2027 SEASON NRL HUNTER GAMES RULES AND REGULATIONS

Revised October 28, 2026

NRL Hunter Games is a national series of one-day field-rifle matches created to introduce people to the sport and give them an approachable on-ramp to national two-day NRL Hunter matches. Games matches emphasize practice, training, and fun while helping new and experienced hunters improve their skills in unknown, hunting-like conditions.

Games matches use the divisions, classifications, equipment standards, stage procedures, scoring, and Power Factor tiebreakers in the 2027 Season NRL Hunter Rules and Regulations, subject to the Games provisions in this rulebook. This rulebook controls the one-day Games format, Skills Division assistance, Games season points, and Games recognition. The shorter format allows Match Directors to offer affordable, welcoming events within their local communities.

DIRECTORY

SECTION 1, NRL HUNTER GAMES SAFETY

SECTION 2, NRL HUNTER GAMES MATCH FORMAT

SECTION 3, DIVISIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

SECTION 4, SCORING AND CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFICATION

SECTION 5, NRL SPORTSMANSHIP

2027 Games rules: What changed from 2026 and why

SECTION 1, NRL HUNTER GAMES SAFETY

A rifle shall remain unloaded until the hunter is in the shooting area, under the Range Officer's supervision, and ready to engage the first target. This requirement reduces the risk of an accidental discharge (AD) or negligent discharge (ND).

A. General Rifle Safety

1. Always point your rifle in a safe direction. Never point a rifle at anything you do not intend to kill or destroy.
2. Always keep your rifle unloaded until ready to use. Treat every rifle as though it is loaded, even when you believe otherwise.
3. Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until you are ready to fire.
4. Know your target and what is beyond it.
5. Never use alcohol or drugs while shooting.
6. The host range may impose additional safety requirements. When a range requirement is more restrictive than this rulebook, the more restrictive safety requirement controls.

B. Rifle Safety at an NRL Hunter Games Match

1. NRL Hunter Games competitions are cold-range events. Except while actively shooting under an RO's supervision, every rifle shall be unloaded with the magazine removed, bolt to the rear, and chamber flag inserted.
2. A rifle may be loaded only under the RO's supervision. After completing a stage, the hunter shall remove the magazine, place the bolt to the rear, show a clear chamber, and insert a chamber flag before removing the rifle from the firing line.
3. Ground rifles only where the RO designates and in the designated safe direction.
4. When moving between shooting locations, keep the rifle pointed in a safe direction and ensure the chamber is empty.

C. Rifle Safety During a Stage

1. Movement or transition shall be performed with the bolt to the rear and the chamber empty.
2. A Match Director may approve a semiautomatic rifle with a closed bolt during movement. When approved, the hunter shall engage the safety and call “safe” loudly enough for the RO to hear through hearing protection before moving.

3. The 180-degree rule applies during all movements. The muzzle shall remain within 90 degrees of straight downrange. An RO may establish a more restrictive muzzle limit for a stage. Hunters shall follow all RO directions and remain aware of the muzzle at all times.

D. Safety Violations and Penalties

1. Cold-range violation: A first violation results in a warning, a second violation results in a zero for the stage, and a third violation results in a match disqualification (DQ) and removal from the competition. Cold-range violations include a live round in the chamber, a magazine inserted, a closed bolt, or failure to use a chamber flag outside active shooting under RO supervision.
2. Muzzling or violating the 180-degree rule: Muzzling means pointing or sweeping the muzzle of a rifle across another person's body while the rifle is in a person's possession. Muzzling another person results in an immediate match DQ and removal from the competition. The RO shall report the violation to the MD, and the MD makes the final DQ decision. Muzzling can occur only when the rifle is in hand. Walking in front of a grounded rifle in a designated holding area is not itself a safety violation. Hunters should nevertheless avoid flagging themselves even when a rifle is considered safe.
3. Unsafe transition: On a first violation, the RO shall stop the hunter, require the hunter to correct the condition, and return the hunter to the previous firing position before continuing. A second violation results in a zero for the stage. A third violation results in a match DQ. When semiautomatic movement has been approved, the same penalties apply if the hunter fails to engage the safety or call “safe.”
4. Sky loading: Chambering a live round without a positive on-target sight picture, or while the muzzle is pointed above the horizon line, is sky loading.
5. Negligent discharge: A negligent discharge is a round unintentionally discharged during a transition, movement, or firearm manipulation, or a round intentionally discharged during a cease-fire period. A negligent discharge results in an immediate match DQ and removal from the competition.
6. Accidental discharge or mechanical failure: An accidental discharge is a round unintentionally discharged because of a mechanical failure. The hunter shall be removed from the event until the rifle is repaired and safe to operate. The hunter receives a zero for the affected stage and forfeits all later stages missed while the rifle is out of service.
7. Drugs or alcohol: If the MD determines that a hunter, RO, or other participant is under the influence of drugs or alcohol during the competition, that person shall be removed from the event. A competing hunter also receives a match DQ. An intoxicated person shall not be permitted to drive away from the event.

E. Match Safety Briefing

The following briefing shall be read before the competition begins. The MD may add location-specific requirements.

1. Always point your rifle in a safe direction. Never point it at anything you do not intend to kill or destroy. Ground rifles only where directed by an RO. Pointing a rifle at another person results in disqualification.
2. Except while it is your turn to shoot under RO supervision, rifles are cold: magazine removed, bolt back, chamber empty, and chamber flag inserted. Cold-range violations, including a live round in the chamber, result in a warning for the first violation, a stage zero for the second, and a match DQ for the third.
3. Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to fire. A negligent discharge results in disqualification. An accidental discharge or mechanical failure results in a zero for the stage and forfeiture of later stages until the rifle is repaired.
4. In an emergency, an RO shall call “cease fire,” and everyone who hears the command shall repeat it. The RO shall assess the situation and notify the MD. The MD shall activate the emergency plan and primary medical responder.
5. The emergency and 911 plan is: [MATCH DIRECTOR TO COMPLETE]
6. The primary medical responder is: [MATCH DIRECTOR TO COMPLETE]
7. The trauma kit is located at: [MATCH DIRECTOR TO COMPLETE]
8. Identify any other medical personnel present.
9. Ask whether there are any questions.

SECTION 2, NRL HUNTER GAMES MATCH FORMAT

A. Hunter Responsibilities

1. Hunters shall comply with the rules of their declared division and classification.
2. Hunters shall understand the RO and hunter communications in Section 2.D and the specific competition rules in Section 2.E before competing.
3. Hunters shall treat MDs and ROs with respect. Disagreements shall be handled through calm, respectful communication. The MD's ruling at the match is final.
4. Every participant is considered a Safety Officer. Anyone who witnesses an unsafe act shall call for a cease fire, stop the unsafe act when safe to do so, and inform the nearest RO.
5. Hunters shall participate in match and stage briefings so the match can proceed efficiently.

6. Before the clock starts, the RO will ask whether the hunter understands the course of fire. The hunter's affirmative response is the last opportunity to request clarification before starting the stage.
7. Competitive hunters may not range or begin searching for targets before the clock starts. Skills Division hunters may receive target locations, ranges, and other stage assistance before the clock starts, as provided in Section 3.
8. After completing a stage, making the rifle safe, and approving the score, the hunter shall promptly clear the shooting area. Gear organization and magazine loading shall occur in the holding area. A hunter shall not remain to watch, comment on, or distract the next hunter, except when assisting a Skills Division hunter, including a coached Young Gun, who requested assistance.
9. A hunter assisting a Skills Division hunter, including a coached Young Gun, and teammates communicating on the clock, shall speak quietly. Communication intended to assist hunters waiting in the holding area may result in punitive action by the MD.
10. Hunters are encouraged to publicly thank the sponsors that support the competition.

B. Match Director Responsibilities

1. The MD is responsible for the overall direction of the match and is the final authority at the event.
2. The MD shall understand and apply Sections 1 through 5 of this rulebook.
3. The MD shall establish RO coverage sufficient to administer the match safely and consistently. A dedicated RO at every stage is not required. Rolling ROs or qualified ROs assigned within each squad are acceptable. The MD shall provide a reliable means of calling impacts, including an appropriate combination of spotters, reactive targets, and/or electronic flashers.
4. The MD shall use the official NRL Hunter scoring system, including the NRL Hunter website and scoring application, to administer the match and record scores. Hunters shall be able to review their score after each stage. A paper backup is encouraged in case of equipment, connectivity, or battery failure.
5. The MD shall use targets that support a high-quality course of fire while retaining reasonable creative freedom in stage design.
6. Games matches should err on the side of being too easy rather than too challenging. Their primary purpose is to introduce people to the sport and provide practice, training, and fun. MDs should design the match so newer hunters have a realistic opportunity to locate targets, build positions, and achieve impacts while experienced hunters are still rewarded for stronger execution.

7. Each stage should offer at least one practical shooting solution using common hunting equipment, match-provided props, or natural terrain. Specialized competition equipment may be used, but it should not be necessary simply to make a reasonable attempt at the stage. Target size, distance, visibility, positional difficulty, and time demand should be balanced with the experience level the match is intended to serve.
8. MDs should clearly communicate genuinely necessary equipment before registration. When practical, MDs are encouraged to arrange loaner equipment or permit reasonable equipment sharing before a hunter begins the stage, provided safety and the integrity of competitive blind stages are maintained.
9. The MD shall provide a 20-minute arbitration period for hunters to review scores and submit grievances. Scores become final when the arbitration period ends and shall not later be altered. Issues reported afterward may be documented and reviewed, but placements, points, trophies, and distributed prizes shall not be recalled.
10. An MD, including a co-MD, may shoot the match they direct for practice only. They are ineligible for match points, Games season points, official placement, trophies, awards, or prizes at that match. If an MD shoots in Team Division, the entire team is noncompetitive and subject to the same exclusions. Practice scores may be recorded, but shall be clearly identified as noncompetitive and excluded from official competitive rankings and from the winning normalized score used to calculate Games season points. Directing one match does not affect eligibility at other matches the MD does not direct.

C. Range Officer Responsibilities

1. An RO is anyone acknowledged by the MD as assisting with the competition, other than the MD, including stage ROs, spotters, registration personnel, and other match workers. An MD who shoots remains subject to Section 2.B.10.
2. ROs shall understand this rulebook before the competition begins. An RO who observes an unsafe act shall call a cease fire and correct the unsafe condition as soon as possible.
3. An RO running a stage shall know the stage and administer it as consistently as reasonably possible for every hunter.
4. Recommended stage commands are: “Hunter, what is your name? Is all gear stowed, except for your rifle and spotting or ranging device? Is your tripod fully collapsed, bipod folded, and backpack fully on? Do you understand the course of fire? Your time starts now.”

5. Spotting ROs are responsible for calling impacts. Standard calls such as “impact,” “reengage,” and “next target” are encouraged. Spotters may provide Skills Division hunters with coaching, target-location and ranging assistance, wind calls, and corrections before and during the stage, including from the start. Other hunters shall not receive corrections during the stage. Post-stage discussions shall be brief and quiet so hunters in the holding area do not gain an advantage.
6. If an RO cannot resolve a grievance, the RO shall ask the MD for a final decision. The MD shall also be informed promptly of grievances an RO resolves.

D. RO and Hunter Communications

1. An RO may answer a concise yes-or-no question that clarifies the target array. Examples include: “Is my first target at placard X?”, “Are my targets X-shaped?”, or “Is target three the buck with its head pointing left?”
2. Questions that cannot be answered definitively with yes or no, or that create additional ambiguity, should not be asked or answered. For example, “Is target three left of the oak tree?” may be unclear when several trees are present.
3. An RO shall not answer a question intended to reduce the hunter's search area or otherwise game the stage. For example, “Are all targets on the valley floor?” seeks a competitive advantage rather than clarification. These communication limits do not restrict the coaching and target information permitted for Skills Division hunters under Section 3.

E. Specific Competition Rules

1. An NRL Hunter Games match is a one-day competition consisting of at least eight stages. Each stage consists of four target engagements arranged as one position with four targets, two positions with two targets, or four positions with one target. The maximum round count is eight rounds per hunter per stage. If weather or another event outside the MD's control prevents completion of the planned course of fire, the match remains valid when the event substantially fulfills this format.
2. Stage scoring is 2-1-dead-target scoring. A first-round impact is worth two points and a second-round impact is worth one point. Once hit, the target is neutralized.
3. For example, a hunter who impacts the first target with the first shot receives two points and moves to the next target or position. A hunter who misses the first shot but impacts with the second receives one point and moves on. A hunter who misses both shots receives no points for that target and moves on.
4. In a multiple-position stage, the hunter may select the position order unless the stage briefing specifies otherwise.

5. Shooting at the host range and using the range's props before the competition is permitted, but no competitive hunter may shoot a competition stage before the match. The MD should know what other events and training occur at the range to prevent accidental reuse or disclosure of the course of fire. An MD who prepares or tests stages may shoot only on the noncompetitive basis described in Section 2.B.10.
6. No hunter, except a Skills Division hunter or an MD shooting on the noncompetitive basis described in Section 2.B.10, may assist in designing or constructing a stage's course of fire.
7. Ties are resolved using the Power Factor (PF) recorded at registration. The individual hunter with the higher PF wins the tie. For a Team Division tie, the average PF of both members of each team is used; the team with the higher average wins the tie. See Section 4.A.
8. Hunters shall carry all equipment through the entire course.
9. For competitive hunters, matches consist of blind stages. Distances and target locations are not provided. Competitive hunters shall find, range, and engage all targets on the clock, either individually or as a team according to their registered division. Skills Division hunters may be given target locations and ranges before the clock starts and are not required to shoot the stage blind.
10. Hunters start the clock with all gear stowed and the pack fully on:
    - A rifle and binoculars or ranging device may be carried by hand or slung.
    - A bipod, when used, shall be stowed or attached to the rifle in a collapsed position.
    - A tripod, when used, shall be stowed and collapsed.
11. Individual hunters have four minutes and Team Division hunters have six minutes to complete a stage.
    - A shot fired no more than 0.25 seconds after the time limit remains eligible for points.
    - When time is called, the hunter shall make the rifle safe, show clear, and insert a chamber flag. No additional shot may be fired, except that a Skills Division hunter may fire a round already chambered before time expired.
12. Shooting areas and positions:
    - Each shooting area shall be large enough to allow appropriate positions for the target distances.
    - If several positions are available, the hunter may select them on the clock unless the stage briefing specifies otherwise.
    - Any position may be selected within the designated shooting area, but not forward of its boundary marker. Positions may be prone, sitting, kneeling, or standing and may use natural terrain or the hunter's equipment. A new position shall be at least one arm's length from the previous position.
    - Stages should use terrain, trees, rocks, and prone positions realistically. “Circus stages” are not permitted.

13. Targets:
    - The initial target in an array shall have an identifying placard at least 18 by 24 inches. The placard should be near the first target, with less than 20 feet recommended. When site conditions require greater separation, the MD shall identify the affected stage and provide only the additional information necessary without disclosing target locations. An aiming aid with left and right lateral limits shall point toward the target array.
    - Targets shall be engaged left-to-right, right-to-left, near-to-far, or far-to-near, as clearly stated in the staging area.
    - Animal-themed targets appropriate to the region are encouraged. Target size should represent the vital zone of the depicted animal; for example, 18 by 12 inches for a large mule deer.
    - Target size and presentation should give a prepared newer hunter a reasonable opportunity to achieve impacts while preserving the field-skill challenge of the stage.
14. Distances:
    - Most targets should be between 200 and 700 yards. Some events may include targets out to 1,000 yards when target size, visibility, and conditions make the engagement reasonable.
    - Targets should not be hidden or unreasonably difficult to locate, though observation skill is part of the competition.
15. Arbitration:
    - A hunter disputing a score or an RO's administration of a stage shall raise the issue immediately and attempt to resolve it professionally before proceeding to the next stage.
    - If the hunter and RO cannot resolve the issue, the MD shall make the final decision.
16. Reshoots are not allowed, including when questions or answers may have caused hunter or RO confusion, because a reshoot would give the hunter prior knowledge of a blind stage.
17. Prize tables and cash payouts are not permitted at NRL Hunter Games matches. Trophies are the only awards that may be based on match results. Any other items, including donated merchandise or prizes, shall be distributed only by random drawing and shall not be awarded based on score or placement. These matches are intended as affordable practice, training, and fun for hunters preparing to compete in national two-day NRL Hunter matches.
18. An MD may provide trophies at the MD's discretion. Optional Skills Division trophies, including trophies for coached Young Guns, are permitted as a Games-specific exception to the national Skills awards restriction. Skills trophies shall be separate from competitive placement and do not confer match or Games season points. Any other items shall be distributed only by random drawing under Section 2.E.17. An MD shooting their own match, and any team containing that MD, remain ineligible for trophies, awards, and prizes under Section 2.B.10.

SECTION 3, DIVISIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

NRL Hunter Games uses the divisions and classifications defined in Section 4.A through 4.C of the 2027 Season NRL Hunter Rules and Regulations, revised October 28, 2026, except for the Magnum classification in Hunter Section 4.B.5. Those provisions control eligibility, rifle configuration, caliber, muzzle velocity, Power Factor, equipment, and weight, except for the Games-specific Skills coaching and stage-information provisions in this section and the trophy and drawing rules in Sections 2.E.17 and 2.E.18. The full division and equipment requirements remain controlling; the applications below do not replace them.

Hunters shall declare their division and, when applicable, classification during Games registration. Classifications may be recognized at individual Games matches, while Games season points are calculated under Section 4.B of this rulebook.

2027 Division and Classification Applications

1. Divisions are Factory, Open Light, Open Heavy, Team, and Skills. All rifle, equipment, and weight requirements in the referenced 2027 Hunter rules apply. Team procedures, including one loaded rifle at a time and the order in which teammates fire, also apply.
2. Factory sealed-box ammunition of .257 caliber or greater with bullets weighing at least 120 grains is exempt from the 380,000 minimum PF requirement in Open Light and Open Heavy under Hunter Sections 4.A.2.c and 4.A.3.c. PF remains required for tiebreakers.
3. The suppressor allowances and production-configuration requirements in Hunter Sections 4.A.1.d and 4.A.2.d apply to Factory and Open Light. Equipment weighing and the treatment of slings, ammunition, detachable magazines, and rifle-mounted electronics follow Hunter Section 4.C.
4. Young Gun eligibility follows Hunter Section 4.B.2: ages 8 through 16, with eligibility beginning on the eighth birthday and the hunter no older than 16 at their first match of the season. A parent or guardian shall be present, and the hunter shall operate the firearm safely without hands-on assistance. A Young Gun who receives coaching or guardian assistance on the clock shall be treated as a Skills Division hunter, with no competitive placement or Games season points. Optional Games recognition is governed by Section 2.E.18.
5. Professional and Amateur classifications apply only at Pro/Am matches under Hunter Section 4.B.4. Pro eligibility uses the national rule's 70% overall-finish threshold at any precision rifle match, including other series, during the preceding three years. Pros shall meet their declared Factory, Open Light, or Open Heavy requirements, including applicable PF requirements. Amateurs may use any safe, functional centerfire rifle cartridge and are exempt from the minimum PF and bullet-diameter requirements specified in that provision.

6. Magnum classification is not offered at NRL Hunter Games matches.
7. Skills Division is recommended for new shooters and anyone who wants a supported learning experience. Skills Division hunters may request coaching and assistance before and during a stage, including from the start. Target locations and ranges may be provided before the clock starts, so a Skills hunter is not required to shoot a blind stage or complete an unassisted attempt before receiving help. Skills hunters may choose to attempt any part of a stage independently. All safety requirements still apply. Assistance shall be given quietly so it does not reveal stage information to competitive hunters who have not completed that stage. Skills scores may be recorded for practice, but do not confer competitive placement or Games season points. Optional Skills recognition is governed by Section 2.E.18.

SECTION 4, SCORING AND CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFICATION

A. Match Scoring and Tiebreakers

1. Stage scoring is 2-1-dead-target scoring. A first-round impact is worth two points, a second-round impact is worth one point, and the maximum individual score is eight points per stage. Once hit, the target is neutralized.
2. Match score is the total of all stage points.
3. Ties between individual hunters are resolved by the Power Factor recorded at registration. The hunter with the higher Power Factor wins the tie.
4. A tie between teams is resolved using the average PF of both members of each team, calculated as (member 1 PF + member 2 PF) / 2. The team with the higher average wins the tie. Both members' PF values shall be recorded at registration, including when a hunter is exempt from a minimum PF requirement.
5. Once a competitor begins the course of fire, all points earned are retained unless another rule expressly requires those points to be forfeited.
6. An MD who shoots their own match, and any team containing that MD, participate only on the noncompetitive basis described in Section 2.B.10. Recorded practice scores confer no official match points, placement, trophies, awards, prizes, or Games season points.
7. Skills Division scores, including those of coached Young Guns, are recorded for practice only and confer no competitive placement or Games season points. Optional Skills recognition is governed by Section 2.E.18.

B. Games Season Points

1. Games season points may be earned only by NRL Hunter members. A hunter who is not a member at the match has seven days after the match to obtain membership for the points to count.
2. Games season points are earned by competing in sanctioned NRL Hunter Games matches.

3. Skills Division hunters, including Young Guns receiving on-the-clock coaching or guardian assistance, do not earn Games season points. An MD shooting their own match, and any team containing that MD, also earn no Games season points.
4. Games match scores are normalized for the season leaderboard so individual hunters and teams can be compared on the same scale. An individual hunter's normalized score is the hunter's total match score. A team's normalized score is its combined match score divided by two. Each member of a team receives the team's resulting Games season points.
5. Each match awards a maximum of 100 Games season points. The eligible hunter or team with the highest normalized score receives 100 points. Every other eligible hunter's or team's points are calculated as a percentage of that winning normalized score. Skills Division scores, scores of an MD shooting their own match, and scores of any team containing that MD shall not be used as the winning normalized score.
   Normalized match score / winning normalized match score x 100 = Games season points

For example, if the winning normalized score is 64 match points and another hunter's score is 61, the second hunter receives 95.31 Games season points.

6. Games season points are cumulative. All eligible scores earned at sanctioned NRL Hunter Games matches during the season count toward the hunter's season total. Games retains this cumulative, normalized percentage system; the national two-day series points and top-two-match qualification provisions do not replace it.

C. Grand Slam Championship Qualification

1. A hunter shall be an NRL Hunter member to qualify through NRL Hunter Games for the Grand Slam Championship.
2. Hunters may compete in as many sanctioned Games matches as they choose.
3. Games season points shall be tallied by NRL Hunter and displayed on the NRL Hunter website.
4. Ten Grand Slam Championship invitations shall be allocated to the top eligible hunters in the NRL Hunter Games series standings, as provided in Section 4.F.2.f of the 2027 NRL Hunter Rules and Regulations.
5. Other Grand Slam qualification routes and invitation allocations are governed by Section 4.F of the 2027 NRL Hunter Rules and Regulations. The Grand Slam Championship itself, including match scoring and squadding, is governed by Section 4.G of those rules.

SECTION 5, NRL SPORTSMANSHIP

A. Good Sportsmanship

1. Good sportsmanship is a founding principle of NRL Hunter Games and is highly regarded throughout the NRL Hunter community.
2. Good sportsmanship grows the sport, creates positive role models, and reflects well on the community and its sponsors. It cannot be precisely quantified but is readily recognized by participants.
3. NRL Hunter may present special sportsmanship recognition at the Grand Slam Championship to a hunter selected by the Advisors.

B. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. NRL Hunter takes unsportsmanlike conduct seriously.
2. Examples include cheating, treating participants or range staff with disrespect, lying, unwarranted complaining, throwing tantrums, or behaving in a persistently unpleasant or disruptive manner.

C. Cheating

Cheating means acting dishonestly or unfairly to gain a competitive advantage. Examples include:

1. Sabotaging another hunter's equipment.
2. Changing preapproved equipment during a match.
3. Scouting targets when it is not the hunter's turn to compete.
4. Discussing stage layouts or target ranges with competitors who have not completed the course of fire.
5. Assisting with a course of fire or obtaining course-of-fire information before the match, except as expressly permitted for a Skills Division hunter or an MD shooting on the noncompetitive basis described in Section 2.B.10.
6. Exceeding 3,275 fps muzzle velocity.
7. Altering or destroying score sheets, electronic scores, or scoring devices.
8. Any other conduct the RO or MD reasonably determines to be unfair or cheating.

D. Penalties for Unsportsmanlike Conduct and Cheating

1. A hunter who acts in an unsportsmanlike manner is subject to a penalty the MD considers appropriate, including a warning, stage zero, match DQ, or removal from the competition.
2. Cheating results in a match DQ and removal from the competition.
3. A hunter removed for cheating or unsportsmanlike conduct receives no match or season points.

2027 Games rules: What changed from 2026 and why

NRL Hunter Games is a place to learn, practice, and build confidence in a one-day match. The 2027 changes bring Games closer to the core rules used at two-day national Hunter matches, so the experience you gain locally carries over when you take that next step.

Skills is the recommended starting point for new shooters

Skills is about learning with support. You can receive coaching, target locations, and ranges before or during a stage, including from the start. You do not have to shoot blind or complete an unassisted attempt before getting help. Skills scores are for practice, without competitive placement or season points. Separate Skills trophies may be offered. All safety requirements still apply.

Learn the divisions and equipment rules used at national matches

The 2026 Games rules used one equipment category without divisions or a minimum Power Factor. Games now uses Factory, Open Light, Open Heavy, Team, and Skills, with the applicable Hunter equipment rules and classifications. This introduces competitive shooters to the rifle-weight, equipment, and ammunition requirements they will encounter at national matches. Skills retains its equipment exemptions. Games does not offer a Magnum classification.

Competitive stages build the same field skills as national matches

In 2026, target locations were shown before the clock started. Competitive shooters now find, range, and engage targets on the clock, following Hunter stage procedures. Individual stages remain four minutes; teams receive six minutes. Skills shooters can receive the target information and coaching they need.

2027 Games rules: What changed from 2026 and why (continued)

Results follow consistent rules

Power Factor replaces lighter rifle weight and a coin toss as the tiebreaker. Team ties use the average Power Factor of both teammates. For season points, team scores are divided by two so they can be compared with individual scores. Games keeps its cumulative percentage-based season points and has ten Grand Slam invitations under the 2027 Hunter rules.

Recognition keeps the focus on learning and participation

Trophies may recognize match results. Other items are distributed by random drawing, and prize tables and cash payouts are not allowed. This keeps Games focused on practice, improvement, and community.

Match Directors may shoot for practice

A Match Director or co-director can shoot their own match, but cannot earn points, placement, trophies, or prizes. The same restriction applies to their entire team. This lets organizers practice while protecting fair results for other competitors.

Safety and match administration are more consistent

Safety procedures and penalties align with Hunter. Repeated cold-range violations follow a warning, then a zero for the stage, then match disqualification. Serious safety violations can still result in immediate disqualification. Matches use the official NRL Hunter website and scoring app, and may use rolling or squad Range Officers to support local events.

Games remains a one-day format with at least eight stages, four target engagements per stage, and the familiar 2-1 scoring system. Match Directors are encouraged to create approachable stages that help newer shooters learn and improve.