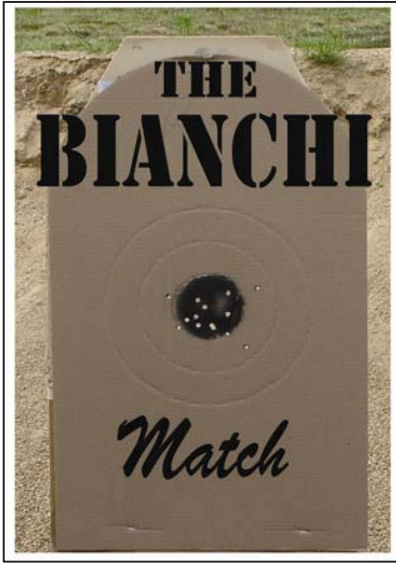


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The Bianchi Cup was first introduced in America in 1979 as a handgun match by John Bianchi and Ray Chapman and was first shot at the Chapman Academy Ranges, outside Columbia, Missouri. It is made up of 4 different matches being the Mover, Plates, Barricade and Practical match. Each match requires 48 rounds to complete for a total round count of 192 and a possible 1920 points. When a Moving target is not available, it is replaced by the Los Alamos match. To shoot well in this competition you must have the right balance of speed and accuracy as each match has its own techniques to master.

At first some of the timings for the Bianchi matches may seem a bit quick for the novice shooter but it really isn't that hard once you've mastered the basics. The start position in the Bianchi for GRCF & GRSB rifles is loaded and held in both hands parallel to the ground, pointing at the target array at waist height. For good safety, fingers should not be placed on the trigger. For LBR's & LBP's the gun is loaded and holstered with both hands held up above shoulder height.



The Rifle ready position. At the closer distances, the second target you will engage is the important one so make sure you line yourself up so that your body points naturally towards it. If you are pushed for time you do not want to try to shoot quickly whilst your body is twisted slightly as this will usually lead to snatching and pulling your shots downwards.



The LBR & LBP ready position

Probably one of the two main problems new shooters face when learning to shoot the Bianchi is the initial target acquisition. If it takes you 3 or 4 seconds to bring the rifle up into the correct aiming position, you will certainly be taking a lot of ammunition home with you after the match! To "draw" any firearm quickly up into the correct aim you just need to work on your eye/hand co-ordination and muscle memory practice. The important thing to remember before you start shooting each match is that everything must be lined up, and every action must be performed consistently, every time you shoot! To do this, practice using a single target and line yourself up properly so that when you bring the rifle up into the aim, it points naturally at the centre of the target. Once this position is achieved, do not move your feet and keep your head still! Keep your eyes focused on the centre of the target and your body upright then slowly lower the rifle down into the "ready" position. You then simply push the rifle forwards slightly and upwards in an arc so that the

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butt does not catch on your clothing, and bring it back up into the shoulder. Practice this slowly at first time and time again, making slight adjustments as you go along so that the scope lines up with the centre of the target every time. Once you have developed a smooth and consistent technique, your speed will increase naturally. Trying for speed first however will simply not work!

The other main problem encountered by novice Bianchi shooters competing with an underlever is not getting the required number of shots off onto the targets within the allocated time. This is usually down to bringing the thumb back over the top strap every time the action is racked, before pulling the trigger. Keeping the thumb up or cupped against the forefinger will help you shoot quicker, and a lot smoother whichever match you are shooting. It always makes me smile when people turn up on the line with their newly installed cocking lever on the hammer, then proceed to make a complete hash of it because it then gets caught up with their thumbs when they try to work the action quickly. They tell me that it makes cocking the hammer easier with their thumb. It may well do, but my Marlin cocks the hammer back every time I rack the lever....

Here are the courses of fire for the individual Bianchi matches with a few ideas to think about when shooting each one!

The Mover match – The target will move 60ft between 2 large screens in 6 seconds with the top of the target set at 6ft. At 10 & 15m you must fire 6 shots at the target on every pass then only 3 shots on each pass (shot twice) at 20 & 25m. The course of fire is:

10m 6 shots, target moving right to left in 6 sec

10m 6 shots target moving left to right in 6 sec

15m 6 shots, target moving right to left in 6 sec

15m 6 shots target moving left to right in 6 sec

20m 3 shots, target moving right to left in 6 sec

20m 3 shots target moving left to right in 6 sec

20m 3 shots, target moving right to left in 6 sec

20m 3 shots target moving left to right in 6 sec

25m 3 shots, target moving right to left in 6 sec

25m 3 shots target moving left to right in 6 sec

25m 3 shots, target moving right to left in 6 sec

25m 3 shots target moving left to right in 6 sec



Note the foot positioning! Body twisted slightly to the right to acquire the target, the body will then naturally unwind allowing the smooth tracking of the target as it travels to the left.



The moving target is definitely the hardest Bianchi match to shoot as you have to shoot quite quickly and keep the rifle moving steadily as you shoot. If you haven't got a mover base fitted to your rifle, you will also have to aim in front of the target at various points in order to give the correct amount of "lead" necessary to hit the centre of the target. Basically, if you aim at the middle of a moving target and

Mover bases offset the scope alignment allowing you to aim at the centre of the target but aren't cheap. Expect a UK one to cost around £120.

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release the trigger, the bullet will travel in a straight line but it will strike the target behind the point of aim as the target has moved x amount of inches or feet forward during the time it has taken the bullet to reach it. As an idea how far in front you will have to aim here is a small chart to help you. Chronograph your ammunition to find the Feet Per Second velocity then apply the relative lead needed. Marking aiming points on a target and keeping this with you on the range will help you remember where to aim at each distance.

FPS	10m	15m	20m	25m
750	4.80"	7.20"	9.60"	12.00"
850	4.24"	6.35"	8.47"	10.59"
950	3.79"	5.68"	7.58"	9.47"
1050	3.43"	5.14"	6.86"	8.57"
1150	3.13"	4.70"	6.26"	7.83"

When shooting the Mover it is important that you line yourself up so that you are naturally pointing at the target over the last 20ft of its travel before it disappears again behind the screen. Then keeping your feet fixed in position, rotate your upper body so that you are in the ready position facing where the target will appear from. As you are shooting your body will naturally "unwind" smoothly as you track the target across the range. It is vital that you get the first couple of shots off as early as possible especially if shooting with an underlever or the target will disappear again before you have shot the required number of rounds. Make sure you are standing within the confines of the shooting box marked out on the ground and once you start shooting, try to maintain a good rhythm (i.e. rack fast, squeeze slow) and don't stop the gun moving at any time! If using a telescopic sight don't be tempted to turn the magnification up too high if shooting a lever action or you'll be in trouble, either trying to find the target initially or after every racking action. You should also remember to re-focus it at each distance by aiming at the ground at the half way point.

The Plates match - Six falling steel plates are mounted on a frame and are painted white so that they stand out against any backdrop. The plates for Full Bore (pistol calibre in .357, .44 etc) are 8" in diameter while the Small Bore (rimfire .22) plates are 4" in diameter. The plates for both calibres are spaced 20" centre to centre and are approximately 4ft from the ground to the base of the plate. Due to range restrictions on some ranges, paper targets may have to be used instead.



The course of fire is:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 10m 1 shot at each plate in 6 sec (shot twice) | 15m 1 shot at each plate in 7 sec (shot twice) |
| 20m 1 shot at each plate in 8 sec (shot twice) | 25m 1 shot at each plate in 9 sec (shot twice) |

Shooting the plates can be broken down into two techniques which are scanning and deliberate shots. Scanning is basically keeping the gun moving continuously across the target frame as you shoot. It probably sounds harder than it is but it's really down to timing. The key is to keep the gun moving at a

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constant speed, then as the sight moves over the leading edge of each plate, you release the shot. Practice this technique slowly at first and just concentrate on hitting the target, every time and you will soon learn to shoot all types of plates a lot faster this way. Deliberate shots are when a shooter stops the gun on each plate, aims then shoots. This is usually how people shoot the underlever rifles due to the racking action needed in between each shot. It is slightly slower but you must choose the way that works best for you. As with the mover, try to line your body up with the end targets as this should help you snatch less towards the end of each run. Make sure you only fire one shot at each plate otherwise you will incur a penalty and that your foot is behind, and not touching the firing line!

The Barricade match – Two targets are placed 7ft centre to centre with the top of the targets set at 6ft from the ground. The barricade frame is made from 2in angle iron and is faced with wood and the height is 6ft with a width of 2ft. At the bottom of the frame is a base measuring 2ft wide by 3ft deep. The shooters' feet must remain within the confines of this area whilst shooting from each side of the barricade. The course of fire is:

You may choose which side to start with at each distance.

10m 6 shots in 6 sec from one side of the barricade

10m 6 shots in 6 sec from the other side of the barricade

15m 6 shots in 7 sec from one side of the barricade

15m 6 shots in 7 sec from the other side of the barricade

25m 6 shots in 8 sec from one side of the barricade

25m 6 shots in 8 sec from the other side of the barricade

35m 6 shots in 9 sec from one side of the barricade

35m 6 shots in 9 sec from the other side of the barricade



You can stand on the frame of the barricade but no part of your feet or body may touch the ground.

The Barricade match is a hard match to shoot properly if you don't have a good technique to start with. To shoot well I would recommend securing the barrel (if possible) against the side of the barricade using a grip that suits you best. I would also recommend holding the rifle in your strong shoulder throughout the match if possible. You can shoot it using the weak shoulder but very few shooters do as it takes a lot of time and practice to get it right. If your club doesn't have one or you can't make a barricade to practice with you can always use an old door just to get the idea. Once you have worked out which hold works best for you, you will need to attain a stance and foot position within the shooting box that allows you to bring the rifle quickly up into the aim. Leaning out to the side slightly will make it easier for you to see the targets turning, as well as lining up your rifle more squarely onto the target.

Here are some examples of the holds you may want to try to which one suits best.

Note the open grip ready to clamp straight onto the side of the barricade.



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Shooting on the left side of the barricade, place the left index finger over the top of the barrel with the thumb and remaining fingers underneath the magazine tube. Cup the hand around the frame of the barricade so that the barrel rests tightly against it and the fingers grip the leading edge of the angle iron. This is a very secure hold if you can achieve it.

For those who cannot reach forward enough to grip the barrel, try holding the fore end tightly between the thumb and fore finger with the left hand, in a comfortable position. Then, resting the fore end against the side of the barricade, use the remaining 3 fingers to grip around the front edge of the angle iron locking everything into place.



A firm grip and leaning in with your right shoulder will give you a very stable shooting position.

For a right handed shooter shooting on the right side of the barricade is usually referred to as the weak side.



Grip the barrel and/or stock with a fist type hold and angle the wrist so that the largest possible area of the hand contacts the wooden face and pull the rifle in towards the side of the barricade.

With the thumb gripping underneath the magazine tube/barrel, place the hand and remaining fingers as flat as possible against the barricade. Make sure your fingers do not get in the way of the scope.



If you cannot adopt any of the suggested holds try simply resting the side of your hand or arm against the barricade.

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This works best for me as I can still lean into the stock with my shoulder whilst pulling the rifle into the side of the barricade with my thumb.

Start with your hands flat against the barricade when using an LBR or LBP.



Grip the barrel in the same way as a rifle but make sure that you pull your left forearm inwards and lock the grip/trigger hand against it will give you a very stable hold! You can also use this method by drawing the gun with your strong hand and then transferring it to your weak hand to shoot on the right side of the barricade.

You may find it easier to rest the back of your hand against the side and use your thumb for support. Or try using a fist type hold on the barrel if you are using optics as this also works for some people.



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After the appropriate commands have been given by the Range Officer, this is the routine I go through when preparing to shoot the barricade match. I always step into the shooting box with at least 14 loose rounds inside my right pocket and then set the range and adjust the focus on my scope. I always load with 8 rounds during a Bianchi match just in case of any jams or racking errors. Remember to count your shots though or you'll get penalised. Next I test and adjust my stance and hold on the barricade then load and make ready with rounds from my pocket so that I do not change my foot position. I then bring the rifle back up onto the barricade to take a final sight picture on the centre of the target. Keeping my head still and focusing purely on the target centre, I then open my fingers just wide enough to release my hold from the frame and keep this hand shape as I lower the rifle into the ready position. It is very important to keep the hand open in this way to ensure the correct shooting position is attained every time you come up onto the target!

As you only have 6 seconds for 6 shots at 10m I tend to take a little more time (maybe 2 to 3 seconds) to make sure that my grip is firm and that I am applying as much pressure as possible onto the recoil pad with my shoulder to help keep the rifle as steady as possible during the racking operation. Then, keeping my thumb up out of the way, I rack the lever fast and catch the trigger right at the end of the upsweep just as the action is closing to release each shot. This enables me to shoot very quickly yet still keep the shots within the X ring. At 15, 25 and 35m I try to release a shot per second racking fast but squeezing the trigger properly, making sure that I am a little quicker attaining my hold position. Settling into a good rhythm whilst making slight adjustments in between each shot should ensure that I keep my shots around the centre of the target.



Whilst certainly not essential on a rimfire rifle, a barricade wing will certainly help you when shooting with a lever action. Whether you have access to machines or just hand tools you can easily make your own barricade wing. The Marlin one fits over the magazine tube and can be locked up with a grub screw or even a bit of tape. For the rimfire one I just squared off the front of the fore end and screwed it on. Simple and effective!



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The Practical match – Two targets are placed 4½ft centre to centre with the top of the targets set at 6ft from the ground. The course of fire is:

(Positions are Standing unsupported unless otherwise stated)

10m 1 shot on each target in 3 sec

10m 2 shots on each target in 4 sec

10m 3 shots on each target in 8 sec - GRCSF/GRSB Weak Shoulder & LBR/LBP Weak Hand freestyle (the weak hand must hold the grip and pull the trigger but the other hand may be used for support)

15m 1 shot on each target in 4 sec

15m 2 shots on each target in 5 sec

15m 3 shots on each target in 6 sec

25m 1 shot on each target in 5 sec

25m 2 shots on each target in 6 sec

25m 3 shots on each target in 7 sec

50m 1 shot on each target in 7 sec

50m 2 shots on each target in 10 sec

50m 3 shots on each target in 15 sec



*You are permitted on some ranges to shoot from a kneeling position at 25m and kneeling or sitting at 50m. LBR/LBP shooters **Only** may also have the option of shooting from the prone position at some distances but again this depends on the range rules at each venue*

As long as you have practiced your “drawing” and sight acquisition the Practical match is pretty straight forwards really although to shoot a good Practical match you must have good timing so make sure you get plenty of practice in with a timer or turning targets. You must also make sure that you rack the action fast but squeeze the trigger properly so that you shoot as accurately as possible and make sure you line up your body with the target you are going to finish shooting on. Throughout the match at each distance you must put 1, 2 then 3 shots on each target within a time limit. When shooting the 3 shots on each target using a weak shoulder hold at 10m make sure that you pull the rifle securely into your shoulder with your right hand and keep your thumb up out of the way so that you can rack the lever smoothly. This will certainly help you stay on the target easier. If you plan on using a kneeling position at 25m make sure that you have practiced it first but I wouldn’t really recommend it as the time is tight and kneeling at this distance won’t really give most people any better accuracy. At 50m however you generally have more time so it may be of benefit to try a kneeling or sitting position, but make sure you test the results first in practice before committing yourself to try it in a competition. If not, you may well end up having a disaster on the day!

If the moving target isn’t available then the **Los Alamitos** match is usually shot instead. This time there are 3 targets which must be shot and the course of fire is as follows:

7m Stage 1 - 2 shots on the centre target in 3 sec

2 shots on the Right target in 3 sec

2 shots on the Left target in 3 sec

7m Stage 2 - 2 shots on each target in 5 sec (any order)

7m Stage 3 - 2 shots on each target in 6 sec (any order)

7m Stage 4 - 2 shots on each target in 10 sec (any order)



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10m Stage 5 - 2 shots on each target, reload, then 2 shots on each target in weak shoulder/hand in 18 sec

25m Stage 6 - 2 shots on each target from the Right side of the barricade in 10 sec then 2 shots on each target from the Left side of the barricade in 10 sec

I think I have only ever shot the Los Alamos three times with a Gallery Rifle and it's a great match to shoot, even though there is absolutely no margin for error time wise. It would certainly be a valued addition if it was incorporated into the 'normal' Bianchi match even if the scores never counted as it's that much fun to shoot.

The first 3 stages are purely double taps and fast initial target acquisition is critical if you want to score well. After these stage 4's 6 shots in 10 seconds on each of the 3 targets seems like a stroll in the park. On stage 5, you are usually allowed an initial load of 10 rounds leaving just 2 rounds to reload before changing over to the weak shoulder shooting. On stage 6 I would recommend shooting both sides of the barricade with the rifle in the strong shoulder and engage the furthest target away from you to start with, making it easier to line up with the other targets as the time runs out.



Mattersey have dedicated ranges for all of the Bianchi matches plus probably every other Gallery Rifle competition that is shot. This is their Los Alamos set up!