U16	60y/60m	50y/50m
U14	50y/50m	40y/40m
U12	40y/40m	30y/30m

Tournaments

When you enter, and how often, is entirely up to you. If you are more competitive, you will enter more competitions. However, you do not have to. If you just want to enjoy shooting in club, that is fine.

Entering your first tournament

We would recommend that you don't enter a competition until you are confident of getting all your arrows on the boss, at all distances (outdoors). There is effectively only one normal distance indoors – though FITA shoots 18m (=19.5 yards) and GNAS shoots 20 yards). However, you do not have to be good to enter, you only need to be good to win!

Some major competitions can be daunting if you are not ready, but there are plenty of local competitions that are friendly and less pressured than, for example, the Welsh Indoor Championships of the Gwent Championships. Llandaff, St Kingsmark and our own two are good starting tournaments.

How and When to enter

Entering tournaments is your own responsibility. You can find tournaments listed in a number of places, including the Archery GB magazine (which you will all receive after joining, quarterly), on the Archery GB website (or links from it) or via other club members. The secretary and tournament officer will normally circulate details of local competitions. Just ask if you don't have these.

You need to enter, usually by post (though some on-line entries are available from more IT-savvy clubs) before the closing date, which is usually two weeks before the tournament.

You will need details of your bow type, age (if a junior), the round you wish to shoot, GNAS (Archery GB) Number etc. Juniors must be accompanied by an adult.

You will also need to decide typically if you wish to shoot the morning or afternoon detail (indoors).

If you have a disability or special needs that require the organiser to accommodate you, you should mention this on the entry form. Wheelchair and shooting stools are normally allocated a fixed position, so that the archer does not need to move them.

Rounds

Rounds vary depending upon competition.

Indoor rounds are normally

- Portsmouth 60 arrows at 20 yards on a 60cm face

- FITA 18 60 arrows at 18 metres on a 40cm face
- Worcester (rare) 60 arrows at 20 yards on a 40cm Worcester face
- FITA 25 (rare) 60 arrows at 25 metres on a 60cm face

Outdoor Rounds are too varied to list here, but you can find information on these on the Archery GB website or ask.

Most tournaments include Junior Rounds. Some outdoor tournaments include half-rounds that only start in the afternoon.

Tournament Format

- There is a dress code for shooting in competition, though this has been relaxed somewhat in recent years. GNAS dress is bottle green and/or white. Club colours are permitted, if registered. Llantarnam club colours are navy blue trousers/skirt with a white shirt or a Llantarnam Archery Club t-shirt. Many tournaments though now allow FITA dress code which only disallows untidy, khaki, combat clothing or jeans, with some restrictions on advertising.
- You will be expected to arrive and set up your equipment in good time, and normally being ready 30 minutes before the designated Assembly Time is recommended.
- Assembly is where the judges and the organiser gather archers to remind them of any rules and facilities
- You will normally be expected to register on arrival, so that the organiser knows you are there.
- A tournament will not wait for you if you are late.
- You will be expected to sign your scorecard before it is handed in
- Presentations and declaration of the results usually happen immediately after the shooting is completed, with a delay that varies from 30 minutes upwards, depending on the record status and the level of organisation/size of tournament

Tournament rules

Tournament rules vary, but the basics are usually the same

- Some competitions will also include an equipment inspection
 - Arrows must be marked on the shaft with your initials
 - Arrows must all have the same fletchings and nocks
 - Bows, arrows, finger tabs etc must all comply with the rules
- Timing and calls can vary, but the norm is now to use FITA timing
 - Two whistles will signal that the first line should approach the line (First Line)
 - You may nock an arrow, but you may NOT lift your bow (and definitely not draw it) until ...
 - One additional whistle after 10 seconds signals that you may commence shooting
 - You will have 2 minutes to shoot your three arrows (indoors) or 4 minutes to shoot your six arrows (outdoors)
 - After the time period is complete (or when all archers have finished shooting), two more whistles will signal that the second line may approach the line (Second Line)
 - You may nock an arrow, but you may NOT lift your bow (and definitely not draw it) until ...
 - One additional whistle after 10 seconds signals that you may commence shooting
 - You will have 2 minutes to shoot your three arrows (indoors) or 4 minutes to shoot your six arrows (outdoors)

- After the time period is complete, three whistles will signal that you may collect your arrows (All Gone)
- **When scoring in competition NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, EVER, EVER** (did I stress this enough?)
CHANGE Arrow values on a score sheet.
 - This can lead to disqualification for the archer.
 - If you observe that the scorer has done this for your score sheet, DO NOT SIGN it
 - **if a mistake is made recording arrow values, call a judge IMMEDIATELY** AND BEFORE any arrow is removed from the target
 - Always use a black or blue ink pen or biro to record scores.
 - **NEVER use a red pen** (only judges are allowed a red pen, for corrections)
 - **Pencils are NOT permitted** (as scores can be erased and changed)
 - Changes to additions are OK however