

## **BR Shooter Profile**

### **Calvin Yanckycki – Brandon, Manitoba**



#### **1. When did you start shooting BR? Which range did you attend your first registered match at and what was your equipment?**

I officially started shooting Benchrest in July of 2008. The obsession with the sport began when I discovered Benchrest.com. I cannot recall how I ever came across it or whoever told me about it. When I got a glimpse of a full-blown Benchrest rifle I had to have one. I had no idea what I was getting into or what it would turn into.

My first registered match was the Nationals in Selkirk Manitoba July 2008. I had no idea what I was up against, as I had never attended a match as a spectator. I just packed up my gear and headed out. I had no expectations but to learn as much as I could. The end result, I was hooked.

My first Benchrest rifle is the same rifle I have today. It is a Light Varmint that currently weighs 10lbs 4oz. It consists of a BAT action (Model SB14MF). It is a right bolt, left port, right eject. It is glued into a Speedy BRX stock manufactured by Robertson Composites. I currently shoot Ted Gaillard barrels, which are 13.5 twist 4 grooves. They are 22" in length with a muzzle diameter around .800". Jewell trigger, BAT rings and a Weaver 36X scope. In the butt of the stock there is approx 7-8oz of weight to bring it up to the 10lbs 4oz. I had Dennis Sorensen of Brentwood Bay, BC build it for me.

I can tell you I shoot the lightest contour barrel of any of the shooters I have shot against. I wanted a gun that was well balanced or what I thought was how a bench gun should be balanced. I went with a lighter barrel and added weight to the rear of the stock. I have since learned a bit more of what a balanced rifle is.

#### **2. Who was your mentor when you started and why did you choose BR over other disciplines? Were you shooting another discipline before BR?**

Who was my mentor? Man that is a very tough question to answer living in Brandon where I do. The nearest range for me where there is actual matches is Selkirk, MB. I have not shot there outside of matches. So there is really no one local that I had help me get started.

I went into the sport blind making my own decisions on what I wanted for a rifle or the required equipment. If I had to give someone credit I would have to say that Benchrest.com was my first mentor. Shortly after joining the forum I met Jeff Wardlow from Drayton Valley, AB via Benchrest.com. We exchanged a few e-mails and a few phone calls. Then while attending my first match at Selkirk I met Jeff along with fellow Albertans Dan Opel and Rob Seeman. The combination of the 3 of them helped me get through my first match. Since then they have been helpful along with all the other shooters I have met at the matches I have attended.

Prior to Benchrest I was not shooting any other discipline. I just shot for the purpose of hunting big game and waterfowl.

### **3. How many rounds a year do you shoot and how many would you recommend to stay competitive?**

I will be the first to say I do not shoot nearly enough to be competitive at this time. I maybe shoot 2-300 rounds outside of what I shoot at the matches and practice the day before. So out of my bench rifle I maybe shoot 1200-1300 rounds a year. That would be 4 matches. To be competitive one has to shoot as many as they can. The more trigger time over wind flags will definitely make one a better shooter as well as a competitive one.

### **4. If someone were just starting what advice would you have for the newcomer?**

I would definitely recommend trying to attend a match to see what it is about and to see what is out there for equipment. You make so many contacts that can help with decision making and getting the top quality components required to enjoy the sport.

I also hear all too often that I cannot afford a rifle. I will be the first to tell you to stop and take a moment to think about what is in your gun cabinet. Look at your gun cabinet, and see how many rifles you actually use on a regular basis. Pull the ones that are there and not used on a regular basis and put them on the auction block. You probably will have enough to buy a very good used or a newly built rifle of your choosing.

The other thing is that most people who are the slightest bit interested in Benchrest will have a semi custom rifle more likely built off of a Rem 700 action. Look at how much money you put into that build or intend to put into a build. You more or less have a full blown Benchrest rifle for the cost of your semi custom, which will not be close to as accurate, or competitive as a full blown custom build.

The final thing that I also hear is "do you think I can be competitive or will the rifle be competitive" It is all up to your expectations. If you want to win, you better have top quality components, know how to tune your rifle and keep it there, and be able to read wind flags. If all you want to do is shoot with those that have a common interest in the king of accurate rifles then the comment "can I or the rifle be competitive" does just not matter.

You have to try Benchrest to see that it may not be as easy as one may think. Even though these rifles are capable of amazing things in the hands of a competent shooter, we are not a bunch of old guys/gals sitting at benches shooting rifles. Every time we step up to a bench for the next relay we try to better the last group we just shot the relay before. It is a sport where it is just you and your rifle against the clock and wind. There is no one else to blame but yourself for the bad group you may have shot. You are the only member of the team.

#### **5. List 3 things about BR that you think are the most critical to small groups and small aggs.**

In my limited experience I would say it is a rifle that is put together by a competent gunsmith that understands the requirements of a short or long range Benchrest rifle. Second, knowing when your rifle is in tune, and third is being able to shoot in the wind.

I would also like to add a fourth because it is something I feel is a critical part for myself. Having the confidence in yourself. Knowing when you made a right or wrong decision when you pulled the trigger. An example of this would be trusting your sighters when you have lost a condition and you are trying to decide how much you have to hold over to put that last shot into the group.

#### **6. What direction do you see the sport taking?**

This is a tough one to answer from a 43-year-old newcomer. I can tell you I would definitely like to see it grow bigger than it is at the present time.

Since I am a relative newcomer to this great sport I have heard stories of some of the founders of what we know as Benchrest in Western Canada. I can tell you I do wish that I had known about this sport say 20+ years ago. From what I hear there were matches and these matches were well attended in Western Canada. Since then shooters have come and gone and ranges have come and gone.

I feel for the sport to grow we need to get the word out and extend our hands to those who are hovering in the wings. We need to welcome them with open arms. Maybe hosting our own introductory to bench rest seminars would be a way to start. Possibly an information table set up at a gunshow is another way to help get the word out. It may take a bit of work on our part but it is we the Benchrest shooters who can only help it grow. Time will tell the tale on how well Benchrest will survive. What

Rick Pollock has done in starting Benchrest.ca it can do nothing but help get the word out about the sport and generate more interest.

What I have learned is that any of the matches, which I have attended, the fees have been far less than say a F-Class match. A weekend of shooting for a Benchrest match will run one \$60.00. I have seen fees for F-Class matches running around \$200.00. So when I hear it costs so much I do not buy it.

These are my thoughts to your questions Joe. I hope you find some of the info helpful. If anything maybe it will spark some conversation.

Take care,

-Calvin