TIPS & TECHNIQUES

ARTICLE 2
Record & Playback

The following series of DCS tips & techniques has been created in the hopes that it will add to your enjoyment of the M.T.H. Digital Command System.

In these brief articles we'll try to point out and clarify DCS features that will make your Proto-Sound 2.0 (and TMCC) locomotives more fun, more realistic, and more interesting to operate. If you haven't yet tried DCS, we hope these articles will entice you to visit a DCS Demo Center, pickup up a handheld controller, and see what you're missing!

DCS

Simply The Best Way To Run A Railroad

ARTICLE 2
Playback & Record

The Record/Playback feature, something you won't find in any other model railroad command system, makes the DCS system a truly interactive command control device.

Record/Playback allows you to record an operating session on your layout and play it back any time you want. Your trains can run all by themselves, going through pre-scripted scenarios that you have designed. Why would you want to do that, instead of running your trains yourself? When you have visitors, you might want to use record/playback so you can talk with your guests while the layout runs itself. Or you might want one loop or part of your layout to run automatically while you run another part manually. For club layouts, record/playback is ideal for showing off the layout at open houses.

You can use a pre-scripted scenario to have passenger trains pull into stations, make announcements and pull out again. Freight trains can stop in the yard and go through maintenance routines before moving back onto the mainline. Your locomotives can automatically sound a whistle or horn at a railroad crossing, clang the bell to alert rail fans to get out of the way, or stop at a crossing track to let another train go by. Record/Playback scripts can activate switches to allow complex routes, and can include both Proto-Sound® 2.0 and Lionel® TrainMaster® Command Control (TMCC®) engines.

If you own a DCS TIU and handheld remote (and a TMCC Command Base and TIU connector cable if you're running TMCC engines), you already have everything you need to record an operating session and play it back. If you want switches and accessories to operate automatically, you'll also need an Accessory Interface Unit (AIU), the DCS component that controls switches and accessories.

Although the Record/Playback feature involves a number of steps, we think you'll find it's easy to do and a lot of fun. We hope you'll print out this email, take it into your train room, and just play around.

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HOW TO DO IT

A. Prepare your TIUs

Use the DCS Remote to ensure that your TIUs are in Normal mode rather than Super mode. (If you only have one TIU and it's already in Normal mode, skip this step.):
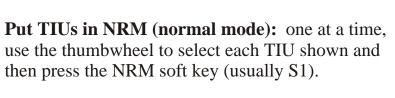
Menu key: press the Menu key.

Scroll and select SYSTEM: scroll the thumbwheel to SYSTEM and press on the thumbwheel to select the System menu.

Scroll and select TIU SETUP: scroll to TIU SETUP and press on the thumbwheel to select DCS Setup.

Scroll and select SUPER TIU: scroll to SUPER TIU and press the thumbwheel to enter Super TIU setup.

Put TIUs in NRM (normal mode): one at a time, use the thumbwheel to select each TIU shown and then press the NRM soft key (usually S1).

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Exit the Menu system: press Menu repeatedly to exit the Menu system.

NOTE that a Record/Playback session can only involve one TIU and the tracks connected to it.

B. Record an operation session

Positions, please! Position your trains where you want them to be at the start of the Record/Playback session. To make playback easier later, make a note of exactly where all trains are at the start of a session. Ensure that transformer power is on for all the tracks on which your trains will be run. You must be operating in DCS command (not conventional) control.

Prepare to record: Prepare to record the session:

Menu key: press the Menu key.

Scroll and select ADVANCED: scroll the thumbwheel to ADVANCED and press the thumbwheel to select the Advanced menu.

Scroll and select RECORD/PLAYBACK: scroll to RECORD/PLAYBACK and press the thumbwheel to select the Record/Playback menu.

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Press the REC soft key: If you have only one TIU, the screen will then return to the last active engine screen and an (R) on the screen will indicate you are recording.

If you have multiple TIUs, select the TIU for the recording session: If you have more than one TIU, pressing the REC soft key will take you to a TIU menu. Scroll and select the TIU where you want the Record/Playback session to be saved. When you've used the thumbwheel to select the TIU, the screen will return to the last active engine screen and an (R) on the screen will indicate you are recording.

Begin recording

Operate your trains as you normally would. You can operate one engine or several, including PS2 and TMCC locomotives, as well as PS2 lashups.

You can start up a passenger train, get it rolling forward and, as it approaches a station, press the PFA key to begin the Passenger Station Sounds sequence. Any time after the bell starts ringing, press DIR to have the train glide into the station and then press DIR again every 30 seconds or so to go through the sequence, and have the train start up and leave the station.

You can do the same thing with a freight train as it approaches a yard. In fact, you can switch back and forth between two or more engines so that they are executing their PFA sounds simultaneously. Sound the bell and whistle or horn on any engine whenever you like. Uncouple a train from an engine, stop the engine, back it up, re-couple the train, and pull out again. Put your trains through as complicated an operating session as you like for up to 90 minutes or 500 button presses, or any combination of the two.

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Stop and save the session

When you're done recording your session:

Stop the trains: use the DCS Remote to stop your trains. If you stop them in virtually the same places they started, you'll later have the option to run your session continuously when it's played back. If you don't plan to run the session continuously on playback, it's a good idea to use the Shut Down key after each engine has been stopped.

Menu key: press the Menu key to go directly to Record/Playback.

STP soft key: press the STP soft key to stop the Record/Playback session.

SAV soft key: Press the SAV soft key to save the session for playback.

Scroll and select a Session Name: Scroll the thumbwheel to one of the 3 session names and press the thumbwheel to save the session under that name. If you have previously saved a session under that name, the new session will replace the one previously saved. You can save up to three sessions on each TIU.

C. Play back an operation session

Positions, please — again! Position your engines where they were at the start of the recording session. Ensure that transformer power is on for all the tracks on which your trains will be run.

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Commence playback:

Menu key: press the Menu key.

Scroll and select ADVANCED: scroll to Advanced and press the thumbwheel.

Scroll and select RECORD/PLAYBACK: scroll to Record/Playback and press the thumbwheel.

Press the PLY soft key.

Scroll and select a Session: Scroll the thumbwheel to SESSION # 1, 2, or 3 and press the thumbwheel to play that session. A (P) will appear in the DCS Remote's screen and the session will begin to play.

To playback a session continuously, press the LOP (loop) soft key rather than PLY. Remember that in order to use loop, your trains must end the recorded session in the same positions where they began. Either way, your trains will perform like magic just the way you told them to. Visitors to your model railroad will watch in amazement as you describe the fine points of the operation while the trains run themselves.

End playback:

When the session has been completed, or any time you want to stop a playback session in progress:

Menu key: press the Menu key.

Scroll and select ADVANCED.

Scroll and select RECORD/PLAYBACK.

Press the STP soft key.

> ### _Tech notes_
>
> _If TMCC engines are used in a recording session, the TMCC Command Base must be connected to the TIU used to record the session._
>
> _The "ALL" command cannot be used in Record/Playback._
>
> _The maximum length of a recording session is 90 minutes or 500 button presses, or any combination of the two._
>
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