

# **A&SN**

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## Tactical Training Tips & Tools



The FN SLP Mark I autoloader is a rock solid and reliable tactical shotgun which comes with two gas pistons to enable reliable operation with a wide range of shotgun loads and is equipped with the standard Invector™ interchangeable choke tube system.

**F**abrique Nationale Herstal (FNH), maker of other excellent fighting arms, has now directed its talents to the concept of a self-loading (hence the acronym – FNH SLP) shotgun suitable for law enforcement and military applications. There are three versions – the SLP and the SLP Mark 1 – with or without a rifled barrel. The SLP with an 18" smooth bore barrel has an adjustable aperture rear sight and a blade front sight and is adjustable for elevation and windage changes by moving the rear sight on the top mounted Picatinny rail which is, in turn, attached to the receiver.

The SLP and the nonrifled Mark 1 both support screw in Invector™ chokes with a supplied choke tool. Improved cylinder and modified chokes are furnished. The one I got for review is the Mark 1 with a 22" rifled barrel. (FNH USA also offers other barrels of 24", 26", 28" and 30" with the Invector choke system. All of these steel barrels are chrome lined.)

### Sights

The Mark 1 has a TRUGLO® fluorescent orange, fiber-optic ramped front sight and a flip up "V" notch rear sight. The rear sight is two parts, as the sight body holds a metal plate containing the "V" notch (attached with two small screws) which permits moving it for elevation changes. This plate has a white triangle on its rear face for quicker sight acquisition.

The front sight can be moved in its dovetail cut since it is also two pieces, with the top part in the cut of the lower body which is permanently attached to the barrel. The two-piece setup also makes replacing a damaged sight easy.

The Mark 1 also has a cantilever alloy mount attached to the barrel extending rearward over, but not against, the alloy receiver. The mount has the usual slots in it for scope or dot sight attachments. For a nice added touch, the mount is also square cut end to



*The fiber-optic TRUGLO® fluorescent orange sight is dovetailed into the sight base.*

end, creating another rear “sight” which cannot be folded down by accident, as can the other rear sight.

#### **Dual Pistons**

Using one of the longer barrels, the SLP can better serve for other uses such as hunting or sport shooting, including trap, skeet and sporting clays. To further aid in law enforcement and nonlaw enforcement applications, the gas operated, short recoil SLP ships with two gas pistons – one for shot charges of 1.5 ounces or less and the other for those above.

Changing the piston is simple, even for me. After clearing the gun and with the bolt forward, action closed and manual safety on, remove the forend by unscrewing the magazine tube cap and sliding the forend and the magazine sleeve off the barrel. (The magazine sleeve encircles the magazine tube where it serves to protect the tube body from dents and distortion due to rough usage.)

Next, lock the bolt open and remove the barrel by pulling it forward out of the alloy receiver. This allows the barrel, along with the gas piston, gas sleeve and gas sleeve spring, to be removed. (It’s easier to do than to describe.) The two gas pistons are readily identifiable. The light load piston has a red colored rim and the heavy piston has a black rim, in addition to being marked as to load weight on their bodies.

#### **Easy Takedown**

To further disassemble for cleaning or inspection, after the above is done, the trigger group is removed by drifting out the two cross pins in the receiver. The bolt can be removed at this point or it can be taken out without removing the trigger group. With the bolt forward, pull out the bolt handle and, then, take the bolt and bolt slide out of the front of the receiver. NOTE: The instruction manual cautions that reinstalling the bolt unit is easier if the trigger group is not in the receiver. The manual, while quite detailed, is very easy to follow.

The tall single-sided and reversible cross bolt safety is at the top rear of the trigger guard. Trigger pull weight measured 6.25 pounds on my Chatillon® scale. Both the forend and butt stock are black in color and are made of polymer. Both have impressed checkering in the usual locations. The pistol grip has a black end cap and the butt stock wears an “X” pattern rubber recoil pad.

Two sling swivel studs are in traditional locations beneath the forend and butt stock, to which the two supplied Uncle Mike’s swivels are to be attached. Unfortunately, with this sample, I



*The disassembled FNH SLP Mark 1*

couldn’t attach the swivels. Either the stud holes are too small or the swivel shaft is too large. In any event, they were not cooperating in getting together.

#### **Fully Functional**

Operation is basic. Pull the horizontal and forward curved bolt handle to the rear where it locks back. To release it, press the bolt release button which is on the right lower forward side of the receiver.

The chamber can be directly loaded as above or released and the shell lifter pushed in with each shotgun shell until eight rounds are loaded. Unloading is done by either running all of the rounds through the action or unloading the tube by holding the lifter down and depressing the shell stop in the tube, allowing all the rounds to exit. When loading the magazine tube, I relearned the need to be firm in my actions because, when I failed to completely depress the shell lifter, it would catch on the round being inserted.



*Pete Grotter running five rounds quickly. The SLP Mark 1 is a very fast shooter!*

The FNH SLP is a derivation of FN’s previous efforts at creating a shotgun for the action shooting competitor market, such as in the Three-Gun events. FNH made the Winchester Super X® and, then, the Super X M2. I recall that both models were well received. One particular claim was that the Super X was the quickest firing semiauto shotgun around.

In fact, in doing research for this review, I found an article, titled “Speed Shotgun,” by Patrick E. Kelley in the November 2001 issue of *Front Sight* magazine, a publication of the United States Practical Shooting Association. He relates how Idaho police officer David Neth fired five rounds in .51 hundredths of a second using Federal MAX 2 3/4" classic 00 buckshot in a Winchester Super X M2 shotgun.



*Pete Grottgger fired the SLP Mark 1 from various and less supported positions, but did not have a malfunction.*



*Buckshot results at five and ten yards ran about nine inches, with flyers past that.*

**Range Results**

When I got to the range, I didn't even try to get results like that since I now respect my well used shooting shoulder (despite this sample being very soft shooting). The SLP does feel to me as though it is quicker than my Remington 11-87 which I've shot in similar testing and some informal double clay bird shooting. I did, however, draft a helper. Pete Grottgger stopped by the range and agreed to "run the gun" for me. Well, as we all know, life is full of missed opportunities – and photos. On not one, but two, runs of five rounds of Remington "slugger" loads, he had all five empties in midair – and I still didn't get the photo! Now, that's quick!!

Earlier, I mentioned this sample came with the 22" rifled barrel. I had expected a smooth bore, but I didn't ask for a replacement barrel because, never having had the opportunity to shoot a rifled barrel shotgun with slugs or with buckshot, I could do so now. I also thought that some of our readers may not have shot a rifled barrel, either, so, by me doing it and reporting the results, it could be beneficial.

Using the light load piston and Hornady reduced recoil 00 buckshot, I started at five yards shooting against a reduced-size IDPA training target from Warren Tactical. After the first shot, I thought I had either missed or something was very wrong with the ammo, as the hits were very scattered. I did it again with the same result. Rifling and 00 buckshot do not a tight pattern make. Backing up to ten, 15 and 20 yards just made matters worse – or better – depending on what results are desired. If you want a true "alley cleaner," this is the way to go. I think you could hit both sides of a narrow hallway from five yards and, at 15 yards, you could "alley clean" a narrow house trailer!

Switching over to Remington sluggers, again using the light load piston, the Mark 1 shot to point of aim at the same distances, as well as at 25 and 50 yards. Shooting standing unsupported, I loaded nine rounds, firing the first five at 25 yards for a 4.5" group and then the last four at 50 yards. I got a three shot, three inch group with the fourth round out. With the first three going into the head box, I was at my best. I think the SLP Mark 1 with a scope or

a dot sight will do even better.

**Final Impression**

A last observation or, better put, an impression: The SLP balances well and is more comfortable to carry than some others I own or have handled. And, for the times which I have been armed with a shotgun but didn't have cause to shoot, these things become more important the longer you have to carry one. When shooting the SLP, it seemed easier to drive it from target to target and quicker to get back on target firing multiple rounds.

All the foregoing does lead to one question: Is there still a need for the 12-gauge short barrel shotgun, semiauto or pump, in law enforcement? The AR-M4 carbine holds a lot more rounds and definitely is preferred by those who are so armed. However, "preference" doesn't necessarily make a gun a fight stopper. I would choose the best tool for the widest range of realistic, not "possible," applications and go with this. Both rifle and shotgun, within their limitations and advantages, are correct, so you need to make your own informed choice. [ASV](#)



*About the Author: Upon receiving his BS degree from Carnegie Tech and completing service as a Special Agent in U.S. Army Intelligence, Walt Rauch was a special agent with the U.S. Secret Service and an investigator with the Warrant Unit, First Judicial District, PA.*

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