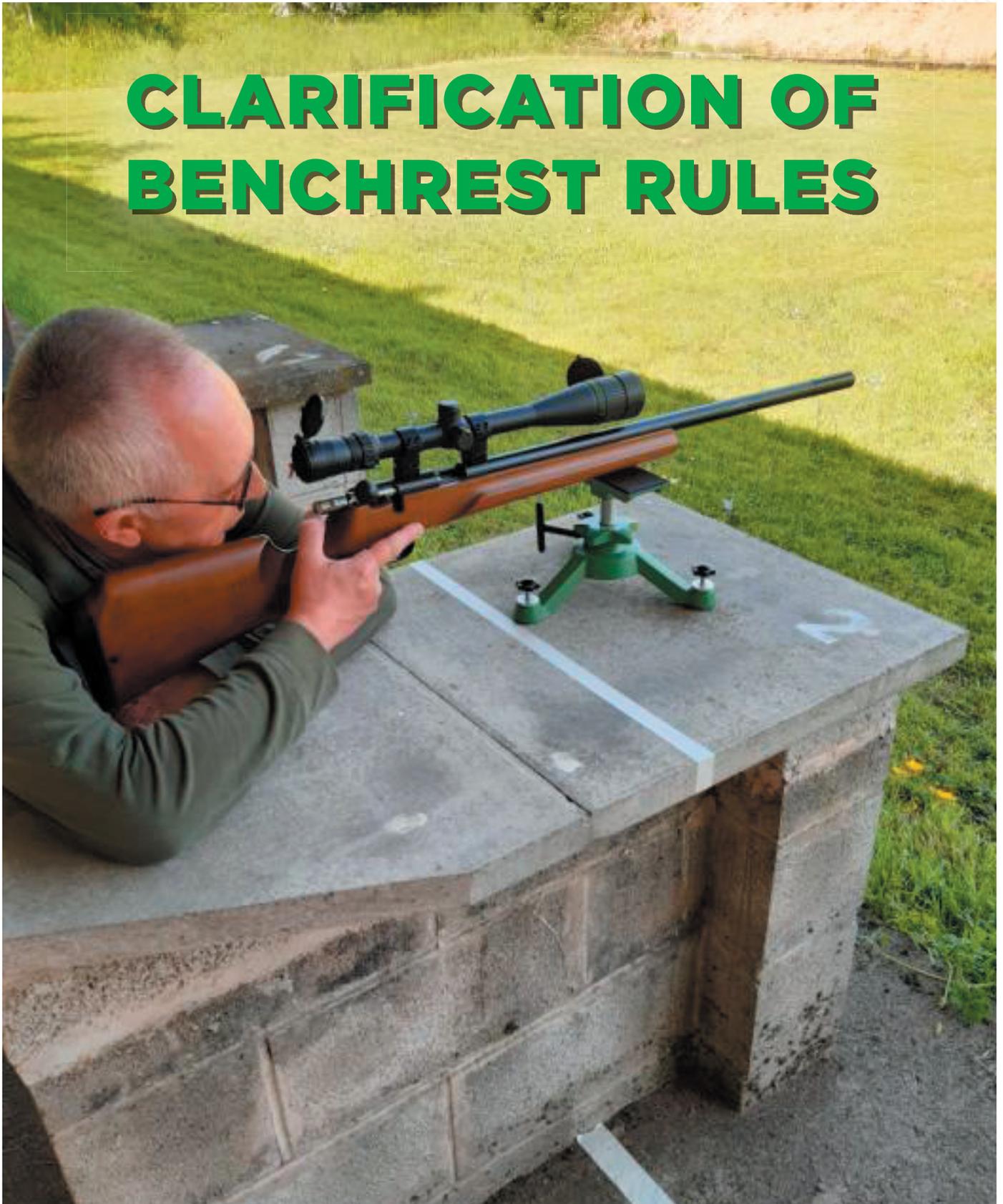




National Small-bore Rifle Association

CLARIFICATION OF BENCHREST RULES



Clarification of NSRA Benchrest Rules

The following document is designed to clarify the rules relating to NSRA Bench Rest Shooting. Each Rule is taken in turn and described in a way that is hopefully easier to understand.

Basic overview of the NSRA Rules

Bench

- Any height to suit the shooter (postal competitions at shooters club) otherwise the bench provided by the organisers.
- The bench top may be shaped so as to form an extension to support the right elbow (or left elbow if left-handed).
- In no way control the elbow's position.

Shooting Distance

- No part of the rifle receiver may be in front of firing line.
- Firing line marked on the bench.

Rest

- One rest at the fore-end only.
- A shooter may use a sling, as in prone shooting, instead of but not in addition to a rest.

Rifle

- Airgun, LSR or Small-bore rifle can be used but must be single loaded.

8.16 BENCHREST RIFLE

8.16.1 Rifle. Any rifle complying with Rules 8.3.2, 8.3.3 or 8.3.4 may be used.

This basically allows the use of any Airgun, LSR or Small-bore rifle.

Rule 8.3.2 refers to Small-bore rifles other than lightweight sport rifles. In this category are included small-bore rifles that would be used for prone shooting. All rifles chambered for rim-fire 5.6 mm (.22 in) Long Rifle cartridges are permitted even if the rifle has a magazine.

Rule 8.3.3 refers to Lightweight Sport Rifles which include .22LR bolt action, semi auto, lever action, falling block etc. Also air guns in either under .22 calibre of any type.

Rule 8.3.4 refers to air rifles. Any type of compressed air or CO2 rifle of calibre 4.5 mm (.177 in) may be used.

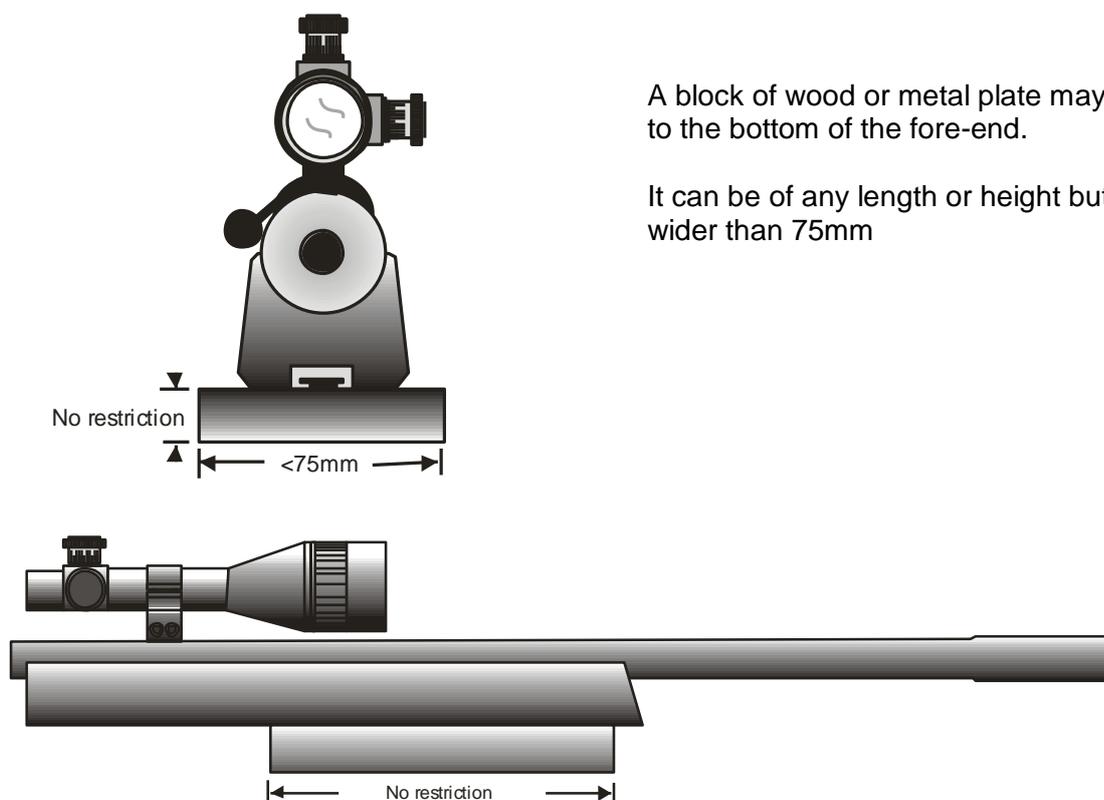
8.16.1.1 Rifles falling within Rule 8.3.3 do not need to comply with the requirements of 8.3.3.1 and 8.3.3.2.

This means that if you chose to use a lightweight sport rifle then it can be heavier than the 4.5Kg maximum weight for LSR and that the trigger may be of any weight that is safe. The RCO has the authority to rule that a trigger is unsafe if he believes it to be so.

8.16.1.2 Rifles fitted with magazines may only be loaded with one cartridge or pellet.

This allows the use of any single shot or magazine loaded rifle but one cartridge may be loaded at a time.

8.16.1.3 Rifles may be fitted with a fore-end raising block not exceeding 75 mm (3 in) in width as measured at 90 degrees to the line of the barrel.



A block of wood or metal plate may be fastened to the bottom of the fore-end.

It can be of any length or height but must not be wider than 75mm

8.16.2 Ammunition. Any ammunition complying with Rules 8.2.1 and 8.2.3.

This allows the use of .22 Short, Long or Long Rifle rimfire ammunition and any airgun pellets of .22 or less of any profile. The bullets or pellets must be wholly of lead or similar soft material.

8.16.3 POSITION

8.16.3.1 The shooter must be seated at a bench or table.

This is to say that the Benchrest Competitions cannot be shot from the prone or F-class style positions – they must be shot from a bench.

8.16.3.2 The rifle may be supported by one rest at the fore-end only. A shooter may use a sling, as in prone shooting, instead of but not in addition to a rest.

This is where the main change from World Rules shooting comes into play. For NSRA competition you may shoot using a fore-end rest only or using a sling at a bench but not both.



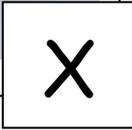
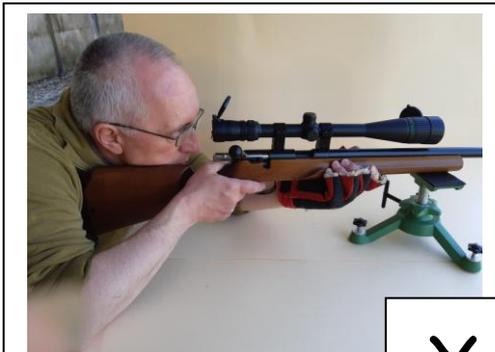
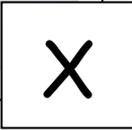
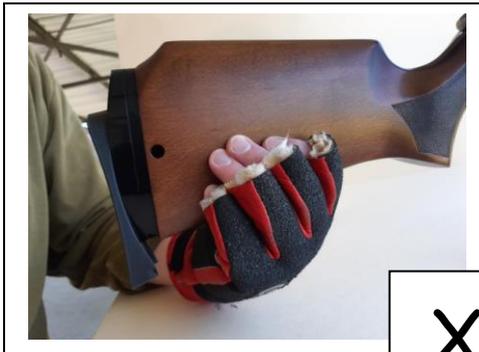
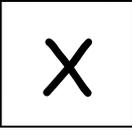
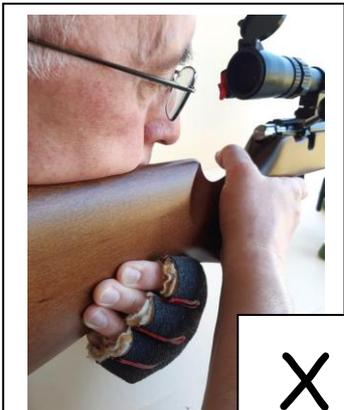
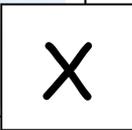
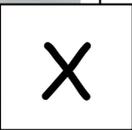
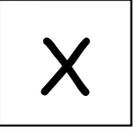
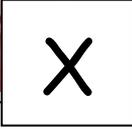
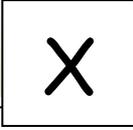
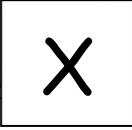
8.16.3.3 When in the firing position, the rifle butt must be located in the shoulder and the stock supported by the shooter's hands. The non-firing hand may rest on the bench and support, but not hold or grip, the rear end of the rifle. This includes the area between the bottom of the pistol grip or any part of the rear of the stock (including butt plate).

The key points are:

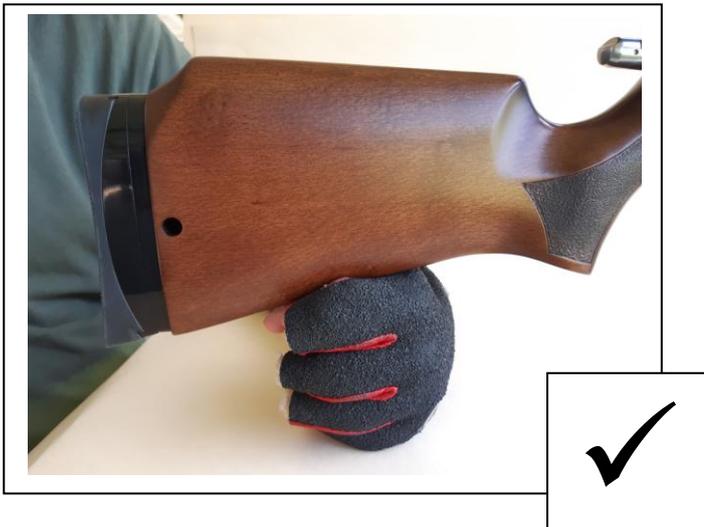
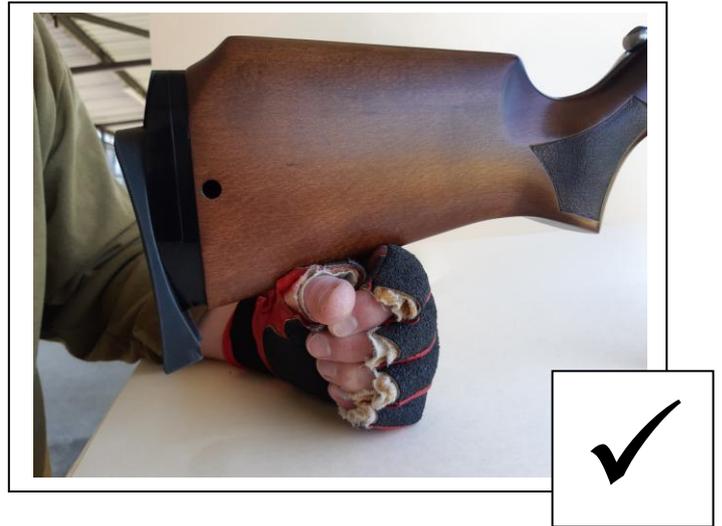
- Supported by the hands – no other part of the body, like forearm, wrist etc. can be used.
- Left hand under the stock somewhere between the front of the pistol grip and the end of the butt plate.
- Left hand supporting **not gripping** an extension or other part of the stock.

The following left hand positions are **NOT** acceptable:





The following left hand positions **ARE** acceptable:



8.16.3.4

Additions to the top of the butt are allowed to imitate the function of an adjustable cheek piece on a free rifle. Additions to the base of the butt are allowed to increase the depth of the butt, but they must not be gripped by the supporting hand.



If you don't have an adjustable cheek piece you can add a block of wood or tape/glue card or other material to the cheek piece to make it fit.

At the bottom of the stock, any extensions – either that are part of the normal rifle accessories (as in the picture above) or those that are made for the purpose, which extend beyond the stock profile. This includes rods that extend down from the rear of the stock, from beneath the pistol grip or any place in between.

You can use rods that extend forward from the butt plate towards the pistol grip as these mimic a deeper stock. These must however, not be angled out to the side.

8.16.3.5

The rear end of the rifle may not rest on or touch the bench, or any pad or other artificial support on the bench, when in the firing position, but may do so between shots and when re-loading.



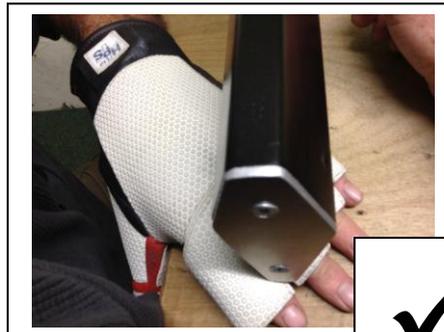
Although you can't use any kind of rear bag or extend the stock or butt plate to touch the bench when firing you may take the butt from your shoulder and rest it on the bench or a pad. However, when reloading make sure the bolt is only closed when the muzzle is pointing at the target. When bench rest shooting it is very easy to take the rifle out of your shoulder, let the toe of the butt plate rest on the bench and operate the bolt. Closing the bolt on a live round in this position would likely send a bullet over the backstop and is extremely dangerous. Also, the pad must not be used in any way when shooting e.g. to rest the hand on.



Although the shooters cheek may also be in contact with the stock no other part of the shooters body may be in contact with the rifle.



8.16.3.6 A glove may be used on the non-shooting hand conforming to Rule 8.7.



Rule 8.7 allows the use of a glove but it must be made of flexible material and must not extend more than 50 mm (2 in) above the wrist measured from the centre of the wrist knuckle or joint. Most people use a standard ISSF shooting glove but other gloves may be used such as an ordinary leather glove.

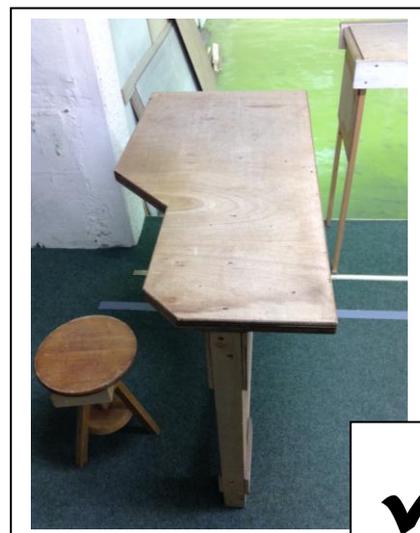


8.16.3.7 Shooting clothing may be worn according to Rule 8.8.



This allows the use of a shooting jacket which is made of flexible material. Any pads, lining or reinforcements of the jacket must also be flexible. The jacket does not have to be to ISSF specification, but must not have reinforcements that support the shooter. You can wear strap-on elbow pads instead of a jacket but not as well as one. In theory, you could wear shooting trousers and boots but they confer little (or no) advantage for benchrest shooting.

8.16.4.1 Bench. The bench may be of any height to suit the shooter. The bench top may be shaped so as to form an extension to support the right elbow (or left elbow if left-handed), but must in no way control the elbow's position.



Any bench may be and it may be shaped like the ones shown above. However, the top must be flat and not have any blocks, protrusions or indentations that give location to the shooter or his equipment.

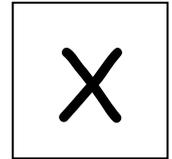
8.16.4.2 The shooter may cover all or part of the bench with a material to give elbow comfort. The material must not have a thickness of more than 20 mm uncompressed.

This allows a shooter to put a mat on the top of the bench. This can be any sort of rubber, carpet or other covering. As an example, a standard shooting mat could be used. The shooter may also use a piece of material that doesn't cover the whole top of the bench to give comfort to the elbows.

8.16.5 Rest

8.16.5.1 *The rest may be of any type of material, may be adjustable for height and may only support the fore-end of the rifle. It may not be fixed to the bench or the fore-end, but must be free to move in relation to both. It must not control the rifle in any way.*

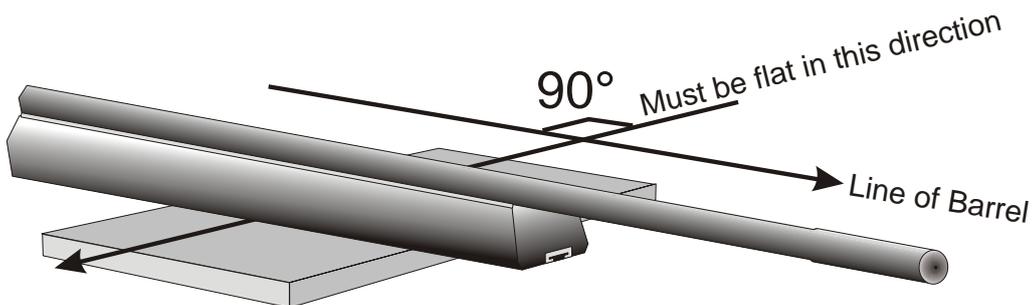
Basically the rest used in NSRA Benchrest Shooting should be a flat platform that supports the weight of the rifle but **provides no further control**. This may be an adjustable type shooting rest or a simple block of wood or other material. The important part is the portion of the rest that is in contact with the rifle. This part of the rest must be flat. In the NSRA Rules it states:



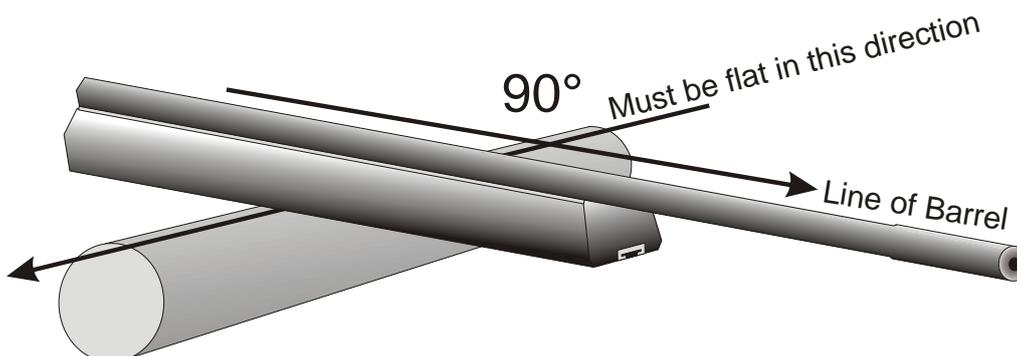
8.16.5.2 *The area of the rest that supports the fore-end of the rifle:*

8.16.5.2.1 *Must be flat in the horizontal plane at right angles to the rifle barrel where it contacts the rifle stock;*

This means that the area that is in contact with the stock has nothing that would control the rifle sideways. This allows the use of a flat plate as in the diagram below.



You can also use a rounded surface (like a cylindrical one in the diagram below) so long as it is flat in the direction perpendicular to the stock of the rifle as shown.

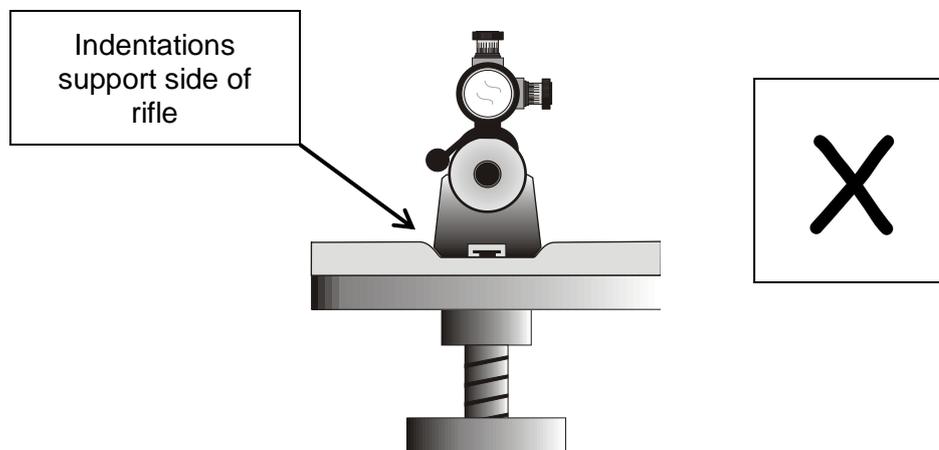


Many commercial rests have vertical extensions (either fixed or adjustable) that are made to control sideways movement. To maintain a flat platform these may not be used when shooting. To this end In the NSRA Rules it states:

8.16.5.2.2 *must be made of a non-pliable material, such as metal or wood;*

8.16.5.2.3 *may have a thin, soft covering, such as cloth, carpet or leather, but the covering must be sufficiently thin that no support is given to either side of the fore-end.*

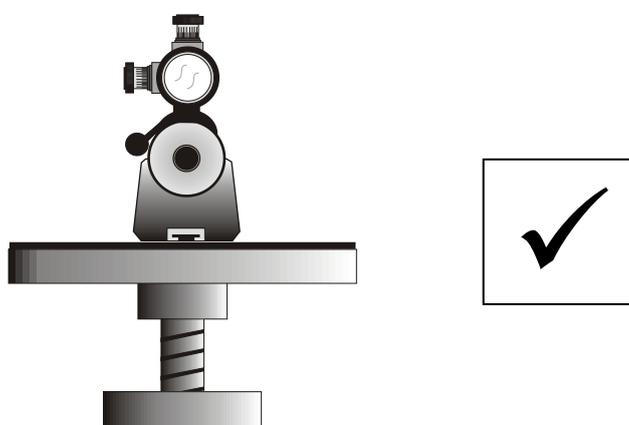
This ensures the surface of the rest isn't modified by the weight of the rifle and gain sideways support.



Other factors must be taken into account when ensuring the rest only supports the rifle. Back to the rule that states:

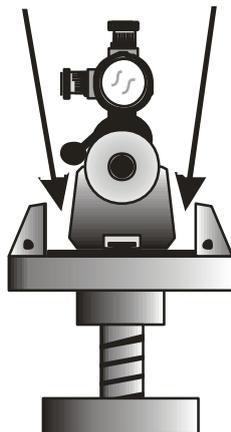
8.16.5.3 *The rest may have vertical extensions at its sides projecting upwards to prevent the rifle falling off the rest between shots and when re-loading, but the fore-end must be visibly clear of these extensions when the shooter is in the firing position.*

This means that the extensions must be removed or a clearly visible gap is maintained on either side of the stock whilst shooting to ensure the forend of the gun receives no further support other than the flat platform indicated earlier.



To ensure that there is a sufficient gap that is visible to a range officer whilst shooting is taking place the gap should be maintained at greater than 10mm on both sides of the rifle stock.

Gap must be greater than 10mm on both sides

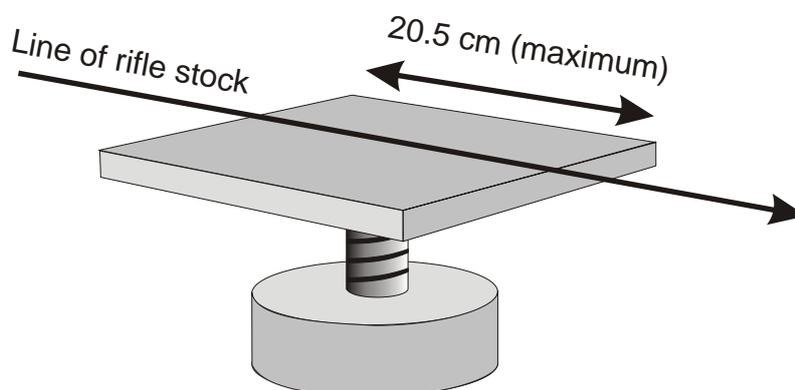


In addition to this the rules further define elements that ensure that the rifle is not controlled. In the rules the rest:

8.16.5.1 *The rest may be of any type of material, may be adjustable for height and may only support the fore-end of the rifle. It may not be fixed to the bench or the fore-end, but must be free to move in relation to both. It must not control the rifle in any way.*

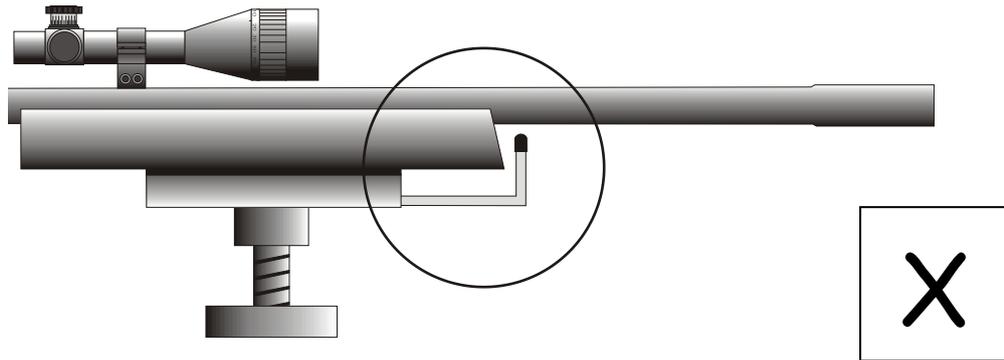
The contact area of the stock and the rest would be affected by this rule. If a very long contact area was used, say the full length of the fore-end, it would give undue control to the whole rifle

The base of the rest itself may be of any size but the contact area with the rifle must be less than 20.5cm long



Some commercial rests are fitted with a forend stop. This limits the forward movement of the stock on the rest and provides a reference point to return the stock to its original position after firing. As such this can also be considered adding further control to the rifle and is prohibited.

8.16.5.5 *Neither the rest nor the rifle shall be fitted with any form of stop device that impedes, or forms a buffer to, the front or rear movement of the rifle over the rest.*



Any forend stop must be removed from the rest or turned so that it can play no part in shooting.

8.16.5.4 *A sandbag may be used to provide the height, but must have a piece of material conforming to 8.16.5.2 interposed between it and the fore-end. The sandbag may not provide any sideways support to the fore-end.*

This allows the use of a sandbag but a flat resilient surface must be put on top of it. This could be a piece of wood or a metal plate. The idea is prevent the sandbag deforming under the weight of the rifle and supporting the sides of it and giving the shooter an inappropriate advantage.



8.16.6 Seat. The seat or chair may be of any height or design and may be adjustable for height.

In shoulder to shoulder competition the benches are provided by the organisers and are not of a specified, standard height. This rule allows the shooter to use their own seat which can be adjusted for height to suit the bench provided.

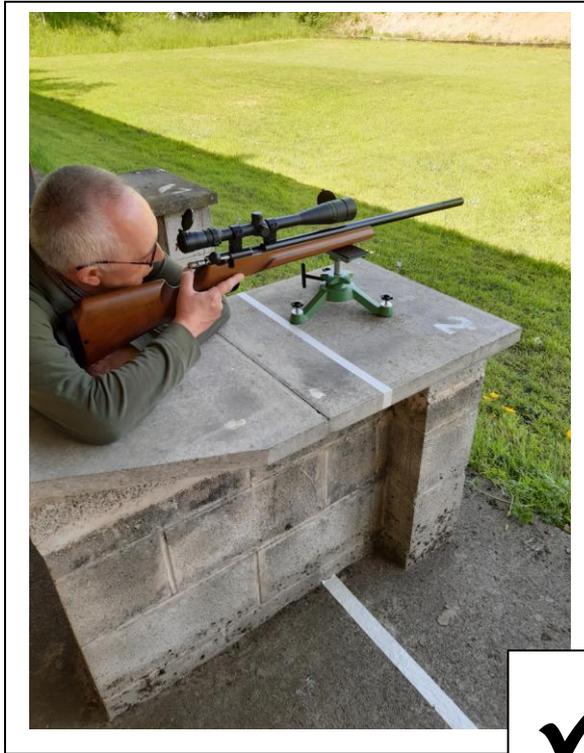


There is nothing to stop the seat being part of the bench. However, many people feel that is not a very flexible solution and makes it difficult to compensate for the stature of different shooters. It can also transmit movement to the rifle.



8.16.7 Shooting Distance. *No part of the rifle receiver may be in front of the front marked edge of the firing point (Rule 1.10.2), which must be marked on the bench.*

As a line for the feet or elbow is inappropriate in benchrest shooting, the means of making sure all shoot from the same distance is worked out using the front of the receiver. This point can be considered to be where the barrel meets the mechanism on any type of small-bore or air rifle. For this reason the bench must be marked with the firing line's position to help shooters and Range Officers.



Front of receiver
behind firing line