

SPLITTER



BRUTE FORCE

Manufacturer

Brute Force Distributing
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Machine Operator

Josh Szydel

Assistant

Clayton Szydel

Time

3 min. 12 sec.

Cords Processed

0.17 Cords

Cords/Hour

3.13 Cords

Brute Force 20-24

The Wisconsin-based Brute Force team was spread pretty thin during the Saturday Shoot-Out. After showing their new 20-30CS the day before, they had both the 18-24 processor and the 20-24 splitter scheduled for the same heat. With just the two of them available, the son/father team of Josh and Clayton Szydel (in that order, since Clayton turned the running of his business over to his son Josh but still remains involved) hot-footed it over from the processor to the splitter before the engine on the processor even had a chance to cool down. In addition to being family, Clayton and Josh have a long working relationship. “We’ve been in business since ’97, and I worked with it since before I was in high school,” Josh recalled. “We sold woodstoves, and were looking for a good firewood processor. When we couldn’t find one we liked, we designed and built our own.”

Brute Force now builds five models of

firewood processors, two splitters, conveyors, and firewood bundlers. As with many small family businesses, Josh finds himself wearing many hats. “I do a little welding, run parts to powder coating, help with assembly, final finish. I test them when they’re completed at the factory, and I do a lot of the shows—a little bit of everything,” he said, laughing.

By the time they fired up the 20-24 splitter, all of the other splitter operators had finished their lot and left the Shoot-Out area, so they were able to work without the distraction, and were concerned only about the clock. For the Shoot-Out, Josh used the optional 20-hp Honda engine (13 hp is standard) and a 6-way wedge (4-way is standard, but 8-way wedges are also available). Wedge height is controlled by a mechanical link to a hydraulic cylinder, and can be quickly changed to a 4-way or 8-way wedge. According to Josh, the autocycle function is a real time-saver, as it allows him to lift the next log in place or perform other

tasks. For safety, the autosplit requires pushing two valves. From there, the hydraulic ram completes the split and returns with no further input. The 2-stage hydraulic pump splits most firewood with a 5-second cycle time, but takes about twice as long if it has to drop down to the low-volume/high-pressure mode for stubborn pieces.

Josh noted that Brute Force fabricates its own beams in-house, with tube stock on the inside to increase stiffness. Any wear surfaces use phenolic bearings that can be easily replaced. Josh says he isn't sure what the maximum diameter for this splitter is. "We put a 600-pound block on the lifter and it picked it up with no problem," he noted. People generally load it up with as many logs as will fit on it and use it as a deck. The splitting platform is wide enough to hold wood that

needs resplitting, and has slots for sawdust and fines to drop through. With Clayton standing by to load the processor and clear split wood from under the outfeed chute, Josh was able to split at a rate of a little over 3 full cords per hour. •



MACHINE SPECS

Model	20-24
Power	20-hp Honda
Cycle time.....	5 sec.
Log loading.....	Log lift
Max firewood length	24 in.
Options used.....	10-ft. conveyor, 20-hp Honda engine, fast-split autocycle

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