



PERFECTLY TO SCALE

Mark Camoccio examines the Weihrauch HW30 Junior, a brand new airgun that is aimed at newcomers to the sport

Have you ever stopped to think just how vital it is that we encourage the next generation into our sport? It seems to go under the radar much of the time, but if we don't take the problem seriously, then airgun shooting, and shooting sports in general, will dwindle to a fraction of what they are today.

Make no mistake, if we don't attract new blood to take part, then airgun sales will take a hit for a start; with all the knock-on effects that that entails. Fewer customers would mean manufacturers struggling to compete, with less investment in new products inevitable. Fewer shooters means government bodies, along with those opposed to shooting, will find it easier to exert pressure, and restrictions will be easier to impose upon us. We're a sport that's already in something of a unique position: having to adopt a

constant state of defence, and as a result, strength in numbers is the only way forward.

Of course, steering youngsters away from their devices and brain-rotting online fodder is no mean feat these days. But just suppose we manage it, a key piece of the jigsaw is to give them an airgun to shoot, which is small enough to be easily handled and operated. There's nothing more off-putting than cumbersome, overly heavy hardware, and that's where dedicated junior models come in.

On test here is a brand new issue from Weihrauch, the HW30 Junior, and whilst the HW30 code has been used before, this new version comes in a full three-and-a-half inches shorter, and half a pound lighter. In fact, give it the once over, and it soon becomes clear it's different in all respects. I quickly checked my archives out of interest, having tested a standard HW30 a few years back, to see how power outputs



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

MODEL: Weihrauch HW30 Junior

MANUFACTURER: Weihrauch, Germany

TYPE: Dedicated Junior break-barrel, spring-piston power plant

CALIBRE: .177

WEIGHT: 5.1lbs

LENGTH: 35.25in

BARREL: 13.4in, Weihrauch's own

STOCK: Scaled down dedicated junior beech sporter

TRIGGER: Two-stage adjustable Rekord unit

VELOCITY/ENERGY: Over 10 shots using Air Arms Diabolo Field pellets

High: 501fps

Low: 491fps

Ave: 496fps

Spread: 10fps

ENERGY: 4.6ft/lb

PRICE: From £290

WEBSITE: weihrauch.co.uk

compare, and the original HW30 produces around 8ft/lb, whereas this new model is set up with new internals to generate around 5ft/lb. That's an inspired move, and the result is a fully scaled down Junior model, aimed at youngsters and smaller shooters, who need to feel comfortable, capable and in control at all times when shooting.

WEIHRAUCH BUILD

However, the Junior is every inch a Weihrauch, and for that, read "high grade specimen". For the overall build quality, and level of finish, leaves nothing to be desired. All metal construction means there's an air of quality from the off, and that is literal, with just the fibre optic elements the only components not qualifying. Those open sights are a nice design too, with clearly marked finger wheels at the back and a neat hooded profile up front. All the metalwork gets treated to rich mirror finish chemical bluing, and this contrasts beautifully with the pleasantly figured beech stock.

Stylish laser-cut stippling adorns both the forend and pistol grip, and that offers proper grip, as well as visual appeal. Look to the grip, and you'll notice the scaled down configuration, deliberately designed to fit small hands. Compare that to a full blown adult sporter, and the importance of this model becomes clear. Attention to detail is everywhere, and that stretches to the oversized chunky stock bolt, neatly recessed on the underside, through to the adjustable breech jaws, so synonymous with Weihrauch break barrels throughout their range. Look to the underside of the forend, and there's an articulated cocking linkage, meaning the wood cut-out is kept to a minimum. And of course, perhaps the ace card: the top class Rekord trigger.

No half measures then just because this is a junior model, and that's an intelligent move from Weihrauch, making the Junior stand out a mile from several rival "starter" models.

If we're effectively training youngsters with their first rifle, then it pays to learn the ropes with the open sights initially; and that's

Weihrauch's new
HW30 Junior – scaled
down perfection



where I started on the test. With the butt planted in the groin for control, breaking the breech open proved easy, and a very easy cocking stroke followed; no surprise given the deliberately low power specification. On test, the stroke was incredibly smooth, followed by that satisfying Weihrauch crunch, as the safety and trigger engage.

Part of the training should be to keep a firm grip on the barrel at this stage, and with that precision engineered breech exposed, a pellet can be pushed flush, and the barrel locked back up. Weihrauch machine a chamfer at the breech so even tight pellets push home fairly smoothly. Nudge off the safety, take up the first stage, gently squeeze the trigger, and the resultant shot cycle is very slick, with no spring resonance, just a quick snap and muted report. Okay, we are talking low power here, but there's a level of sophistication and class that well and truly belies this model's status.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO SHOOT?

Starting at 10 yards, and using the open sights, I could easily manage 5p sized groups, while moving back to 20 yards, my eyes were telling me this was about the limit for me despite the marvellous fibre optics to play with. One-inch groups were very acceptable I would hasten to add, but I couldn't resist going the whole hog, and fitting the perfectly compact Hawke Airmax 2-7x32, which proved the perfect companion. Super tight sub-quarter-inch groups over 20 yards, with both BSA Goldstar and Air Arms Diabolo Field pellets, proved the point; namely that this diminutive Weihrauch is a top class performer, that will reward technique and enthusiasm.

In short, a delightful airgun, hard to fault, and a winner from Weihrauch, one that can only help our cause in recruiting that all-important next generation of airgun enthusiasts to our sport. ■



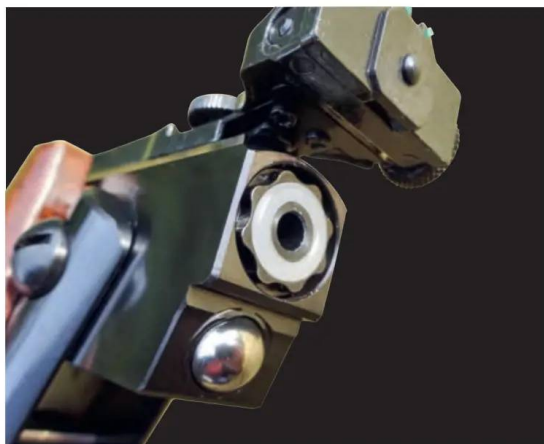
Look to the scaled down grip and smaller hands are well catered for



Detail of the recessed stock bolt- no half measures here



A quality trigger adds class to the HW30 Junior



The now familiar Weihrauch breech configuration



Results were impressive on test