CZ SCORPION EVO 3 S1

BY ARON BRIGHT, AS1967

While the NICS check was being run at Parabellum, the Scorpion was given a visual check. This is a very modern-looking carbine, definitely not your father’s or your grandfather’s carbine. It has a very cool, space-age look, too sleek and trim for something from Starship Troopers. The Scorpion looked more like a carbine that an Imperial Storm Trooper might have in hand. Even Jake was impressed with how this carbine looks. When I arrived home that evening with the Scorpion, my ten year old son wanted to know if the storm trooper knew his gun was missing. That kid is just like his mother.

The Scorpion features a collapsible stock that locks in three positions, and also folds for easy and compact storage and transport. The length of pull on the carbine is 14.25 inches in the longest setting and 13.25 inches in the shortest setting. For most users in a USPSA or Steel Challenge match the stock should be just right, the way Goldilocks liked it. The designers at CZ seem to be off to a good start.

The pistol grip is adequately long and will work for any size hand; the pistol grip is thin enough that the small hands of the sport will be able to reach the trigger. It tapers slightly out to the bottom end of the grip, where it swells to help lock your hand into a high position on the grip. With a proper firing grip on the gun, it is easy to manipulate the ambidextrous safety and the ambidextrous magazine release. This is a carbine that is set up for right and left handers. In the early stages of exploration of this gun, the design team seems to be on the right track. The safety is easily operated by the thumb of the strong hand, and the magazine release is designed to be operated by the trigger finger as it rides on the front of the trigger guard. Once again the design is both strong and well thought out.

The Scorpion arrived with iron sights which sit on the rail that runs from the folding stock forward for 16 inches. The rear peep/ghost ring sight spins and has four different size apertures; the proper aperture can be selected for the application or distance involved. The front sight is a standard post-style sight. The Scorpion was able to deliver good hits using the iron sights in the drills Jake and I ran, and it did just fine in a Steel Challenge Club match. The gun is accurate out of the box.

The trigger is crisp and has a very tactile reset. There is a bit of pre-travel in the trigger pull and even after the reset there is a bit of pre-travel, but the trigger breaks crisply. This trigger performs well and will not be a gear issue that holds the shooter back. It is wider than the trigger on most pistols but it functions well.

As of this writing, I am back from a pretty dismal day on the range. Toward the end of that disappointing session the Scorpion came out, and the 50-yard steel target that had been such a problem to hit reliably was no problem. The gun shoots fine at that distance, and the trigger is just fine out of the box.

The hand guard on the Scorpion runs 11.5 inches in front of the magazine well. The hand guard is very ergonomic, and has a three-inch concaved recess to accommodate the weak hand grip and to prevent slipping. Just behind the hand guard on both sides of the receiver are sling attachment points. The Scorpion is comfortable in the hands, it looks cool, and is designed to be practical.

We took the Scorpion to the Riley Conservation Club in October, put it through its paces on the range in a variety of drills, and shot a medium-sized stage. During this range session, all of the shooting was done utilizing the iron sights. The rear aperture that was used was the largest of the four available, because the shooting on USPSA stages is normally not that difficult for a carbine due to the distances involved, so a small and precise aperture did not seem appropriate for our testing. Critics are always quick to point out that it is a rifle at a pistol competition; that is not an argument for this time and place, but the shooting is obviously easier with a PCC. We had two 20-round magazines available for all of the range sessions. All of the ammo used in the exercises was Federal Syntech.

Jake managed a time of 5.73 seconds and 4.91 seconds for his two runs; his first run was down two points and the second faster run was down six points. My two runs were 5.06 seconds and 5.21 seconds, and they were both down two points. The first shots on three of the four runs were 1.38 seconds. The time of the first shot on the fourth run was 1.51, so getting on a standard target at 10 yards and getting hits was slow for both of us. (The person who had the slowest first shot will go unnamed, but he lives in Indianapolis.) The slowest first shot also appeared during the fastest overall run. As has been the third position was through a closed door that revealed the remaining paper targets, including hard cover and no-shoots. Through the door, the distances were around 18 yards. No reload was necessary, we engaged small steel and distant paper from the first position and then closer targets to try to simulate the different elements shooters would encounter at matches. The level of difficulty for this stage would be considered medium to challenging – it was no hose-fest. The sights had to be used or the hits would not be there.

We ran the stage three times each to try to establish some sort of baseline on what could be expected from the Scorpion. Jake’s three runs were 13.81, 13.74, 12.13 seconds respectively. His points varied a little more than his times; he was down 12, two and 16 points. My three times were 13.95, 13.50, 12.98 seconds respectively; my first and third run were both down four points and the middle run down 16 points. We both tried to push the speed on the last run. The results from those six runs on this stage came out about the way we expected. Jake is usually a little faster than me and I usually have a little better points, which is pretty much the way this stage came out. My take away is that the Scorpion is as capable as the shooter.

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CZ SCORPION EVO 3 S1 / CHRONO RESULTS

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<th>147gr FMJ</th>
<th>1010</th>
<th>1081</th>
<th>1099</th>
<th>1060</th>
<th>1106</th>
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<th>1130</th>
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<th>PF=158.9</th>
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<td>1313</td>
<td>1308</td>
<td>1304</td>
<td>1316</td>
<td>avg=1356</td>
<td>PF=162.3</td>
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Stated in a previous review, we are not carbine guys. A good PCC shooter would do much better.

The next exercise was a 16-round stage that required three shooting positions. We started in a box and engaged three paper targets, a couple of small poppers and a steel plate. We then moved to the left and engaged a single paper target with a no-shoot guarding it at about five yards. The
comes to carbines in general, and we have different strengths in shooting stages. The Scorpion worked for both of us. Obstacles such as doors and ports can be a different challenge with a PCC than with a pistol. The Scorpion performed well with the different challenges of this stage.

The next exercise of this range session was a couple of runs on El Prez. We did not measure the distances but stepped it off at 10 yards. For the first time, the reload came into the equation. We were not looking forward to it, as neither of us had a suitable magazine pouch. Jake reloaded from an unconventional spot on the belt that was less desirable and would not suffice for a match. I reloaded from a Clay County holster (back pocket), which could be done in a match but is not optimal. Jake ran the stage in times of 8.74 and 7.49 seconds and was down two points both times, while my two points were bad, down eight and four points respectively. I had a list of excuses for the poor performance on El Prez, but I have since lost those notes.

The mandatory reload on classifiers makes the PCC division unique. PCC shooters who change magazines easily and smoothly are few and far between at this time, but that will likely change and improve as things progress and evolve with the division. The controls and ergonomics of the Scorpion are set up in such a manner that a serious competitor with practice could become quite proficient with this carbine. Is the Scorpion a good enough carbine to take a chunk out of the PCC market? Can any carbine not of the AR style sit on top of the PCC mountain? Those who have been around USPSA for 10 or more years can recall a time when Glock owned the Production division, and that is no longer the case – so it would not be surprising if these folks at CZ elbowed their way into the mix in PCC. CZ is turning out many great guns and good products, and the Scorpion seems to fit in that category. A couple of GMs dedicated to PCC and shooting a Scorpion could open the eyes of the multitude. The Scorpion is good enough to compete if the shooter is good enough.

We were shooting USPSA Metric-sized steel targets at the longest three distances. The Scorpion once again performed well. As we completed this session from the bench, Jeff McGauley commented that the Scorpion would make a good “truck gun”. The more thought given to that statement the more merit it has; a high-capacity 9mm with a folding-stock riding around looking for a time of need seems to be highly plausible. It’s not exactly a USPSA role, but sometimes USPSA folks might need to dispatch a stray coyote or some other varmint. The Scorpion would be more than ample in such a role.

It seemed like a good idea to shoot a Special Classifier at Applied Ballistics in Lafayette, Indiana, in order to get in a match with the Scorpion. The carbine ran without malfunction, and the cool factor was on display in public. WHO shooting and mandatory reloads from the Clay County holster made the results dismal at best. Shooting a carbine and competing with one are two different things.

The charging handle on the Scorpion is pulled to the rear and then upward to lock the bolt open. Once the magazine is inserted the charging handle can be slapped down, which allows the bolt to slam shut. This feature is the coolest thing about a pretty cool gun. The Range Officer running our squad, Andrew Heath, commented that every time I made ready it reminded him of Bruce Willis in Die Hard. There were just two big differences – I had shoes on, and the Scorpion is only semi-automatic. There may be other subtle differences but that is not germane to the story line.

The Scorpion was a ton of fun to load and make ready, and to shoot. The Scorpion was malfunction-free and performed very well throughout the series of tests. Getting a gun for the PCC division is way down on the list of things needed, but if I decide to go that route, the Scorpion is going to get serious consideration. The performance is very good and the price point is very favorable. The Scorpion continues the tradition of quality from CZ. The Scorpion is worth your consideration as well.