

NFAA Field archery has its roots in the "roving" of the 16th century and what many today call stump shooting. It was developed in California in the post WWII years and the National Field Archery Association started in 1947. Its founders were hunting archers who wanted a more organized way of practicing and competing.

A full field round is 28 targets, while the more common layout of 14 targets is referred to as a "unit". Many courses limited by size to 14 targets just repeat the original 14 to make a 28 target round. Targets (except animal targets) are 20cm, 35cm, 50cm and 65cm and are varied according to distance, i.e. small targets at the closest distances and large at the longest. The two round target types are both scored 5, 4 & 3. This is the new scoring system adopted in 1977 and prompted by the growing popularity of the compound bow. Prior to that the scoring was simply 5 & 3, with the small dot in the middle used only as an aiming point. It is now the 5-ring and what was the rest of the 5-ring has become the 4-ring. Animal targets are two dimensional pictures of animals marked with two scoring areas, a kill zone and the rest of the body. Legs, feet, ears, tails and antlers or horns are not scored. More on scoring the animal round later.

There are three different field rounds, all of them shot in state, regional and national championships. What is known as the Field Round is shot on the black, white and black targets. The Hunter Round uses a mostly black target with only the aiming point (the 5-ring) in contrasting white. Target sizes are the same for both Field and Hunter rounds although distances differ. Field and Hunter rounds call for four arrows to be shot at each target. The animal round differs in that three numbered arrows are used and the first "scoring" arrow is all that's needed. If, after three shots, no arrow has earned any points the target is scored as zero.

The Field round is always in 5 yard increments except for the smallest targets (20cm) which are shot at 20, 25, 30 & 35 feet. The longest shot in the Field round is 80 yards and it is part of what's called a "walk-up" target. Walk-ups have four shooting positions, moving progressively closer to the target and one arrow is shot from each. The Field round also has "fan" targets in which the shooting distance is the same but there are four

shooting positions located in a fan shape, so each shot is from a different angle.

The Hunter round has targets at odd distances (not always multiples of 5) and has more varied shooting positions than the Field round. There are more walk-ups, including some with only two shooting positions. Two arrows are shot from the first, then two more from the second, closer marker. There are also more fan targets than on the Field round. The longest shot on the Hunter round is 70 yards, again part of a walk-up and the shortest is on the 20cm targets at 11 yards.

On the Animal round, the 3 arrows can be fired from one position or sometimes there will be three shooting positions making it a walk-up. The number one arrow is fired first. If it hits the "kill" zone it is worth 20 points. If it hits the "body" it is worth 18 points. If the first arrow is a miss the number two arrow is fired. A kill with #2 is worth 16 and a body is worth 14. If the number three arrow is needed a kill is worth 12 and a body hit is worth 10. Distances for the Animal round are mostly odd yardages the maximum range is 60 yards.

The possible for a 28 target round is 560 (280 if only 14 targets are shot). Maximum score for any target is 20 points. Recently, because of the extreme accuracy capable with compounds, an extra scoring spot has been added to the Animal round targets so 21 points/target are possible if the "spot" is hit.

In the 1960s and into the 1970s field archery was the most popular form of competitive archery practiced in the US. Nearly every town or community had a field archery range. Turn out for major tournaments was measured in the thousands. It was a family sport with husbands, wives, kids even grandparents all showing up to shoot on a weekend. Field archery was started by "traditional" recurve and longbow shooters, largely shooting without sights in the early days. When sights came along two basic classes were formed, barebow and freestyle. There was a handicap system so that people competed with those shooting similar scores.

In our modern era, what remains of Field archery has eight

shooting styles, based on minor equipment variations. Some feel this proliferation of styles, making awards complicated and expensive, is what killed off field archery. Others think 3D is responsible for its demise. Whatever it was, field archery is no longer the popular sport it once was, although it is as great a game as ever.

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