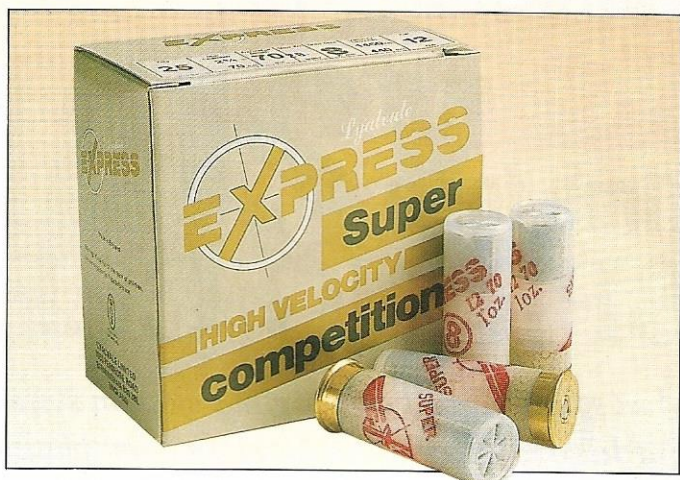
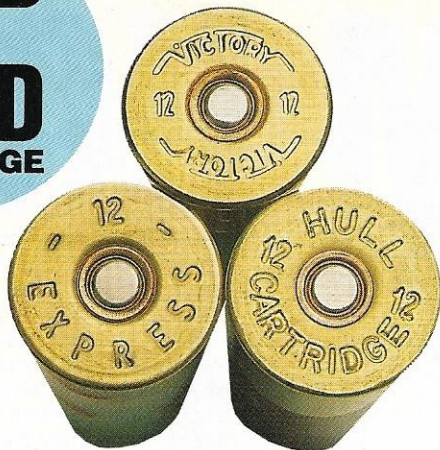


HEAD TO HEAD CARTRIDGE TEST



LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

Here are three top shells from Victory, Express and Hull, all capable of putting you on the winner's rostrum!

WHERE do you go for your competition shells? Do you prefer a British-made cartridge, or do you believe that makers elsewhere in the world have the edge on our home-grown loaders? Judging by the latest crop of shells to go through our test sequence there isn't a lot in it, with offerings from Express and Hull Cartridge in Britain, and Victory of Cyprus, putting up some cracking performance figures and being very pleasant to shoot, too.

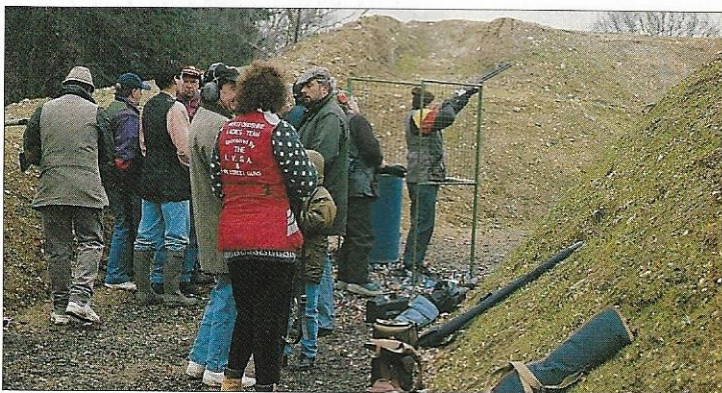
Here are the shells, and what we found:

Express Super High Velocity Competition

This one's loaded in a clear 70mm case with an 8mm brass head, sealed with a six-star crimp. Power comes courtesy of the expected charge of Vectan powder, while the 28gr. of shot is carried in a B & P plastic wad.

The shot was super - spot on Size 8, round and well-formed with no "rogue" pellets, and it recorded 28 per cent in our crush test for hardness. This makes it super competition shot.

Velocity was 1,432 ft/sec, while the down-range, observed



■ All of the cartridges tested this month are highly suitable for English Sporting, although some shooters will prefer to keep a few size 9 Skeet shells handy for the closer targets.

figure was 1,140 ft/sec.

This is good performance by any standards - particularly the down-range figure - and is achieved at a pressure of 570 bars.

Victory Challenger 2

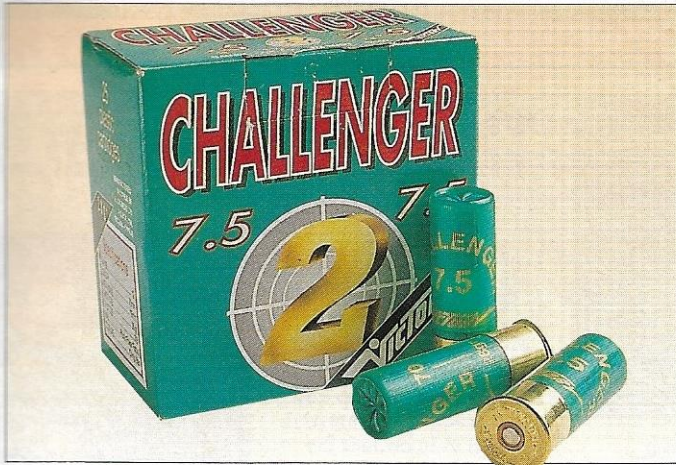
The 'old' Challenger was a cracking cartridge - so Victory had to make sure that the 'follow-up' not only lived up to the reputation, but also surpassed it. We feel that this one does just that.

Victory use a translucent green case with a 16mm brass

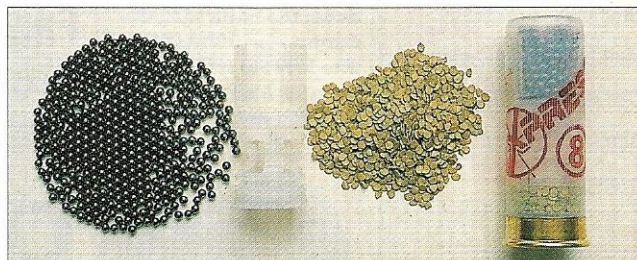
head for this shell, and seal it with an eight-star crimp to give consistently sweet pressures. Powder charge is Vectan, and the plastic wad is described on the box as a "Power Piston".

Surprisingly for an imported cartridge, the shot was spot on English size 7½ with no difference in size worth recording between the individual pellets. It was truly round and well polished, and showed 30.5 on our crush test - good trap shot.

Muzzle velocity was 1,409 ft/sec with good consistency from shot to shot, while the down-range figure was 1,132 ft/sec - all achieved at a pressure of 533 bars.



■ RIGHT: The Express shell is loaded with the expected Vectan powder, as well as other high-quality components.



■ The Victory shell is the only one closed by an eight-star crimp.

■ RIGHT: The Challenger 2 uses these components to record a very good down-range figure.

Hull Cartridge Sovereign

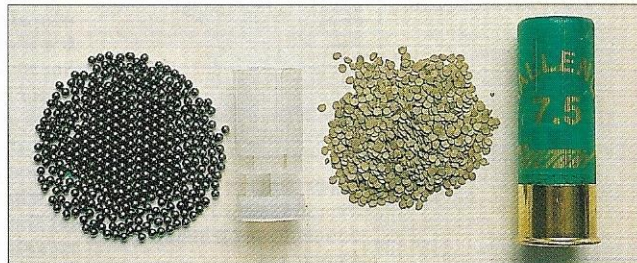
This is the new flagship of the Hull competition range, and it certainly looks "the business". It's loaded in a 70mm Burgundy-coloured case with an incredible 22mm brass head, and is closed with a six-star crimp. Propellant charge is Vihtavuori powder - a departure from Hull's traditional Neodisc - and the B & P wad is similar to that used in the Express shell. The shot was similar, too - so alike in dimensions and hardness it could have come out of the same batch at the same factory.

At 1,438 ft/sec the velocity was a little down on the maker's figure, but this was made up for by super consistency from shot to shot. Down-range velocity was 1,117 ft/sec, and pressure was 509 bars. It seems clear that Hull have decided, like most knowledgeable shooters, that consistency is more important than all-out velocity.

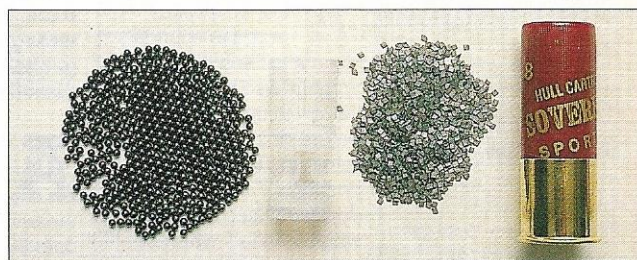
Verdict

All of the shells shot well and recorded good, clay-breaking patterns. In spite of the high velocities, no excessive recoil was felt although the Hull seemed a little softer.

All are very good competition shells capable of putting you on the winner's rostrum, and prices are close, too. Shop around, because the prices quoted are only approximate.



■ RIGHT: The Hull Sovereign is the new flagship of the range, and employs an unusual powder for a British cartridge.



SPECIFICATION	Express super comp	Victory challenger 2	Hull Sovereign
LOAD	28gr. No. 8	28gr. No.7½	28gr. No.8
SHOT	lead	lead	lead
POWDER	Vectan	Vectan	Vihtavuori
WAD	B&P Plastic	Power Piston /Plastic	B&P Plastic
CASE(type)	Tubular plastic	Tubular plastic	Tubular plastic
CASE(size)	Clear plastic 70mm	Green plastic 70mm	Red plastic 70mm
CRIMP	6 star	8 star	6 star
PRESURE	570 bars	533 bars	509bars
VELOCITY Muzzle	1,432 ft/sec	1,409ft/sec	1,438 ft/sec
VELOCITY Observed	1,140 ft/sec	1,132 ft/sec	1,117 ft/sec
CRUSH TEST	28%	30.5%	28%
PRICE (1,000)	£110 or less	£102 - £104	£116