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By Leaps and Bounds ... Vol 4, Tactic AnyLink 2.4GHZ Radio Conversion

By Mike Mangus

This installment is going to take a different tack than previous articles. We will still talk about the latest cutting edge technology for our ships yet written more as a product review. The product under review is the AnyLink 2.4GHz Radio Adapter and Receiver. 2.4GHz radio systems are the norm in our hobby. The 2.4GHz systems are extremely reliable and do not suffer from radio interferences from bad pump motors, solenoids, or any other unwanted electrical noise.

The downside to 2.4GHz radios is the old 75MHz transmitters cluttering up the workshop. I have a shelf full of 75 and 72MHz transmitters just taking up space. I should simply get rid of them but luckily there is a new product on the market that could put those old radios to use. It is the Anylink 2.4GHz Radio Adapter.

The AnyLink is touted as a low cost 2.4GHz conversion for nearly all transmitters on the market no matter what frequency they are on. It will convert ham bands, 50MHz, 72MHz, 75MHz, even 2.4GHz radios. Though why anyone would convert a 2.4 to a 2.4 is beyond me. At first I was skeptical. After watching the disaster Jeff 'Banzai' Lide had while trying out a new Chinese made 2.4 conversion at the 2011 Brouhaha I did not want to take a chance on an unproven system. But favorable internet reviews, the low cost, and the fact that Tower Hobbies would not carry a bad product tipped me into buying the Tx-module and a three channel receiver. A six channel receiver is also available.

By Leaps and Bounds

-Continued-

Tower's usual efficient handling and shipping had the module and receiver at my door in a week. My first impression of the system was how lightweight it is. The module weighs less than an ounce and seems well built in a thick, solid-feeling plastic case. The typical short 2.4GHz antenna articulates like the Spektrum transmitters. The module comes with a small, well written manual, adaptor cables to fit Futaba square and JR/Spektrum trainer jacks, and sticky back Velcro. Cables for other transmitter types such as Futaba/Hitec round jacks, Spektrum DX4e/5e/7s/8/10T radios, the Hitec Aurora, and the high end Futaba transmitters are sold separately. Airtronics seems to be the only manufacturer left out. The AnyLink three and six channel receivers are identical in size and weight, i.e. small! At 1.77" x 0.98" x 0.5" and weighing a mere 0.25 ounces, the receiver can fit into the smallest ship in our hobby.

The most noticeable difference of this receiver is

the lack of an external antenna ... it is built inside the receiver case. Also not that only the AnyLink receiver will work with the module. No other brand will connect to the module. It only took 15 minutes to attach the module to the popular Futaba 7C transmitter. The reason it took 15 minutes is because 13 minutes was spent trying to find the transmitter. Heh. The sticky backed Velcro was applied to the back of the transmitter and the module before sticking the pieces together. The supplied cable was just the right length to plug into the Futaba square trainer port. To prevent the transmitter from broadcasting on the old frequency, the instructions directed removal of the transmitter's frequency crystal. In less than two minutes the transmitter was converted to 2.4GHz. The three channel AnyLink receiver was installed into a 32" sailboat for testing. Since the antenna is internal there was no fussing with positioning wires at 90 degrees apart for best radio reception. The receiver accepted tabbed servo plugs without any problems into the

clearly marked (yet small lettered) servo ports. All in all it took perhaps five minutes to swap receivers. Binding the transmitter to receiver is easier than a Spektrum. Following the instructions, the transmitter is turned on first (it beeps once audibly to let you know) then the receiver. Grabbing a pen, I depressed the recessed button in the receiver and held it until the red LED light went out three seconds later. The receiver immediately picked up the transmitter signal and moved the servos as directed. A quick test waggle of the sticks showed full control on the bench without any stuttering or hesitation.

So it works on the bench, but what about the water? It took a couple of weeks before the opportunity arose to go sailing. The place was a very large pond with three other sailboats operating at the same time. It would be a good test to check the range and see if the system can play nice with other 2.4GHz radios nearby.

Within a minute after launching the sailboat and after it had traveled around

Continued on page 631

2011 Survey Results

By Bob Hoernemann

Once again the BOD had a survey on the rules ballot in an attempt to 'take the pulse of the hobby'. Not everyone who voted took the survey; the results and a summary of any comments follow.

1) Do you like Campaign battle at NATS?

Twelve people liked two per NATS. Eight people had no opinion. Five people would like to add one more Campaign battle on Wednesday.

Comments:

"I waver on 'liking campaign' depending upon my assignment. There are parts that I dislike personally that others enjoy. As a non-convoy type person, I enjoy the lower stress environment for my secondary ship in shooting convoys and targets. Not so much in the planning and running of convoys. As far as campaign length, with the advent of the 2.4GHz radios, the battle day at NATS is much less event filled than before. The one hour campaign duration leaves a large amount of non-battle time on campaign days."

"I am not enamored of Campaign, but NATS would be boring if it was nothing but

8 or 9 straight fleet battles. I think it is important to keep campaign (or some other alternate battle format) to keep things interesting."

2) Should Campaign be longer than one hour?

Ten people think it's perfect as is. Eight people think campaign should be 90 minutes long. Seven people had no opinion. Two people want campaign replaced by fleet battles. One person thought campaign should be two hours long.

3) For Wednesday at NATS, how would you like the day to run?

Fifteen people would like one fleet battle, small pickup fleet battles and night battle. Four people had no opinion. Two people would like one fleet battle and one campaign battle. Two people would like one campaign battle and night battle. One person would like two fleet battles. Comments: "Keep it the same."

"I enjoyed the order that was this year. When I attend, I would like to have as much battling as possible. Another fleet battle, with the individual battles. I did enjoy the night battle. A possible campaign

would be nice as well. But, I understand that many people would use Wednesday as a day off to repair damage and enjoy the tourist sites in the hosting area. I feel that it should be voted on at the [captains] meeting at the [beginning] of NATS."

"Leave things the way they are people need a break. It's getting way to [competitive]." "I like the current setup of individual battles with night battle which for some reason isn't an option."

4) Cannons are firing too hard: Nine people disagree. Eight people agree. Five people had no opinion. Two people strongly disagree. Two people strongly agree. Comments: "Anyone that answers this with anything less than 'Strongly Agree' is being blinded by their own stupidity. When a bb goes through 1/8" plywood that been glassed on both sides with WestSystem 1.5" below the waterline, something is horribly wrong.

"There are so few 'hard firing' cannons out there, is this really an issue? If they become the norm, then we'll have to do something at least for safety purposes..."

2011 Survey Results

-Continued-

"I disagree, I think this is a perception vs reality issue."

5) If they are firing too hard, how should it be resolved?

Fourteen people had no opinion. Seven people recommended by committee.

One person recommended by pressure. Comments:

"A committee should be formed immediately to address this issue before someone gets seriously hurt."

"Lower the tweak of stern cannons. Sidemounts still require max tweak to hole 1" below."

"[Control] velocity not pressure."

"Limit # of solenoids to 1 per cannon and limit their orifice size."

"Majority of guns in the hobby are fine. Need to establish ceiling for guns so we do not compromise safety. Some sort of penetration test with combat tweaked guns would be ideal (i.e. unable to penetrate off the shelf [safety] glasses at 6 inches or something similar)."

"Lower pressure, or shorter barrels are the only real way to limit velocity without testing every gun. Smaller ID tube would be effective but you could still set it up to shoot

at the same velocity just at a much reduced rate of fire."

6) Do you like the current scoring system?

Twenty-two people liked the scoring system. Three people do not like the scoring system. Three people had no opinion. Comments:

"Sinks should be worth more."

7) If the scoring system should be changed what should be done?

Twenty people had no opinion.

Two people would like to increase the points for belows.

Two people would like to decrease the points for belows.

One person would like to increase the points for belows and ons. One person would like to decrease all points.

Comments:

"The scoring system is fine as it is, although a penalty for ramsinks should also affect the fleet that commits the ram sink."

"Sinks should be worth more."

"On the scoring system (and several other rules such as rudder area), it is highly skewed towards class 6 ships being advantaged. The Risk/Reward proposition for building larger ships is highly disadvantaged. Not only do you have greater effort in building and battling a class

7/8 ship, you take increased sink points for your trouble while having to deal with your score factor being the same as a class 6 and dealing with a rudder area/ship size ratio smaller than the class 6 ships. I do not see this as changing though as long as Nagato and North Carolina remain inflated to be the top performing and scoring classes. If you want to compete, build either of the two. If you want to be 'tender vittles' as the Commodore says, build what you want.

"As far as the current scoring system, I would cut the points for holes by 1/2 and double the sink points. I think there should be a bonus for sinks. As damage control has gotten better, ships take 1000's of points in damage, but don't sink. It is not uncommon for a ship to take 20 or more belows and not sink. Under the current scoring system, sink points are considerably less than the amount of damage taken.

8) Should sinks be worth more points?

Seven people would like a 50% increase in sink points. Seven people like the current values. Six people would like more points but are unsure by how much. Four people would

2011 Survey Results

-Continued-

like to double sink points.

Four people had no opinion.

Comments:

“Double points due to the fact that wattage for pumps has gotten insane.”

9) Should ram penalties be changed?

Eleven people had no opinion.

Five people believe they should be but are unsure by how much. Four people would like to halve all penalties.

Three people would like to double all penalties. Three people would like to triple all penalties. Comments:

“A 200 point penalty for a below ram is a joke. Captains with ram bows should be more careful and I’d like to see some teeth put into the ramming penalties.”

“No change leave ram penalizes the same.”

“Rams are going to happen, especially with 3” or shorter range sidemounts. Unless we open the ranges by [specifying] a minimum gun range or making the maximum down angles less, we’re not going to get away from Nasca’s ‘Rubbin is racin’.

Accidental rams happen and the current rules deal with them fine. Malicious rams

should be handled by the CD as [sportsmanship] issues and luckily are few and far between (I can’t think of a single one in the past 5 years that I have personally witnessed).”

“As for [Should ram penalties be changed?], I think it would be a bad idea to “halve” the ram penalties. We should keep them just as they are.”

10) The new casemate rules are an improvement.

Twelve people agree. Eleven people strongly agree. Five people had no opinion. One person disagrees.

11) Did the new casemate rules remove loopholes and gray areas within the casemate rules?

Twenty people agree. Seven people had no opinion. Two people disagree.

12) The recent reverse speed rules are an improvement.

Nine people strongly agree. Nine people had no opinion. Six people agree. One person disagrees. Comments:

“No technology should be limited regardless...turning motors, super reverse, batteries, tracking, ranging...let people be creative and invent solutions and use those solutions to their advantage.”

“The reverse rules were an improvement but there are still loop holes for the clever/dedicated.”

13) Battery capacity should be limited within ships based on a maximum wattage per class.

Ten people strongly disagree.

Eight people disagree. Four people had no opinion. Three people agree. Two people strongly agree. Comments:

“The question is confusing. The question says limit the max wattage. Are you trying to limit the pump wattage?

Propulsion motor wattage remains the same [regardless] of battery type. I agree capacity (amp-hours) should be limited. Managing battery capacity should return to the game.”

14) The newer more expensive LiFe PO4 batteries give ships a major advantage.

Eleven people disagree. Five people strongly agree. Five people strongly disagree.

Three people agree. Three people had no opinion.

Comments:

“Strongly Agree. If this wasn’t the case, people wouldn’t be using these expensive batteries.”

15) The downside to expensive LiFe PO4 batteries? Fifteen people see no

2011 Survey Results

-Continued-

downside. Three people think it hinders rookies, discourages Nats attendance and are expensive. Three people had no opinion. Two people think they are extremely expensive. One person thinks they hinder rookies from being able to compete. Six people commented:

“All of the above. If this continues, Nats attendance will continue to wane.”

“Life Batteries are massively expensive, despite recent lowering of costs for chargers. While they can provide a more “flat” discharge curve, the same result can be achieved with much cheaper and more durable NiMH batteries. Most larger ships (class 4+) have enough weight to carry more than sufficient capacity. Life batteries are not a pre-requisite for competitiveness. I’m not going to stop anyone from buying them if they want to, but I am also not going to [recommend] anyone buy them because they feel they will be uncompetitive if they don’t.”

“LiFe PO4 batteries. I feel that the very high initial cost would discourage the rookies. It would seem that it is required to compete. I myself looked at

them for my ship and decided against them because of high cost. Many of [captains] feel that is the only way to go. But, as a battler that has a limited budget, feel that it is discouraging. While trying to involve new [captains] in our hobby, we may need to start thinking about limiting the cost of involvement.”

“Regarding LiFe PO4 batteries, I do not believe they are any more expensive than NiMH (AH for AH). When I revised my ship for LiFe, I bought 4 each 40 AH batteries and 2 chargers. That cost me \$250 total. If I had built 8 each 10 AH NiMH packs, and the necessary additional chargers, I would have spent more than that, and no one complains that NiMH is an advantage.”

“Batteries – while LiFe PO4 batteries are a huge advantage over SLA due to discharge curves, I do not believe that they prove a similar advantage over NiMH cells. The advantage over NiMH is significantly reduced complexity. Over time, I think the Li cells will prove to be cost effective when compared to SLA due to increased cycle life. They provide significant weight/power benefit to

smaller ships which have traditionally been limited by SLA technologies. It is only in the very large class 6+ ships that the wattage carried has the potential for excess. This is where a limitation to the watt/hr of say a 42ah 6v SLA (the largest SLA that I have seen carried in a class 6 ship although I have seen 50+ AH carried in class 8 vessels) would be helpful. We are currently seeing a pump amperage escalation well past the 15-20amp pumps that have been the normal battleship pump for the past decade. So while I do not see the LiFe PO4 as bad for the hobby (they are most beneficial for the smaller ships), there is a point where we need to restrict the wattage available simply to prevent the need for 40-50ah pumps in all ships.

16) Ships are currently a lot uglier since there is so much more damage being inflicted. Ten people agree. Six people had no opinion. Five people disagree. Four people strongly agree. Four people strongly disagree.

“I agree. When ships are damaged as much as ours are now, of course they start looking more hideous.”

17) If the MWC combines

2011 Survey Results

-Continued-

with the IRCWCC, how should it be done?

Fifteen people would like the IRCWCC to dissolve and join the MWC. Five people think both organizations should dissolve and form a new club. Three people would not like the organizations to combine. Two people had no opinion. One person would like the MWC to dissolve and join the IRCWCC. Comments:

“If you take the time and [actually] ask people about this you will find all the new guys are for it. There are only a few battlers that have been around in both clubs long enough to care.”

“Neither of the first two options is realistic. One would have to take over the other in a gradual process. To do that more people need to attend events in the “other” club. (IRCWCC or MWCI) It is a two way stree.”

“The IRCWCC is a small regional group but I suspect a few people within that organization will not want to combine. They adopt our rule changes a year later anyway.”

18) Do you use the on-line system to sign-up for events and does it affect your

attending a battle?

Fourteen people use it and it doesn't affect their decision.

Seven people use it and it does affect their decision. Four people had no opinion. Two people do not use it and it does not affect their decision. Two people did not know there is an on-line sign-up system.

“On-line sign up encourages me to sign up for events early.”

19) Do you enjoy TF144 and write articles for it?

Sixteen people enjoy it but do not write articles. Eleven people enjoy it and write articles. One person thinks the TF144 would be gotten rid of to save money. One person had no opinion.

20) Additional comments:

“Overall, I would consider that self-sealing hulls and people showing up with knowingly defective ships at Nats is a detriment to the organization.

In fact, you could say that appearing at Nats with a ship like that is unsportsmanlike.”

“I was really disappointed to see how hard some veteran ships were at Nats. Ships that had been to Nats multiple times.”

“Additional issue – Welwood hullskins... While I have no issue with the use of welwood to attach a normal silkspar &

dope hullskin to a hull (it is far superior than CA in both application and removal), the use of welwood (or other rubber cement products) in the application of the silkspar to the balsa and in patching is leading to ships with [effectively] selfsealing hulls. There were a handful of ships at NATS this year using this method (3 sheets of silkspar on the inside applied with 60% welwood / 40% MEK, 2 sheets on the outside applied similarly, patches applied using the same 60/40 solution) where gunfire was extremely ineffective. This type of situation (not even going into the health risks of MEK exposure) if allowed to continue will escalate both power in attempts to cause sufficient damage to the rubberized sheeting for sinks to occur as well as increasingly selfsealing hulls to mitigate the increased damage.

“Hulls are becoming selfsealing.”

“Thrashnbash gets old. This is supposed to be the MWC, now WWF.”



By Leaps and Bounds

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40' off shore, the transmitter module beeped once. After a few seconds it beeped once again and a few more times within the next 30 seconds. Each time it beeped, the sailboat would lose control briefly before reconnecting to the transmitter. I finally traced the problem to my fat fingers bumping the module to transmitter cable which wasn't plugged fully into the trainer cord socket. After pushing the plug all the way in the transmitter worked fine.

I proceeded to sail the boat around the pond for the next hour and a half with the other sail boats. The transmitter to receiver link stayed solid and fully in control. Deciding to test the range limits, I sent the boat across the pond towards the other shore about 1000' away. I lost control intermittently around the 800' mark but managed to get it turned around and heading back. It regained control almost as soon as it turned. 800' range is more than enough for most ponds and battles.

The real test came during a 13 sailboat two-day regatta. Even with a multitude of 2.4GHz transmitters operating in close proximity, the AnyLink system worked flawlessly.

My impression of the AnyLink conversion is favorable. It was easy to set up within minutes. The link between transmitter and module stayed solid and in control. The 800' range is more than enough for battling on most ponds. The system plays well with other 2.4GHz systems such as the Futaba FFAST and Spektrum. The cost of the module and receiver is an affordable \$50 to \$55, well below the cost of a new 2.4GHz radio system. And finally, it will put those old 72/75MHz systems to use.



<http://www3.towerhobbies.com/cgi-bin/wti0001p?&I=LXBPKF&P=M>

TASK FORCE 144

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“Take her down!” - Commander Howard Walter Gilmore