

# Competition Hunting With a Metal Detector

## How To Find a Few More Good Targets

### Equipment:

Use the detector that you are most comfortable with but in an all day competition try to choose a detector that is not too heavy. If your detector has a frequency shift feature, this can be very helpful in a crowded field where other detectors are using the same frequency. Use good quality earphones even if it's not required. They help to cut down on all the noise.

For sand hunts you also need a fast sifting scoop with a comfortable handle length. You will need a good size pouch with an open mouth. Hold the mouth open with wire or insert another container. This is very important. Do not take pinpointers, knives, or other diggers to a sand hunt. You don't need any of those as they will slow you down. Wear good shoes. At times you will be digging with your feet. For grass hunts you will need a small digging tool like a screwdriver and a pinpointer but use them only when necessary. The pros will find most targets with just their fingers because it's faster.

### In the days before the hunt:

Practise your technique. If it's a beach hunt, go to the beach and spread a few coins around. See how long it takes you to find them all. Keep trying until you have your best time. If it's a grass field hunt, practise pinpointing with your detector. Try to find every coin without using your pinpointer. Have your pinpointer with you but if you have to use it for every coin it will slow you down. Keep practising until you feel that you can compete with the best. Remember that competition hunting is not like your usual relaxed detecting in the park or on the beach. All the best athletes train for game day.

### The day before the hunt:

Check your equipment. Buy good quality new batteries for your detector or make sure that your detector is fully charged. Test your new batteries but take an extra set just to be safe. Some pros take an extra detector as a backup and it's a good idea if you have one.

### Game Day, the day of the hunt:

Get to the hunt early and study the beach or the field. Is the field damp or dry? How deep are the coin planters leaving the coins? Look for a good place to be standing when the hunt starts.

It's important to know how the game is played, so go to the opening ceremony and ask the hunt chairman how many tokens will be in the hunt. This information is usually given out at the opening ceremony. The reason that you want to know how many tokens will be in the hunt is because you already know the size of the field, and you can be sure that the token planter will distribute them evenly throughout the field, then you can calculate the distance between the tokens. More on this later.

### The hunt is about to begin:

Find a good place to start. If the field is square, stand near the middle of any side. Do not stand in a corner as there will be too much traffic when the horn blows. If the field is a rectangle, stand near the middle of a long side. Watch where the pros are standing. They always choose a good place to start.

### Your strategy:

You know how many minutes you will be allowed to detect. Most targets will be found in the first third of the hunt so if the hunt is 45 minutes, you have 15 minutes to find most of your targets. One other consideration is that in some hunts there will be one special prize like a gold coin or a detector

and this will be on a special token, perhaps a different color or shape. It's a good bet that the hunt chairman will place this token near the center of the field to give everyone an equal chance so your path should take you to the center of the field where you will scan as widely as possible.

**The horn sounds to begin the hunt:**

Take a few steps go get ahead of the crowd. Scan left and right moving in a zig-zag motion always moving towards the center of the field. Every time you scoop or dig a target take a quick look at it. If it's a clad coin just dump it in your pouch, you're only looking for tokens. Don't pick it out of the scoop, just dump it in your pouch. When you find a token, take a quick look at it to note the color and see if it's the same metal as all the other coins, like a painted nickel, or is it something else. At one time, hunt organizers would use special tokens like brass but they've mostly stopped doing that because it became too easy to "cherry pick" the tokens. If the token is brass you might have a way to find more while ignoring nickels so take a quick look. This also applies where the hunt contains silver coins mixed with other coins. Quickly drop the token in your pouch. Now, remember that you have previously calculated the distance to the next token. The next token will never be beside the one that you have just found. Move away to the location of the next token, always moving away from the crowd or towards the center of the field. When you find the next token, stay with your plan. Always move to new territory or away from the crowd. Always watch the contestants around you to see if they have missed some ground. When the hunt is half over, most of the targets will have been found. If the hunt is in sand, you might see the pros scan the edges of the field. This sometimes produces a few targets because everyone takes a step or two when the hunt begins. If the hunt is on a grass field, and there is some taller grass, I have had good success by using the last third of the hunt to scan the tall grass. Others will avoid that area early in the hunt, as you should too. Always scan the easy ground first.

**The horn blows and your pouch is full of tokens:**

Cash in your tokens then enjoy the break between hunts by visiting with new friends. These events are all about making new friends and having a good time. If that hunt didn't produce as many good finds as you had hoped, don't get discouraged. You're doing everything right, and luck does play a part. The next one could be the big one!

**Notes:**