

NFAS Course Laying Guide

Reviewers

Review period

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General Secretary

Field Officer

3 years

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Preface

This has been written as a guide and is not meant as definitive. Each woodland is different to the next and should be viewed with its layout and conditions in mind. The points set out below should help to lay a safe and interesting course in any woodland.

Risk assessments

No course should be laid without due completion of a risk assessment and consideration to the rules in the NFAS Shooter Handbook (rulebook), which takes precedence. All risk assessments must be reviewed regularly, particularly after any changes.

Ground Preparation

There must be a thorough preparation of the course, identifying any trees that are 'hung up' or need removing, and identifying potential dead wood that may fall. Persons should be suitably trained or seek assistance from a competent person.

Steps to laying a course

Start with a map of the wood and shooting area and plan where catering, admin, first aid facilities, car park and camping (if applicable) will be placed. Identify the entrance and exit routes.



Work out the direction that the wood will be shot in.

Unless there will be a total stop for lunch, try to plan the course to go through the catering point and toilets at least twice. This makes a more comfortable day for the archer, who will not need to carry everything all day (drinks/food etc).

Walk around the woods looking out for interesting shots and mark them on the map, for example dips, gullies, long tracks, buildings, banking etc. At this point the type and size of the target need not be decided. Mark the course out on the map.

Once the map is drafted, return to the woods and assess it. Mark each end of the shot, flags on canes give a good visual aid. This gives an idea of the type and size of target that can be used. The peg and target position can be adjusted at the next stage.




Points to remember

- a. The shot must be hittable, see rule 27 of *Rules about Course Laying* in the NFAS Shooting Handbook. If you add an extremely long shot, remember to add to the risk assessment.
- b. The red, white and blue peg can be in any order but normally the red peg is the most difficult and usually the longest shot. The white and blue pegs are also shot by juniors.
- c. The yellow and orange pegs need to be in range to the lowest powered bows and age group and far enough away to avoid bounce backs.
- d. What happens if the arrow misses the target?
 -  Where will the arrow end up?
 -  Can the overshoot area be seen from the red peg?
- e. How does the group move away after the shot? Try to avoid exiting the shot 'behind' the target as this is still the overshoot area.
- f. How does the group arrive at the next shot?

Now is the time to find the definitive shot. Set the chosen target and place the peg positions. This is preferably done with 2 or more people so that opinions and perception of the shot and the safety of the shot is considered. If a wasp peg is used, think how to make best use of it – perhaps to find a difficult window to challenge compound archers rather than simply consider distance of the shot. Check that the target can be seen and there is sufficient room around the pegs for all bow styles, left/right-handed people and people of all heights. Look up and look down - a rock or log low in front of the peg area can be a problem for those with longer bows or shorter legs.

From the target find a safe path to the next shot. The map should show roughly where the next target pegs will be, so aim for that point in as straight and clear a line as possible. Clearly mark the path, which must be visible in all weathers. If using barrier tape, consider using one colour and pattern for the path and another for hazards. It is important that the path leading to the next target does not walk archers between the peg and the next target, otherwise there is a risk of one group walking into another groups shooting line.

Once the first shot has been placed and path created to the next shot, there are other factors to consider in placing the next targets:

-  Overshoot from the previous target
-  Overshoot of the following target
-  Ensuring the path is in the safest possible place

When setting 3Ds or placing a shot around or in an obstruction (such as a tree) think about the possible distance of a ricochet from a powerful bow.

Do not fan the pegs – see rule 28 of the NFAS Shooting Handbook (rulebook). Pegs should be positioned in as straight a line as possible to the target to maximise the effectiveness of backstops and overshoots and reduce the risk of damage to arrows.

Depending on the design and shape of the course, check for overshoots from other parts of the course if in a loop or 'U' shape.

The rest of the course is a repeat of the previous stages. When the whole course is set, other club members should walk the whole course and to identify any issues that may become apparent. This may be the ease of finding the next target or overshoot concerns.

There is a 'Course/Shoot Checklist' document in the downloads section of the NFAS website that will help.

If there are any questions about the safety or suitability of a shot, then it must be changed.

Test shoot the course with ideally three groups of people following each other so that each three targets in turn can be assessed from the target behind and the target in front. Wave and shout to each other in order for the shooting line to be checked. If there are any problems, change it. If there are no problems, the course is ready to be shot by visiting archers.

Other considerations:

If the wood has a public footpath (or one the public may use), clear warning signs must be put out to ensure the public are warned of the dangers of entering this area.

If the wood has a road running along an edge, make sure targets are not pointed towards it.

Remember where the car park is to be situated and avoid shooting in that direction.

It is not advisable for an archer who shoots one discipline only to lay a course without help from other styles. For example, an AFB archer may consider trees and ditches as part of the challenge whereas a compound archer may set each target at a distance leaving no trajectory for less powered bows. Work together for a course to challenge all archers.

Course laying in the summer can be deceptive with high foliage. Make sure that the shot can be seen and the next target found.

Consider which starting pegs would be most appropriate to those very competent and enthusiastic archers who are less mobile. Thinking of this will reduce delays and receive appreciation from those concerned.

Make it clear where the smoking/vaping areas are so that there are no mistakes, arguments or fires.

Safety

The club safety officer should have final say in the course layout, if there is any doubt at all, change the shot. The NFAS Safety Officer is available for advice if required.

All and any near misses and incidents must be reported to the NFAS Safety Officer in order for all to learn from situations.

Additional resources:

- D001 Club handbook
 - RA001 Blank risk assessment
 - RA002 Open shoot (before and after shoot starts)
 - RA003 Practice in woodland using NFAS approved equipment
 - RA004 Using machinery and maintaining field courses
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