

WHAT NEXT FOR A BEGINNER

Congratulations, you have completed your beginners' course, so what next?

The archery world is your oyster and there are various options available to carry on with your new hobby/sport. It can seem a bit bewildering with two separate governing bodies, official rounds, unofficial rounds, imperial rounds (distances in yards), metric rounds (distances in metres), 10 zone scoring (1 to 10), 5 zone scoring (1, 3, 5, 7, 9), 3 arrows per end, 6 arrows per end, 6 arrows per end shot in two sets of 3, different sized target faces, classifications, handicaps, indoors, outdoors, recurve, barebow, compound, longbow, Asiatic bow and American flat bow.

During your course you will have shot both barebow (no sight) and recurve (with a sight) so one of those is the logical place to start depending on your preference. You will have access to a club bow for the first few months and can switch between the two types by simply adding or removing the sight. At this time, you should concentrate on your shot process and achieving consistency, but it is important to bear in mind that the club bow and club arrows are not optimised to you. It takes a 2 to 3 hour appointment to be fitted with the correct bow/arrow combination for you so do not rush out and buy a bow as, if you are tempted to purchase your own equipment from Ebay or similar, there is every chance that it won't be right for you and some of what you have bought may need to be replaced. Senior club members will be happy to discuss equipment needs with you, including accessories that you can buy straight away, and give pointers as to what to think about when considering bow and arrow options.

Nobody is going to push you, the rate at which you develop and progress is in your control, but do not be afraid to ask questions and seek assistance from other club members or coaches. Not everybody welcomes advice so, unless you are doing something that is unsafe to other archers or dangerous to you, it is down to you to make the initial approach and if that person is not able to help then they will suggest who can. Please do not be reluctant to ask.

You can choose to be a club archer and just shoot for fun, or you can set your sights (pun intended) on earning classification badges, or you can enter competitions run by other clubs, or you can try to get in the county or even national team – it is entirely up to you and may change.

There is a lot of information available on the club website – www.ctra.uk – and this document will refer to those links rather than rewriting the information that they contain.

Key rules to remember:

1. If you hear a call of "FAST" someone has spotted a safety issue on the range. Do not shoot any more arrows. If you have an arrow nocked return it to your quiver and move back from the shooting line.
2. If you spot a safety issue, such as an animal or member of the public stray onto the range or a fellow archer still down range after the whistle has gone, then be the person to call "FAST", do not assume that someone else will do it.
3. Remember 1 whistle or "safe to shoot" is the signal to go to the line and commence shooting, 3 whistles or "safe to collect" is the signal to go and score and/or retrieve your arrows.
4. Never dry fire a bow or it could be very costly and dangerous. If you are doing a practice draw or have an arrow nocked and decide not to proceed with the shot (or FAST is called) then ease the string forward until there is no tension, do not just release it.
5. Refer to rules 1 to 4.

Chelmsford Tudor Rose Archers (CTRA)

Membership

Membership of CTRA is an annual fee. It can be paid in full or split into 12 equal monthly instalments by standing order to spread the cost across the year, but the latter is not a monthly subscription that can be stopped if you are unable to shoot for a period and then restarted when you can. As well as membership of CTRA, the money that you pay will be used to cover mandatory memberships for Archery GB (AGB – the national organisation), Southern Counties Archery Society (SCAS – the regional organisation) and Essex County Archery Association (ECAA – the county organisation), which are all payable when you first join and then renewable annually. Renewals are organised on your behalf by the club secretary. If you leave the club within 4 months of your AGB membership being renewed and you are paying monthly, then you will be asked to continue your standing order until 4 payments have been made since the renewal in order to cover the AGB cost. AGB membership remains active for 12 months from renewal date should you decide to return or join another club.

Ongoing Coaching

There is a lot to remember (and forget) in order to be a consistent archer and even the most experienced archers need coaching - it is the best way to improve. The club has a non-shooting coach, John who helps with the beginners' courses and is there most sessions as well as several archers who have shot at county level so there is a lot of experience around. The club may pay for a county coach, Deb, to be generally available, but we can also put you in contact with her if you would like dedicated one to one coaching, which you have to pay for.

Unless you are seen to be doing something that is deemed unsafe you will not be approached. If you have a question please ask. If you feel that you need someone to spend a bit of time with you then, indoors, there is a green card system. In the box on the table by the rear doors are some green laminated cards. Simply attach one to your quiver and a coach or senior archer will approach you. Outdoors please just ask and you will be helped or pointed in the right direction.

Keeping Informed

CTRA has communication groups set up in WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. These are used to pass on all sorts of information to club members. If you wish to be added to either or both groups then please see the Secretary, Chris Higgins, who will make the necessary arrangements.

Indoor Facility – Sandon School

The club's indoor facility is at Sandon School in Molrams Lane, generally in Sports Hall 1. This offers the chance to shoot at 15 yards, 20 yards or 18 metres. Whilst 25 yards is possible it leaves little room behind the shooting line. If you can please arrive around 6.45pm and, if you are able, help to set up the hall so that shooting can commence at 7pm in order to maximise shooting time. If you arrive after 6.55pm please use the rear doors to enter the hall. The usual set up is a small 40cm face shot at 15 or 20 yards. If you wish to shoot a shorter distance or use a larger face (122cm, 80cm or 60cm), particularly if you are just starting out, then please make this known as early as possible so that this can be accommodated.

There is a signing in sheet on the table near the rear doors and you write your name against an available boss number (counting left to right) and area (e.g. top or bottom, left or right) then go to that boss and attach the appropriate sized face. A 122cm or 80cm face requires a whole boss and

a 60cm face requires half a boss, but more than 1 archer can shoot at those faces at the same time, whereas 4x 40cm faces can be put on each boss (or 2 on one side with a 60cm on the other). Archers can shoot in pairs with 1 archer on each side of the boss.

As it is an indoor venue all types of arrows are permitted. A maximum of 3 arrows should be shot per end (or 5 for a Worcester round). At the end of the session please remove the target face and return to the pile. This enables us to monitor the condition of the foam, which needs replacing periodically.

Sometimes Sports Hall 1 is not available (e.g. when it is set up for mock exams) and an alternate hall has to be used. This has less space and four straw bosses are used, limiting the number of archers that can shoot. This will be advised in advance.

Smoking or vaping is not permitted anywhere on the school premises so you have to go out of the grounds onto Molrams Lane to indulge.

Outdoor Facility – Writtle College Sports Ground

Access is via Fox Burrows Lane, which is off Lordship Lane. The access road has a tarmac surface, but is mostly single track with a passing place halfway down. Drive right to the end for the car park (which is potholed and bumpy), then walk onto the field and head to your left past the pavilion (to which we have the door code for access to the toilets).

The field is marked with distances from 10 to 100 yards and 10 to 90 metres. The targets are in two parts, a wooden stand and a round foam boss. There is a trolley available to transport these onto the range. There is no sign in process at Writtle, simply choose your distance, set up a stand and boss and attach your chosen face size, usually 1 face to a boss. If someone is already set up for your chosen distance and face size then you can ask to join them or set up separately – the maximum is 4 people to a target, shooting in pairs. If shooting has already commenced when you arrive then you should set up whilst the other archers are retrieving their arrows to minimise disruption to them. If you are the last person/people shooting on a target, then please pack it away before you leave.

Writtle is a shared sports field so all arrows that miss the target must be found before leaving the site. Always know how many arrows are in your quiver at the start. Metal detectors are available and other archers present will join in the search as arrows can bury themselves, particularly in soft ground. Please note that carbon only arrows are not permitted at this venue as only the metal pile at the front will trigger a metal detector and that is a very small target to locate – bear this in mind when purchasing arrows as carbon arrows can be cheaper and therefore tempting.

Generally, 6 arrows per end are shot outdoors, but you can shoot fewer if you wish. Two people can shoot on the same target at the same time.

When the football pitches are in use the car park can fill up and there is overflow parking in an adjacent field, accessed via an opening at the end of the hedgerow on the right as you enter the car park.

Shooting Sessions

The club website has a calendar that details the upcoming sessions.

Generally, the club shooting days (at the time of writing and subject to notified change) are:

Nov 1st to Mar 31st – indoors at Sandon Tue and Fri 7pm till 9pm

Apr 1st to Apr 30th - indoors at Sandon Tue and Fri 7pm till 9pm, outdoors at Writtle Sun from 10am

May 1st to Sep 30th – outdoors at Writtle Tue and Thu 6pm till sunset and Sun from 10am

Oct 1st to Oct 30th - indoors at Sandon Tue and Fri 7pm till 9pm, outdoors at Writtle Sun from 10am

The above may vary as the club has to keep an eye on costs, so refer to the club website for the up to date information.

Governing Bodies

Archery GB - <https://archerygb.org/>

This is the governing body for the UK and you must be a member in order to shoot at the club. The club secretary will organise this for you and it will be paid for from your club membership fee. AGB Membership is payable when you first join the club and then renewable on the anniversary of your joining date. You will receive a login to the AGB website and this contains a plethora of archery information for you to peruse, including, under Member Resources (log in, select your profile at top right then Member Resources), the rules concerning archery in the UK and the master documents for many items mentioned in this guide.

Your AGB membership also gives you access to the Sport80 site via the same login details, but used at <https://auth.sport80.com/> (then select Archery GB from the Already Registered list). The site can be used to view and amend your membership information as well as track any awards achieved at qualifying tournaments and to enter national tournaments.

World Archery - <https://www.worldarchery.sport/>

This is the worldwide governing body of which AGB is a member association. Individual membership of WA is not required so there is no cost to you. Some international competitions (e.g. the Olympics) are run under WA rules, which differ in some aspects to those of AGB, but this is not something that you need to worry about at this stage.

Rounds and Rewards

252

Having shot for a few sessions the first challenge is usually a 252 at 15 yards or the AGB Progress Awards (see next section). The 252 scheme is not officially recognised by AGB and each club has their own set of rules. The CTRA version is explained in more detail at this link on the club website - [252-Award-Scheme](#) – and the basic idea (for recurve) is to score 252 or more with 36 arrows shot in ends of 3 indoors or 6 outdoors using 5 zone scoring at a specific distance on a specified target face size. Essentially the whole red zone scores 7 points and 36 arrows x 7 points = 252 so it requires reasonably consistent shooting and a badge is earned when this is achieved. For recurve the target is 252 points irrespective of the distance being shot. The other bow types have different score thresholds, which can also vary depending on the distance being shot and a sheet with all the details, including face size to be used, is available for you to keep and to track your progress. The generic term “252” is used for everything, but in reality means the score threshold for your chosen bow style and distance.

Having achieved a 15 yard 252, the next target is a 20 yard 252. If we are indoors this is the maximum distance for our hall so you can then consider trying the next size smaller face or keep

the same face size and try to improve on your score – it is your choice. If we are outdoors then you can consider trying 30 yards and beyond (40, 50, 60, 80 and 100 yards). There are no metric distances for 252 rounds.

AGB Progress Awards

This is the official AGB scheme for developing archers. As with the 252 system, a Progress Award round consists of 36 arrows shot at the same distance on an appropriate sized face to achieve a qualifying score, but 3 rounds have to be shot at the qualifying level rather than just 1 for the 252.

All indoor rounds are shot on a 60cm face using 10 zone scoring with the scores determining the award level. Junior rounds are shot at 10, 15 or 20 yards, whilst all senior rounds are shot at 20 yards, with the scores determining award level (badge colour).

Outdoor imperial rounds are shot on 122cm faces at distances up to 60 yards using 5 zone scoring and the distance being shot determines the award level.

Outdoor metric rounds are shot on 80cm faces at distances up to 50 metres using 10 zone scoring and the distance being shot determines the award level.

You can mix and match imperial and metric rounds to get a particular award level and can use the first 3 dozen arrows of an official AGB round as your score.

Separate indoor and outdoor scoresheets are available on the club website and include all the qualifying scores for each award level for each age group and bow type on one side and a grid to records your qualifying scores on the other. There is also a link to the full rules on the AGB website.

Official AGB Rounds

It is easy to fixate on 252 or Progress Award rounds when in fact the badge can be earned whilst shooting any official round that has 3 dozen or more arrows for the first distance and the correct face size with the first 3 dozen being the “252” or “Progress Award” qualifiers. Check this link on the club website - [Archery Rounds](#) – for full details of the available rounds, distances and target face sizes. Each row is a single round between 4 dozen (48) and 12 dozen (144) arrows. Imperial rounds are shot over 2 or more distances whilst some Metric rounds are single distance and some multi distance.

Classifications

Official rounds give you the opportunity to earn a Classification badge and there are separate schemes for indoors and outdoors – 252 and Progress Award rounds do not have a Classification. A Classification is earned by shooting multiple rounds to a required standard (minimum score), although it is possible to earn an outdoor “Archer” 3rd, 2nd or 1st Class rating from a single 12 dozen arrow round. A combination of different rounds and distances can be used to achieve a Classification. See this link on the club website - [Archery Classifications](#) – for full details of the number of arrows required for each level and the 2 sub-links from that page - [Outdoor Classification & Handicaps \(GB Archery\)](#) and [Indoor Classifications & Handicaps \(GB Archery\)](#) - for the scores required for each round split into tables for gender, age group and bow style. A score below the minimum required for the lowest Classification (Archer 3rd Class) is deemed “Unclassified”. There are a lot of tables, but only a couple will apply to you at any one time so consider keeping a screenshot of the appropriate one(s) on your phone or a printed copy in your archery bag for quick reference.

A Classification must be earned within a single season – 1st Jan to 31st Dec outdoors or 1st Jul to 30th Jun indoors. Any partial progress is lost at the end of each season and you start the next one from scratch.

Handicaps

Handicaps are another way to track your progress, but there are no badges available. When you first start your handicap is 150 and counts down towards 0 as you progress. There is a set of tables that define the Handicap for any score for any round – see “Outdoor and Indoor Handicap Tables” in the Member Resources section of the AGB web site. The average (rounded up) of the Handicap for your first 3 rounds determines your starting Handicap and thereafter as each round is shot the average of your current Handicap and the Handicap for the round just shot is taken to determine whether your Handicap has improved – the result is rounded up so effectively you have to shoot 2 better than your current Handicap to achieve a reduction of 1 (e.g. a current Handicap 50 with a round rated 49 gives an average of 49.5, which gets rounded up to 50 so no improvement, whereas a current Handicap 50 with a round rated 48 gives an average of 49 so your Handicap reduces by 1).

Handicaps are not really referred to much, but they do link Classifications across different rounds. So the threshold score for an Archer 3rd Class Classification for say a Warwick round, a National round and a Western round will all have the same Handicap rating.

Handicaps can also be used to level the playing field between different levels of archer using an “Allowance”. All archers shoot the same round then the Handicap for each archer is looked up in a set of tables and the Allowance for the round type shot is added to their score and highest adjusted score wins. An archer who shoots exactly to their current Handicap will have an adjusted score of 1,440 (or above that if they shoot better than their current Handicap or below that if they shoot worse), but this is rarely used except in some clubs to determine Club Championship Handicap trophy winners.

Progress Tracking

Phone App

There are many different phone apps available for recording scores. They are generally preset with all the official rounds, but also allow custom (unofficial) rounds to be set up. As the 252 scheme is widely used some apps have these preset, whilst others require you to set them up as custom rounds. Some apps require you to input the arrow scores as numbers, for others you plot the positions on an image of a target face, whilst some offer a choice between the two.

An app can be used to keep your score during a round, but if you are doing a competition then the official scoring should be done first (usually a paper scoresheet, occasionally an iPad) and then you update your app.

Some apps will track your Classification and/or Handicap (if the developer has paid for a licence to use the official tables to calculate these).

Golden Records

The club has a licence to use computer software called Golden Records. This is the official record of scores, Classifications, Handicaps and club records for CTRA. Classification badges will be awarded based on what is in Golden Records and not what is on your phone. If you wish for your progress to be tracked then there are 3 ways to get your scores added to the database.

Firstly, provide the club Records officer with a signed paper scoresheet or screenshot of it, which will then be used to add your score.

Secondly, provide the club Records Officer with a screenshot of an app screen, which will then be used to add your score.

Thirdly, add your own scores online into the Golden Records database. If you wish to be set up for this please ask the club secretary and he will set up a user name, which will then be emailed to you with a link to the database that you then use to set up a password to complete the process. As well as being able to input your own scores you will be able to see your score history, personal bests, Classification, Handicap and the club records.

Competitions

There are a multitude of competitions taking place all over the country, pretty much every weekend. Most accommodate all levels of archer and are a great way to watch, learn from and mix with other archers so you shouldn't feel that you are not good enough to enter.

The club hosts a couple of open competitions, the County Indoor Championships (usually in February) and outdoors a Double 720 (usually in May). Club members can assist as part of the field party (a good way to see how these things work and also observe some elite archers in action), but are also invited to enter the shoot – there is no minimum qualifying standard.

The club also enters a couple of winter indoor postal leagues, both shot on the small 40cm face, one at 15 yards, the other at 20 yards. There is no team as such, it is the top 5 scores that count and get sent in. Although it is a league match, both clubs actually shoot at their own venue and the results are posted (emailed these days) to a central league secretary who puts it all together and then issues the results and league tables.

There are also a couple of outdoor summer leagues that the club may enter – the Windsor League and the Albion League, both named after the round that is shot. These involve teams of up to 8 archers (minimum 5 as the top 5 scores count) and are shot “face to face” so either another club comes to Writtle or we go to their club. 108 scoring arrows plus 6 sighters are shot in ends of 2 alternate sets of 3 arrows, split into 36 arrows at each of 3 distances with breaks in between, so it goes on for several hours. For home matches the field is segregated so you will still be able to do your own thing, or there is an option to “shoot alongside”, which means shooting the same round as the league match (or a shorter distance version of it) on an extra boss next to the match ones.

THAT'S ALL FOLKS – IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE ASK