

# Handloading For The Long-Range Handgun Event

In handloading the 7mmBR for the Masters, Judy and I considered several variables: usable trajectory for bracketing the targets from 75 to 200 meters without sight readjustment, having enough power and bullet mass to topple 23-pound 12-inch circles at 200 meters, brass life, barrel wear, and accuracy.

Here are our component choices:

- The 145-grain Speer spitzer, considered a dinosaur by some competitors who experimented with lightweight 6mm bullets to limit recoil and flatten trajectory, always knocked down targets we hit. Lighter bullets didn't always take the targets off their bases. Though we started out using the Speer .284-caliber 145-grain flat-based spitzer in our loads, in 1994, after 7,000 rounds, we replaced the original shot-out barrel with a new barrel from Lilja Precision that preferred the Sierra 140-grain boat-tail bullets.

- We looked at several suitable powders and settled on Hodgdon's H-335. We could buy it in bulk inexpensively, it was a ball powder that had a low flame temperature and was thus less damaging to the throat of the bore, and it would provide suitable external ballistic performance in the 7mmBR with heavy bullets.

- Our handloading procedure is very simple. We use a Dillon 550 progressive press with RCBS dies. We segregate brass by the number of times it is fired and trim the necks back on each lot as it reaches maximum allowable length. No other case preparation is done. Powder is metered through the Dillon measure, not weighed. When we get half-minute of angle groups from a handgun that is only expected to keep its shots on a 6-inch plate at 200 meters, there is no practical reason to pursue accuracy further.

- We load 28.3 grains of H-335 in Remington 7BR brass with Remington Benchrest primers and the Sierra .284 140-grain boat-tail soft-point bullet. This develops muzzle velocities of 2050 fps. This is a mild load, but it gives us the ability to bracket the targets, is easy on brass (in fact we are still using much of our original brass purchased in 1991), is easy on the bore and throat, is extremely accurate even with mass produced loads, and will not cause the case to stick in the chamber.

--Charles Woolley