

20. Tom Hermann's ALCO RS-2



The American Locomotive Company's RS-2 often gets overshadowed by the similar and more numerous RS-3 model, but I've always liked the cleaner lines of the RS-2. The Lehigh and New England took delivery of 13 RS-2 locos in 1949. These 1500hp units went to work as the primary diesel power on the branch I model, which further cements their status as favorites on my layout.

I built my version of L&NE #656 using Kato's HO scale RS-2 model. Kato released these models some 20 years ago, but they feature a drive that still rivals anything out there today. The main modification I made to the stock model involved (carefully!) cutting down the frame with a hacksaw and Dremel tool to remove the large underframe fuel tank. I also added an assortment of detail parts, including separate brake details on the trucks to upgrade the original cast-on details. Kato did not offer these decorated for the L&NE so I stripped the factory paint with a long soak in 91% isopropyl alcohol and repainted with Scalecoat II Loco Black. Decals are from Microscale's L&NE diesel set. I used gouache, Testor's Dullcote, and Pan Pastels for weathering. Internally, I equipped the 656 with a Tsunami sound decoder and the biggest speaker I could fit under the long hood. I mounted a TCS Keep Alive capacitor in the short

hood to improve performance over turnout frogs and dirty track. Fitting all that under the shell meant discarding the extra weights that came with the stock model, but I've seen no loss of traction/pulling power as 656 earns its keep hauling freight with its fellow RS-2s on my Catsauqua Branch layout. **Todd Hermann**