

REVIEWS

The St!ffi St!f Stick and St!ffi barrels

By Dale Ford

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SITE Inc., the creators of the St!ffi barrel, has been in business for over 25 years, building components for satellites, aircraft, and other defense industry products. This gives SITE a decided edge in working with products made with carbon fiber.

The St!ffi barrel is a mainstay in their product line, forming the basis for the Sw!tch kit, marker bolts, and tips for other barrel kits. Newest in the lineup of St!ffi barrels is the St!ffi barrel for the Angel One, which is the marker used for this review. Also new to SITE's line up

is the Stif-Stik, used by pro teams Miami Rage and Stockholm Joy. Test Crew Member John Navarro used a Stif-Stik on his '05 Mantis Ego during the course of this review as well. Functionally the St!ffi and Stif-Stik are the same, with the main difference being that the Stif-Stik is available in a variety of patterns, including camo and digicam sage, which is what Navarro used on his Mantis.



The St!ffi Angel One



The camo Mantis Ego

ported, which makes it quieter than the stock Angel One barrel kit.

The St!ffi barrel is a one-piece design, made totally out of carbon fiber, with the exception of an aluminum collet on the rear of the barrel to allow threading to attach the barrel to the marker. The barrel uses a stepped bore, meaning that the first half of the internal bore is sized to the specifications (in this case, .689), and the remaining length of the bore is significantly larger. SITE uses a proprietary process to "MicroJewel" the bore of the all-carbon barrel to give it a smooth internal finish. This gives a very light barrel, and as the name suggests, a stiff barrel that is impervious to environmental conditions. Unlike metal, carbon fiber won't expand or contract due to varying temperatures, which according to SITE, makes for a more accurate and consistent barrel. The St!ffi barrel is also extensively

The test markers for this review are a bone-stock Angel One and a mildly upgraded 2005 Planet Eclipse Mantis Ego. The Ego is upgraded with a DART bolt and Virtue board. Both markers are light, fast and accurate. The Angel One comes with an already excellent barrel kit straight from the factory, albeit with bore sizes that are larger than what is normally used in the US. Most players in the southeast can get away with using a .689 bore barrel for most of the paint that is normally used. A wide variety of paint was used in the markers during the course of the test, including Empire Bullets, X.O. Industries Menace and V1, PMI Premium, Evil and Mid-Evil, and DraXxus Midnight.

The Angel One, which is already a small, light marker, became even lighter with the addition of the 53 gram St!ffi barrel. Observed accuracy with the barrel was slightly improved over the stock kit, but consistency at the chrono and efficiency were noticeably improved over the stock kit due to the better paint-to-barrel match provided by the St!ffi barrel's .689 bore. Similar results were seen on the Mantis Ego, which originally came with a .693 bore Eclipse Shaft barrel. As expected, the higher grade X.O. Menace and Evil shot the best out of the barrel, but overall perceived accuracy was improved with all grades and brands of paint used during the course of this test.

At the end of the day, the St!ffi barrel and the cosmetically enhanced Stif-Stik are top notch barrels that offer extremely light weight, precise sizing and in the Stif-Stik, style that stands out. MRSP for the St!ffi barrel is \$109.95, and the Stif-Stik is \$129, and is available in Rage, Joy, DigiCam Sage, Camouflage, Z, and Patriot patterns. For more information, or to order your St!ffi or Stif-Stik barrel, check out www.stiffibarrel.com



John putting the Ego through the wringer