



Technical Bulletin - Bring on The Outdoor Season

By Tom Hinojosa, Level 4-NTS Coach

Each year around this time we all turn our attention to the fast-approaching outdoor archery season. Now that the excitement of the Indoor Nationals Final is completed and most other indoor events have been held, it is time to prepare for competing outdoors. In a previous High Performance Newsletter (April 3, 2017), Coach Linda Beck provided some pro tips for your transition from indoor to outdoor. Those tips are worth revisiting. They include:

- **Tuning:** As you move from indoor to outdoor distances, chances are you will be switching to your smaller diameter "outdoor" arrows. You may even be choosing to go to a higher draw weight. Be sure to take the time to do a proper tuning for your outdoor arrows, adjusting your nocking point and setting your sight. Your shot has likely changed since last year and fresh tuning is needed for optimal equipment performance. The Easton Tuning Guide is a good resource and can be downloaded from eastonarchery.org and several other online sources. The guide addresses both recurve and compound bows. You can find tips for tuning for barebow at the [Texas State Archery Associate website](http://texasstatearchery.org).
- **Arrow Selection:** If you shot large diameter arrows indoors, you will want to shift to smaller diameter arrows for outdoors. Make sure you are shooting correct spine at long distances to attain optimal arrow flight, good groups and high scores. Check the arrow manufacturer's arrow spine chart you can find online and possibly verify your arrow selection with your knowledgeable local archery shop technician.
- **Skills Training:** Practice your aiming off skills indoors so you are prepared for aiming off in the wind outdoors.
- **Setting Your Sight:** If you can't move your sight down far enough for the distance you need to shoot, moving the aperture of sight closer to you will enable you to move sight down further. In extreme cases, recurve archers can put the sight on backwards with the sight on face side of bow.

Along with those important tips, remember to hone your mental game for the great outdoors. The conditions you will be shooting in at outdoor events are often unpredictable and change over the course of the tournament. You need to be ready to deal with whatever comes your way. Additionally, there are likely to be more distractions than what you typically deal with competing indoors. To be prepared, be sure to include these components to your regular training sessions which are always helpful but especially important for the outdoor season:

- **Awareness/Mindfulness** - It all starts with how you typically approach your world. Daily habits shape your life and influence your ability to skillfully implement high performance strategies as needed. How aware are you at any given moment of what your brain is actually thinking about? A simple exercise to increase awareness is called, Notice Three Things. Throughout your day, pause for a moment and notice three things you can see. Listen carefully and notice three things you can hear. Notice three things you can feel in contact with your body like, your watch or your shirt on your back or the ground or floor beneath you. Then try doing them all at once.
- **Focus Training:** Your conscious mind wants to constantly be active as you go through each day. Thinking about what's going on, what happened earlier, and what may happen later (like, eating) are normally good things, but not while you are competing. Focus involves how you are casting your attention at any given moment. You must be totally present and focused on what you are doing right now as you get set for each shot, begin your shot cycle, and provide feedback to your brain after each shot. You can practice being focused on what you are doing throughout your day. It is important to focus while you practice and not let your mind wander. To strengthen your ability to focus, try following just one insect or bird flying around your practice field. See how long you can follow it with your eyes. If you lose it, find another one and follow it for at least 20 seconds. Cultivate a curious mind and see how many details you notice.
- **Distraction Training:** The outdoor environment is naturally full of potential distractions including wind, rain, heat, birds, airplanes and much more. While you have little or no control over the distractions in your environment, you do have control over how you choose to process those distractions. Again, it takes practice, but you can improve your ability to not let environmental factors take your attention away from your shot preparation and execution. Much like focus training, you need to practice placing your attention on a given task and keeping it there. Work towards resisting distraction and concentrate on what you're supposed to be doing. Of course, you should minimize distractions that you have control over. Consider leaving your cell phone in the car or at least on airplane mode in your gear bag. If you are training with others, you can take turns shooting an end while the others have a conversation a few feet behind you. Work to keep your thoughts on your shot process and not on whatever it is your friends are talking about.
- **Mental Toughness:** Often, whether you are able to perform at your best comes down to your ability to cope with adversity. To achieve consistent high performance requires the archer to remain completely focused and calm in the face of difficult or unexpected circumstances like surprisingly strong winds, a summer rainstorm, extreme heat, flying dust, or lengthy tournament delays. It could be how you react to going behind in a match or how you handle a mistake such as misjudging the wind. You must be able to stick with your shot cycle, trust your training, and maintain your self-belief and motivation. Develop more mental

toughness by practicing under challenging situations including wind, rain, under lights and more as you prepare for outdoor tournaments.

The transition to outdoor season brings new situations, possibly new equipment, and a welcomed change in your archery activities to keep things fun and interesting. Maximize your enjoyment of your outdoor season through preparation and positive expectations.