

About the program

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program teaches youth rifle safety and procedure and lets children participate in an Olympic skill sport while fostering healthy competition. All interested youth under 18 years old (or high school seniors no older than 20) are welcome, regardless of gender or physical ability.

Shooters are trained to use a .177 air rifle, and levels vary from beginners learning safety basics to winners of the Legion-affiliated National Championship, which consists of regional champs competing in a shoulder-to-shoulder match.



"One thing I always tell young people when they are involved in the shooting sports is to enjoy what they are doing. Remember that one reason you are participating in this sport is because you enjoy the sport and have a passion for it. It is very difficult to be great at something that you do not enjoy doing."

Jamie Corkish, 2012 Olympic gold medalist and winner of The American Legion's 2002 Junior Rifle Precision National Championship

Resources

The American Legion embodies strong American values and forms a grassroots force dedicated to love of country and commitment to veterans, their families, their communities and young people.

For more information on Junior Shooting Sports, email juniors shooting@legion.org, visit www.legion.org/shooting or contact your department chairperson. For additional information, contact:

Civilian Marksmanship Program

888-267-0796

www.odcmp.org

National Rifle Association

800-621-7615

programs.nra.org

National Safety Council

800-621-7615

www.nsc.org

USA Shooting

719-578-4670

www.usashooting.com



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To contribute to one of The American Legion's programs that helps veterans, youths and others, please visit www.legion.org/donate.



THE AMERICAN LEGION JR. SHOOTING SPORTS JOIN A CLUB



Artwork # 234ACY0715

Stock# 22-010



Learn about rifle safety, compete in marksmanship contests

Who Can Participate?

In shooting sports, you don't have to sit on the sidelines: Anyone under 18 (or high school seniors no older than 20) can participate. Physical ability and size are no match for mental toughness and discipline in this co-ed skill sport.

Why Shooting Sports?

After demonstrating knowledge of safety techniques, you will join the centuries of Americans who have mastered marksmanship for survival and sport. But the appeal doesn't stop at our nation's borders — the best shooters from around the globe vie for Olympic gold. In fact, 2002 American Legion Three-Position National Champion Jamie Corkish won a gold medal at the 2012 Olympics.

As you become a better shooter, you'll gain responsibility, confidence and self-reliance. To hit your mark, you will also have to improve your ability to concentrate. Plus, you'll develop a skill you can enjoy and hone throughout your life.

What Will We Do?

You'll practice and study with your Legion-affiliated club, but get to compete as an individual.

Beginner: Safety First

All participants start with rifle safety and fundamentals.

The Legion prides itself on safety. There has never been a rifle-related injury in Junior Shooting Sports Program history. You'll learn the right way to handle, load, aim and fire a rifle.

The student handbook is available under the Resources tab of the Legion's Junior Shooting Sports Program website, www.legion.org/shooting.

Intermediate: Build Skills

Once you have mastered the basics, you can take air rifle courses from the National Rifle Association or the Civilian Marksmanship Program through your club. These will help you develop your skills, set personal goals and work to achieve established performance standards.

Advanced: Compete With Others

Your club may hold competitions among its own members, or it may host or attend regional matches.

The two basic kinds of competitions are postal and shoulder-to-shoulder. In a postal match, you and fellow participants shoot at targets and then mail them off to be scored. Shoulder-to-shoulder matches are in-person and scored in real-time.

The American Legion Junior Three-Position Air Rifle Tournament begins with state and regional postal matches. The top shooters from that round participate in a qualifying round, which is also a postal match. The best 30 junior shooters from across the country earn an expense-paid opportunity to contend for the National Championship in Colorado Springs, Colo. In the same facility where Olympians train, those junior shooters will compete in a shoulder-to-shoulder match for the title.

How Much Does It Cost?

Some American Legion posts lend participants gear, including rifles, or some equipment. Many charge a registration fee to cover these costs and the cost of the practice facility.

Often students are required to provide their own pellets and targets.

Contact your local post for detailed information.

When Can I Start?

If your local Legion post supports a Junior Shooting Sports Program, contact them directly to check on practice dates and course schedules.

If you have questions, contact juniors shooting@legion.org.