

Precision SHOOTING

Dealing exclusively with extreme rifle accuracy

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Equipment List Super Shoot 2005

The range at Kelbly's before the match started. Breedlove photo.

BY DICK WRIGHT

It is mid-summer and mid-season for benchrest shooters. For the first time in a month or so I am taking a weekend off from shooting. Part of the reason is a deadline for this article. Another is the fact that I need to put the gun down for a week...

I haven't shot well this year, partly caused by some really stupid mistakes, partly because our weather seems to be changing. We usually have a couple of hot and humid weeks in June. This year it's been that way for the last two months resulting in light but switchy, swirlly conditions and mirage that I don't seem to be able to handle... Best to take a week off and contemplate my transgressions.

We got a satellite dish for the TV's last winter. (The editor remains surprised that we have electricity up here in the woods.) For the first time ever I get to watch Michael Schumacher drive his Ferrari in Formula One.

This morning I sit in my office, finishing up this article and watching the Hungarian Grand Prix. It's a fascinating spectacle featuring the quickest cars on the planet... little twelve or thirteen hundred pound cars with thousand horsepower engines and more technology, pound-for-pound, than

the space shuttle. All this in the mega-bucks, up-tight, glitz show that is Formula One. It is run by a tough little jillionaire with a wife, three daughters and a really bad haircut. (And you think you got troubles.) This guy makes some pretty dumb decisions as witnessed by this year's Indy Grand Prix where only six cars ran. Besides that, in Formula One there is hardly ever a pass... you win the pole, you win the race.

It ain't nuthin' like "Boogity, boogity, boogity... let's go racing."

This is the third equipment list I have done for the Super Shoot. Once again, this is the equipment used by the fifty best shooters in the most important match of the year.

I think most competitors are probably like me in that they save the "Good stuff" for the Super Shoot, testing everything through out the year and squirreling away that which performs the very best, anything to maximize one's chances of doing well where it counts the most.

As I did last year I chose to use only the Top Fifty shooters rather than all the competitors. I did this again for a couple of reasons. First, these "Top Fifty" are, at least for one week, the "Best of the Best". These are the shooters who prevailed in the largest match of the year, a match which draws nearly four hundred

competitors from all over the world. I think the equipment used by the fifty best competitors is much more meaningful than it would be if I included the "Bottom Fifty".

Secondly, I simply didn't want to do what is involved in sorting thru nearly four hundred registration sheets many times over. Gentle reader, that's a LOT of work and it's benchrest season and I got more important things to do. I did it once and anyone who wants that job is welcome to it.

There are several things that need covering before we get into the actual numbers. First, the Top Fifty shooters used a total of seventy rifles. Twenty of the fifty chose to shoot a Heavy Varmint rifle in the 13-1/2 lb. class. The rest of the shooters used a 10-1/2 lb. gun in both classes. All seventy rifles and their accessories are listed herein.

I did not include any equipment if only one shooter used it. There's a long list of "one's" in several of the categories. I don't think those numbers are that meaningful and they take up too much space in the magazine. To any bullet or barrel maker whose product was only used by one competitor... sorry about that.

This year I checked for actual numbers on calibers the shooters used. I have long suspected that

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Equipment List: Super Shoot 2005

Continued

6PPC shooters make up about 95% of all benchresters. The actual numbers come out pretty close to that. Some competitors will simply list "6mm" rather than specifying "6PPC". I think that most if not all of these are probably PPC shooters but that's just a guess.

For the first time, this year there were several competitors who shot a 30BR at least in part of the match. The writer shot one in the 200 yd. HV stage. After a lot of ballyhoo about 30BR's on the internet (www.benchrest.com) over the last year I just wanted to see how one would work at 200 yds. in group competition. Unfortunately, none of the 30's made it into the Top Fifty so there is nothing herein pertaining to them. For what it's worth, my 30 shot admirably well the one day I used it. (The shooter did not.)

Here is the equipment used by the fifty best shooters in this year's Super Shoot.

CARTRIDGES

6mm	66
.22	4

As you can see, only eight percent of the Top Fifty competitors shoot .22 caliber rifles. I find it interesting that two of the .22 shooters have won the Super Shoot (Bill Forrester in '99 and Mike Ratigan in '04) with their .22's in the last six years. Maybe they know something we don't... ya think?

ACTIONS

BAT	27
Stolle	25
Farley	7
Hall	4
Nesika	4
RFD	2

A good action is the very core of an accurate benchrest rifle. As usual, this year Stolle and BAT actions dominated the numbers, a fine tribute to their manufacturers.

BARRELS

Kreiger	30
Shilen	17
Hart	15
Broughton	4

Again, the "Big Three" lead the way in barrel selection. I doubt if many of us realize just how hard it is to make a barrel that is good enough to shoot competitively in a match like this. You need machine shop experience to understand the difficulty in

drilling a hole, smaller than a quarter-inch in diameter, 26" or 28" deep and keeping it absolutely straight. My hat's off to any of these barrel makers.

BULLETS

Bart's	32
Self	10
Hottenstein	6
Arnette	6
Euber	4
Watson	3
Rossing	2
McGowan	2
Otto	2

Bart's Bullets, made by Lt. Col. Bart Sauter USA Ret'd and his wife Kimberly are a hard act to compete with. Since Bart introduced his "Ultra" bullet two years ago, they have set at least eight World Records. It seems competitors pay attention to this sort of thing.

What I said about the difficulty in making barrels also goes for bullets. These are the most accurate projectiles ever made and anyone on this list deserves respect.

GUNSMITHS

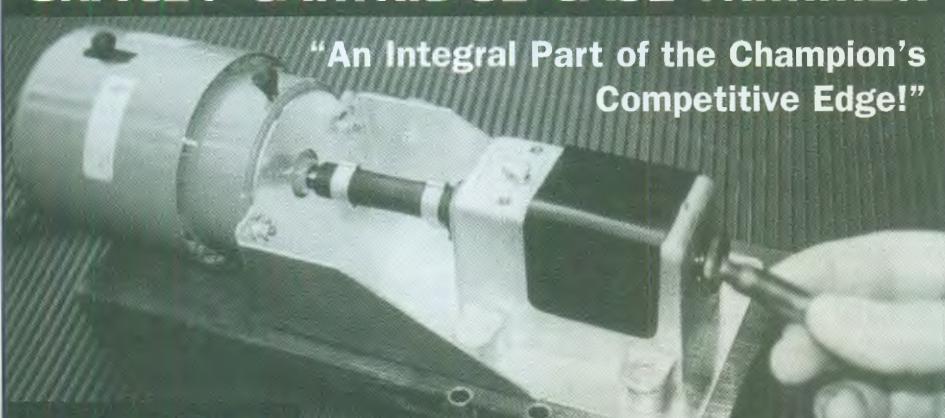
Scott	14
Self	8
Stevens	7
Green	5
Simison	5
Borden	4
Pierce	3
Hoehn	2
Ocock	2
White	2
Brown	2
Downey	2
Brackney	2
Smith	2
Goodling	2
LaChapelle	2

These are the best accuracy gunsmiths in the world. I was happy to see our friend and gunsmith, Dwight Scott, come out on top of the list this year. However, anyone on this list is capable of making a rifle that is much more accurate than most any of us can shoot it.

Of note, a trend surfaced in this category that will continue herein...

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the number of competitors who do their own work. I have the utmost respect for any hobbyist (after all, that's what we are.) who is capable of, in his own basement, turning out metal work to the standards required to make a Top Fifty in this match.

SCOPES

Leupold	56
Sightron	8
Weaver	3
B & L	3

No surprises here. With the 2002 introduction of Leupold's Competition

Series scopes, they have captured an even larger share of the scope market. Although expensive, they have features shared with no others and I think they will continue to dominate.

Of note is the emergence of Sightron as a serious competitor. Most of the Sightrons used in the Super Shoot were given a simple modification by gunsmiths to help them keep a precise point-of-impact. This includes Col. Billy Stevens USA Ret'd who won the Two Gun trophy at this year's Super Shoot. I own two of the modified Sightrons, both of

which work very well. One supplier for modified Sightrons is Hoehn Sales, a PS advertiser.

SCOPE RINGS

Kelbly	53
BAT	6
Farley	6
Jewell	2

Kelbly's elegantly designed and lightweight scope rings dominate this category year after year.

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The Accurate Rifle

BACK ISSUE CLOSEOUT SALE

The recent passing of *The Accurate Rifle* magazine from this mortal coil makes it a good bet that we're going to have a closeout sale of the back issues in stock at our Whitehall, NY facility. We still have in stock 23 out of the 55 issues published during its career, so it is possible to get a pretty good-sized hunk of reading material at fire sale pricing levels.

Term of sale...

Now until the point where we get tired of looking at them (September 30th is a good guess.)

Pricing structure...

5 copies (minimum order) to 14 copies...\$1.50 each.
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We pay shipping for US and Canada. Foreign orders are actual shipping charges plus \$1.00 handling. (Specify Air or Surface Mail.)

Current back issue availability...

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2002...November is available (1 issue)
2003...December is available (1 issue)
2004...All except March and May (10 issues)
2005...All five copies, January through May, are available (5 issues)

All issues that are described above as being in stock are believed to be in quantities adequate for the sale. If however an issue does sell out...we reserve the right to substitute another issue without chasing you halfway around the known world to discuss the matter in depth. (For a \$1.00 magazine it just isn't worth it!)

**Order from:**

Precision Shooting, 222 McKee Street, Manchester, CT 06040. Visa or MasterCard accepted without surcharge at our CT office (860) 645-8776 phone; (860) 643-8215 fax. CT residents add 6% sales tax; NY residents add 4% sales tax.

Equipment List: Super Shoot 2005

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STOCKS

Kelbly	14
Scoville	14
Borden	10
Leonard	6
Six	5
SG&Y	5
Pierce	3
Bruno	2
Adamowitz	2

Kelbly's offer many options in benchrest stocks. Bob Scoville makes the most technically advanced benchrest stocks ever made. The writer has one of each and loves them both. You really need to shoot a modern benchrest stock (that includes Borden's and Leonard's and Pierce's, etc) after you've used a twenty-year-old stock for years to understand just how good they are. Their low center-of-gravity and bag-riding characteristics make them far superior to older design stocks.

STOCKERS

Scoville	14
Self	8
Stevens	7
Borden	5
Delasandro	5
Green	5
TM	4
Leonard	4
Pierce	3
SG&Y	2

Ocock	2
Welch	2

These are the folks who bed your action in a stock and paint it. If they ain't bedded right, your gun won't shoot... now that's a pretty easy concept.

I love the paint jobs on some benchrest rifles. Some are very elegant...some quite whimsical. Benchrest rifles come in fairly wimpy calibers (that's why they shoot so well.) and if you want a pink gun with lacy additions, you probably won't get too a hard time about it. I tend to like race car colors and have been known to put Porsche and Ferrari stickers on my guns. So sue me.

POWDER

VV133	40
8208	15
T-32	11
322	2

It's VhitaVouri by a run-away in the powder category. Shooters used a surprising amount of 8208, a reclaimed military powder. Be careful of the 8208. It comes in many different burning rates. Some is fairly hot and some is really slow and some of it is really dirty. Don't pay much attention to anyone else's loading data and do your own load work-up with any lot of 8208 you get. Hoehn Sales (PS advertiser) sells small screens specially made to sift the small stones, dead birds, dirt, etc, that may show up in some lots of 8208. By the same token, good 8208 will sometimes shoot like crazy in a 6PPC. It is used

by some of the very best shooters in the world.

CASES

Lapua	70
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Not much to discuss here. Almost all competitors' 6PPC brass is made from Lapua 220 Russian. One of my projects this year was to test brass by another manufacturer. They finally made a new lot that was fairly satisfactory. However, the price was almost twice that of Lapua's. Why would anybody spend twice as much for something almost as good?

PRIMERS

Federal	62
Win	4
CCI	4

In primers it's Federal in a runaway. That goes for both their 205's and 205M's. Testing by the best shooters has revealed no difference in performance between the two. I save money and buy the 205's. However, a few of the very best shooters, including this year's Two-Gun winner, swear by Winchester's.

There you have it... the equipment used by the best competitors in the biggest match of 2005. This is the third year I have done this and it's been interesting to watch the changes from year to year. Benchrest shooters have a real tendency to watch equipment lists and to buy that which others are winning with. Kinda makes you wonder if the Sauter family is going to have time for Christmas this year, Eh?

Dick Wright
Staff Writer



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