

# **Youth Archery Handbook**

## **Of the Middle Kingdom**

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Editor in chief:

THL Roewynne Langley of Mugmort  
Middle Kingdom Youth Archery Marshal

Editors:

Forester Nigel FitzMaurice, Middle Kingdom Archer-General  
Forester Owen FitzOwen, Midrealm: past-Regional Archery Marshal

Commentators:

Archery Marshals from the Midrealm & Other Kingdoms

Aduke Ayoko, Forester

Neko-Me, Forester

Master Sean O'Shaunessey

Dame Nichola Halden

Muriel of Three Walls, Forester

Baron Charles O'Connor, OP – Aethelmarc

Graidhne ni Ruaidh, OP – Aethelmarc

Robert the Grey, Scarlet Guard – Aethelmarc

Aleezabet of House Black Fletch - East

## **From the Archer-General:**

One afternoon at a Pennsic a few years back, while I was standing outside the Marshal's Tent eyeing the day's activities, a woman approached me and asked if I were the Marshal-in-Charge. Not wanting to get involved in technicalities regarding the difference between Archer Generals and MICs, I agreed to the description, hoping internally that her problem wouldn't be too acerbic. I did her a disservice though, for she immediately waxed enthusiastic, and told me that she and her young son had just spent a wonderful day on the range. She had been concerned that he might not find much to do at Pennsic, and hitherto he had only shown some interest in youth boffer combat. Today, they had come up the hill, and he had been enthralled. As she reported to me, he had said "Mom, can we come up here again tomorrow? I want to do this some more!"

That is the essence of the Youth Archery program. It is a staid old truism that only in young archers will we find our future champions, but the complimentary note - that without a Youth Archery program we will not see young archers, is not as often heard. A well-organized Youth program will convert a skeptical child into an enthused participant, eager to continue. But in order to flourish, such a program must have a well thought out set of rules. Such a set of rules, I believe, you hold in your hands right now.

The following rules and guidelines have been carefully crafted to comply with current SCA and Midrealm archery regulations, while at the same time indicating the unique qualities of youth participation in archery. They have been a labor of love for the marshals who have whole-heartedly involved themselves in developing a Youth Archery program, and it is to those marshals that this work should be dedicated to - without them, the program that builds our future champions would be a much poorer place.

THL Forester Nigel FitzMaurice  
Middle Kingdom Deputy Earl Marshal for Missile Weapons

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## 1. Parent/Legal Guardian Responsibility

Archery uses "live" weaponry, and can be considered a dangerous sport if approached carelessly or without due regard for safety. This section describes the basic limits, requirements, and parent/legal guardian responsibilities to participate in archery throughout the Middle Kingdom.

- 1.1. Parents/Guardians and Responsible Persons need to be aware that archery can be a dangerous sport and that injuries may occur.
  - 1.1.1. In General, a "Responsible Person" is defined as the parent or legal guardian of the Youth, but note 1.1.2 as well.
  - 1.1.2. A Responsible Person may also be an someone who is not the custodial Parent/Legal Guardian, but is at least 14 years of age or older, who has already learned the etiquette of the ranges.
    - 1.1.2.1. They may accompany the younger child to the range so the Youth can shoot.
    - 1.1.2.2. They must have the Parent's permission to accompany the child.
    - 1.1.2.3. The Parent/Legal Guardian is at all times directly responsible for all actions, behaviors and conduct that the Youth and the minor Responsible Persons accompanying the Youth take on the ranges.
  - 1.1.3. If the Responsible Person is not the Custodial Parent or Legal Guardian, they must have written authorization signed by the custodial parent/legal guardian stating that they may seek immediate medical treatment in case of an emergency, signed and dated by the Parent/Legal Guardian.
  - 1.1.4. The Responsible Person must know where the Parent/Guardian can be reached in case of emergencies, and is accountable for the behavior of the Youth that is under their Supervision.
- 1.2. The following age categories are to be used in determining the appropriate level of supervision for minors engaged in Archery activities:
  - 1.2.1. For 2-9 year olds, the presence of the Parent/Legal Guardian must be at the range where the youth is shooting. It is mandatory.
  - 1.2.2. For 10-13 year olds, the presence of the Parent/Legal Guardian or Responsible Person is required to be at the range where the youth is shooting.
    - 1.2.2.1. In as much as some 10-13 year olds show sufficient responsibility and have knowledge of range etiquette, they may, at the discretion of the Marshal in Charge (MIC) of Archery, (or a separate Youth Archery Marshal, if provided) if requested, be granted permission to...
      - 1.2.2.1.1. Remain on the range to shoot at their targets without Parent/Legal Guardian/Responsible Party at the same range, but they would still remain on the Archery Ranges.
      - 1.2.2.1.2. Youth this age may follow rule 1.2.3.
  - 1.2.3. For 14-17 year olds, Parent/Legal Guardian or Responsible Person must be on site and written notification of where they may be located left with the Archery Marshals, along with medical release forms.
  - 1.2.4. If the Parent/Legal Guardian is within calling distance, sight of, and/or not more than 5 minutes walking distance from the Archery Range, a medical release would not be needed, but is advisable nevertheless.
- 1.3. Parents/legal guardians and Responsible Persons are to behave in a courteous and responsible manner at all times.
- 1.4. Parents/legal guardians and/or Responsible Persons are responsible for their minor's safety, with the Adult Archery Marshals guiding the shooting and safety on the range. If needed, a Responsible Adult may help on the Range, at the discretion of the Archery Marshal in charge of the activity.

- 1.5. Parents/legal guardians and/or Responsible Persons are required to read and understand these rules and standards, and are to insure that they and their minor(s) follow them.

## 2. Safety Guidelines

The Guidelines discussed below describe the safety aspects of shooting. Archery can be a dangerous sport, and injuries may happen.

### 2.1. What an Archery Marshal is

An Archery Marshal is someone who has gone through extensive training in safety, inspection, rules and regulations for participating in archery for the Middle Kingdom.

- 2.1.1. Archery Marshals are at all times to be heeded on the range.
- 2.1.2. The Archery Marshal is there for your safety.
- 2.1.3. The call of “Pay heed to the Marshal” will tell you that an Archery Marshal is about to impart information. All talking should stop and activity cease in order for instructions to be heard.
- 2.1.4. Archery Marshals also help control the line, the crowd, how many people are shooting, and where people should be when they are off and on the line.
- 2.1.5. Archery Marshals control what, when and where you are to shoot while you are on the line.
- 2.1.6. Archery marshals are not babysitters of your Youth.
  - 2.1.6.1. Archery Marshals are not trained in managing children, and their marshallate duties preclude them from taking anything more than an overseeing role in such matters.
  - 2.1.6.2. It is explicitly the responsibility of parents, guardians, or designated Responsible Parties to insure appropriate behavior on the part of the children they have in their care.

### 2.2. Rules of the Range

- 2.2.1. When first arriving at an event, the archer shall go to the Bow Inspection area and shall have their bow and arrows inspected.
- 2.2.2. Archers shall take their equipment after inspection and remove them from the inspection area to the waiting area to shoot.
- 2.2.3. If there is an open line and gate, ask the Archery Marshal if the line is open for shooting, and if you may shoot on the line.
- 2.2.4. Some sites have waiting gates behind the line. Form in the gates to wait your turn.
- 2.2.5. Wait until the Archery Marshal tells you it is all right to shoot.
- 2.2.6. Always follow the Archery Marshal’s instructions.
- 2.2.7. Always remember to drink water or juices. Dehydration is a very real problem for those shooting on the range

### 2.3. Etiquette for shooting on the range

The Archery Marshall is in charge of the organization, running and inspecting on the range.

- 2.3.1. At all times, listen to the Marshals.
- 2.3.2. Do not leave bows and arrows in places where people can trip over them. Place them in appropriate areas.
- 2.3.3. After shooting, remove bows and arrows from line to designated area.
- 2.3.4. When archers are on the line, please respect them and be quiet in the “holding” or waiting areas; especially when a competition is in progress.
- 2.3.5. If someone calls “Hold”, all activity and talking immediately stops, until the problem is located and the Archery Marshall says it’s O.K. to resume. This includes removing arrows from bows. **DO NOT SHOOT WHEN THIS IS CALLED!**
- 2.3.6. Do not remove arrows other than your own without permission.
- 2.3.7. Always remember courtesy when on the range.

- 2.3.8. No arrow shall be nocked (arrow is on the bow to shoot) when archer is not on the line.
- 2.3.9. When searching for lost arrows, please keep it to a small time limit (1 minute or less), and search longer after the shoot is over.
- 2.3.10. Any behavior that creates disturbances or other problems on the range (including but not limited to: running, shouting excessively, or fighting) will not be tolerated. When such instances occur, the person causing the disturbance shall in the first instance be warned about behavior - if they do not comply, they must then be timed out from participation. If problems persist a third time, they shall be removed from the range, along with the parent/legal guardian.
- 2.4. How, where and when to shoot
  - 2.4.1. Stance  
Archers should be in line with one another, so that no archer is in front of another, or loading over another.
  - 2.4.2. Grip  
Bow grip should be loose, but secure in hand while on line.
  - 2.4.3. Line  
Archer should straddle the line (i. e. each foot should be placed on one side or the other of the release line).
  - 2.4.4. Stop/Hold Calls  
All activity should stop, including let-down of the string and removal of arrows from the bow.  
No one shall shoot an arrow after a hold call.  
For cocked crossbows, ask permission to release into the ground just in front of the archer.  
Silence is held until the Archery Marshal releases the hold call.
  - 2.4.5. Shooting space  
There should be space between archers on the line, so as not to impeded shooting, or bows hitting each other. The recommended distance is 3 feet between gates.
  - 2.4.6. Retrieval  
Arrows are retrieved ONLY when the Archery Marshal tells you it is safe. Special regulations for retrieval of overshots may be used.
    - 2.4.6.1. Walking the range  
When on the way to retrieve arrows, walk with eyes on ground to avoid stepping on other arrows.
    - 2.4.6.2. Pulling arrows from target  
Pull only your own arrows from the target. Hold target secure. Place one hand low on the arrow to hold the arrow straight. Using your other hand, slightly rotate the shaft until the arrow is loose and can be removed.  
When removing from ground, gently guide the fletching if the arrow needs to be pulled. In targets and hay bales, push arrow through if the fletching is in the hay. This prevents the vanes from tearing from the fletch.
    - 2.4.6.3. Finding lost arrows  
Wait until the marshals indicate a break in activity to search for these arrows. If lost arrow is found and is not yours, remove gently from ground and place upright where you found it. If you are at the end of the shoot, and it is no-one's arrow, bring it to an Archery Marshal or place it upright in a lost arrows area.

### 3. Equipment Guidelines

### 3.1. Children's Bows, Arrows, and String

Children's bows are equipment built for very young shooters, typically with youth 9 years of age or younger.

3.1.1. Most children's equipment, (except compound bows) are allowable, as long as it is inspected beforehand.

3.1.2. Arrows using plastic fletches are allowed.

3.1.3. Arrows using rubber suction cups are allowed.

3.1.4. String may use bowyers knots, may be secured with metal clips if the bow is of very light poundage (20 lbs or lighter), or may be tied and looped through a drilled hole in the limb if the bow is of light poundage.

3.1.5. String may be of cotton, dacron or nylon. No gut string is permissible.

### 3.2. Legal Bows

Youth archers older than 8 or 9 will likely be using standard SCA-legal equipment. All these bows shall conform to standard Society and Middle Kingdom Archery Equipment Standards; henceforth known as Standards. There are three main types of bows: Recurve, Longbow and Crossbow.

#### 3.2.1. Poundage

"Poundage" is the amount of force a bow exerts on an arrow, and can be thought of as the amount of weight pulled upon when drawing back the string. There is no low or high limits on poundage for either youth or adult shooters - such a matter must be decided according to the shooter's strength, and by inspection from an Archery Marshal. Beginners under 9 are recommended to use bows at 10-25 pounds. Crossbows recommendation is 60 pounds or less.

#### 3.2.2. Inspection of bows

All bows shall be inspected according to the standards by an Archery Marshal.

### 3.3. String

String shall be standard dacron. Gut shall not be used on the range.

### 3.4. Arrows

3.4.1. Any field point may be used that does not damage the target.

3.4.2. Youth beginner arrows may be metal unless competing in Royal Rounds or Winter shoot, or other competitions as indicated by the Marshal-in-Charge.

3.4.3. Fletching may be plastic for beginning archers.

### 3.5. Gloves/Tab

It is strongly recommended that a youth wear a protective archer's glove or tab on his shooting hand.

### 3.6. Bracer

A bracer or arm guard protects the bow forearm from string slap. It is strongly recommended that a youth uses a bracer. Bracers are typically made of leather, but can be constructed from other materials as well.

### 3.7. Clothes

3.7.1. Arms should be bare (aside from arm-guards) or have a tight sleeve.

3.7.2. Loose sleeves may catch the string and injury may occur.

3.7.3. No pins, medallions should be worn on the torso or sleeves.

### 3.8. Footwear

Appropriate footgear should be worn for the site and range. There are no standards for wearing footgear, but barefoot and open sandals are strongly advised against, especially in high grass. Sneakers will help protect against burrs, arrow points and insects.

3.9. Hair

There is no regulation to length or how you wear your hair. However, for longer hair, it is recommended that you pull it back off your face in a braid or ponytail to keep the hair from entangling with the string or arrow.

4. Forms\*

\*See also: [Individual](#) and [Family](#) Minor Waivers

4.1. [Medical Release form](#) (.PDF format takes a few seconds to load)

4.2. [Sign-in forms](#)

4.3. [Shooting forms: for Archery Marshals](#)

4.3.1. Youth Range Schedule and Novelty sign-ups

Pennsic Youth Archery Marshal Sign-up

(Counts as part of 4 hours at Range)

Archery Marshal will help run the range and/or have novelty shoot for youth or youth and adults.

Shoot Activity	Title of Shoot
DATE: _____	(circle one)
9-10 AM _____	Yes No _____
10-11 AM _____	Yes No _____
11-12 AM _____	Yes No _____
12 - 1 PM _____	Yes No _____
1 - 2 PM _____	Yes No _____
2 - 3 PM _____	Yes No _____
3 - 4 PM _____	Yes No _____
4 - 5 PM _____	Yes No _____

YOUTH RANGE IS CLOSED AFTER 4PM

5. How to Shoot a Bow: Basic Archery Shooting Form\* (without even shooting a bow!)

Article by Roewynne Langley of Mugmort

\*for non-crossbows

Stance:

1. Face at a 90 degree angle from the target.
2. Stand relaxed, knees slightly flexed.
3. Stand with feet apart until it feels comfortable to you.
4. Center yourself so that equal weight is distributed over both feet. If you have a line, straddle the line, so that the weight and body is centered over the line, with feet at either side of the line.

5. Turn the foot nearer the target towards the target. This allows you to keep balance when the arrow is released from Potential to Kinetic energy.
6. Raise arm and hand shoulder high and level, pointing towards target. Your body should be straight, and perpendicular to the target. Head is not yet turned towards target.
7. Turn head to sight down the length of your arm.

### Stringing the bow:

The bow has several parts: the body, upper and lower limbs, backside and front, knock points.

There are several ways to string a bow. Here are three of them:

With a bow stringer (preferable), around the ankle, or in the foot.

1. Make sure the string is turned the correct way. Strings usually have a nock point on them. If off the bow, usually a smaller loop means that side is the one that seats on the bottom of the bow limb.
2. Slip larger loop over upper limb.
3. Seat smaller loop on bottom limb.

Your next job is to seat both ends of string to the end nocks.

### Stringer:

**THIS IS THE RECOMMENDED METHOD TO USE AT ALL TIMES!**

Place one end on bow tip, slide the other end over tip to limb, below the bow string. Hold stringer down with foot. Slide up stringer that is on the limb, pushing up the bowstring, until the second loop seats. Release.

### THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT RECOMMENDED:

Over foot: (for right handers. Left-handers, do this backwards) (2 ways)

First way:

1. Step through between string and bow with right leg.
2. Set lower end against top of foot/ankle area. Many times the end of the bow can dig into the ground, thus wearing down the nock area, and weakening the bow tip, and warping the bow.
3. Place upper limb behind thigh.
4. Bend forward until seats.

Second way: (I really don't suggest this way--too many snap backs into faces, plus you are digging the end into the ground.)

1. No step through
2. Set lower edge against inside of left foot. This lets you set against the foot. But, it is **THE ONLY** thing to keep the bow steady!
3. Bend forward in front, using lower thigh. Some people don't even step through at this. **PLEASE DO NOT STRING YOUR BOWS THIS WAY!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Over ankle: (my preference when I'm without the stringer, and is a safer way with light and children's bows.)

1. Step through between string and bow with right leg.
2. Set lower bow end against outside of left ankle.
3. Bring upper bow limb behind derriere (buttocks).
4. Bend bow forward using the cheek of your derriere as your brace.
5. Slide string into place until seated.

## Holding The Bow

### Grip

You are going to hold the bow at the grip, the name for where you place your bow hand, and part of the body of your bow.

You want to hold your bow lightly, so it swings freely at first.

Pretend you are shaking somebody's hand. Grasp your bow the same way.

Your bow should lie securely in the web, the flesh between your thumb and forefinger.

To check: only have bow sit on top of webbing of hand. It should sway.

Gently enfold the bow with your hand. Do not grasp tightly. Having a light grip, lets the energy stored in the bow some flexibility when released.

### Raising your bow

Remember your first stance? Now that you have your bow, raise your arm so that it is level with your shoulder. You want to keep your hand straight; the wrist should not be bent. Bending your wrist puts extra pressure on the ligaments. Your bow should be an extension of your arm.

You will notice that your elbow is turned in. Keeping your arm straight, turn your elbow outwards.

This eliminates many string burns.

You are now ready to take an arrow and nock it to the string.

## Arrows

An arrow has a shaft (the wooden body), points (various types--bodkins and field points are standard), nocks (end of arrow that sits on the bowstring), and fletching. We use feathers fletches. The usually standard is 3 feathers. 2 of the same color--called Hens, 1 of a different color, called a Cock. All fletching is equidistant from each other. When placing on string, the cock feather should face outwards from the bow.

## Shooting The Bow

### Drawing back the string

Review: you are facing 90 degrees from target. Your arm is raise to shoulder height, pointing towards target. You are gently holding bow in your grip.

There are two standard grips. With one you use two fingers--1 above, 1 below arrow; the other you use three. 1 above arrow, 2 below arrow.

When placing fingers on string, only use the pads of your fingers. Do not go down to your first joint. This makes the string jump upon release. Try to keep wrist straight, but not stiff.

Place arrow above nock. You want to pull from quiver, around and over the string, to place on nock and on arrow rest. An arrow rest of some sort is usually on the top part of or above the grip. The arrow should sit securely on rest, and should sit or click securely with the string between the points of the nock of the arrow.

Take arrow between fingers. Keep elbow up, and pull back with the elbow, not the hand. Pulling back with the hand, makes the elbow drop down, changing the aiming. Standard way is that you want to pull parallel to the ground with your elbow, bringing your bow to full draw.

With your hand, find an anchor point on your face. An anchor point is where you want to draw your bow to every time you pull it. Consistent anchors give you better results.

### Sighting

Many suggest keeping both eyes open to site. I now only keep my dominant eye open. Learn which eye gives you better shooting results, and remember to use that eye. One reason an arrow can be shot feet away from where you sighted is that you used a different eye.

From your anchor point, at full draw, you want to sight down the length of the arrow and aim at or below the target. I suggest that if you have a heavier bow than 25 pounds, you start aiming about an inch below the target.

### Release

Only release a string when you have an arrow fitted to it. Releasing without an arrow is called dry firing. When this happens it destroys the integrity of your bow, creating stress marks. Stress marks mean that the bow has weakened in this area, and having a lot of marks will fail a bow, as being unsafe to shoot on the range.

Once you have sighted in, release the string. To do this pull back to your anchor point with the tips of your fingers, and gently let them roll off the string. Sudden movements can make the string jump, thus making aiming harder.

Your arm that is raised should remain still. Do not move it. Hold it in place, for the follow through of your arrow, after you released the string. Moving your arm too soon will change the arrows' flight path.

Archery Marshals will also have you draw back, making sure that the bow is not too heavy for you and to check for other signs of wear. When you do this, bring the string gently forward, back into its original position. This doesn't wear the bow out. Actually, it's a good winter exercise when you don't get out to shoot.

### Adjustments

Watch to see where the flight of the arrow landed. Adjust your aiming point as needed. If arrow flies too high, bring your aim point down. If the arrow flies off to the left, aim more to the right.

Make sure your arm that is holding the bow isn't moving, and that the bow has the same vertical placement. If you have it straight up and down, keep it in that place. If it is canted, make sure when canting, the bow cants the same way, every time you shoot.

### Exercises:

For those of us that don't do anything, try keeping your arms shoulder height for a count of 60, without movement. Several times a day. Any exercise is good.

## 6. Youth Competitions

### 6.1. Youth Royal Rounds

6.1.1. Youth rounds may be shot on the Adult range, using Adult rules and yardage. A designation of YOUTH should be put on the forms when submitted.

6.1.2. There is a separate youth royal round, which is shot the same as Adult, except the yardage is at 10 yards, 15 yards, and 20 yards.

6.1.2.1. Standard target size is used.

6.1.2.2. A round (a round is 6 arrows) shall be shot each at 10, 15 and 20 yards, a round at a time. Archer may take as long as they need for completion of each round.

- 6.1.2.3. A speed round of 30 seconds shall be shot at the 10 yard target.
- 6.1.2.4. Scores are added together for Total score.
- 6.1.2.5. Archery Marshall should have Youth range and age noted on scores, with type and weight of bow.

6.2. Youth IKAC

6.3. Youth Winter shoot

You can access <http://web.raex.com/~obsidian/wint.html> for the complete rules and regulations for Adults and children.

The youth may either shoot at 20 yards or 10 yards. Please notify the Archery Marshal in charge, and make sure that YOUTH is designated on the form.

#### The Shoot:

As it was last year, the shoot is eight ends at 20 yards, and may take place at any event, practice, or get-together where a warranted SCA archery marshal (or your Kingdom's equivalent) is present to score it.

Target Round - intended to help maintain accuracy over the winter months. It consists of 2 ends of 6 arrows each untimed at a 40 cm (16 inch) 5 ring target with standard 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 scoring.

Speed Round - intended to help archers practice speed shooting with accuracy. It consists of 2 ends of unlimited arrows shot in a 30 second time limit for each end. Each archer must shoot at least one arrow each end but may shoot as many as possible in 30 seconds.

Scoring of the 40 cm 5 ring target is 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Archers who do not manage to shoot off 6 arrows in 30 seconds will gain bonus points for arrows unshot. To determine the number of bonus points, subtract the number of arrows shot from 6 for each end and add that number to the actual score of the arrows that hit the target. IE: you shoot 4 arrows, you get 2 bonus points. If the archer has not managed to hit the target at least once in the entire round of two ends, then no bonus points are added. When scoring, please show real score + bonus points, IE: 12+2

Wand Round - intended to help the archer concentrate on minimizing left/right movement. It consists of 2 ends of 6 arrows untimed. Each end is shot at a target wand 3 feet long by 6 inches wide, consisting of a central strip of one color flanked on either side by strips of a differing tint (hint:a standard strip of duct tape is 2 inches wide); each band equal in width (2 inches). Each arrow within or touching the central strip scores five points. Each arrow outside the central area but within or touching either of the two outer bands scores three points.

Bull's Eye Round - intended to help the archer focus on the center of a target. It consists of 2 ends of 6 arrows each untimed. Each end is shot at a target consisting of a 4 inch circular bull's eye centered within a 8 1/2 inch outer circle,(standard piece of paper). All arrows within or touching the inner circle score five points each. All arrows outside the center bull's eye but within or touching the outer circle score three points each.

6.4. [Youth Novelty Shoots](#)

6.5. [Youth and Adult Combination Shoots](#)