



SPLITTER



**Machine Operator**  
Tom Brown

**Log Handler**  
Mark Brown

**Time**  
44 min. 13 sec.

**Ricks Split**  
1.5

**Ricks/Hour**  
2.0

# Timberwolf TW5FC

AFTER THE Timberwolf TW5's successful run in the 2007 Firewood Competition, Tom Brown, president of Brownwood Sales, brought in the Timberwolf TW5FC (FC stands for "fast cycle") from his dealership in Sandusky, Ohio, for this year's competition. The 1,200-pound firewood splitter uses the same 11-hp Honda on the same frame as the TW5, but with a smaller hydraulic cylinder. The result is a faster 6-second cycle time, but at the sacrifice of some force behind the ram. Tom made a good call to bring in the faster machine. The 20-ton splitting force pushed every log through the 6-way adjustable wedge without complaint or hesitation—or in Tom's words, "The TW5FC brutalized the wood, even though we had some dense

hickory with internal knots."

Under normal circumstances the machine would have dispatched the 1.5 face cords with just one pass. It was getting the wood through the holes in the target—which Tom compared to "an opening the size of a small mailbox"—that frustrated him and his son Mark. Tom recalls that "we were so busy during the show we didn't have a chance to observe the procedure ahead of time." Tom also had a little trouble with his pace. "Sprinting is a different animal," he explained. "I'm geared to a marathon performance that produces a semi-load of regular firewood in one shift."

A standard time-saving feature of the TW5 series (and larger Timberwolf machines) that helps both sprinters and marathoners is the



automatic splitting cycle. Once the split is initiated, Tom was able to take his hands off the controls and turn his attention to other tasks while the machine finished the split and then automatically retracted. Tom used the optional hydraulic log lifter to heft the heaviest logs onto the splitting deck and to hold the larger split pieces for further processing. The sorting deck on the

outfeed end of the machine provided Mark with the opportunity to set back oversized pieces for a second pass through the splitter.

One strategy that worked for Tom was to put aside the tougher hickory blocks. Whenever he got ahead of Mark, he would work on them until Mark caught up. Even at that, he claimed, "Neither one of us broke a sweat."

With a time of 44 minutes, 13 seconds, the team beat the previous Timberwolf competition time by half an hour. This comparison points out how important it is to match a machine to the job. Larger, tougher pieces may require the greater force of a larger—and slower—hydraulic cylinder, but the TW5FC proved to be a capable machine for smaller (if you can call 20-inch diameter small) or straight-grained firewood, and saved the operator time on each cycle.

While Tom feels he could have done better with more practice splitting wood for the small target holes, he didn't complain about the showing. "Our first attempt at the competition was definitely a learning experience," he said. "Next time, we will knock at least 10 minutes off our time without straining or huffing." ■



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