



Sixteen masons amaze crowd at the second annual SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500™

On Feb. 18, 16 determined bricklayers gathered outside the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla., to vie for the title of “The Nation’s Fastest Bricklayer” in the second annual SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500™. Fast becoming the industry’s hottest event, the competition was held in conjunction with the World of Concrete/World of Masonry.

Each bricklayer knew that he had some tough guys to beat. Half of them had either won a regional competition or had competed in the first SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500, held last year in Las Vegas, Nev. The rest of them were there purely to get into the game. Most of these masons had spent hours practicing in their backyards, in their basements or on the job. Each one of them believed in his ability to win, and they were not going to hold back.

Last year’s champ, Wayne Phipps, was there to defend his title as “The Nation’s Fastest Bricklayer.” The Houghtons from Iowa never miss an opportunity to compete, and Glenn Houghton Sr., Glenn Houghton Jr. and Ben Houghton were back for more. Bob Boll had held the world record for bricklaying in 1987 when he laid 914 brick in an hour. His younger brother Mike Boll had won the regional competition in Chicago with more than 700 brick.

Brian Tuttle placed second the regional qualifier in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Tracy Allen, a return competitor from last year’s contest, won the Salt Lake City qualifier. Paul Klein, Patrick Baxter, Brian Gruenhagen and Jerald Navarette believed they were fast enough to win. Jaysen Walter won the Wisconsin regional qualifier. Bernard Ferrante saw last year’s competition and thought he could do better. Pascal Robertson just wanted to compete, win or lose, and Phillip Veal, a 52-year old bricklayer, wanted to see if he could out do “those young kids.”

The crowd started gathering at 1:30 p.m., and by 2 p.m.



Glenn Houghton Sr. of Houghton Masonry, Blue Grass, Iowa, gives his all in the second annual SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500™ in Orlando, Fla.

the grandstand was full. The Toughest Tender competition started off the event at 2:30 p.m., and at that time, people were standing four deep around the perimeter of the competition area. The crowd was estimated at 2,000.

Each bricklayer had one tender to assist him during the contest, and these 16 tenders raced to be the first to set up his station. Each moved 1,000 brick, 38 8x8x16 CMUs, 2 8x8x8 CMUs, 5 mortarboards, 5 mortarboard stands, 4 16-foot plank, a wheelbarrow, 2 five-gallon pails, 2 tempering pails, a shovel and 2 brick tongs. Derek Schurke of Five Star Masonry, LeClaire, Iowa, came out ahead to win this race.

At 3:10 p.m., the 16 bricklayers stand ready as they wait for the signal for the start of the second annual SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500.

An air horn blasted and the bricklayers went flying. At the halfway mark, the frontrunners began to edge out from the pack. The Boll brothers were definitely in a race of their own. They paced each other brick by brick, but Mike, 19 years younger than his brother, eventually moved

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SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500 (Continued from Page 1)

ahead. As the air horn signaled the end of the contest, the audience was speculating on the winner.

But the tallest wall isn't necessarily the winner. Skill counts as well as speed in this race. So even though Mike Boll had placed more than 800 brick, he lost the No. 1 spot because of the number of voids in his wall. The title of the "Nation's Fastest Bricklayer" went to the previous world record holder Bob Boll, who laid 765 brick.

A very special thanks to Jim O'Connor, executive director of the Greater Chicago Mason Contractors Association for his work as the event's emcee. O'Connor really knows how to get the crowd going. And also thanks to the SPEC MIX Mudslingers who worked furiously to keep up with the bricklayers. Also thanks to our co-sponsors for their contributions of prize money, prizes and equipment (See story on Page 4).

Below are the final results of the second annual SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500:

SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500™ Winners

- 1st Place: **Bob Boll**, Boll Masonry, Conifer, Co.,
765 brick
- 2nd Place: **Phillip Veal**, R&G Masonry Contractors Inc.,
Jonesboro, Ark., 668 brick
- 3rd Place: **Paul Klein**, New World Construction Corp.,
Montgomery, NY, 646 brick

Toughest Tender Winner

Derek Schurke of Five Star Masonry, LeClaire, Iowa

Also competed:

Tracy Allen of IMS Masonry, Orem, Utah

Patrick Baxter of Summit Concrete & Masonry,
North Branch, Minnesota

Michael Boll of Boll Masonry, Oaklawn, Illinois

Bernard Ferrante of Ferrante & Sons Masonry Inc.,
Massillon, Ohio

Brian Gruenhagen of Stellar Concrete & Masonry,
Burnsville, Minnesota

Ben Houghton of Better Built Masonry, Muscatine, Iowa

Glenn Houghton Sr. of Houghton Masonry, Blue Grass,
Iowa

Glenn Houghton Jr. of Five Star Masonry, LeClaire, Iowa

Jerald Navarette of Mathis Masonry, Avinger, Texas

Wayne Phipps of Mourer Masonry, Batesville, Arkansas

Pascal Robertson of Pascal Robertson Masonry,
Apopka, Florida

Brian Tuttle of Quik Trowell Masonry, Elkridge, Utah

Jaysen Walter, Hartford, Wisconsin

Five minutes and counting

In the words of "The Nation's Fastest Bricklayer" Bob Boll

It was a heated race between brothers Bob Boll and Mike Boll. They were stationed right next to each other and were able to keep tabs on each other the whole way. Bob told us his thoughts during the final minutes of the competition and on the SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500™.

My son [Bob's tender] kept telling me, "Go faster. Go faster." I thought, "Wow, [Mike's] really going." I didn't think he had it in him. I thought the 714 brick he laid in the Chicago competition was about the best he could do. He said that if I showed up, he was really going to try harder. ... I always tell him that he lays brick as fast as he can and I lay brick as fast as I



want. Whenever I would go back to Chicago to make a few extra bucks, he would always race me and really give me a work out.

I expected to lay 800 brick myself, but my last corner was a half inch too high, so I had to go back and redo it. Then I lost steam after that and Mike just kept going. I thought, "Well, second place is fine too."

It was the best organized event that I've been to. I thought it was great. There were bleachers for people to watch from, and guys making mortar for us. I couldn't believe how great the mortar was. I thought it would be real course sand. We didn't have to add anything to it. And you were so generous giving so many prizes to everyone who participated. I really thought it was great.

Bob Boll competes to defend his title of The Nation's Fastest Bricklayer" on Jan. 19, 2005, at the World of Concrete/World of Masonry in Las Vegas, Nev. Don't miss it!

SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500™



Approximately 2,000 spectators gather for the second annual SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500™.



Bricklayers Bob Boll, Conifer, Co. (left), and Mike Boll, Oak Lawn, Ill. (right), pace each other brick by brick.



Mike Luthi, Hartford, Wis., arranges 1,000 brick in the Toughest Tender competition.



Bricklayer Glenn Houghton Jr., LeClaire, Iowa, keeps his eye on his trowel and gives his best effort.



1st Place Team: Bricklayer Bob Boll of Boll Masonry, Conifer, Co. (left), and Paul Boll, tender (right)



2nd Place Team: Bricklayer Phillip Veal of R&G Masonry Contractors, Inc. (left), and Jerry Crump, tender (right)



3rd Place Team: Bricklayer Paul Klein of New World Construction Corp., Montgomery, NY (right), and Joseph Macagne, tender (left)



Toughest Tender: Derek Schurke of Five Star Masonry, LeClaire, Iowa

SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500™ winners cash in

SPEC MIX, Inc., along with the following generous co-sponsors made the following prizes available to the SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500 winners and competitors:

FIRST PLACE

CASH: \$7,500

PRIZES:

MK Diamond: BX-3 Brick Saw and MK-70 saw & (2) 14-inch diamond blades

Marshalltown: \$1,250 tool package

Kapro Tools Inc.: Prolaser Vector - 888 and tripod

Crick: 48-inch teak level and custom teak case

SECOND PLACE

CASH: \$5,000

PRIZES:

MK Diamond: BX-3 saw & (2) 14-inch diamond blades

Marshalltown: \$1,000 tool package

Kapro Tools Inc.: Combi Prolaser - 887 and tripod

Crick: 48-inch cherry level and custom cherry case

THIRD PLACE

CASH: \$2,500

PRIZES:

MK Diamond: MK-70 saw and various diamond blades

Marshalltown: \$825 tool package

Kapro Tools Inc.: Prolaser Wiz 328

Crick: 48-inch African walnut level and custom African walnut case

TOUGHEST TENDER

CASH: \$2,000

All competing bricklayers and tenders received the following:

Cabela's: heavy-duty work jacket

Marshalltown: cap and t-shirt, margin trowel, 3/8-inch tuck pointer, London trowel

SPEC MIX: competitor t-shirt, gloves and tool bag

Bricklayers only:

Crick: 48-inch wood level

Kapro Tools Inc.: Palm Prolaser 2

Tenders only:

Kapro Tools Inc.: Tape Measure 509

Thanks to all those who made the SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500™ a success

You should give credit where credit is due, and if it wasn't for the following people and companies, SPEC MIX couldn't continue to bring such a worthy event to the masonry industry.

First we wish to thank all the teams for taking the challenge and putting their hearts, souls and sweat into the competition.

Second, thanks to the SPEC MIX Mudslingers who really put their backs into the contest to provide the bricklayers mud, and at the rate these masons were going, you guys really had your work cut out for you. In just one hour, more than 11 yards of mortar were mixed and delivered from two SPEC MIX G7000 silos!

Then last, but certainly not least, we thank the following companies for partnering with us and making the SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500 a first-rate event:

Gold Level Sponsors

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Don't let your raw materials put you in a bind

BY MARK LUKKARILA, SPEC MIX TECHNICAL SERVICES MANAGER

Switching of raw materials is a common occurrence throughout the concrete and masonry industry. Few people think anything of it, until there's a problem.

For example, I know of a manufacturer that was accustomed to using a specific combination of accelerating admixture and Portland cement. After switching Portland cements, the calls started coming in regarding a lack of set acceleration. A few simple tests revealed that the accelerator was not compatible with the new Portland cement.

Switching raw materials is done with the assumption that sand is sand, cement is cement, and an admixture is the same regardless of who manufactures it. Having been intimately involved with various sectors of the construction industry, I understand the differences that can exist between materials that have similar properties on paper, but very different actual performance characteristics.

In a series of upcoming articles I will illustrate some of the reasons why it is important to know and understand the properties of new raw material sources before switching to them. The consequence of not knowing the material properties can result in a multitude of complaints and problems including, but not limited to, loss of boardlife, excessive retempering, shrinkage cracking, admixture incompatibilities, water requirement, and workability. I'll also address the differences that can exist between raw material sources including cement, aggregate, and various admixtures and the potential affect these differences may have on the end product.

Unfortunately, there wasn't enough room in this issue to go into more detail, but watch for the next issue of Trowel Tales to learn more about not letting your raw materials put you in a bind with your customers.

Hydo-Mobile celebrates 10th anniversary as industry leader

Hydo-Mobile, the leading North American manufacturer of mast climbing work platforms is celebrating their 10-year anniversary. As they say, "Becoming a leader is one thing, staying at the top for 10 years is another." It requires more than technology and quality to be the best — it also takes devoted people. Dedication is what made Hydro-Mobile the North American leader in mast climbing work platforms for the past decade.



With more than 3,500 platforms on the market, Hydro-Mobile continues to stay innovative. Their personalized training seminars, their 24-hour customer service for special needs and engineering support, along with their close network of distributors, are the keys to Hydro-Mobile's 10 years of unceasing success and outstanding growth.

As an industry leader, Hydro-Mobile collaborated with SPEC MIX, Inc., as a co-sponsor of the second annual SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500™, which took place on Feb. 18 in Orlando, Fla.

They provided their top-selling machine, the M-2 mast-climbing platform, which was used as a stage (see photo).

Hydo-Mobile is a privately owned corpora-

tion, principally involved in the design, manufacturing and distribution of mast climbing work platforms for the construction industry. Hydro-Mobile platforms are distributed throughout North America and Europe through a wide network of distributors that are recognized as key players in construction equipment sales and rental.



Hydo-Mobile's M-2 platform serves as a stage at the SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500™ in Orlando, Fla.

Cabinetmaker and mason, too

His instructor tells it best. “Josh started in our vocational program as a freshman. His first interest in our building trades class was cabinetmaking. He placed third in the state of Iowa SkillsUSA competition that year. The following summer, he found a job with a local masonry company, and he’s concentrated in that trade ever since.”

Darin Steva instructed Josh Knudtson at Perry High School in Perry, Iowa. “Can you believe it?” Steva asks. “This young man did so well in cabinetmaking, then turned around and did even better in masonry.”

Knudtson represented the state of Iowa in the national masonry contest held this past summer in Kansas City, Mo. In conjunction with the SkillsUSA–VICA National Leadership and Skills Conference. He competed in the secondary division.

Returning to high school, Knudtson added to his academic and masonry efforts by participating in football, soccer and track. He was on the school bowling team, and he was a very active member of the Technical Student Association (TSA). Knudtson started out as a local officer his freshman year. By the end of his freshman year, Knudtson had been elected Iowa TSA State Treasurer. Simultaneously participating in SkillsUSA, this past fall, Knudtson was elected Secretary of the Iowa State Association.



Josh Knudtson of Dawson, Iowa, checks his work during the 2003 National Masonry Contest held in conjunction with the SkillsUSA–VICA National Championships in Kansas City, Mo.

Even though Knudtson’s father owns a residential construction business, he gives credit to his instructor. “Mr. Steva taught me everything I know about masonry,” Knudtson said.

Knudtson graduated in February and is currently employed by Burkett Masonry, earning money to continue his education. He is considering a number of community colleges in Iowa.

Academician and mason, too

“Errol McDonald began my class by working hard, and he never let up,” vo-tech instructor Porter Soley said.



Errol McDonald lays another brick on his composite project in the post-secondary competition of the 2003 National Masonry Contest held in Kansas City, Mo., in conjunction with the Skills USA-VICA National Championships.

“From the very beginning, Errol’s been a special student, and it’s been my great honor to teach him.”

McDonald graduated with a 4.0 GPA from Pearl River Community College in Hattiesburg, Miss. His academic honors include the Dean’s List, the President’s List, the Citizenship Award, the Outstanding Student Award, and election to Who’s Who Among American Students. He was also involved in his local chapter of VICA.

In fact, McDonald represented the state of Mississippi in the national masonry contest held this past summer in Kansas City, Mo. in conjunction with the SkillsUSA-VICA National Leadership and Skills Conference. He competed in the post-secondary division.

In addition to his efforts at school, McDonald worked as an apprentice mason for Porter Solex. He is currently employed by Branch Masonry, Inc., in Bogalusa, La.

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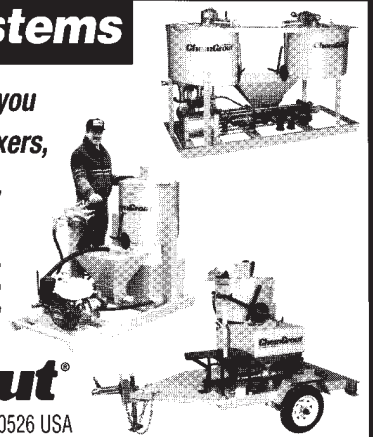
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April 21-23
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May 26-29
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Tech Center

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Apprentices of the Month

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Errol McDonald: Academician and mason, too