

Review of Wilson's Shock FX

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Introduction

Ok – let's first make this clear – this is NOT a “traditional vs. hockey style mask (HSM)” debate...This is a look at the new Wilson Shock FX, and a comparison to my +POS HSM (made by All-Star and private labeled by +POS).



First Impressions

When I first took it out of the box, my first thought was, “Wow, the cage sure sticks out quite a bit.” Then when I put it next to my helmet, I could see that it really is a different design – the cage on my HSM sits back flat against the helmet, whereas the FX cage sits out away from the shell and angles out even farther (see pictures 2 and 3).

After I put the Shock on and walked around a few minutes, here’s what I noticed:

1. Light and very comfortable!
2. Bars thinner by just over 1/16th of an inch – able to get away with that due the titanium cage.
3. Wider space between top and bottom viewing bars – 2 ¼” for the Shock vs. 1 ¾” for my HSM.
4. The field of vision was so different...it really felt like the whole room opened up for me.





Testing

My goal was to actually have a pitching machine shoot balls at me while I wore each of the HSMs – I figured what better way to test the shock absorbers than to see if I felt a difference. Well, I wasn't able to get that done, so I had my son (Freshman in high school) throw a ball at my face (he volunteered way too quickly, if you ask me! ☺). While it didn't match the speed and impact of an 80 mph fast ball, I have a couple of observations that I found noteworthy:

1. As I mentioned above, due to the increased field of vision, it felt like I wasn't wearing a mask – consequently, I actually blinked and felt myself braced for each impact. I'm sure it is something you can get used to, it just felt like every ball was going to smack me in the nose!
2. There definitely was a different sound with the shock vs. my HSM – again, it may take some getting used to, but it sounded like more of a pop – possibly because of the shocks?

Comparison

What follows is a comparison of weights of various All-Star HSMs to the Wilson FX – I decided to compare it to All-Star masks because I think most everyone is familiar with them (at least some of the models):

Model	Weight (oz.)
Wilson Shock FX	36.8
All-Star 2200SL (Super light cage)	38.5
All-Star 3000TI (armor clad liner – titanium cage)	42.2
All-Star 2200SP (Steel cage)	43.0
All-Star 3000SL (armor clad liner – super light cage)	44.2
All-Star 2000TI (model used by MLB – Kevlar shell)	51.0

(To give some perspective, two ounces is equal to about four quarters)

Conclusion

While I know there are other niceties of the Shock FX, I feel there are two big innovative features that will separate this HSM from the competition:

View – 2 thumbs up.

I see this as the biggest positive – the panoramic view the cage provides is awesome. As I mentioned above, I think it is something you will get used to and will love once used to it – just be prepared for the initial “shock” ☺, and call some scrimmage games before the season starts.

Shock Absorbers – ???

Unfortunately, I wasn’t able to adequately test the shock absorbers, as I just had this loaner unit for a short period, so the jury’s out on this one...hopefully someone will post another review with some first-hand experience on this name-sake’s feature.