

Demolition derby contestants buy "obsolete" old combines for \$50 to \$250.

"THEY'RE PRACTICALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE"

World's First Combine Demolition Derby

The world's first combine demolition derby took place last July at the Brandon, Manitoba Provincial Exhibition and a 17-year-old U.S. farm boy, who had never driven a combine before, walked away the winner.

More than 3,000 fans and two national TV networks were on hand as the eight giant machines crashed their way through four elimination heats leading up to a final confrontation featuring the four finalists. After endless smash-ups, Tom Swenson, of Little Falls, Minn., emerged the winner.

Ernie Brookins, president of International Truck and Tractor Pulls of Fargo, N.D., conceived the idea for the combine derby and says that, so far as he knows, there has never been another.

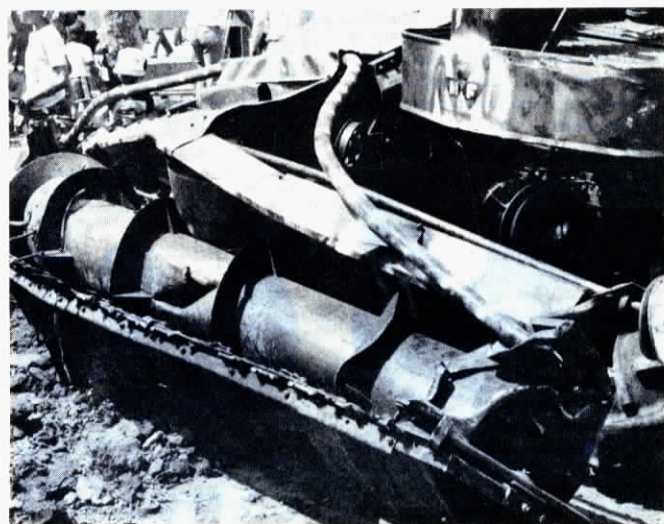
"We didn't know what to expect but the first derby in Brandon proved to be highly entertaining, drawing big crowds and providing lots of excitement," he told FARM SHOW.

"It's the only demolition sport where the driver is in full view of the crowd because most of the old combines don't have cabs. Since all the drivers are local participants, the crowd enjoys watching the reactions of the driver as he operates the machine."

Brookins, who has promoted various motor sports for the past 15 years, says he's copyrighted the combine demolition derby idea. Since the first contest in July, he has staged several more successful derbies at fairs throughout the Midwest.

Most of the demolition combines are older model Deere machines that contestants buy for an average price of \$50 to \$250. While it sometimes takes a little effort to get them running again, once started, Brookins says the old machines run great.

"Most combines become outdated because they don't have enough capacity, not because they're worn out. The engines are usually still good," he says.



Combines must be equipped with a header to compete.



Photo courtesy Kelowna Daily Courier

John Jackson's miniature working replica operates on compressed air.

ACTUALLY THRESHES, BAGS GRAIN

"Mini" Threshing Rig Works Like Real Thing

"I made every part and I aim to make the thing thresh grain when I'm through."

John Jackson, 76, of Kelowna, B.C., has spent the better part of the last four years fulfilling his life-long dream of building a miniature "threshing outfit" identical to the one operated by his father in 1915 "on the farm in Colorado near Steamboat Springs at the foot of Elk Mountain."

And, after 6,000 hours in his shop following homemade plans, pictures out of a 1912 J.L. Case Threshing Machine Co. catalog, and his memory, Jackson has completed a miniature 75-horsepower steam tractor and

almost completed a miniature 36/58 750 rpm separator.

They are miniatures not models, because Jackson has taken pains to duplicate every rivet, spoke and control handle on the machines right down to "working" miniature pressure gauges.

The tractor operates on compressed air rather than steam, but, it could operate on steam, if desired. Everything works on the Jackson miniature as it does on the life-size tractor. If one wants to make the tractor go forward you reach into the cab, squeeze the lever on the control handle and shove the handle forward to engage the engine.

The inside of the threshing machine is made with the same precise care. Jackson, who is currently working on an operating grain-bagging attachment for the machine, said every piece on the thresher has been hand-machined in his shop.

"The 1915 Case Tractor always seemed to lose power in reverse," says Jackson. "Now watch this." He would switch his miniature into reverse and, sure enough, its operation became sluggish. Apparently the unexplained power loss prevalent in the large models has manifested itself in Jackson's miniature. "These things always ran lousy in reverse," he notes.

Jackson, who says he's too old "to go back home" has, through his hobby, created a little time machine which transports him and everyone who comes under his spell back to the farm in 1915. One almost expects to see grain fields, an old farm dog and a threshing outfit when stepping out of Jackson's workshop.

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Brookins says the combines are "practically indestructible" except for their exposed rear axle. After a recent derby in Minot, N. Dak., six of the 12 combines entered were still in running condition after the event.

"Some stop because drive belts pop off or a wire gets knocked off the coil. The combines must have a grain header on to enter and sometimes that is twisted into the ground so the combine gets hung up. One driver filled the wheels with water and, when the tires were punctured, he got stuck in his own mud," says Brookins.

Each contest features 9 to 12 combines, running in 3 to 4 heats. The most expensive machine entered to date was a \$10,000 Coop Implements combine.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ernie Brookins, International Truck and Tractor Pulls, Rt. 2, Fargo, N. Dak. 58102 (ph 701 282-7913).