

Choosing Your Cartridge

For TC Encore, Savage, Model 97D Rifles and BF Pistols

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What to Consider When Choosing an Accurate Cartridge

With so many choices, folks will often ask what we recommend as the "Best Cartridge". Unfortunately what's best for one situation is not best for another. For example, 6mm PPC has won more Benchrest Shooting Competitions than any other cartridge (I think)... so it should be considered as among the most accurate cartridges in the world. But it's a little light for deer hunting. As a contrast, our EABCO 308 Winchester chambering is what the US Rifle team used at the Bisley matches in England... very accurate and powerful enough for deer sized game and larger. BUT, it recoils significantly harder than the 6mm PPC... Making it a more difficult cartridge to shoot well. When recoil gets stiffer, accurate shooting depends more and more heavily on the shooter's marksmanship skill.

So, the key to choosing the Best Cartridge for YOU is this: Decide what you're going to use it most for, then choose based on accuracy potential and shootability.

Decide What You Are Going to Use it For - If you're primarily wanting to shoot the **tightest groups at paper targets**, choose 17 Ackley Hornet, 22 Hornet, 222 Remington, 223 Remington, 22 PPC, 219 Donaldson Wasp, 6mm PPC, 6mm Donaldson Wasp, 6mm BR. If you want to use it for **Varmint Hunting**, any of the above would be fine plus everything else we offer from .17 caliber thru 6mm. For **Big Game Hunting**, you need a medium to large case capacity with a heavier bullet in calibers from 6mm on up. Be careful here to optimize your choice for what you plan to hunt most often... not for the heaviest game you'll ever hunt. Most good deer cartridges will work just fine for elk hunting when loaded with heavy, bonded core bullets. But, the biggest magnums suitable for elk hunting are usually way too much for deer and a lot harder to shoot well because of recoil. Magnum power is useless if you can shoot it accurately.

Accuracy Potential - Cartridge **Efficiency** is something to consider in accuracy choices. If a cartridge is so large that it can't burn all of its powder charge by the time the bullet leaves the barrel, you'll get a lot of muzzle blast for not much increase in velocity and perhaps an accuracy disruption just as the bullet exits the crown of the muzzle. .308 Winchester is more efficient than 30-06 when shooting 150-165 grain bullets. But, 30-06 will give faster velocity potential than .308 when you shoot 180-220 grain bullets. **Ackley Improved (AI)** cartridges will generally give a boost in both velocity AND accuracy potential due to the bolt thrust reducing body taper.

Shootability - Accurate shot placement is more important than velocity, energy, momentum or any other measure of lethality when hunting game. More importantly, it is a measure of your marksmanship that the pure accuracy of your barrel cannot overcome. So, it's important to choose a cartridge you'll feel comfortable enough with that you'll **enjoy** shooting it... for practice or just plinking for fun. Recoil and muzzle blast are the biggest destroyers of shootability because they cause a shooter to develop bad habits... flinching, jerking the trigger, holding the gun apprehensively, etc. We have muzzle brakes and recoil pads that can help you reduce recoil. As a direct recommendation on cartridges for deer hunting that have moderate recoil and excellent shootability, consider: .243 Winchester, 25-35 Winchester, 257 Roberts, 6.5mm BR Mag, 6.5X55 Swedish Mauser, 260 Remington, 270 Winchester, 7mm BRM, 7-08 Remington, 30-30 Winchester, 30-30 Ackley Improved, 300 BRM, 308 Winchester, and 30-40 Krag.

Killing Power for Sport Hunting - There's an excellent article in the **P.O. Ackley Handbook Vol I** that addresses this from all of the popular viewpoints (energy, momentum, velocity, knock-out, etc.) No one formula predicts perfectly for every cartridge but, what becomes most conclusive toward the end of the article is that being able to hit what you're aiming at is the first priority, followed by the **quality of the bullet** with respect to penetration and expansion.

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