MINI REVIEW: WEST MOUNTAIN RADIO

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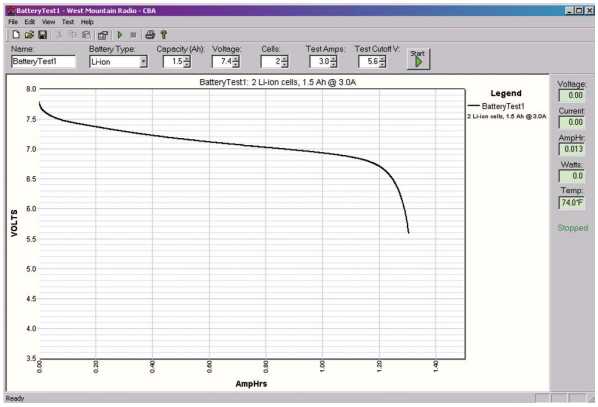
The Computerized Battery Analyzer (CBA) from West Mountain Radio is a new tool for measuring battery performance that gives you detailed insight into how your batteries behave under real world conditions. The CBA lets you select the testing discharge rate (in amps), and then observe how the voltage drops as the battery is depleted. The resulting graph shows voltage on the left vertical axis and amp-hours across the bottom axis. Note the abrupt voltage drop-off in the curve shown. Discharge terminates at a safe voltage cutoff point that is either auto or user-determined.

With its graphic display of performance, it is easy to compare batteries to see which perform the best in terms of (1) capacity (which translates to flight duration) or (2) voltage during discharge (typically, the higher the voltage, the higher the rpm). These results will help you select the batteries with the best performance for your particular electric models.

This simple tester can answer many interesting questions . How much capacity is lost if you run a pack at a high discharge rate? How does a high discharge rate impact battery voltage? A pack that maintains a higher voltage will give your electric more spunk than one that sags during discharge.

The CBA allows you to overlay test results from different packs. You will see at a glance which battery offers the best performance. Are you flying with Lithium Ion or Lithium Polymer cells? This laboratory-grade tool will tell you whether the cell can withstand a given current load without losing capacity or voltage, or whether loading the cell at a certain amp-draw causes it to overheat and, if so, at what point in the discharge. If two Li-Poly brands of similar capacity differ in these respects, you'll immediately know which to use in your 3D models. In simplest terms, the CBA graphically describes the "personality" of each cell or pack you test.



It gets better. You can match individual cells to build the best packs, and you can test batteries over time to see how repeated use impacts their performance. Will some packs begin to age after 20 cycles and others maintain their fitness for 200 cycles? Now you can find out. The CBA will test any type of cell or cell chemistry so long as you stay within its limits of 40 amps, 48 volts and 150 watts. Are your connectors working well? If not, the CBA curves will show bad contacts. There's much more to this unit, and we will provide a full review in a future issue. Price–$89.95; $9.95, Temperature probe (optional)

—Tom Atwood

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two aircraft. Joe Malinchak won Highest Scale Points with a model weighing under 1.5 ounces (sponsored by DWE) with his Piper L-4, and Bob Wilder won Highest Points won using E Cubed R/C short antennas (sponsored by E Cubed R/C).

Although only 34 models were campaigned, the event is growing and is attended by leaders in the world of indoor RC. The following individuals were inducted into the AMA Indoor RC Hall of Fame (NIRAC sponsored): John Worth, Joe Malinchak, Clarence and Dan Hurd, and Jack McGillivray. Other vendors present included DJ Aerotech and Room Flight.

For more information on NIRAC and the competition, visit www.nirac.org.

—the editors

Photos (left to right): Bob Wilder (left) receives his High Point Award from NIRAC President, Dave Robelen.

Bill Snead's tiny Fokker D-VII weighed 1.49 ounces. The color scheme was scanned then printed on tissue and applied to the model. It has a KP-00 geared motor, two of the new Falcon 1.7 gram micro servos, and a Penta receiver all on a single 145mAh Li-Poly battery.

Joe Malinchak's scale Piper L-4 weighing just 1.4 ounces won the DWE sponsored special award for the highest scale point total under 1.5 ounces total weight.

Larry Park came from North Carolina and had a vendor booth for his Room Flight company. Here he is holding his "House Fly" bipe for which he sells a laser-cut kit.

Henry Pasquet flew this John Tatone Atomizer in the old timer event. It was another 5-ounce model. The minimum weight was neceesary if you wanted to win!