



Coaching Philosophy

Coaching youth shotgun shooters is fundamentally no different from coaching any other youth athlete. Competitive shotgun shooting, like all dynamic sports, demands strong hand-eye coordination, refined technique, sound fundamentals, precise execution, and a disciplined mental game. As a result, effective shotgun coaching today looks far more like modern athletic coaching than the way many of us were originally taught to shoot—and that is a good thing for the athlete, the coach, and the long-term health of the sport. This shift makes coaching more accessible than ever. You do not need to be a gun-club champion to develop successful young shooters; far more important is having the right philosophy, mindset, information, and commitment to athlete-centered development. Below are the elements we center our coaching around.

1. Build a Growth-Centered Environment

Praise effort, preparation, and improvement - not talent or outcomes

Normalize struggle; emphasize and embrace the journey

Reinforce that skills are trained, not inherited

2. Emphasize Deep Practice

Break skills into small, precise chunks

Slow practice down to control the difficulty

Repeat with full attention, not mindless reps

Practice at the edge of current ability, where mistakes are discovered

3. Remove the Fear of Failure by Making Mistakes Valuable

Mistakes are information, not failure (ask: “What did that miss tell us?”)

Encourage immediate correction and retry (within 4 seconds)

4. Coach with Clear, Short Feedback (One-Sentence Rule)

Use brief, specific cues. (“eyes,” “feet,” “hold point,” “front edge,” etc)

Address one thing at a time (per drill or practice)

Give the athletes room and time to self-correct when possible

Feedback should focus on pre-shot corrections rather than actions to take after “Pull”

5. Focus on Process over Results

Measure success by execution quality, consistency, and decision-making

Highlight trends and consistency, not single outcomes or scores

Fundamentals are never wasted training time (70-80% of practice time)

6. Create Productive Struggle

Design drills that are challenging but achievable (60-80% target success)

Increase difficulty gradually (ex. Same drill but with tighter chokes)

Guard against frustration by stepping back - it's counterproductive to growth

7. Model the Attitude, Mindset, and Behaviors You Seek

Admit mistakes openly

Show curiosity instead of frustration ("Let's see what happens when we adjust X")

Stay calm - there is really very little to get worked up over

8. Use Purposeful Repetition

Repeat skills with intentional variation

Reset between reps to avoid autopilot training/reps

Encourage visualizations before execution

Reinforce correct movements immediately

9. Deliberately Train Mindset and Pressure

Incorporate visualization regularly and often - its not something that people do naturally

Add small pressure to well practiced targets ("Can you break X times in a row?")

Process/fundamentals changing under pressure tell you how well they are trained

10. Be Patient but Relentless

Prioritize long term development over short term results

Maintain consistent standards — no short cuts

Trust the process - even when they may lose confidence because of uneven progress

Broken targets come from an environment where athletes believe skills are built, practice at the edge of their ability, learn from mistakes, and are judged by effort and commitment to process.

