By Duane Thomas

In October 1999 the United States Practical Shooting Association, the governing body of the International Practical Shooting Confederation in the US, introduced three new divisions of competition (based on the type of gun you’re shooting of course). One of these, called Production division, is the Promised Land for anyone who wants to get into shooting IPSC easily and affordably.

In Production division, single-action autos are outlawed, only DA or Safe Action autos allowed. So, no cocked and locked 1911s. If you’re firing one of the “selective double actions” a la CZ-75 offering the option of cocked and locked single action or hammer-down double action first shot, to compete in Production division you MUST start with the hammer down for a DA first shot.

In Production division your holster and mag pouch(es) must be located behind the hips, as opposed to all other USPSA divisions in which you may place the holster/spare ammo carriers wherever you wish. Ten rounds max in-magazine. Allowable modifications in Production are extremely limited. Obviously Production division was inspired by – and in many respects its rules mimic – IDPA. This is the class for the person who wants to take a stock Glock, SIG, Beretta or whatnot out to fire an IPSC match.

Production is probably the most cost-effective approach to begin firing IPSC. All it takes to compete in Production division is a non-single-action auto pistol, concealment type holster, mag pouch and gun belt, and at least two spare magazines (though more would be better). If you’re a serious gun carrier, you probably already own all that stuff, indeed you carry it on a daily basis. Thus, you can get into IPSC without having to spend a penny on new equipment.

Under USPSA rules, you only compete for score against those shooters in your own division, people armed with approximately the same level of technology. Thus, Production shooters only vie for score with other Production shooters. If you’ve been putting off trying IPSC because you thought there was no way on earth your Glock could hold its own against those slick, spendy custom 1911s…don’t worry about it. You’re not gonna BE competing against the single actions, only other Production guns!

In Production, alone of all its divisions of competition, USPSA does away with IPSC’s Major/Minor scoring system in which hits outside the target’s highest scoring area count for less than the exact same hit inflicted by a bullet that “makes Major.” In Production EVERYTHING scores Minor no matter what caliber you’re using. This is THE class in IPSC for 9mms because there’s no scoring advantage to firing anything with more recoil than a Nine.

USPSA leadership realized the 9mm Parabellum is an extremely popular self-defense cartridge, and they wanted their Production division to be 9mm friendly. If they’d stuck to the standard Major/Minor scoring system that wouldn’t have been the case. The guys firing .40s and .45s “making Major” would’ve had an advantage, thus no one would fire Nines and all the guys toting Glock 19s, SIG P228s, Berettas 92s and suchlike wouldn’t come out to play. So USPSA just said, “Okay, you ALL score Minor no matter what.”

That “everything scores Minor no matter what” rule might sound like it sucks for the guy who wants to win the match, until you consider the aforementioned fact that in Production division you only compete for score against other Production shooters operating under the exact same scoring system.

A good Production competitor can do a baaaad number on most other shooters, even those firing Major pf ammo in other divisions. In Washington state where I live, we have a Production specialist named Bruce Bennett. At most matches Bruce fires his Glock 19 carry gun; invariably his score beats most people at the match no matter what they’re shooting, and in which division they’re shooting it. Now that’s DAMN impressive. Yeah okay, you may not technically be firing against the guys with their Open-class $3,000 comped-out raceguns but you’ll probably still like to know how your scores compared. It’s just so much FUN when you take your Cro-Magnon level technology and make those Open guys eat it.