



**Illinois Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## Teaching strategies of a 4-H Shooting Sports volunteer: goal setting, skill instruction, encouragement, and fun

The [Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports](#) program relies heavily on adult volunteers to take the lead in teaching the disciplines and management of the local clubs. It is the volunteers who ultimately make the county program successful. [Mason County 4-H](#) Shooting Sports archery instructor Ted Snider is an instrumental part of the team that makes it an outstanding program.

“When my kids joined 4-H Shooting Sports, I saw a great program with great volunteers and participants in all shooting disciplines. I knew pretty quickly I wanted to join in the fun with the kids and other volunteers,” shares Ted. Over the last five years Ted has taught dozens of youth in the program, three of which are his own.

“My own kids and others all get the same coach/dad,” shares Ted. His teaching method begins by presenting his expectations. He then allows youth to make their own choices towards how seriously they want to work towards any goal. He provides a supportive nudge when necessary, and believes once given the opportunity for personal goal setting, the achievements can fully belong to the youth.

The activities of the shooting sports program along with the support of caring adult leaders provide young people with opportunities to develop life skills, self-worth, and conservation ethics.

Ted has been a student of all types of archery for many years and has spent a lifetime of accumulating archery knowledge. He especially likes the simplicity of recurve archery. “The elegance of the recurve bow along with the organic connection between the hand and the string really appeals to me.” Ted feels it takes a higher lever of skill and discipline to master, and to him “recurve archery is more rewarding than other types of archery.” For his family, archery has been a great hobby and he has been able to spend a lot of time bonding with his kids in their backyard archery range.

Over 3.5 million youth and adults have been introduced to shooting and hunting sports through the National 4-H Shooting Sports program. Ted has also served as the Illinois 4-H Recurve Archery coach to the youth who participate in the 4-H National Shooting Sports Competition. All three of Ted’s children have ranked in top placings in the state to earn national competition eligibility, with middle son Ben competing at Nationals in summer of 2021. Ted shared, “If I could have youth take anything away from 4-H Shooting Sports, I hope they have confidence they can succeed in anything they do according to their effort.”

Ben competed against 56 other youth and placed second overall and in the top five of each recurve archery event. “It was an incredible experience for me as a coach,” said Ted. “It was a true pleasure to see our state team perform among the most sportsmanlike youth in the country. As for my coaching technique, it’s the same no matter the venue...encourage kids, then get out of their way!”



Photo by Joli Pierson | Illinois Extension

*Mason County 4-H Shooting Sports volunteer and Illinois State Recurve Archery Instructor, Ted Snider, checks targets from a distance as his son, an Illinois team member, competes in the field competition at the 2021 4-H National Shooting Sports Championships. Ted tells his own children the same thing about competition as he tells all kids: “If you win, but you don’t have fun, it’s not worth it. If you don’t win, but you have fun, that’s great. But it’s kind of fun to win!”*

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