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I read recently about your barrel blowing up at the Olympic Team Trials and that the screw in choke at inside the barrel may have been the problem. Is this a common occurrence in your experience and should I just settle for buying a gun with fixed chokes?

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I can understand your apprehension at considering purchasing or modifying a shotgun barrel with adjustable chokes after hearing about what happened to me, but don't let this incident cloud your judgment. To be very honest I do not have any real idea of what happened to my barrel. It was a barrel that had been modified with adjustable chokes after it was manufactured therefore it had no manufacturers warranty on it. It had conservatively fired over one hundred thousand rounds so I had no problems with the chokes being faulty when they were fitted. Like everything concerning firearm barrels they need to be properly maintained and there is some feeling that I may have dropped the choke on the ground and dented its side wall thus letting gas leak in between the choke and the barrel wall when I re inserted it. This dent would cause the explosion. I have had other gunsmiths tell me that it was caused by something obstructing the barrel. Whatever the reason the bottom line is that I either did not correctly maintain the choke or I didn't check that the barrels were clear before firing the gun.

I have always been an advocate for the added advantages of having adjustable chokes thus increasing the guns versatility in terms of range and pattern performance. Most manufacturers offer barrels that have adjustable chokes as standard from the factory in many models and there are several reputable gun smithing firms around the world that have fitted screw in chokes to barrels that have fired many hundreds of thousand rounds. In answer to your question I personally would always opt for the adjustable choke barrel over fixed chokes regardless of what form of shotgun shooting you do. Remember that proper maintenance and care is always required of all barrels to ensure your safety and the safety of those around you.

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