

# Fastest Trowel on the Block Competition Rules & Evaluation

## What is the Fastest Trowel?

The Fastest Trowel on the Block Competition is a showcase of industry craftsmanship and a testament of both the speed and skill of our industry's workforce. Only those journeymen masons who have the skill, confidence and courage to face-off with the industry's best are invited to compete. This is a contest that also proves how important teamwork is in accomplishing a final product.

The competition will pit journeyman masons, accompanied by their two favorite tenders, against one another in a show of both speed and craftsmanship. Each contestant's goal is to complete as much of a 24-foot long wall as possible, using 8"x8"x16" CMU and the provided mortar in a twenty-minute heat. Contestants must have a high degree of workmanship using normal masonry practices and hand tools.

The contest promotes quality training and pride in workmanship among journeymen and contractors, as well as promoting the craftsmanship, speed and versatility of masonry systems and the masonry workforce. This contest also rewards and highlights the country's best mason journeymen for their hard work and dedication to the trade.

## Entry Requirements

To enter the competition, a mason must be an active journeyman and complete the entry form before competing. Competitors and their teams will be accepted on a first come basis. Participants selected for the Fastest Trowel will be notified prior to the competition in order to make proper arrangements.

Any mason is eligible for the Fastest Trowel on the Block, this includes both MCAA members and non-members. Contestants must be registered and confirmed at least two weeks prior to the contest date, or will not be able to compete. No contestant will be allowed to compete if registering on the day of the contest. Each contestant must be present at the orientation meeting on the day prior to the contest, or they will not be allowed to compete.

## Competition Materials

In the competition, contestants will use the official weight block and mortar supplied by the contest sponsors. Contestants may temper their mortar with water. Concrete masonry units will be 8"x8"x16" CMU and 8"x8"x8" of the normal weight class. Each contestant will be provided 180 full size and 12 halves. No additional block will be provided under any conditions. Each contestant must furnish his own tools. The only allowable tools to be used during the competition are:

- Levels (must provide a 4' level for judging)
- Trowels
- String Line
- Jump Boards
- Jointers
- Trigs
- Line Pins
- Sled Runners

Each contestant will receive one spool of braided string, 2 line blocks and 4 trigs. No other tools will be provided or available. Scaffolding is not allowed. If the contestant determines that there is a need for a jump



board to achieve the maximum height. jump boards may be placed on a single 8" height of 8"x8"x16" concrete masonry unit. The jump boards may be placed by the mason tenders. Jump boards must be placed in a safe manner that does not interfere with other contestants and provides a stable and safe support for the contestant. All jump boards must be furnished by the contestant. Mortar boards will be provided. If a contestant wishes, a different type of mortar board or mortar pan may be used, but contestants must provide their own equipment. Levels are to be provided by the contestant and left on the wall upon completion for use in judging. Either one or two levels can be used. Four-foot levels are mandatory for use in judging. If a contestant wishes, another length level may be used during the actual competition, but a four-foot level must be provided for use by the judges.

## **Competition Rules**

Contestants will have 30 to 45 minutes before the start of the contest period to work with the mortar, locate and determine the height of the mortar boards, and finalize the locations of the block piles. During this time contestants will also lay an 18 block long base course and check the alignment. The block in the base course will not be counted in the contest. The base course must all be full size units. No half units will be allowed. The first competition course will start and end with half units.

The contest begins. Contestants are responsible for raising the leads at each end of the wall, securing the line and pins/corner blocks, and for running each course of block. All contestants must use a string line. The use of metal, timber, or other end profile posts or prepared block is prohibited. While constructing their wall, contestants must place four trigs, one at each end of the wall at the top of the base course and at the top of the third course, to be used in judging story. Trigs will be placed on the side of the wall facing the mortar boards.

The mason must lift each block from no more than five piles of block and all trowels of mortar from no more than four spot boards. These piles and boards must be set out along the length of the wall in usual working fashion by the contestant and helpers, and in accordance with the stall map provided.

No more than two helpers will be allowed per contestant. Any assistance from these helpers in placing block in the contestant's wall, transferring mortar from the spot boards to the wall, applying mortar to the blocks or handling the blocks from the piles to the mason will result in disqualification for this team. The tenders or helpers can keep the piles of block replenished and can place the block on the pile any way the mason wants. Once the mason has touched a block the helpers cannot touch the block again. Helpers can keep the mortar boards full but cannot touch any of the mason's tools such as levels, lines, pins, etc.

The wall must be cut flush on both sides prior to laying the next course. Points will be deducted for true and workmanship for any completed courses not cut. There will be judges constantly monitoring this. At the end of 20 minutes of the final round, the mason must stop laying block.

There will be a two-minute break. A coin will be tossed to determine which side of the walls will be judged for voids and workmanship, the sides facing the mortar boards or the sides not facing the mortar boards. All contestants will be judged for voids and workmanship on that side of the wall and the jambs. Plumb will be judged on the side facing the mortar boards.

All contestants will be allowed three minutes to strike the wall prior to judging voids and workmanship. The purpose of this three-minute period is the improvement of voids, using only the jointer (hand jointer, sled runner or both, but only one at a time). Mortar can be used, and trowels may be held and used as a pallet for the mortar. No tools other than the jointer or sled runner may be used on the wall. No contestant will be allowed to use his trowel to point in voids. Other than striking and tooling of joints, no additional corrections to the wall will be permitted. Brushing and/or sponging the wall is not allowed. These faces will be used to judge voids and workmanship. All other requirements will be judged on the opposite face of the wall while the contestant is striking the face to be judged for voids and workmanship.

## **Judging**

The Fastest Trowel on the Block contest is a competition of both speed and skilled craftsmanship. Contestants are scored out of 100 points, with 30% of their score based on the quantity of block laid. The remainder of the

score is a function of the quality of their wall. The fastest block layer doesn't always win, but the best does! The contest judges will be selected by hosting committee members. Contestants are scored with a 100 point scale, broken down as follows:

- True and Workmanship (10 points)
- Plumb (15 points)
- Level (15 points)
- Story (15 points)
- Voids (15 points)
- Production (30 points)

This category is subjectively rated by all judges. Walls will be rated by assessing bond accuracy or alignment, coursing appearance, out of plane or tipped block and bows, dips, and lumps, along with joints that are not cut flush, mortar stains and smears, etc. Only the working face will be judged. Each judge will award the best wall in the competition 10 points and all other walls a portion of 10 points (ranging from 0-9) depending on the appearance of each wall compared to the best wall.

### **Plumb (15 points)**

Contestant's level will be used for judging. Vertical plumb will be measured on both ends and in the center only. The number of 1/8" deviations in excess of 1/8" (1/8" at each location is allowed) will be deducted.

### **Level (15 points)**

Contestant's 4' level will be used for judging. The top course of the wall at three locations, both ends and in the middle will be judged. The single point of greatest deviation in each of the three sections will be recorded. The number of 1/8" deviations in excess of 1/8" (1/8" at each location is allowed) will be deducted.

### **Story (15 points)**

The contestant's tape measure will be used for judging. Contestants are to place trig at top block on the base course and top of block on the third competition course. Story height at both ends of the wall will be measured. Four measurements will be taken: third course trig to the top of the top course block and base trig to third course trig at each end of the wall. The number of 1/8" deviations in excess of 1/8" (1/8" at each location is allowed) will be deducted.

### **Voids (15 points)**

Only one side of the wall will be judged - determined by a coin toss following the block-laying portion of the competition. Voids will be measured and rounded up to whole inch. One half point for each 1" will be deducted. A void is defined by any opening in a head or bed joint. Also, mortar that did not squeeze to the plane of the face shell is also considered a void. A void breaks the visual continuity of the mortar joint.

### **Production (30 points)**

The number of block laid by each contestant will be counted. The contestant that lays the most block will receive 30 points. The other contestants will have 1/2 point deducted from the 30 points for each block less they lay than contestant that lays the most block.

A complete list of judging criteria is supplied to each contestant and additional copies are available upon request.

Requests must be put in writing, either via email, fax or mail from the contestant himself. The following information will be provided: the individual contestant's scores for each criteria, total score and rank; the total scores for the first, second and third place winners. No additional score information will be provided, without exception.