

# New Kid On The Block

Though Anschütz and Feinwerkbau unquestionably dominate the selection of rifles by Olympic-grade athletes, a bit player is trying to make its presence felt again.

Walther has always been a chihuahua nipping at the heels of Anschütz, the bull mastiff of free-rifle manufacturers. With the introduction of the new KK 200 three-position .22, Walther is seeking to gain a beachhead on the world's elite shooting shores.

One shooter who gave up his Anschütz 2013 in favor of the Walther KK 200 is Bob Foth, an Olympic silver medalist in 1992 and an alternate on the two-person air rifle team in Atlanta.

Foth switched to the KK 200 last year after a relatively short try-out period—an unusual step for a top-flight shooter who has become familiar with a certain gun. “I tried it and shot well with it immediately,” he said. “I shot with Anschütz for a long time, and used quite a number of different stocks and barrels and two or three different actions, so I had a good idea of what I was capable of doing with it. I shot better with the Walther immediately.”

Foth says the KK 200's benefits include a very stable, stiff aluminum stock. “With the sling in position putting tension on the forend, I noticed it wasn't finicky. Also, it didn't seem sensitive to cheek pressure, as many wooden-stocked guns are,” he said.

Also, Foth said the aluminum stock doesn't flex even when subjected to multiple stresses: a tight sling on the forend, pressure on the buttplate, pressure of the head on the cheekpiece, grip pressure on the grip. He says this consistency helps reduce bullet-impact changes due to changes in recoil patterns.

“We're trying to keep all of those pressures as consistent as possible through a long course of fire,” he said. “In any rifle, even with an aluminum stock, drastic change will change how the rifle recoils. To shoot the smallest groups, you need that recoil to stay consistent shot to shot.” Other things he likes about the gun are how close the hand sits to the centerline of the bore. ISU prone rules dictate that the shooter's arm keep at least a 30-degree elevation away from the ground, and it's easier to shoot a lower overall prone position and yet maintain the required 30-degree angle when the forend is thin.

He also likes the sound of the gun when it fires. “The vibration that's transmitted into your cheekbones when the gun goes off is very solid and dead. It's not lively. That makes the 200 a tiny bit easier to shoot.”

He also cited the ergonomics of the movable pistol grip as an advantage. “Before, you had to use Bondo or file on a thousand-dollar piece of wood to get the right hand position. Now, I can adjust the grip for every position if I choose to.”