

SPORTING CLAYS OF SEPTEMBER

September 2025

There's a certain romance to the idea of sporting clays. You step onto the course, shotgun in hand, and imagine yourself channeling the focus of a champion shooter. The clay pigeons will fly, you will swing with grace, and the scorecard will sing your praises. At least, that's the plan. My recent outing, however, ended not with the roar of glory but with the polite shrug of a 64 out of 100.

Now, 64 is not an awful score. It's not catastrophic. No one had to call in a search party for my dignity. But let's be honest: it's not exactly the kind of number that gets whispered reverently around the clubhouse. It's the numerical equivalent of "solid participation." If sporting clays were a school subject, 64/100 would be that C-plus you try to convince yourself is basically an A when you squint hard enough.

The day started strong enough. The first few stations were merciful, the clays flying at angles I could actually manage. I broke targets, puffed a bit of orange dust, and allowed myself a few self-satisfied nods. Confidence is a fragile thing, though, and mine cracked around station four. Suddenly the targets decided they were fighter jets. One zipped straight past me at a speed suggesting it had somewhere urgent to be, while another arced gracefully into the sky like it was trying out for the Blue Angels. I shot, the clays laughed, and I began building a strong case for mediocrity.

By the halfway mark, I was firmly planted in the middle of the pack. Every station seemed to give me just enough hits to keep the dream alive, but not enough to pull me into respectable territory. My shooting buddy, who was having one of those days where everything connects, politely offered advice: "Swing through more," "Stay in the gun," "Don't think so much." All helpful, no doubt. Unfortunately, it's hard not to think when you're busy wondering how you just missed a clay bird the size of a bagel at 25 yards.

Still, there were moments of triumph. A fast pair of crossers fell to quick instinct and a bit of luck, and I celebrated like I'd just qualified for the Olympics. The scoreboard, however, remained unimpressed. When the final tally came, the verdict was clear: 64. Out of 100. Solidly, resoundingly, unmistakably average.

And here's the thing—I had a blast. The real joy of sporting clays isn't in posting a score that earns bragging rights; it's in the rhythm of the course, the camaraderie of laughing at your misses, and the small personal victories that make you pump your fist. A 64 may not earn a plaque, but it did earn me a reminder that shooting is supposed to be fun, not flawless.

So the next time you step onto the course, don't fret about the scoreboard too much. Sometimes being perfectly mediocre is exactly what makes the day memorable. After all,

64/100 isn't the end of the world—it's just proof you've got plenty of room to keep having fun.