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Although the Q5 weighs less than 800g, it handled well in rapid fire sequences, thanks largely to the very good trigger system.



Walther Q5 Match 9mm State of the Art

When Frontier Arms contacted me to arrange a review of Walther's new Q5 Match 9mm autoloader, I thought it was just another PPQ series polymer-framed variation. Wrong!

While the Q5 Match is based on the Walther PPQ series autoloaders, it is definitely purpose-built for competition and on opening its hard carry case, the contents says it all. The Q5 comes with 3 magazines with a magazine loader assist unit, a set of grip inserts to allow the grip to be set up for individual hands, a detachable adjustable open sight, a set of detachable bases to fit other types of holographic pistol sights and the test pistol was already fitted with a Trijicon sight.

The main difference with the Q5/PPQ compared to other striker fired autoloaders like the Glock, is the firing system. The Q5 has what Walther calls a 'Quick Defence' trigger system that I think is unique to Walther. The striker on the Q5 is always in the pre-set condition, other than when it has been fired on an empty chamber and is in the fully un-cocked mode. At other times, the striker is ready to go, awaiting instructions from the trigger.

Unlike the Glock system, the Q5 trigger does not have to completely cycle the striker

mechanism and work against the striker spring. The trigger system sounds fairly complex, as when the trigger is pulled, it actuates a disconnecter bar that releases the sear and drops the striker.

This means that the trigger only has to look after itself, allowing for a relatively short (9mm) and light 25 Newton (about 5.5lb) constant release weight.

This means that after initially cycling the slide, the Walther Q5 is constantly in a cocked state. The Walther Q5 specifications state that the trigger is only required to move forward about 2.5mm to reset the striker connection.

Once the Q5 has a loaded cartridge in the chamber, the trigger is 9mm away from firing a shot.

The Q5 is polymer framed as are all models in the PPQ series, with its stressed and wear components being steel. The Walther uses a modified Browning-type recoil operated locking system, where cam surfaces in the frame and under the barrel, move the

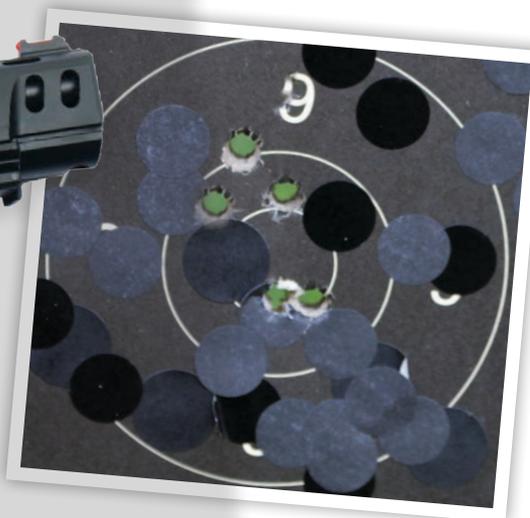
locking lug on the barrel out of engagement with the slide as the slide and barrel recoil.

The slide and other metal parts are listed as being 'Tenifer' coated. This is proprietary nitriding process that imparts a hard and corrosion resistant coating to the surface of the steel. The 'Tenifer' coating is reported to have a Rockwell C hardness of 64. This is very hard as the average good quality knife blade has a Rockwell C hardness of around 60.

All the contact surfaces on the frame and grip area are textured and the form of the grip will suit most average hands. The grip is ambidextrous in that it fits quite well for either right or left-handed shooters.

The front of the frame also has a Picatinny rail integral with its underside at the front to accommodate aiming devices or lighting equipment.

The Q5 has a 127mm barrel and slide to match and the slide has been comprehensively slotted to reduce its weight and presumably accommodate the longer length slide on the Q5.



FAR RIGHT: The Walther Q5 Match is based on the PPQ with significant upgrades including the vented slide and the sight package options. The rest pistol came with the Trijicon sight.

LEFT: Excellent performance from the 125gn Federal ammunition – hand-held 5 shot group from 25m.

The Walther weighs only 775g with an empty magazine and I was curious to see how such a light handgun would handle recoil and recoil recovery, as my preference is towards pistols that tip the scales at 1000g or more. I recruited GUNS regular long-arms reviewer and pistol shooter, John Rutkay, to give me a hand testing and photographing the Walther Q5 in action.

A good variety of 9mm ammunition, both factory loads and handloads, was lined up to put through the Q5, including some Federal Premium 124gn and 147gn loads, Winchester 124gn lead and Hornady 125gn Steel Match loads.

My handloads contained 3.8gn of Alliant Bullseye with 125gn Top Score conical hard cast projectiles.

Rather than changing the Trijicon sight for the open sight, it was left on for the tests and proved to be very useful and easy to use after a bit of practice at finding the green dot.

As most out of the box autoloaders we have tested usually shoot above the point of aim, I lined up the Q5 with a two-handed hold across the bench, used a 6 o'clock hold on an ISSF 25m target at 25m and squeezed of 5 rounds of 124gn Federal Premium ammo.

On checking the group, I was somewhat surprised to see all 5 shots in a 40mm group around the 10 Ring. Given my aging eyesight and the lively recoil of the Walther, I thought there may have been an element of beginner's luck, but the Walther Q5 repeated to performance with the 147gn Federal Premium loads.

Further good results were obtained with the other loads, and both John and I shot the pistol with a similar outcome. I also put the Walther through its paces in a rapid fire sequence with a magazine full of Hornady Steel Match loads at 20m in an ISSF target and all the hits were within the 9 ring on this target.

Once again, the light weight of the Q5 did not appear to hamper its recoil recovery characteristics. The way the trigger works with a smooth roll-off action is a positive factor in this performance and the action cycles very quickly.

When we review an autoloader for GUNS,

it is usually possible to get some action shots with an ejected cartridge in the air near the pistol. Not so with the Q5! Both John and I had a go on the camera and after 20 shots, we gave it up. Too fast for us.

Takedown for cleaning is simple on the Walther. There is a U Shaped latch above the trigger and with the magazine out of the pistol and the firing mechanism discharged; pulling down this latch allows the slide to be pulled forward off the frame.

The Walther barrel has polygonal rifling so there are no sharp edges to make cleaning difficult and after putting over 50 rounds of both jacketed and lead bullets through the barrel, it cleaned up very easily.

The magazine loader assist is a very useful accessory as filling the magazine against the fairly stiff magazine spring with the little 9mm cartridges takes a bit of effort, and if your fingers happened to be greasy, it is even harder. The magazine loader assist pushed the follower down far enough to start a cartridge into the magazine and then it needs to be moved out of the way so the cartridge can be fully seated.

The Q5 has a fibre optic front sight and as well as the adjustable rear sight, comes with bases for Docter, Leupold and Trijicon sights.

The additional two grip inserts that came with the Q5 are easily fitted to the rear of the grip frame via a single pin that locks the insert onto the frame through the bottom of the grip. I found the grip to be OK as delivered so did not make any changes in this area.

The Walther Q5 Match lives up to its name and out of the box is a very competitive handgun for any of the action matches and if the accuracy of the test pistol is anything to go by, it is also a possibility for Service Pistol where 50 yard accuracy is a major factor in getting good scores in this match.

For any matches required rapid triggering, the innovative trigger system on the Q5 is a definite advantage, with its smooth, pre-loaded striker release and allows fast sequential shots to be taken without losing control of the sights.

For more information on any Walther products, contact the Australian distributor – Frontier Arms Company at www.frontierarms.com.au.

SPECS

WALTHER Q5 MATCH

Calibre: 9mm

Action: Recoil operated semi-auto

Trigger: "Quick Defence - very short trigger travel and reset path

Trigger pull: 2500g

Slide release: Ambidextrous

Magazine release:

Left side magazine release, reversible to right

Slide:

vented – Tenifer coated corrosion resistant carbon steel slide.

Barrel: 127mm with polygonal rifling

Magazines: 3 x 10 shot with anti-friction coatings.

Grips: Polymer non-slip grip with interchangeable backstraps

Frame: Polymer with MIL-STD 1913 Picatinny rail forward of trigger.

Dimensions: L-W-H – 206mm – 135mm – 34mm

Weight unloaded: 775g

Sights:

LPA click adjustable rear sight -
LPA red fibre optic front sight
Supplied with three interchangeable adaptor plates for red-dot sights from Trijicon, Leupold and Docter/Meopta (Optic sold separately)

Dimensions (L/H/W):
206mm / 135mm / 34mm

Weight: 775g