

What is IPSC?

This new and exciting style of sport shooting had its origins in California in the early '50s. It quickly spread over the next few years to other continents including Europe, Australia, Central and South America, and Africa.

The International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) was officially founded at the [International Pistol Conference](#) held in Columbia, Missouri, in May 1976. Forty people from around the world were invited to attend this conference in order to determine the nature and future of practical marksmanship. Colonel Jeff Cooper was acting Chairman and acclaimed as the first IPSC World President.



Rob Leatham, World Shoot Caracas Venezuela 1988.

The promotion of accuracy, power, and speed as three equal elements was the prime objective of the Conference along with procedures and [rules](#) for safe gun handling. A [constitution](#) was established and the Confederation was born. The origins of practical shooting were developed and the motto - **DVC** - Diligentia, Vis, Celeritas (Accuracy, Power, Speed) was introduced to reflect this balanced objective.

Today, the International Practical Shooting Confederation is promoted in more than sixty countries (called [Regions](#)) from Argentina to Zimbabwe. Every year, the elected representatives of these Regions meet at the [IPSC General Assembly](#).

In practical shooting, the competitor must try to blend accuracy, power, and speed, into a winning combination. [Targets](#) are 75 centimeters by 45 centimeters with a 15 centimeter center representing the "A zone" or bullseye. Most shooting takes place at close range, with rare shots out to 45 meters. Hitting a 15 centimeter A zone at 45 meters or less might seem easy to an experienced pistol shooter, but in IPSC only full power pistols are allowed (9mm or larger). This power minimum reflects the heritage of this modern sport, and mastering a full power handgun is considerably more difficult than shooting a light recoiling



17 year old French student Eric Grauffel at the 1997 US Open Nationals.

target pistol especially when the competitor is trying to go as fast as possible. Time, also plays a factor. In Comstock scored stages, the scores are divided by the time, adding to the challenge. Competitors may enter any one of five [Divisions](#) depending on the style of firearm they use.

Multiple targets, moving targets, targets that react when hit, penalty carrying targets mixed-in, or even partially covering shoot targets, obstacles, movement, competitive tactics, and, in general, any other relevant difficulty the course designer can dream up all combine to keep the competitors enthusiastic and the spectators entertained. While the rules of IPSC state that the course of fire should be practical and diversity is to be encouraged, to keep the sport from becoming too formalized or standardized. In fact, some matches even contain surprise stages where no one knows in advance what to expect.



Matt Mclearn, World Shoot Bisley, England 1993.

Although the roots are martial in origin, the sport matured from these beginnings, just as karate, fencing, or archery developed from their origins. Now, IPSC shooting is an international sport, emphasizing safety and safe gun handling, accuracy, power, and speed, in major [competitions](#) around the globe. The crowning glory for practical shooting is to become the [IPSC World Champion](#).