

Re: SS2K vs. Mead LXD-75 or C-GT

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Roger Hamlett wrote:

"szaki" <szakil0@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:VOKdnSL2BYcNHHnfRVn-sq@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

How would the SS2K compare to the new Celestron and Mead goto controllers, like the LXD-75 or the Celestron GT has?
Over all performance, photography etc..
Thx Julius

I don't think there is a simple answer. There is generally more difference between the mounts themselves than between what can be done by the controllers. The SS2K, is a great controller, and if it is the first controller you use, you will probably find the other controllers 'odd'. Conversely, if you start with a Meade controller, the others will seem less logical. In a sense whichever style you start with, will be the easiest to use. The SS2K, is a very heavy unit compared to the other controllers, but this is because the motor drive electronics is in the handset, when the other units need this separately. Having the electronics in the handset, brings the problem that the cabling from the handcontroller is much heavier, and guider cables etc., all have to go back to the handcontroller. There have been problems in the past with the connectors at the rear of the SS2K being unreliable, probably because of this.

Generally, the SS2K, is the 'better made' unit, but it is now pretty much a 'tail end' controller (with Vixen shifting their support to the Sphinx). It is though a superb controller. The biggest difference though is in the mounts the controllers are as standard attached to. The GP, and GP-DX, are very well made mount assemblies, with generally low periodic error, and the error itself is of the form that is readily correctable. The Celestron mount, has undergone about four revisions, and the current unit, is actually fractionally 'better' than the GP-DX, in one area (the improved main bearings, allow it to

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carry more weight). For the money, it is a great mount, but does not match the quality of the GP-DX, with poorer overall fit and finish, and typically slightly worse PE. The Meade mount, is a lot better than the version that was supplied on the LXD-55 models, and is now pretty acceptable, but is still not as good as the current Celestron CG-5. The Celestron mount in particular can be massively improved by adjustment, re-lubrication etc., and with this done, can become quite competitive to the GP-DX.

Personally, 'in use', I think the SS2K, if fitted to a good mount, is one of the great controllers. The Losmndy Gemini for example, is a 'better' controller in terms of it's pointing model, but in terms of the user interface, the SS2K 'runs rings' round it!....

In terms of actual 'use', if fitted to the same mount, all the controllers are fully capable of doing everything you are likely to want. The actual 'resolution' is limited by the encoders on the motors, rather than the controller, the pointing accuracy is good (there have been 'oddities' in particular software releases, and also limitations in terms of what can be done - for instance, the 'three star' align on the current new Celestron controller, works very well, but you must chose three stars that form a reasonably 'deep' triangle if it is to work properly). The newer Celestron controller, and the Meade controller are both 'reprogrammable', while the older Celestron handset, and the SS2K, require chip replacement to reprogram. Whether this actually 'matters' is arguable, since if the controller works, it is really unnecessary!.

I'd look at the mount first, and work out which suits the load you are going to carry, and the target application, then worry about the controller.

Best Wishes

Thanks for the great description, very informative.

I own the SS2K2.05+GP combo, but the price I paid for SS2K used (\$750) can buy me complete new Meade or Celestron goto mount.

I've noticed the SS2K advantage is, it can be fitted to different EQ mounts straight or with modification. Also the controller can be used independently with encoders, like on a DOB in Alt/Az mode.

Julius

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