

Scout Scopes

Part II: Variable Power Scout Scopes

Introduction

In Part One of our series on scout scopes, we covered what they are, a bit of history, their advantages, and why they work so well on lever actions. For review, the term “scout scope” was popularized, if not coined by, the Late Col. Cooper for use on his Scout Rifle concept. A scout scope has extended eye relief, meaning it is mounted further forward than a typical rifle scope, forward of the receiver. These were originally introduced as fixed magnification sights at fairly lower power, somewhere between 2 – 2.75 for most of these scopes. While there are some benefits to the lower magnification, there are also benefits with higher magnification, and frankly, some shooters just want to be able to zoom in more than the fixed power scout scopes.



Variable Power Scout Scopes

Fortunately, the shooting sports industry responded with variable power scout scopes. These can be a great option for a sight on our lever-action rifles. The extra magnification can extend your effective range over iron sights or red dot sights. Recently we tried out three of the variable scope scopes on the market. We had a chance to try out the [Burris 2-7 Scout](#), the [Leupold VX-R 1.5-5X](#) and the [Vortex Crossfire 2-7X Scout Scope](#). Overall, we were very happy with how they performed. You can watch our video [here](#) to learn more about these Scout scopes and how they performed.

VARIABLE SCOUT SCOPES



BIG HORN ARMORY

The Scopes

Burris 2-7X Scout Scope

Specs/Features:

- Ballistic Plex Reticle
- 2-7 magnification
- 1" tube
- 32mm objective
- Length: 9.7"
- Weight: 13.0 oz.
- Eye relief: 9.2 - 12 in

First up was the Burris 2-7X Scout Scope. This is a mid-priced scope and the 2-7power is a very useful magnification range. It's a 1" tube so finding rings should be easy. We mounted it on our scout scope rail (more on that later) using medium height rings with no issues. It is lightweight and compact so it's handy and looks good on the rifle. One thing we particularly liked is it has their Ballistic Plex reticle which has some hold over aiming points. It wouldn't take much for a shooter to do some experimenting to figure out useful holdovers for their particular load. We were able to consistently hit a steel ram at 200yds. Overall, this would be a great choice for use on our lever-action rifles.

Leupold VX-R 1.5-5 Scout

Specs/Features:

- Duplex Reticle with fire dot
- 1.5-5 magnification

- 30mm tube
- 33mm objective
- Length: 12"
- Weight: 14.2 oz.
- Eye relief: 6-6.9 in.

We had the chance to try out the Leupold VX-R 1.5-5 Scout, but we've been told this has been discontinued. Fortunately, their VX Freedom scout scope will have similar features. This is a great scope. It uses a 30mm scope tube so rings should be easy to come by for this as well. It has a fast-focus eyepiece which is nice, easy to use adjustments and great image quality. One thing we liked, in particular, is the Firedot reticle. Through some sort of voodoo (okay... it's science, but math is hard and the important thing is it works), there is an illuminated dot in the center of the crosshair. In the lowest setting, this can be used like a red dot sight, and even on the higher magnifications, the dot is a great aiming point that naturally draws the eye and is easy to center. This was the largest of the scopes we tried with the shortest eye relief, so you might have to play with your length of pull and scope position to get a full sight picture, but overall, this is a great scope.

Vortex 2-7 Crossfire Scout

Specs/Features:

- V-Plex MOA Reticle
- 2-7 magnification
- 1" tube
- 32mm objective
- Length: 10.71"
- Weight: 12 oz.
- Eye relief: 9.45 in.

The Vortex 2-7X Crossfire Scout is another good choice. It is the most budget-friendly of the scopes we tried. It has a one-inch main tube so finding quick detach rings will be simple. The scope has easy to use elevation and windage adjustments, a fast-focus eyepiece, and an oversized, easy to grab power selector ring which is a very nice feature as it will come in handy if your hands are cold or wet or if you're wearing gloves. It is also lightweight and compact, being just a bit larger than the Burris. It has a fairly thick reticle which some people may not like, but it did make it easy to quickly acquire and get on target when getting behind the scope.

Mounting

To use a scout scope, you need a scout scope mount. This positions the scope forward of the receiver. Our scout scope mount is a factory-installed option either at the time of purchase, or you can send your gun back to us to have it installed. Once installed, you'll love the versatility for mounting scout scopes, red dots, or even lights if that's your thing. We'll cover mounting and setting up these scopes in our next installment.



Summary

With our rail installed, we were easily able to test all three of the variable power scout scopes. All of them held zero, were easy to sight in, and looked great when looking at distant targets.

Overall, these variable scout scopes work well and each of them was able to figure out an aiming point to consistently hit the 200 yd ram. The extra magnification can be very useful and these scopes definitely can extend the effective range a bit over iron sights or a large MOA red dot (we'll cover red dots in another installment). The result is these variable power scout scopes are a great option to use with the Big Horn Armory lever-actions.



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