The BOWdometer: A Review

by Crispin Duenas

A few years ago, I was approached by George Wagner, one of the founding partners from BOWdometer, to test out a new product that he had in mind. He wanted to create a device that could be attached to your bow and have two primary functions: to automatically count the number of arrows shot by the archer and help to improve the archer's shot consistency. I was instantly intrigued by the idea and definitely wanted to be part of the first batch of testers.

Almost a year later, the first prototypes were released to the beta testers and we were excited to get this project rolling. And yes, it counted the number of arrows shot and was rating my shot according to a scale that I didn't quite understand at the time.

The BOWdometer is a small plastic box that attaches to your bow either by use of the supplied Velcro straps, zip ties, or screwing the supplied mount into an unused stabilizer hole or your unused secondary plunger hole. In my experience, the more solid you can make your connection to your riser, the more accurate the data will be for your shot rating (as there is less random movement of the BOWdometer). A solid connection required me to screw the mount to the riser and I used the stabilizer hole located directly under my grip.

It may be small but it will have a big impact on your consistency. Photo courtesy of www.BOWdometer.com.

Simply put, the BOWdometer works by detecting the impulse generated by your bow when the arrow is shot from the bow. It will also rate how consistently you hold your bow right before the shot is executed; this involves the cant in your bow, how much movement there was before the arrow was released, and the movement during the initial stages of your follow-through. The impulse in your bow can also change if you shoot a good shot or a bad shot, and using all of this information, the BOWdometer gives you a shot rating (which is called "Xi") after each shot.

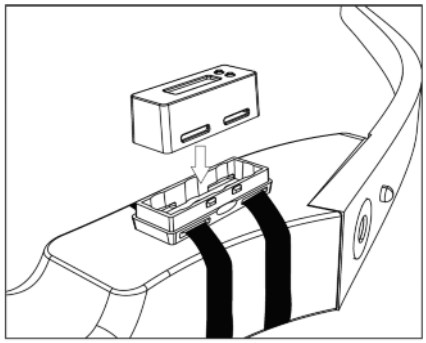
Of course the arrow counting feature is pretty typical, with one thing to keep in mind; if your device is attached to your bow and you pluck your bowstring (which is typically done after stringing up the bow), the BOWdometer will use that impulse to count it as a shot.

The shot rating feature was very interesting to me, and I think that it helped me when I was able to associate the Xi rating to what I felt during my shot. Simply put, your goal with the shot rating is to achieve a Xi number as close to 50 as possible (the scale is from 1 to 100). The Xi number 50 equates to your average shot, and this is learned by the device over a few hundred recorded shots. If you make a small change to your shot, or you execute a shot that is not considered your normal shot, the device informs you by displaying a number that is greater or less than 50.

It took a lot of shots for me to be able to do determine what the numbers meant for me and my usual mistakes, and I will admit that the algorithm used to calculate Xi can be pretty confusing. Without a guide on what the Xi number represents (not yet, anyway) I was able to figure out which Xi numbers were associated with what I felt during my shot. I feel that archers who are novices at this sport will not be able to associate the shot feeling with Xi numbers as well as a seasoned pro, but they will be able to start to develop shot feel after they've seen the Xi rating for each shot.

Continued on the Next Page

The BOWdometer "grows" with the archer and it tracks your progress by assigning you a level. The developers of BOWdometer like to use these levels as a comparison to a video game where more consistent shooting will allow you to "level up" – ironically going up a level can potentially also be the cause of more frustration in an archer. The sensitivity of the BOWdometer increases as the levels increase and your Xi rating will start to have a wider spread at higher levels, unless you're able to increase your shot consistency and close the gap in your Xi variance. Also, you can go down in levels if your shooting becomes more inconsistent than the previous Xi variance.



The BOWdometer can be velcroed to your bow or bolted on more securely (recommended).

Overall, the challenge of scoring a 50 on my Xi rating was the big hook with the BOWdometer, but I found myself kind of obsessed with achieving that and looking at the BOWdometer after almost every shot. I soon caught myself doing this and made the conscious effort to put the device on my bow, set it and forget it. I would only look at the unit if I had a shot that I felt needed to be mentally noted and the Xi number associated with that shot. For example, after executing a weak shot that had a bad release, I quickly looked at the BOWdometer to see what number was being displayed so I could associate that shot with the Xi score.

Analyzing your shot data on the phone app after shooting an end, or a specified number of arrows, was the best option in my opinion. This allowed me to focus on my shot without constantly looking at the shot rating and being a little obsessed with scoring 50. I believe that most archers can benefit from the BOWdometer as long as they realize that this isn't going to fix your shot in one end; it's meant to track your shots and give you a numerical value of your shots which is based on a large data pool of shots, and help improve your shot by promoting consistency.

It has also been really nice not having to count my arrows as well.

Raise Money for Your Archery Club!

Generate cash for your archery club by joining the Archery Focus Affiliate Program! It's as Easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Click on "Affiliate Info" on your AF account page.
2. Download your choice of AF banner and place it on your website.
3. Each time a click results in a new subscription, a 30% commision ($9.80) will be credited to the PayPal account you've specified.

Got Questions? Email Claudia@ArcheryFocus.com