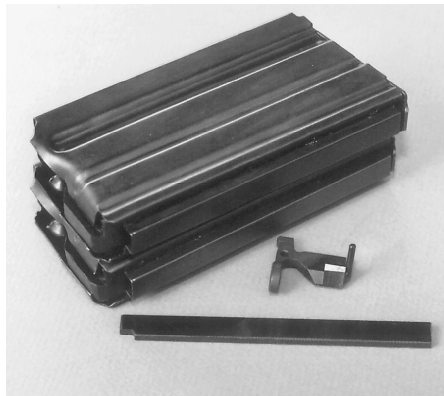


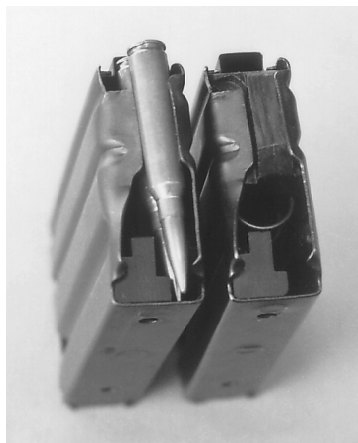
Sierra® Sardines

Some out there are convinced that shooting Sierra® 80s out of the magazine is the “wave of the future,” as one fellow put it. Shock wave, maybe. Some are cutting the fronts out of magazines, which adds about 0.060 more room, plus whatever space there is to flirt with until the bullet tips drag on the receiver. That’s not enough. With such significantly reduced case capacity I can’t imagine trying to get that to shoot, and I’m sure as hell not going to try it just to find out (the last time I tried something only for the sake of seeing what would happen I was 12 years old and ended up needing stitches, and major bike repairs). I don’t know if this is an axiom or not, but when there’s more bullet inside the case than outside the case it can’t be good. But. There was a prototype magazine floating around Camp Perry in 1997 that actually did look to be way workable. Its maker, John Snick of Long Range Products, plans to test a 200 unit market sample: by the time you read this it will probably be in full production (my bet). It could make a majority of what you just read about magazine bullets history.



A magazine designed and manufactured by John Snick of Long Range Products allows a round with a Sierra® 80gr MatchKing™ to be fed from the magazine. This could be huge: the 80 drifts a considerable amount less than any reasonably available magazine bullet. This magazine was built, not modified, to incorporate the little reinforcement ridge at the back of the magazine into a case holder, which turned it into a single stack magazine (only has to hold eight rounds). It also set the rounds off on a diagonal. My prototype will handle a Sierra® 80 at a 2.460 tip to tail length, which,

absolutely, gives the big bullet a viable amount of headroom. Whether it’s the thing to do, I don’t know: it will ultimately be judged by x-count rather than wind drift, and, of course, reliability. That I know. I also know that my Sierra® 80 loads shoot extra well at 300 yards. Simplicity strictly favors one load and one bullet.



The modification requires a new bolt stop, which John can supply: the post is moved from the center to the right so it won’t interfere. That, of course, means that a modified rifle can be fired only using these magazines, but a plastic spacer is included so that rounds at standard 2.250 or so can be used.

common choice for .22 caliber High Power shooters. Its performance is typical of what we expect from Sierra®: tolerant and reliable. It may not offer equivalent downrange performance of the 80gr VLDS, but many have found the less “temperamental” Sierra® is a better performer for them all around.

Listed as a “specialty” bullet, the 80 is sold in 500 unit boxes (all bullets should be) and can be purchased directly from Sierra®, which is a way wise choice. You can’t really “try before you buy,” but if you get them they will work.

The Berger® and JLK® VLDS are frequently discussed in unison since many think they are all of the same design and construction. *They are not the same bullets!* Whatever the hell else you do, don’t confuse Berger® and JLK® in your loading recipes [see *Eighty Grain Refrain* sidebar]. Both makers do, however, offer VLDS in 70, 75, and 80 grain weights. Berger .224 VLDS all have a 15 caliber ogive. JLK® uses a 12 on its 70s and 75s and a 15 on its 80s. The different weights are, as mentioned, offered with the intent of enabling owners of slower twist barrels coping with ballistic envy to avail themselves of the improved downrange performance of this bullet design.

‘Haitygrinds’

There is no real reason to sweat over which 80gr bullet to use at 600 because all can work well and none are a liability to score, provided that at least one shoots accurately in your rifle. The VLDS can fly better than the Sierra® (if for no other reason because they can go faster) and, if the right combination is hit on, may flock a little tighter over a long run average. The Sierra® tends to be more of a “test today, match tomorrow” solution for those who don’t like fiddling with loads (which the optimistic among us refer to as “tuning”). My instinct, experience, and the manufacturer’s own claims, say that JLK® out flies the Berger®.

Good friend, great gunsmith, and U.S. Palma® Team member, Scott Medesha, ran a sample of each 80gr bullet through his .22 PPC and calculated the BCs based on starts and stops at 600 yards, 10 shots with each. All used the same charge of powder except the moly coated Berger® which was bumped up a half grain.

- mc Berger® .464
- Berger® .466
- Sierra® .473
- JLK® .478

There was a 38 fps difference overall.

Scott said the standard deviations were nothing special:

- mc Berger®, 9 at the muzzle, 23 at 600 yards
- Berger®, 15, 15
- Sierra®, 20, 17
- JLK®, 23, 24

Interpret what you will, but, based on this test there is no evidence that any particular 80gr guarantees a better shot in a windstorm.

[Derrick Martin and Dana Beasley tested the JLK® and Sierra® 80s at 500 yards and calculated starts and stops to derive .516 and .484, respectively, compared to the maker claims of .510 and .420. Is everyone wrong? No, everyone is right.]

