

Technics RS-1500

Test Report (*Best Buy' Magazine circa 1978*)



This machine incorporates 3 speeds, the middle one being 19cm/s. Although basically a half-track stereo machine, an additional quarter-track stereo replay head is fitted, and the tape path itself is known as an "Iso-loop" type, the tape actually running in an "O" shape around the capstans with a pulley wheel at the bottom. Although NAB reels can be accommodated, their adaptors are rather poor, although we liked the tension swing arms. Control functions include a vari-pitch pull-out (all speeds), three position speed control, remote timer start, meter sensitivity, mike attenuator, source tape monitoring (separate for each track), three switch positions for bias and equalisation, record track selection levers, and the normal tape counter indicating for minutes and seconds at 38cm/s per second (excellent). Two good quality VU's are fitted, but transients still under-read appreciably and no peak indicators are fitted. Phono line in/out sockets are provided but there is no 5-pin DIN type. A facility for 24V DC operation is provided, in addition to

normal AC mains.

The microphone inputs ($\frac{1}{4}$ in mono jacks) were very insensitive, although the clipping margin was excellent. Input noise was a little high, and the use of capacitor microphones is recommended. The line inputs worked well, and no clipping problem was noted, although the record amp noise was slightly higher than optimum.

The replay amplifier clipping margin was excellent at best, but depended on the position of the replay gain control, headphones being driven from a $\frac{1}{4}$ in stereo jack on the front panel suitable for low impedance types only. Whilst replay hum and noise measurements were all excellent, replay responses showed EHF droops at all speeds on the most accurate test tapes; 9.5cm/s gave -3dB at 12.5kHz, for example. The quarter-track head gave almost identical responses to the half-track one, incidentally.

Technics tape was supplied (Scotch 207) and this was used for all measurements and equalisation and bias were used on position 2 as recommended. MOLs were not quite as good as they should have been, 19cm/s actually being the best speed for these. A/B levels were reasonably well optimised, and azimuth very well set. At 9.5cm/s the record response was flat, but the overall (record/replay) showed the replay loss mentioned. At 19cm/s the response was maintained flat up to 20kHz, whilst at 38cm/s it reached 25kHz, although bad bass woodles were penned. At high levels, the 9.5cm/s was good and 38cm/s excellent even at +4dB. Overall hiss levels were only average, being around 2.5dB worse than optimum.

Wow and flutter was disappointing, being particularly poor at the slow speed, although the other speeds were good. Some eccentricity was noted on one of the capstans, which was perhaps surprising. The machine is basically designed for vertical mounting, but horizontal wow measurements were about the same. Phase jitter and stability measured well, showing that the Isolooop drive was effective. The speed variability is available on record and replay, and this is surely rather unwise. Nominal speeds were very accurate, a strobe being fitted on the lower tape roller, which is also a useful editing point. Spooling an LP NAB reel took 2m. 40s. but was not too neat. Erasure was just adequate, and crosstalk good other than at EHF.

scans von Michael-Otto