

We hope to see many of you at the State YHEC Tournament. We hope everyone's practice pays off! We recognize there are many participants who this will be their first tournament. We wanted to give you a quick list of things to expect. All of you should have the agenda as part of registration so you all have the times. We have attached it for your convenience. We will give a quick rundown of each event as well as some rules to remember.

The biggest rule that needs to be remembered is that once an event starts there is to be no coaching or help from a parent at all. This can be a very challenging rule to follow. YHEC is supposed to test the kid's ability NOT the parents coaching ability. Let me give a few examples of what NOT to do.

1. On the shotgun event do NOT yell, "You shot behind it!" You can yell "Great SHOT" all you want though 😊
2. On .22 rifle do NOT yell, "Remember to use that post to rest your gun against." Do NOT yell, "You shot low!". Do NOT yell, "Get your body in the right position."
3. On archery do NOT yell, "It's 25 yards!" Please, please, please resist the urge to use a rangefinder to range any target prior to the event. Just don't do it! Part of what is being tested is a competitor's ability to estimate distance. Range finders are NOT allowed. Ranging distance before an event and sharing that information with a child is considered cheating.

You are welcome to "coach" before an event starts. In fact it is appropriate to share last minute coaching advice prior to an event starting. But the second your child starts the event, please do not offer advice or coaching of any sort. Simply cheer and encourage! This is the biggest rule that needs to be considered to keep the competition fair.

The 8 events will be in a rotation typically. Upon registration and check-in you will be assigned a starting event and a rotation to follow so we don't get kids all clustered up at the same event. Most kids will complete 5-6 of the events (including the written test) Friday. Friday is a long day especially with the travel, so remember that a good night's rest can really help kids. The remaining events will be completed Saturday morning. There is typically a 3-4 hour wait between when your child finishes the events and the awards ceremony is ready to be held. You are welcome to leave the site during this time, so you may want to plan something to do during this wait. Occasionally the awards portion has started early so don't be late getting back.

The .22 rifle event will be as follows. Each kid will shoot 5 shots from 6 different stations at the small knockdown targets you have practice on at YHEC practice. The first 2 stations (5 shots at 2 stations) will be shot while standing. The maximum standing distance will be 30 yards. The next 2 stations will be from a seated or kneeling position. Normally the position is of the competitor's choice. There is almost always a "prop" that can be used. Typically it is a post in the ground so make sure your child knows how to utilize a post to prop their gun against while seated. The maximum distance of the seated / supported shots is 60 yards. The last 2 stations are shot from the prone position. Again there will typically be something to prop the gun against (a rock, a log, a block of wood, etc.) The maximum distance of the prone shots will be 75 yards. Normally there will be some close stations and some far stations so that it gives both the new kids a chance to be successful, but also tests the experienced kids. (A 75 yard prone shot at those tiny targets is a real challenge.) The biggest key in this event is to know your holdover past 50 yards. The other key is to make sure that your kids know they have as much time as they want to get into a comfortable position prior to shooting. Once they take load and take that first

shot, they can't change positions or adjust scopes at that point. So have them get everything setup just how they want prior to shooting.

On the Archery event, normally there will be 15 targets set out with a maximum distance of 40 yards. At each target the kid take shoots 2 arrows. The key to this event is to make a calculated decision on the first shot. Then evaluate that shot and adjust for the second shot. Binoculars are allowed and do make a difference if your child knows how to use them. NO RANGEFINDERS. Remember the maximum shot is 40 yards, so if it looks far away, use that 40 pin! But always learn from the first shot and adjust on the 2<sup>nd</sup> shot!

On the muzzleloader event, the competitors will normally go into a tent and take a written test that will be worth 150 points. They then take 6-8 shots that will combined equal 150 points. These shots can be from a variety of positions and at a variety of distances. Normally there are some easy shots and a couple really challenging shots. During the shooting portion of the test, each kid will be assigned to a single volunteer to help them through the event. So if your child is young, or inexperienced, there will be an experienced adult with them to help. (My youngest doesn't have the strength to always ram the bullet down the barrel. The volunteer will help him if needed.) The volunteer will also be there to make sure a competitor doesn't double load the gun or do something unsafe.

On the shotgun event there are normally 2 courses. An easier course for the juniors and a more challenging course for the seniors. The event is a normal 5 stand course where each kid will take 6 shots from 5 different stands for a total of 30 shots. A volunteer will again be close by to help them. One of the biggest mistakes on the shotgun event is a safety being on when the kid goes to shoot. This is considered a MISS and they will not get a retry. We teach our kids to simply leave the safety off during the entire event which is allowed. Encourage your kids to watch the others shooting and learn from them. You are welcome to give advice before they begin shooting. Coach as much as you want prior to them stepping in the stand. Once they start become a cheerleader! But encourage them to watch all the targets even while they are shooting. They can learn a lot from watching the others shoot! There is normally ammunition provided for this event for those who would like to use it. But be careful with this. If your gun doesn't like some ammo, stick with what you know works!

On the orienteering event, there will be 150 points available for the "field" portion of the test. Then another 150 points available for the written portion of the test. Normally the written portion will include a map that they have to evaluate and answer questions from. The field work is simply taking bearings and distance and finding a stake on the ground. Encourage your kids to ignore all the stakes and TRUST their skill to find the correct stake. There will usually be a lot of incorrect stakes mixed in with the correct one. Once in awhile a kid might luck into the correct stake, but that is not normal. Usually there will be multiple stakes place in close proximity to the correct one so that they really test a kids skill. Pace charts are allowed and you can give your kid a pace chart at the start of the event. Often there will be a place with a known distance marked where they can verify their pace. You can also use a range finder to help your kid determine their pace prior to the event. Just don't use the range finder for any other purpose and do NOT send it with your kid! Just put it away after you verify their pacing if you want to.

On wildlife ID, the kids will go into a tent, in a building, or walk on a trail depending on the location. They will have a paper with 30 number and blank lines written on it. They will approach 30 specimens and write down what animal it is next to each number on their paper. It is absolutely critical they write the correct name down next to the correct number. If they skip an animal but don't skip ahead to the

correct number on their paper, they will miss everything. There will be no mercy shown if they get off on the numbers. So remind them to make certain at each animal that they are writing their answer down on the correct line. Each animal will be clearly labeled with a number so they really have no excuse to get off. But it does happen. Tell them to simply guess on the ones they don't know as they may get lucky!

On the safety trail each kid will be partnered up with an adult to walk them through a trail with different hunting scenarios. The adult will be evaluating their safety and hunting knowledge. Each kid will be given a pretend hunting license and tags. This license and tags will show them what they can and can't shoot. For instance the tag may say they can shoot ONE bearded turkey. So when they come to the turkey's in a scenario they need to shoot the bearded turkey. If they come to a turkey later in the course they can NOT shoot it as they already filled that tag. They may be asked to judge a distance. They may be asked to tell the adult how many "doves" their license says they can shoot without looking at the license. Make sure each kid SIGNS their license. Make sure they wear ORANGE while hunting. Orange hunting vest are usually provided at the event but remind them to put them on. Each kid will need to bring their own UNLOADED shotgun to the event. The best help you can give is to help them study and memorize what they can and can't shoot prior to the event. Once they start they normally can't look at their tag. So they need to know if they can shoot a coyote or not. They need to know if they can shoot a mule deer or a whitetail deer, etc.

And last is the dreaded written test. Everyone will take the written test together as a group Friday night. (See the schedule). It is normally multiple choice with some True/False thrown in. Occasionally it may have a fill-in-the-blank spot. If they don't know the answer tell them to guess. They may get lucky. Just encourage them to do their best. Encourage them to read each question CAREFULLY as there are often key words that need to be recognized. Have them read every answer before picking the correct one. Most kids know how to take tests and the same skills apply here. Have them take their own pencil to the test.

The last bit of advice I can give is to help your kids understand the challenge of this event. YHEC is hard. It takes years of practice and experience to do well. Having a 10 year-old first-timer compete with a 14 year-old who has been to 5 previous tournaments is hard. Most of the new kids will not win medals or ribbons. And sitting through an awards ceremony and not getting a single ribbon or medal can be tough on some kids. It's tough on the parents (I know!) Remind your kids that MOST hunts end without getting an animal. Most competitions take years of practice to get good at. Not everyone is equal in their skills and abilities. Not everyone deserves an award. Only 1 can be the best! We can be happy with the success of others. But I would recommend you prepare your young kids and new kids to not expect to receive a bunch of awards. Remind them they are competing with kids that have been practicing for years and years. Experience teaches a lot in YHEC. And there is no substitute for experience.

Encourage your kids to focus on the FUN! Focus on the good! There are 2400 points available in YHEC and most of the kids won't top 1500, which means even the best only hit about 3/4 of their shots! Even the best only get 3/4 of the questions right! Encourage them to compete against themselves and to just have fun! And if this is their first year and they enjoy it, remind them that the kids that win the majority of the awards didn't win ANY at their first competitions. They won them because of years of practice. Any kid can win YHEC if they work hard enough! So give them a goal to work towards and help them focus on the fun and the experience! Look to the experienced kids as heroes to follow! I know we have

spent years watching other kids dominate YHEC and it has given us something to work towards. These other kids have inspired us to work hard! If you as a parent and your kid as a competitor manage your expectations it will be a better experience. I would also encourage you to not put a lot of pressure on your kid. Our kids seem to do better when we simply encourage them to have fun and to not worry about how they are doing. Don't worry about what the other kids are doing! Just go have fun! And as the parent be the best cheerleader you can be. Much of the last second advice will simply stress them out. Stress will make them do worse. Just let them go have fun! Good luck to all! We can't wait to see you guys there!