

## **SECTION 8**

# **BOW HAND AND EYE DOMINANCE**

Before allocating equipment, decide whether the student is to shoot right or left handed.

There are two criteria to consider; the student's eye dominance and their natural handedness. The first option is to set up the student with the equipment according to their natural handedness. This usually allows them to more easily co-ordinate the actions of using the bow and arrow. The handed ability chosen is that hand which is used to draw the string. The instructor must be sure that the student uses the eye that is above the string hand for sighting, i.e. right hand at jaw for anchor, right eye for sighting.

If the student has a problem with aiming and co-ordinating their anchor, eye dominance is the next factor to consider.

Of our two eyes, one eye is usually a dominant eye and we use this eye to focus on objects, while the other non-dominant eye gives depth of field.

Ideally the correct process in shooting is to have the nock of the arrow placed directly below the dominate eye when at full draw to allow automatic alignment with the target.

When conducting "Come N Try" classes, firstly determine if the person is right or left handed. This should be done by simply asking the students who are "Right" handed and who is "Left" handed.

The modern practice is to use the preferred "handedness" of the archer where possible, regardless of which is their dominant eye.

It is usual that right-handed people are right-eye dominant and left-handed people are left-eye dominant. However, this is not always the case, so it is essential that an archer's eye dominance be established at the beginning of the first lesson.

Most importantly you need to be aware if the students are "Right" or "Left" handed to allow you to issue the appropriate equipment to the students.

In some cases you may find a person whose dominant eye does not correspond to the hand they usually use, for example a right handed person with a left dominant eye.

In most cases this will not be an issue and the person will quickly adapt their eyes to allow them to shoot the bow.

However, in a small number of cases, the student is not able to adapt and you may need to have them either wear an eye patch over their dominant eye or close their dominant eye (although this is not a desirable alternative) or in the worst case, have them change to shooting the other hand. Only ask the archer to change to the non-preferred handedness if it proves impossible to deal with the non-preferred eye dominance.

When conducting an instruction class, as part of the introduction when you ask the students if they are right or left handed, you should separate them into two groups. This makes it easier when issuing equipment.

For your own interest you should also conduct an eye dominance test, this provides you with confirmation of each student's eye dominance as well as pre-warns you of any potential issues with students.

### **Eye Dominance Test**

There are a number of methods of determining eye dominance. The method below is considered the best when conducting instruction classes; it is quick, simple and gives instant feedback to both you and the student.

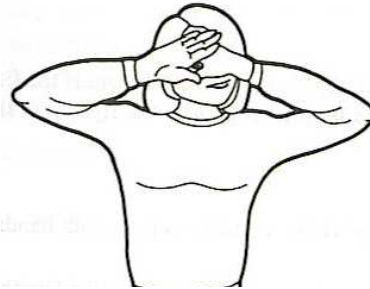
When conducting the eye dominance test it is important for an instructor to closely supervise each student as some will tend to either use only one eye or shift their hands about.

- 1) Extend both arms directly in front, shoulder height with hands flat, fingers together and palms facing away from the body.
- 2) Link the hands together so that a 'V' formed by index fingers and thumbs forming a small opening.
- 3) With **both eyes open**, the student looks at a distant object through this opening Diagram A.
- 4) To double check you can also have the student bring their hands in towards their face, all the while keeping both eyes open and looking at the object. Diagram B
- 5) The eye at which the hands come to rest is the dominant eye.

When testing groups of students, particularly young students, it is best for the instructor to stand in front of the students, and have the student look at the instructor through the small hole (*with both eyes open*) created by their hands. Have the student look through the hole at the instructor while bringing their hands to their face. When the student does this, the instructor can instantly see which is the student's dominant eye.



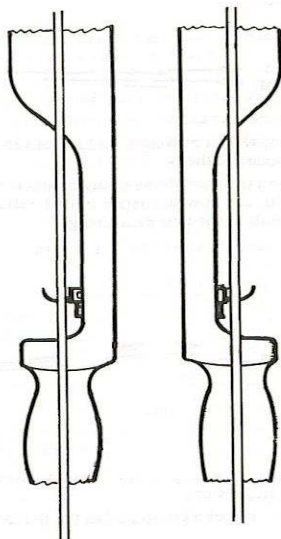
Diagram A



### Bow Hand

It is difficult for many students to fully understand the difference between a right hand and left hand bow. In simple terms this indicates the cut out for the bow window and the hand and eye to be used.

- **Right-handed** – sight window cut on the left hand side of the bow.
- **Left-handed** – sight window cut on the right-hand side of the bow.



Right

Left

#### Right Hand

If the student is right eye dominant, they use a bow with the cut out (sight window) on the left hand side of the bow; the arrow is to be drawn with the right hand to the right eye.

#### Left Hand

If the student is left eye dominant they would use a bow with the cut out (sight window) on the right hand side of the bow, consequently the arrow is drawn with the left hand to the left eye.

Some people may have equal strength in either eye and they can be taught to shoot with either hand, depending on their personal preference. They will usually shoot right hand because of the predominance of right-handed equipment.