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a magazine for shooters by shooters



GEORGE KELBLY

Dear Dave,

Before I get into the main reason for writing I would like to bring attention to a possible problem shooters can unknowingly get themselves into.

This concerns the shipping of barrels. We have gotten in a couple of completed barrels to be fluted that the customer packed paper into one end of the shipping box to fill-out the over-long box. Because the strength of the package is mainly derived from the barrel itself the boxes have come in with the section where the barrel ends either completely torn open, exposing the crown or chamber, or at the very least crushed. The solution to this problem is to cut one end of the box off leaving just enough to fold and tape the end closed.

Now on to the main reason for writing. I and others in the .222 camp would have to disagree with your assessment of the reason for the dominance of the 6PPC as stated in your April 1987 editorial. I feel that the factors that contributed to the success in the last ten years of this cartridge are refinements made in areas other than the cartridge.

One of these improvements was the introduction of fiberglass stocks. The stocks appear to be less finicky than wood stocks and therefore easier to set-up right.

An even more important contributor to accuracy was spawned by the use of fiberglass stocks and that is the glue-in. This has eliminated, for the most part, an even larger cause of variables, the screw-in bed job and the headaches of getting the bedding perfect and the torques right on the screws. This also saw the demise of the old — boy that was a poor group, maybe I should put a few more inch-pounds of torque on the screws — solution. This, if taken to extremes, could ruin the bed job and lead to groupus maximus.

In addition this was also the time period in which the short light scopes came onto the market. This got the front of the scope up off the barrel, thereby reducing one more variable.

But probably the biggest improvement was the growth of a virtual forest of wind flags on the ranges in the last ten years. I can remember a time when at a Nationals a kid could run out onto a range in the dark without fear of running down twenty flags before even getting up a full head of steam. The improving ability of shooters to make some sense out of this colorful, twitching, twirling and (to those that haven't the sense that day) macabre dance playing before them is most likely the main reason that groups are getting smaller.

The success of the 6PPC is therefore in my opinion a case of a new cartridge being in the right place at the right time.

People were wrongly accusing the 6x47 and .222 family for the above stated problems and were looking anywhere for a solution.

Probably what happened next was that a few shooters that built these newfangled rifles decided to go all the way and try this strange new cartridge developed by the double P's. And lo-and-behold the darn thing did pretty good. Like most sports that rely heavily on the equipment used, when something new comes out that looks like it might give an edge, the bandwagon gets crowded in a hurry. Naturally when new shooters came in they sure don't feel it wise to build their own wagon.

Now that the 6PPC is in the majority, the odds are in favor of it winning a match. It doesn't hurt that most of the best shooters are also shooting the 6PPC. But I'd be willing to bet that if you looked through the match results you'll find that the average placing of .222 cartridges shot at a match, be they of the .222 family or .222 Waldogs (which is basically a short fat .222 REM), is as good as or better than that of the 6PPC.

Besides if you'll notice the .222 is beginning to dominate out west again. This too could just be due to the fact that some of the top shooters are just starting or coming back to these cartridges.

This point brings up another disagreement I have with your editorial. That is with regards to your wanting the calibres to be distinct between the sporter and light varmint. I disagree for a slightly different reason than the one stated. My contention is that there should only be one light class because the calibres are so similar that it would be like running the Indy 500 twice. Once with all the cars painted the same color and once with them either all another color or whatever color you like depending on which way the ruling went.

Anyway I feel that the 6PPC is given a little more credit than it deserves and believe that any cartridge that has trouble free brass and isn't over or undersized in capacity will give good accuracy if all the other variables are taken care of.

After all that, I would still like to say that for the most part you are doing an excellent job and keep up the good work.

(Editors Note: You will note an absence of wise quips from yours truly scattered throughout the letter. This is in recognition of the fact that George out-weighs me by ten ... maybe even twenty pounds).

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