

## Why Offer Shooting Activities to Youths

Today, nearly 70 million Americans own firearms, and over half of U.S. households have at least one. Shooting is one of the world's most popular sports, with tens of thousands competing from local matches to the Olympics, ranked third in global participation behind only track and field and boxing. In the U.S., more than 20 million hunting licenses are issued annually, generating significant funding for wildlife conservation.

## What is Shooting

- Shooting is a skill sport—it builds responsibility, discipline, concentration, self-reliance, and self-esteem.
- Shooting is a participation sport—youth and adults alike can actively take part, including those with physical disabilities, who often compete alongside others.
- Shooting is a safe sport—with strict safety codes, injuries are so rare they aren't even tracked.
- Shooting is a lifetime sport—people of all ages can enjoy it, starting as young as eight or nine with lightweight air rifles.
- Shooting is an exciting sport—the challenge of hitting a target, improving skills, and competing with others makes every practice and match rewarding.

## 2025– 2026 American Legion Junior Three Position Air Rifle National Championships

### Important Dates

**September 1, 2025**– First round postal match competition target sales and registration opens.

**December 15, 2025**– First round postal match competition target set sales and registration closes.

**February 2, 2026**– Targets due to the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) – must be postmarked on or before Feb 2 to be eligible for scoring.

**February 16, 2026**– Second round postal match competition targets mailed out by the CMP.

**April 1, 2026**– Second round postal match competition ends. Targets due to the CMP – must be postmarked on or before April 1, to be eligible for scoring.

**July 21–25, 2026**– American Legion National Championship (Individual Tournament).

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### For More Information:

[www.michiganlegion.org/juniorshooting](http://www.michiganlegion.org/juniorshooting)

American Legion, Department of Michigan

Attn: Jr. Shooting Sports

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# Starting and Running a Junior Shooting Sports Program

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## 1. Define Your Goals- Here are some suggestions:

- Teach firearm safety and basic marksmanship.
- Introduce the shooting sports to the community.
- Support youth groups (Scouts, 4-H, Law Enforcement Explorers) in meeting program goals.
- Build leadership, discipline, sportsmanship, responsibility, and confidence in young people.

## 2. Identify Leadership

- Form a committee through your Post.
- Select a qualified leader/instructor with knowledge of safety and marksmanship.
- Recruit Post volunteers as assistant instructors (weekly sessions work well).
- Strongly recommended: at least one instructor complete a certification course.
- Remember: this is a program where all members can participate, regardless of age or ability.

## 3. Registration & Targets (JSSP 3-Position Air Rifle Championship)

- Registration opens Sept. 1.
- First Round: State Championships (Individual & Team).

## 3. Cont-

- Match Entry Fee: \$15 per shooter's set (6 targets).
- Targets ordered online: <https://register.legion.org/jssp-club-registration>.
- Clubs must be affiliated with American Legion JSSP and have a designated youth contact who has completed background check and risk management training (\$20).

## 4. Insurance Coverage

- Confirm liability insurance through your Post or hosting facility.
- If coverage is insufficient, purchase an additional rider or specific shooter's coverage.

## 5. Facilities

- Air gun ranges can be set up almost anywhere.
- Range requirements:
  - At least 10 meters (33 feet) deep.
  - 4 feet width per shooter.
  - Backstops/pellet traps and protective covering for walls.
- Equipment: safety glasses, pellets, target traps, rifles, mats, spotting scopes.

## 6. Equipment

- Recommended rifles: .177 caliber match-grade training rifles (e.g., Crossman).
- Pellets are widely available at sporting goods stores.

## 7. Funding

- Use Post youth funds or charge a registration/club fee.
- Have participants purchase their own pellets/targets.
- Seek donations from local businesses, shooting clubs, and community leaders.
- Dedicate proceeds from Post fundraisers (fish fries, dinners, etc.).
- Consider hosting an adult match with entry fees supporting the youth club.

## 8. Promoting the Program

- Audience priorities: youth, parents, community leaders, and the public.
- Outreach tools:
  - Posters at schools, items in school newspapers.
  - Articles in local papers, radio ads.
  - Presentations to civic groups.
  - Letters to businesses for sponsorship.

## 9. Recruiting Participants

- Partner with youth groups: Scouts, 4-H, Police Athletic Leagues, SAL Squadrons.
- Connect with local high school JROTC programs, which often include shooting sports.
- Stress that gun safety is the foundation, and that shooting complements other youth activities.

## 10. Optional Enhancements

- Consider affiliating with the CMP Junior Club for additional training opportunities.
- Explore the CMP Junior Olympic Shooting Program (JOSP) for advanced competition and growth.