

## Steel Challenge Stage: Pendulum

Steel Challenge is the drag race of the shooting sports focusing on the delicate balance between speed and accuracy. In order to place well, you have to shoot all eight stages well or your competition will. In order to be proficient on all stages I am starting a stage breakdown series focusing on some tips and helpful hints on how to maximize your performance in your next match.

Let's start by examining The Steel Challenge Stage Pendulum, some say this is the stage which requires the most accuracy and patience of all the stages. So, what is the fastest order for this stage? The most popular and accepted option as we are looking down range and is shot 1-2-3-4-Stop Plate. This pattern does not differ for most with the type of division being shot; when shooting any gun from the low ready or from the holster the order is the same. There are other variations, which do not have an appreciable difference; typically what is comfortable to you will yield the best results. Some alternative patterns are; 3-4-1-2-Stop, or 4-3-1-2-Stop, etc.

Here are some tips to be successful on this stage:

Tip #1: I prefer to have my index setup on the Stop Plate – right in front of me. I test this by pointing my pistol straight out and it will show me where the gun is pointed. I will also hold a rifle like a pistol and do the same check. This allows my body to wind up on my first shot and when I transition the gun fast, the height of the gun does not change.

Tip#2: For those who are starting at the low ready, take a few 'sight picture' repetitions to the first plate to make sure when you move the gun up the dot or front sight is on the middle of the target. This allows you to get the gun up fast and get a solid first shot.

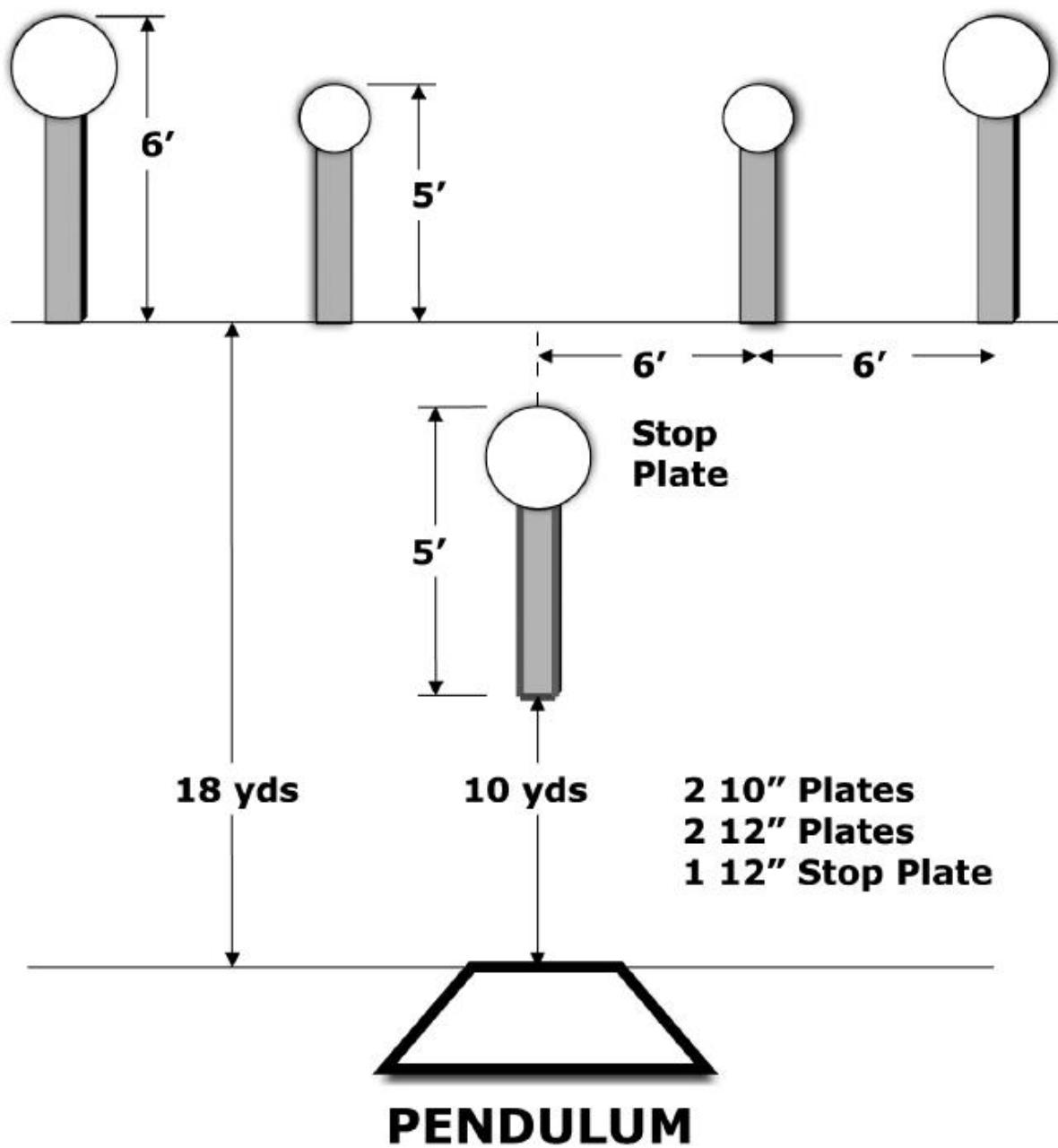
Tip#3: Take the opportunity on the first string to shoot the stage at 85%-90% of your peak Edge time especially if you just came from a faster stage. All Steel Challenge stages are different, different size plates, different distances, different width of transitions, etc. so they should all be shot differently.

Tip#4: The most missed plate on this stage is plate #2 if you shoot the stage as outlined above. This happens because the transition from Plate #1 to Plate #2 is a 'blind transition'. Meaning you are moving the gun at a downward angle and if you stay on the sights you have to be thoughtful about picking up the second target quickly. Be aware of this and get your hit and transition the gun quickly to Plate #3.

Tip#5: Keep the gun moving. You need to slow the gun down enough to get an acceptable sight picture and then take your shot. This is a stage where smooth is fast.

Tip#6: Don't prematurely take your sight/dot off of Plate #4 to get a fast transition to the Stop Plate. Make sure you keep your eye on the sight/dot on the plate as you pull the trigger. Moving your eyes off the plate will not get you to the Stop Plate faster.

Tip #7: Follow through on the stop plate. The concept of follow through when shooting in steel challenge on a stop plate means as you drive the gun hard to the stop plate, stop the gun on the stop plate as you are pressing the trigger. I advise students to count "One Mississippi" with the gun on the plate. This helps reinforce the concept of "calling shots".



Keeps these tips in mind the next time you step into the box in practice or in a match and watch your times fall! Stay tuned for more analysis of the other Steel Challenge Stages.

See you out on the range soon!

Steve