

DOUBLE TRIGGERS VS SINGLE TRIGGER

Dear Technoid,

What is your opinion about single trigger vs double trigger on SXS shotguns?

Pros, Cons, resale value, tradition, etc.

Thank You

Lou

Dear Lou,

This is a tough one and very much a personal choice. In theory, I prefer the double trigger on any field gun, SxS or O/U. In practice, I'm not so sure.

The theory in favor of the double trigger is the obvious instant selection of choke. Well and good in theory. It's for sure that I've never been able to quickly take the safety off and select a barrel with any Browning, Ruger or Beretta style safety/selector. Remington had an interesting safety/selector on the 3200 that had possibilities, but the gun weighed a ton and no one in their right mind would willingly tote one around at port arms. When I hunt with a single trigger gun and want to quickly get to the tighter choke, I simply fire the first barrel. It's amazing how often that first barrel with the "wrong" choke downs the bird. Of course, this system isn't perfect and it is actually slower than the DT because one has to deal with the recoil and barrel flip of the first barrel before you can shoot the second.

If you look at clay target competition guns, you'll almost never see double triggers. That maybe because competitions universally use a pistol grip to give additional gun control to the right hand. DTs are slightly less comfortable to use with a pistol grip. The more vertical the pistol grip, the less comfortable to use DTs. Very relaxed pistol grips, like the Prince of Wales or Browning Round Knob, work well with DTs.

I think that the main reason you don't see DTs on competition guns is because there is no need for instant barrel selection. The targets aren't a surprise. Unlike your typical grouse shot, you know what competition target is coming next, so you can prepare for it before the shot. Of course, the obvious fact that most competition guns are O/Us has something to do with it. The DT is not traditional on a modern O/U.

Even though your question was about DTs in SxS guns, discussion of the DT vs ST is just as appropriate in an O/U. I have a couple of Belgian Browning Superlights. One has an English stock and single trigger. The other is a European FN version and has a swan neck stock (sort of a curved English stock) and double triggers. They are close enough so it's a pretty good comparison of DT vs ST on an O/U. The guns are used mostly for ruffed grouse, wild Montana pheasant and driven birds. To this day, I'm not sure which trigger setup I like better. Being 12 gauge guns, both have an oval shaped wrist that

gives better purchase than a subgauge gun or one with a round wrist. I think that's important to making the DTs work well because there is some slight hand movement when going to the rear trigger. I don't mean that you actually move your hand rearward, but there is some slight loosening of the grip for me when I go to the rear DT. A fuller wrist helps compensate for that.

On SxS guns I usually get DTs. My Webley & Scott 12 ga 500 has a very thin diamond shaped wrist and works beautifully with DTs. But the W&S 20 gauge that I had didn't work as well with DTs for me because the wrist was thinner and gave me less to hold on to as I fussed with the second trigger. I had a Parker Repro in 28 gauge with their single trigger. Due to the Repro's short stock (that couldn't be changed due to the skeleton butt plate), DTs would have killed me. A short stock and DTs make for an extremely loose right hand. For me, DTs take about 1/2" to 3/4" more stock length than STs. I normally measure my stock length on a DT gun from the REAR trigger, not the front as the stockmakers do. I had a Poli made with DTs and a very long stock that worked perfectly.

That said, when I ordered my Galazan RBL, I specified an English stock and an ST. Most of the people who ordered English wood went with DTs. Those who picked the Prince of Wales grip usually went with STs. For me the setup of the RBL's rear DT trigger didn't feel right so I felt that the ST would be a safer pick.

My choice of DT vs ST was made based on my personal DT technique. I get a little more hand movement than I should when I switch triggers. This is a fault in my shooting style that others don't have, but I have to deal with it. In the long run it means that DTs work for me only when the fit of the gun is perfect. Since the RBL's stock is not a custom one, I felt that I'd have a better chance of a good workable gun with an ST on that particular gun. I won't deliver of that gun for a while, so I don't yet know if my guess will turn out right.

As you can see, based on my meanderings between DTs and STs, there is no constant. I shoot both and I really think it depends on how well a particular gun fits me. It also depends partly on how light a gun is. The lighter the gun, the more I need to use the grip to control movement and the less I can devote to moving rearward with a DT. That speaks more to my faulty technique than it does to any intrinsic advantage the ST has.

As to resale value, the purist wants to see DTs on an English stocked SxS. The average guy wants STs because he feels they are easier to shoot. There is also the issue of reliability. Beretta makes both DT and ST models in their 470 series SxS, but most of their US sales are ST. Traditionally English and Spanish STs on SxS guns have been problematic. That's why DTs are more popular on these guns. They are more reliable. The Italians and Americans seem to have figured out how to make reliable STs on SxS guns so reliability is not an issue.

Traditionally, this also seems to be the way it goes. The more expensive the SxS, the more likely it will be to have DTs. The exception is some of the Italian SxS pigeon guns that can be big bucks for a ST SxS.

Bottom line: It's up to you. I find that stock fit isn't quite as critical for me with STs as it is with DTs, but that may just be me. In hunting, I think that the number of times fouling up the operation of DTs has cost me a bird is roughly equaled by the times being able to go directly to the other barrel has gotten me one. It's a wash.

One thing to remember though, the closer your two chokes are to each other in constriction, the less the advantage of the DT's instant barrel selection matters. If you are shooting a Cylinder and a Skeet on grouse, they are so close in pattern that picking one over the other really doesn't matter. In western pheasant, where I normally choke 1/4 and 3/4 with #5s in the open barrel and #4s in the tight one, DTs do provide a meaningful difference when it comes to instant barrel selection.

There you have it. The opinion of a guy who can't make up his mind.

Best regards,

Bruce Buck
Shotgun Report's Technoid