



Scratchbuilding a Track Bumper in N Scale

by Marvin Linke

Sometimes I am envious of larger scales. Scales where every detail is available ready made and inexpensive too! One of the details is a realistic track bumper for my many stub end tracks. I have seen a few European style bumpers in N scale and Walthers has recently offered a track bumper but they do not look like bumpers I have seen. The solution was to build my own from scratch.

I started by searching the Internet for images of prototype bumpers. A fan of the search engine Google, I used Google's image option and found many examples. I settled on the style shown here. This bumper was built by the Hayes Corporation of Linden, Indiana. I chose this style because it was simple in design and functional.



Photo #1

The rear steel I-beams were made from styrene #BFS-2 1/16" I-beam stock from Plastruct. The forward legs were made from .020 x .040 styrene and .010 x .100 styrene was used for the top and end striker plates. A jig was made to connect the front and rear legs (Photo #2). Another jig was made by placing a piece of scrap thin wood between the rails on a small section of track. A space was left on each side of the wood from the rails to allow the legs to rest against the rails while leaning towards each other. I then glued the two sections using styrene solvent cement. (Photo #3).



Photo #2

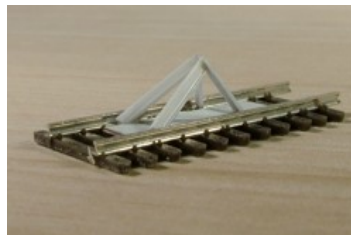
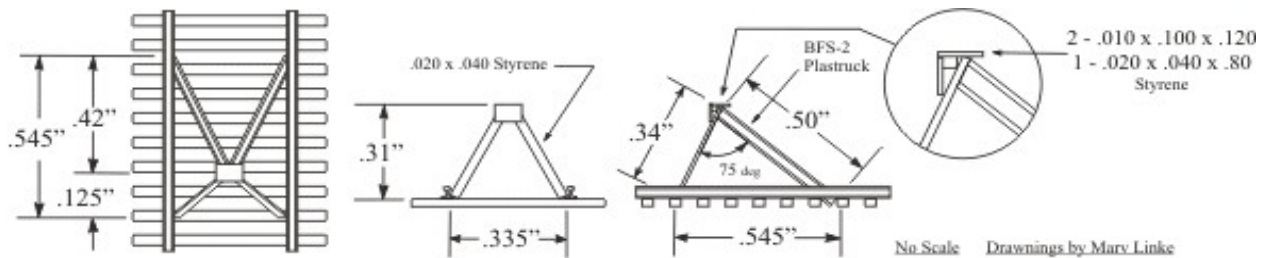


Photo #3



Photo #4

Photo #4 shows two completed bumpers. The top and end striker plates were cut from .010 x .100 styrene. I cut them to a length of .120. A small piece of .020 x .040 styrene was glued to the top of the frame to help position the striker plate. After priming I painted the bumpers with Scale Coat Milwaukee Road Maroon. I used a brush and made sure some primer was left exposed to simulate wear of the paint because of exposure to the elements. I then placed the bumper on a section of track using cyanoacrylate glue to fasten the bumper to the rails. The front legs rest on the ties while the back legs rest between the ties. Resting the back legs between ties makes the bumper very functional. Pressure applied when the coupler strikes the bumper is transferred to the track ties.



Track bumpers are essential in the operation of a railroad. This simple design allows us detail challenged modelers to build our own bumpers inexpensively, accurately, and quickly.

All photos and drawings by Marv Linke

Marv Linke
 N Scale Layout "The SouthWestern"
 Website: <http://home.comcast.net/~marv11/train.htm>
 marv11@comcast.net