

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF (MY) TIME

**I've always been a competitive shooter.** I spent my share of time plinking .22 casings and sniping at cottontail rabbits when I was younger, but as time went on my focus in shooting turned exclusively to paper targets. The reasons are many but it's my "nature," or that's the best explanation I have for it. I like competition, for one. Next I like technology. I do appreciate the old and surround myself with examples of that. Antiquities are a passion, and my collections of those range from fossils to golf clubs to books to furniture. I live in an antiquity, as a matter of fact; my house is 125 years old. Aside from the house, I don't "use" any of that old stuff. Things I participate in, things I use, I want to be new as tomorrow. I like old vehicles but I like other people's old cars. I like new ones for myself. I also like new rifles. Rifles are tools to me. Nearabout a supply item. When something can be made better, out with the old and in with the new. Just like that. See, next to shooting, another lifelong mechanical passion has been motor racing, and related. Specifically, I raced motocross for the entirety of my youth. I still race in the 40+ class. Anyone who has ever been involved in racing knows that years are nine months long and that means new equipment all the daggone time. If you don't get it you don't keep up with everyone else who got it, and mostly you don't keep advancing your own self.

You also learn that nothing that comes out of a box (crate, actually) is going to make you happy. It has to be fixed to suit. When I get a new bike, I might change the bars, grips, shift lever, and a half-dozen other things, that I know (I think) I need to do my best on it. That work is usually done before firing it up for the first time. Sometimes it gets more involved. Sometimes it's gearing or tires, or "worse." What matters in racing is simply how fast you can go. That's pretty plain, but eventually you learn that the things that make you go fast aren't all about horsepower. Speed is all about everything! So everything has to be addressed. Everything has to be looked at, and some things have to be changed to suit. "Set up" is the general term for what a rider does to his bike to make it meld with him. Looking at the set ups of the top riders makes it very clear that none of them are on the same page. What they do works for them but if two top riders swapped bikes they would both be slow, by their standards, and think the other guy must be nuts. Bear with me on this, because it's far and away the best means I found to enter into this segment on this target rifle.

Another thing that becomes clear to a local racer is that setting up the bike for the track he races most is the only thing that makes any sense. That should be easy to accept, but I run into people who use such and such because their factory-rider hero uses it. He's not only a different person with a different set of preferences, and rolls unbelievably faster than a mortal, but he's often running on radically different tracks. His tuner isn't adjusting his suspension from track to track; he's using unique custom-valved and sprung forks and shock for different tracks. Gearing, tires, and so on, are all mated to the surface for that weekend stop-over.

The pro teams don't compromise. They don't adjust, they just do over. That's also very expensive and there aren't many people who can experience it. I never could. However! Rifles don't cost as much and we don't need a semi to haul them from match to match.

I took a look at set up the same way Team Yamaha does when I built this gun. All match rifles are purpose-built, but all I mean by that is that their purpose is competitive shooting. That's not quite defining enough. It should be clear to most that different types of competition would at the least favor, and come closer to require, completely different rifles. The rules might even allow no choice but all new. I wanted to take that one step further, one step closer to truly purpose-built. Different conditions, firing distances, and different shooting positions all force a compromise. Since I couldn't do anything about conditions or shooting positions, distance became the operational variable that could be tuned for.

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# PROJECT RIFLE

## REDUCED-COURSE NRA MATCH RIFLE



course. In my area there is one a little more than two hours away and another closer to four. The rest are overnight trips. I'm lucky, compared to many. There are states that have no reasonable access to 600-yard ranges.

That's the whole reason tuning for distance got my attention and became the focus for a project rifle. Heretofore, the overt compromise has been shooting a rifle at short range that was designed, as best it could be, to fire long distance. I have wanted to purpose-build such a gun for years. And years.

I have never been a snob when it comes to reduced course shooting. I like it. It's not easy, not at all. The targets are scaled proportionally smaller than they "should be" given directly proportional mathematical calculations. I think reduced courses are outstanding training aids for the serious shooter because environmental conditions are all but removed from the equation. That means the shooter can focus on shooting.

The most common reduced-course distance is 100 yards. There are places that shoot 200, and there