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Indoor archery in Mississippi is as next to non-existent as a flourishing elk herd; however, it is growing in popularity, and for good reason. Indoor shooting provides very important details to a shooter on his or her foundation: shot execution. Unlike 3D there is no wind, change in lighting, yardage variation, uneven footing, or messy terrain features to deal with. By cutting out all of the variables that come with outdoor shooting, there are only two things that can cause misses. Rarely, there is a problem with the bow itself. I never recommend looking there first. Most of the time when an arrow does not reach the x-ring, it is the fault of the operator. Knowing this, a shooter is more open-minded to form changes and shot execution techniques that can pay huge dividends on the 3D course the following spring.

People are competitive by nature. In fact, it would be hard to find a person who shoots competitive archery who is not at least a little bit competitive. This creates a problem for using indoor as a training tool. If you are going to use it to become a better archer, check your ego at the door. Remember that this is a practice session and you are there to learn. Learning is highly inhibited by the notion that you are the best in the world. As the old saying goes, "if you think you are ripe, you will rot. If you think you are green, you will ripen."

The first thing I like to do when shooting a round of indoor is to warm up completely. When it starts to feel natural and I have no tension in my arms, hands, and shoulders I feel sufficiently warmed up. I am ready to execute the best shots I can. When I prepare to shoot the first thing I do is clear my mind, look at the x-ring. I tell myself, "that is where my dot will be when the bow fires." From that moment on, I never take my eyes off of the x-ring. I do not look to see if my arrow is staying on the rest, I do not look at the person standing next to me, I do nothing but stare a hole in my desired target, and let the bow fire. If you have a clear mind and shoot a relaxed shot from start to finish, this

gives you a foundation to begin analyzing your routine. Last winter, I was practicing and started to notice that had several misses left. I am a right-handed shooter with a wider than normal stance. So, I started to pay attention to every detail about the shots I was making. I found that my stance was too open. When my shot ran too long, the tension in my torso induced by having a more than normally open stance was causing my bow to fire when my pin would move left off of the dot, realigning my shot to its normal position.

There are couple of different target faces that are shot for indoor tournaments. There is the 5 spot target shot in Louisville, Kentucky. This is a marathon. Sixty shots, each shot worth a possible 5 points with an x-ring in the middle of each spot. Perfect score is a 300-60x. There is also the 3 spot "Vegas" target. This target is used in Las Vegas, and at the Lancaster Archery Classic. There are actually 2 scoring systems used for this face. In Las Vegas each shot is worth a possible 10 points with an x-ring in the middle. Perfect score is 300-30x for each day of the 3 day competition. Lancaster uses a slightly different method. There is the 10 ring in the middle of the Vegas target face, but the x ring counts as 11 points. A perfect score here would be a 330 for each round of the 2 round event. Lancaster is my favorite style of indoor shooting. Using the 11 ring as a tie breaker seems more productive to me.

With all of this being said, there are many facets to indoor archery. The breadth and width of it could be nearly as deep as 3D. But, if you are like me, and just want to use it as a training aid for 3D, get your equipment, head to the range and become one with shot execution. Learn to time your shots. Learn to know how hard to pull against the wall. Learn to set your feet the same way every time. Learn to draw your bow the same way every time. Most importantly, do not get frustrated when you miss. Use this as an opportunity to elevate your game. In the end, you will be thankful you did.