

Wright Shooting Concepts | IDPA Skills | March 7, 2020



BLUF: RECOMMEND

Format

8 hours | 1,000 rounds | \$250 | Homestead Training Center

Instructor to Student Ratio

1:9 | Brandon Wright was the solo instructor

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Personal Kit

Colt Combat Commander 9mm | Vickers Combat Wilson Duty Magazines | Speer Lawman 147 grain TMJ | Long's Shadow OWB holster and double mag carrier (required) | Ares Gear belt | Oakley eye protection | Etymotic electronic ear buds
| **ZERO STOPPAGES OR ISSUES**

Training Day

Class started with introductions, paperwork, safety brief, and kitting up. With 9 experienced students and 1 instructor, this went quickly. (Of the 9 students, I was the only "tactical" [I hate that word!] shooter, while the others were serious about gaming and represented a spectrum of experience and ratings.)

Class began with an in-test, so owner/instructor Brandon Wright could evaluate each student's skills upon arrival. Administered one student at a time, we shot the El Presidente from 10 yards (sans the 180° turn). Everyone was solid.

Though this course was billed as an "IDPA Skills" course involving both shooting skills and gaming strategies, Brandon expanded it to include USPSA since he shoots both. As a result, he would frequently compare and contrast the two organizations in terms of what gamers need to be thinking about.

Brandon explained that with the new IDPA scoring rules, the goal is to shoot clean even at the expense of time because your score is based only on time, and the time penalties for missing an "A zone" are draconian. Indeed, one of my favorite quotes from him that day was **"In IDPA you can never get time back, you can only give it away."** As such, he said it's not uncommon for him to shoot .28 splits for accuracy in IDPA whereas in USPSA he would shoot the same course with .18 splits.

We then proceeded to run a course of fire he set up with barriers, movement, cardboard and steel, etc. Each one of us ran it as fast as we could and still make solid hits. After all of us went, Brandon takes his turn and said he was "going to take his time." Watching him it felt like he was moving in slow motion and truly

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was taking his time . . . but the timer didn't lie and he was 50% to 150% faster than every one of us.

This introduction led to a block of training on efficiencies when running a stage. For example, he showed how when we were shooting from the side of a barricade we would have to adjust our shooting position for each target as they presented differently, versus his establishing 1 universal position he could then parlay into shooting all the targets by simply leaning in a particular direction to engage that target. Another example was footwork. Some of us were not leading with our outside foot against an outer edge when working around a barricade, nor properly working fault lines.

As if this wasn't enough, Brandon then started covering what he called "time savers." Some examples included:

- Tracking with your gun up while moving from point A to point B. Too many of us were lowering our gun too far while moving and then having to bring it back up.
- Performing reloads from slide lock while moving instead of when stationary.
- Focus on tasks with intent. For example, the stage began with our loaded gun on a barrel. Unlike the rest of us, Brandon was intensely looking at his gun, had his open hands positioned as close to the gun as possible, and deliberately picked up the gun with both hands so he was ready to start shooting.
- Driving the gun on the way to the target instead of waiting until we settled into position.
- Leaning out one time to see all the targets, instead of only a few.

It was at this point of the morning that I began to see clearly a lot of crossover between gaming and real world applications. Not everything, mind you, but a whole lot more than I expected.

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Next up was determining how target size and distance dictate:

1. Acceptable sight picture
2. Trigger control
3. Cadence

We began this journey with Brandon's sight deviation drill where we learned the outer limits of our sight picture, whether with iron or red dot sights. Using a hard front sight focus and slow fire, we fired at 5, 10, and 15 yards with our sight picture at every extreme. We started with a traditional "perfect" equal height, equal light sight picture, and then progressed with the front sight or red dot oriented in the extreme right, left, top, and bottom edges of our rear sight notch or window, respectively. For most of us, we were able to keep the point of impacts at the edge of the A zone out to 15 yards.

Once we knew the mechanical limits of our sighting system, we then learned about throttling between hard target versus hard front sight focus. With our guns holstered, Brandon simply had us focus on a random object with both eyes open. Once we did this, and while maintaining both eyes open, he then had us place our dominant thumb over the object resulting in our thumb "ghosting." Once we achieved this ghosting, he then had us close our non-dominant eye. When we did this our ghosted thumb was now clearly covering the object. The concept here is that we can remain target/threat focused with both eyes, have a front sight that looks ghosted, and still maintain proper point of aim/point of impact because the front sight, like our thumb, is aligned to the object.

To further emphasize the importance of target/threat focused shooting, Brandon had us perform another exercise. With both eyes open we brought our dominant thumb up again, focused on the thumb this time and started to horizontally move the thumb left to right and back. When he asked us if we could see what was going on with the targets in the background we all said "no." Next, he had us to the exact same drill but this time had us focus on the targets/background. When we moved the thumb across this time we were able to clearly see the targets/threats/background as well as our ghosted thumb.

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Again, I found this target focused line of thinking not only very relevant to defensive shooting, but also aligned with the Fieldcraft Survival course I took in January. What's interesting, however, is that neither school was dogmatic about always being target focused. Indeed, both stated that we should use target focused only in relation to the target size, distance, and our skills.

After driving home the point with these thumb exercises, Brandon then continued the training so we could learn how to throttle. At this point, we know what our sight picture limits are out to 15 yards, and we understand target versus sight focused shooting. Now it was time to put these together.

The next drill was to have us repeat the first sight deviation drill, but this time target focused instead of hard front sight focused to find out our A zone limits. Guess what happened differently? . . . Nothing. Same hits, same results out to 15 yards. It was at this point that Brandon echoed what Raul Martinez's Fieldcraft Survival said, which is that out to 15 yards most folks can make solid hits with a target focused sight picture with both the front and rear sights blurry. Beyond that and we needed to change up our focus and alignment on the sights to make hits.

After finishing acceptable sight picture, Brandon next moved on to Trigger Control. Just as we learned how to throttle sight picture, we now had to learn how to throttle the trigger.

We began with simply slapping the trigger as fast as we could see the sights and manage recoil at the same 5, 10, 15 yard distances to find our A zone limits. For me, 5 yards was pretty much my limit when slapping the trigger.

The next type of trigger control began with our finger just touching the trigger face (no take up), then pressing all the way to the rear, then during slide cycling allowing our trigger finger forward just ahead of the reset. With this, I could manage A zone hits out to 15 yards very quickly.

Our third and final type of trigger control was more traditional: prep the trigger, press to the rear, upon slide cycling allow the trigger finger forward just ahead of

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the reset, and prep the trigger again for the next shot. I found this pace worked well beyond 15 yards and with a traditional front sight focused sight picture.

After learning how to throttle our sight picture and our trigger control, we concluded with how to throttle cadence. Brandon explained that how we work these 3 elements results in one of three possibilities when it comes to cadence:

1. We can see it (~ .20 splits)
2. We can see it and call it (~ .30 splits)
3. We can see it and call it and fix it (~ .40 splits)

While these split times are a rough guide and vary by individual, I observed these to be pretty spot on across the students in the class.

Up until now, I could easily see the transference of the gaming skills being taught to defensive applications. It was our next “Movement Drill” that I had lots of problems executing because I just wasn’t wired to perform it the way Brandon wanted. This individually timed 9 shot drill starts off with the shooter in the center of an X. At the beep, the shooter hits steel with 1 shot, then moves to the top right of the X for another shot, then returns back to the center for another shot, then moves to the top left of the X for another shot, then returns back to the center for another shot, and so on with the bottom parts of the X.

My mental block on this drill was my desire to put the safety on in between movements, go to SUL in between movements, and avoid “stepping into the unknown” (i.e. backwards) for the bottom of the X movements. I’m a huge believer in “always step into the known, never the unknown” and sure enough two of the shooter tripped over themselves when moving backwards, one straight to the ground with his live pistol (though he had great self-control and kept the muzzle downrange and finger off the trigger). In a defensive scenario, tripping and falling backwards is a no-go in my book. This exercise, along with crowding cover versus offset to cover, ended up being the two areas of divergence between gaming and defensive for me. Fortunately, Brandon is not only a professional shooter, but also a former LEO so he was able to differentiate and articulate differences as they emerged throughout the day.

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Finally, we expended 600 of the forecasted 1,000 rounds that day.

Reflections

Wow! What a great class. I have to admit I signed up on a whim and went in with low “this is for gamers” expectations, only to end up being pleasantly surprised with every expectation exceeded, and then some. Brandon Wright is aces. He is ego free, laid back, very clear, not afraid to demonstrate, takes on challenges, and answers questions. He genuinely cares about his students and does a solid job throughout, all while keeping it light and fun. I was impressed. The fact he kept the tuition cost very reasonable was an added bonus.

If you are an experienced shooter looking to up your skills for gaming or defense, this class is a strong recommend.