



BAKER Products

Sawyer
Hank Somero

Tailman
Bryan Martin

Log Scale
403

Sawing Time
27 min. 53 sec.

BF/HR
979

Net Yield
45%

Percent Scale
113%

Percent Overrun
13%

Baker Blue Streak

THE MACHINES at the Shoot-Out are run by all sorts of people at all levels of experience—salesmen who run the mills as demonstrations at shows, and even the designers and builders—but to see how a mill is run on a day-to-day basis, you just can't beat watching a customer who makes his living with the machine. Enter Hank Somero, who estimates that he has—over the last nine years—cut more than 1.4 million board feet on two Baker Blue Streak sawmills. You would expect someone of this experience to be full of confidence, but Hank says that was not the case. “I have done shows before, but not the Shoot-Out. I was under pressure from the crowd, but as long as I cut lumber and didn't look at the people, I was OK.”

If he had been able to bring his own mill from New Hampshire, Hank might have been more at ease, but he was running a new machine

that had three major differences from the one on which he had sawn the last half-million or so board feet. “I have the smaller 38-hp Kubota. The 65-hp Cummins on the saw at the Shoot-Out is more saw than one man can handle by himself.” He recalled getting acquainted with the larger engine. “I ran it as fast as I dared. I kept cranking up the feed rate until I was almost nervous sawing with it, and that's where I kept it.”

The second difference was that the Shoot-Out mill had Baker's computer setworks that automatically moved the carriage to the exact height for each cut. “I just do the math in my head,” he said, “and I can hit that number.” While he could have overridden the computer and set the board thickness manually, he used the automatic setworks, and lost only one board when the last cant shifted on him.

Back home, Hank runs his Baker

Blue Streak solo without an edger. At the Shoot-Out, however, the mill was set up to drag the boards back to the sawyer's station where tailman Bryan Martin dispatched them to the edger or lumber stack. Bryan works in product development for Baker, and has demonstrated their mills at every Shoot-Out. He had no problem taking back seat to Hank. "We thought we'd take a guy who cuts logs every day. It was a good opportunity to show people what to expect from the machine." While he said he expected to learn some of Hank's techniques, he was far too busy to pay much attention. As Hank put it, "Bryan was sweating, but he kept the out-feed table clear."

At least Bryan did not have to worry about the log handling. The Blue Streak is fully hydraulic, and Hank was very

familiar with the log loading, turning, and clamping controls. Hank's experienced eye caught several boards that were trying to bow due to stress, and he turned the cant after each cut to keep it as flat as possible. He also cut most of the boards 10 or 12 inches wide. With the power behind the mill, this made good sense, and helped keep the cut-



ting time down and the recovery factor up.

Pressure from the crowd notwithstanding, experience paid off. It took the Baker team 27 minutes, 53 seconds, to cut and stack the 455 board feet of yellow poplar for an average cutting speed of 979 board feet per hour and an overrun factor of 13% over the 403 board feet of log scale.

Bryan said he felt good about the performance. "All in all, I think we did an excellent job." He then added, "Hank is real easy to work with. He's a down-to-earth guy." For his part, Hank found that "doing this show was like a vacation. It has been raining in New Hampshire for so long, this was like just another day." He also indicated that he would not turn down an invitation to saw at the next Shoot-Out. ■

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