



The Delta Optical Stryker HD series

By Chris Blatherwick

In today's highly contested rifle optics market, manufacturers tend to focus on variety, novelty, and economy. This often means the average consumer has to settle for a lower-specced version of an original design. Although a good adaptation, it is often a compromise.

Enter Delta Optical, a Polish optics manufacturer turning this highly-contested market on its head by producing affordable high-quality long-range optics that are not only feature-packed, but all their Titanium models including the Stryker models carry a 10 year warranty. We received two prime examples of the Delta Optical Stryker series long-range rifle optics from The Powder Keg for evaluation to see if these newcomers can withstand the harsh African conditions.

Design, form, and function Optical design has surprising similarities with modern architecture's 'form follows function' principle. This states that the shape of a building or object should be based mainly on its intended function or purpose. Form and function are critical components of a rifle optic that manufacturers cannot ignore, and that consumers demand.

Delta Optical ticks all the boxes in the 'what a rifle optic should

look like' stakes, but really knocks it out of the park with the 'bulletproof' construction of its Stryker series rifle optics. These high-definition (HD) rifle optics are constructed from a single piece of aircraft-grade aluminum, and finished with a durable black graphite coating that should be able to withstand years of range or hunting use and misuse. Our test units boasted an impressive 4.5-30, as well as an astounding 5-50 magnification, featuring a 34 mm main tube with a 56 mm objective.

STRYKER SERIES TICKS ALL THE BOXES FOR THE LONG-RANGE HUNTER OR PRECISION SPORTS-SHOOTER

If you are a long-range sports-shooter or hunter, this already ticks some major boxes. Stryker also has multi-coated HD. HD is



not a type of glass or lens, but a measure of image resolution. In optical terms HD light transmission is more than the human brain can distinguish. As optics have improved steadily, the resultant higher light transmission and resolution only become measurable by spectrometers and lenses, and not the human eye.

The Titanium series, which includes our Stryker derivatives, has been tested and certified by the DEVA Institute of Germany as conforming to HD/high light transmission, scoring 92% for the entire optical system, and an astounding 98% for the individual layers. This is truly an exceptional rating, and ranks the Delta Optical Titanium series among the world's leading rifle scopes.

Stryker is produced in both first focal plane (the reticle size increases and decreases in relation to the target as the magnification is adjusted accordingly), and second focal plane (the image size increases with magnification, but the reticle size remains constant/ the same size configurations) derivatives for the hunting and sports-shooting segments. Reticle options include the DLS-1, DLS-2, DLS-3, DLR-1, and LRD-1P, as well as the LRD-1T reticle, our preferred reticle design.

The Stryker 4.5-30x56 we evaluated featured Delta Optical's LRD-1T reticle design. It is adjustable for windage and elevation increments of .1 MIL (1 cm at 100 m) with a maximum of 28.09 MIL elevation and 14.54 MIL available to the shooter. In contrast, the Stryker 5-50x56 'long-range decimator' features a more traditional, but extremely user-friendly, DLS-3 reticle.

The optic was mated to our Howa M-1500 action and barrel chambered in .308 Winchester, was fitted to a Warrior Gen 3 aluminum rifle chassis (more about this brilliant South African designed and constructed rifle chassis in a future edition of On Target Africa).

The DLS-3 reticle design is adjustable for windage and elevation increments of 1/8 MOA (3.64mm at 100m), with a very generous elevation of 100 MOA as well as a 50 MOA maximum windage adjustment. Both optics are similar in design, but not in dimensions and features. A parallax rheostat on the left side of the main tube has settings of 10 m to infinity (5-50x56) and 23 m to infinity (4.5-30x56) respectively.

Our two Stryker test units were designed for deliberate hands-on, or gloved, usage. The large exposed tactical turrets and power ring (featuring a built-in power through lever) and bristly-type knurling assists the shooter in adjusting on the fly with ease. Both the windage and elevation turrets have exceptionally positive clicks that are crisply audible with every adjustment. The zero-stop functionality elevates the Delta range above many of its competitors.

Stryker has an illuminated reticle, powered by a single CR2032 battery, on the left side of the main tube in the illumination rheostat. The illumination controls are manipulated easily by the shooter's support hand, thus giving the shooter the ability to keep his fire-control hand on the rifle while changing the illumination settings according to the ambient lighting conditions.

PUSHING THE LIMITS

When I carried out my initial research into the Polish-designed, Japanese-produced Delta Optic range, the key phrases were 'high quality', 'durability' and 'internationally-certified'. However, talk is cheap. Show me the performance! In true On Target Africa fashion, we elected to test Delta Optical's claims of



The Stryker in a bucket of grey water for its submersion test.

the durability and quality of its flagship Stryker series.

TEST 1 – PRESSURE TEST

We removed the 4.5-30x56 from its box, opened the battery compartment on the left side of the main tube, and inserted a single CR2032. Before replacing the cap, I inspected the O-ring seal that covers the battery

compartment. The heavy-duty O-ring was covered with a light coating of silicone grease, and showed no signs of damage. I closed the cap and tested the illumination intensity through the entire brightness range.

I adjusted the focus ring on the rear ocular, as well as the windage and elevation turrets, before I

unceremoniously submerged our test unit in a bucket of grey water. This tests all the O-ring seals inside and outside of the optic, ensuring it functions flawlessly in adverse weather conditions.

I removed the Stryker after an hour of our 'dunk' test, and checked for any water intrusions. After a thorough inspection, I found no moisture internally. In addition, the illuminated reticle still functioned perfectly. Some other so-called 'high-end' optics have failed this simple submersion test, indicating possible quality-control issues, or even design flaws.

TEST 2 – FROM THE NORTH POLE TO THE SAHARA

Our second test was more dignified, but just as challenging. We placed the Stryker in a freezer set at -10°C for three hours. This simulates the extreme temperature fluctuations of our climate. Sutherland is the current recordholder as the coldest

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OPTICS ARE DESIGNED FOR ONE PURPOSE ONLY

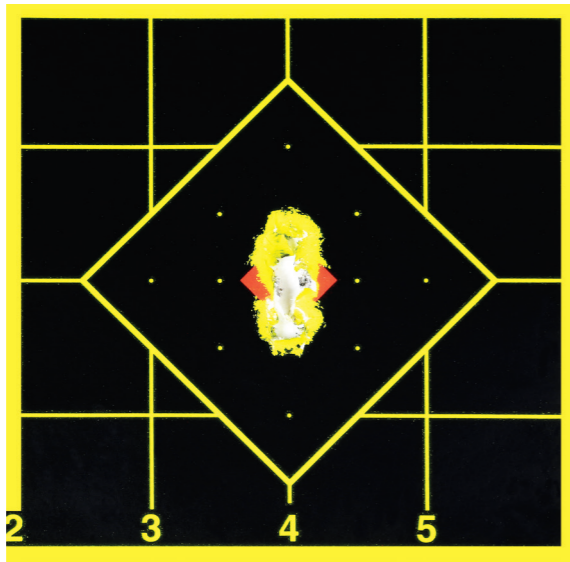


TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS	Delta Optical Stryker HD 4.5-30x56	Delta Optical Stryker HD 5-50x56
Make	Delta Optical	Delta Optical
Model	Stryker HD	Stryker HD
Magnification	4.5-30	5-50
Reticle	LRD-1T	DLS-3
Illuminated reticle	Yes (red reticle)	Yes (red)
Battery	CR2032	CR2032
Body	Single-piece anodised 6061 T6 aluminium	Single-piece anodised 6061 T6 aluminium
Lens coatings	Fully multi-coated	Fully multi-coated
Objective lens diameter	56 mm	56 mm
Focal plane	First focal plane	Second focal plane
Eye relief	81 mm to 97 mm	89 mm to 100 mm
Length	365 mm	363 mm
Weight	1 014 g	1 100 g
Tube size	34 mm	34 mm
Turret style	Tactical	Tactical
Adjustment graduation	.1 MIL (1 cm at 100 m)	1/8 MOA (3.64 mm at 100 m)
Maximum windage adjustment	14.54 MIL	50 MOA
Maximum elevation	28.09 MIL	100 MOA
Parallax adjustment	23 m to infinity	10 m to infinity
Nitrogen purged	Yes	Yes
Applications	Long-range sports-shooting and hunting	Long-range sports-shooting and hunting

place in Southern Africa, with an astounding -20.1°C minimum. The Sunday River Valley in the Eastern Cape, on the other hand, is the recordholder for the hottest place in Southern Africa, with an unbelievable 50°C maximum.

As a rifle shooter, I personally would rather hunt in colder weather, which presents its own set of challenges, than in extreme heat, which not only affects the ammunition, depending on the brand of powder, but produces mirages, which play havoc with any significantly magnified optics. This is not to even mention the reality of dehydration during walk-and-stalk hunting excursions.

To state that the Stryker was cold to the touch afterwards is an understatement. However, I was surprised to find no internal fogging, and only the normal build-up of moisture on the exterior of the ocular and objective lens. All the controls functioned flawlessly. The nitrogen-purged Stryker passed the second test without breaking a sweat.



The .308 fitted with the Stryker 5-50x56 performed up to standard at 100 m, as can be seen from this five-shot grouping

TEST 3 – ACCURACY IS THE NAME OF THE GAME

Optics are designed for one purpose only, namely to provide the end user/shooter with the clearest image possible of his or her intended target, whether paper or of the four-legged or winged variety. This allows them to make extremely accurate shots

over vast distances. We mounted the 5-50x56 on our 'Howa Extreme' (a Howa M-1500 with a Varminter barrel and action mated to a third-generation Gun Warrior modular rifle chassis, fitted with a Warrior Ultimate large silencer with external muzzle break), and a set of Warne 34mm high rings sitting on a Warne 20-MOA rail.

Testing rifle optics in the Western Cape in summer can prove challenging, as the Cape Doctor pops up out of nowhere to play havoc with any testing. But this is On Target Africa, and 'extreme' is our game! Our initial sighting-in of the optic proved interesting, as we were pummelled by a 41 km/h headwind. We compensated for the near gale-force conditions by deploying our 'secret weapon', namely hand-loaded .308 Winchester rounds with Peregrine 196 gr Rangemaster monolithic heads. We achieved an acceptable grouping after five shots, and moved to the 100 m mark. After dialling in the elevation, the waiting game was on.

I cranked up the magnification to x 25. Overkill for the distance, most definitely, but this allowed me to observe the minuscule movement of the target as it fought the wind tooth and nail to stay upright. I loaded the 196 gr Rangemaster into the chamber of our Howa, and closed the bolt. I flipped off the safety, and rested the tip of my finger on the trigger.

After an eternity, the target was perfectly still. The wind died down a bit. I applied two pounds of pressure to the trigger, and sent the head hurtling towards the target at 2 453 fps. I repeated this exercise ten times, yielding two five-shot groupings of 12.41 mm and 15.78 mm respectively. The to-and-throw movement of the target was unavoidable sometimes, and did play havoc with our overall groupings.

While I was peering through the Stryker at my target, I could not help but notice the quality of the HD glass, as moved the optic to the left and right, as well as up and down, on our Shoot NC Target. The optic displayed edge-to-edge perfection, with zero distortion. The HD-certified lenses give the shooter an excellent view of the intended target, with crystal-clear colours through the entire light spectrum.

We placed a 300-mm gong at the 370-m mark, right against the backstop. The idea was not to shoot sub-MOA groupings

on the gong, but merely to ring some steel after our sub-standard groupings. I chambered another 'secret weapon', and dialled up to x 35 magnification. As I peered through the scope, I thought to myself that this was truly an impressive optic, as I could see every single divot on the steel gong.

As I placed my finger on the trigger, I saw movement to the right of the gong. I engaged the safety immediately as the Range Officer yelled: "Cease fire, buck on the range! Unload and show clear." That was the end of our test session. I am confident, however, that the 5-50x56 will give any shooter a crystal-clear view way past the 900-m mark.

WHAT IT ALL BOILS DOWN TO
Consumers are creatures of habit. We load our rifle each year with exactly the same ammunition as the previous year. We procure the same brand of optics for our hunting and competition rifles, as it worked for my father or brother, and therefore should work for me.

This reminds me of a quote from Robert Frost: "Two roads diverged in the wood, and I – I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference".

I am a non-conformist by default. My exposure to a multitude of weapons platforms and accessories has confirmed that the global firearm industry has a lot to offer consumers, if you are prepared to step out of your comfort zone.

Sometimes the road less travelled leads you to the greatest discoveries, such as the Delta Optical Stryker series. If asked four years ago if I would be willing to procure a rifle optic designed in Poland and produced in Japan, I would have given them the "You have to be kidding, right?" look.

Well, fast-forward four years, and ask me the same question after I have put the Stryker series through its paces. That look would now probably translate to: "So when are they arriving, and are you accepting pre-

orders?" The Stryker series ticks all the essential boxes for the long-range hunter or long-range precision sports-shooter, such as the hardcore F-Class men and woman. I foresee that Delta Optical will soon become a household name in South Africa. 🇷🇷

The Stryker 4.5-30x56 FFP and 5-50x56 SFP, and other Delta Optical derivatives, are available from The Powder Keg in Roodepoort, Gauteng.

STRYKER
Both models (34mm Tube) retail for *R29 500.00 VAT Incl.
TITANIUM
4.5-30 x 50 (30mm Tube) retail for *R13 100 VAT Incl.
3-24 x 56 (34mm Tube) retail for *R19 000.00 VAT Incl.



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*Price correct at time of going to press.

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