

The BaMaKey TP-II twin paddle

At the UK National Hamfest in Newark this year I spotted a paddle in use (but not for sale) by the guys on the Kenwood stand. I was interested enough to find out who the maker was, and ended up buying one.



The paddle is manufactured by 'BaMaTech', a German precision engineering company owned by Markus Baseler (DL6YYM).

It is unusual in having being specifically designed to be used /P or /A as well as in the shack.

The paddle mechanism is available anodised in black or red. Unlike a certain Italian SDR rig the price is the same for either colour ☺

The totally enclosed, lightweight, mechanism is held to the heavy base by magnets that hold on to the bolt heads inside the rubber feet. The base is kept in place on your desk by its own mass bearing down on four 'gel' feet.



The base is only available with a high quality chrome finish. You can buy the paddle without having to buy the metal base.

The 4 holes in the metal base, into which the rubber feet of the paddle mechanism locate, are spaced slightly differently for the front & back. This means the paddle mechanism only fits on the base one way round. It does mention this in the instructions, but I found out the hard way ☺

On the underside of the metal base I noticed a small grub screw that does not appear to do anything. I assumed it was provided in case you lose one of those in the paddle mechanism when making tension/spacing adjustments.

They are very tiny, so if one dropped onto the carpet you'd have your work cut out trying to find it, and if you were out /P at the time you probably never would. Markus recently told me it is only there to fill the hole by which the base is hung from when it is having its chrome coating applied, so having a spare grub screw is just a case of serendipity.

The instructions suggest that when making tension/spacing adjustments you do not completely loosen the locking grub screws as you get more precise adjustments if there is some friction. But be careful not to over-tighten the grub screws afterwards.



Adjustment of spacing and tension is done via two large bolt heads on each side of the paddle mechanism, which are locked in position by small grub screws on the underside.

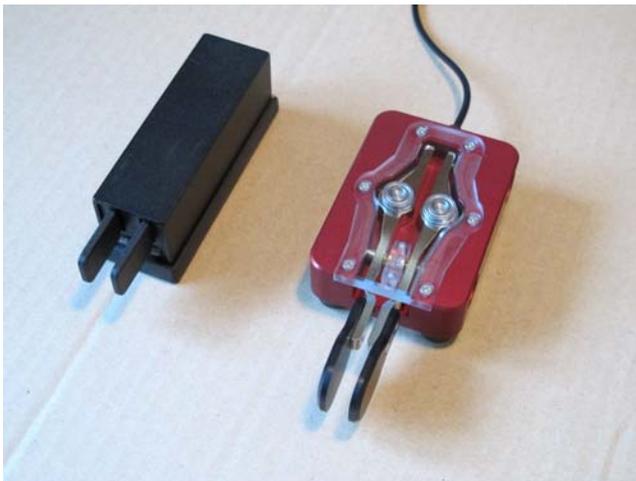
The spacing and tension for each lever can be set independently. The grub screws need a small Allen key (hex) to turn them, and one is provided with the paddle.

The 'tension' provided by the magnets in the BaMaTech paddle can be adjusted between 5g and 45g on each side. As supplied the tension is set to 12g and I have not felt the need to alter it.

The requirements of a paddle for portable or /A operation are very different from paddles being used at the home QTH though. I imagine that many SOTA types use the 'Palm Mini' paddle, and it would be entirely possible to use the magnets in its base on a heavy piece of metal at home.

But having had a Palm Mini paddle for some time it is not something I could put up with for lengthy CW sessions at home. The Palm Mini is very well made, but the extremely tiny size of its mechanism imposes limitations on the engineering.

The mechanism is a similar length to the Palm Mini, but being twice the width means the levers can be much more substantial and that makes it suitable for main station use as well as in the field.



Unlike the Palm Mini there are no magnets in the bottom of the lightweight mechanism.

You would need to hold it with one hand while keying with the other when out /P but you'd need to do that with his Palm Mini when operating /P if there was no convenient metal surface.



In terms of size (when sitting on its metal base) the BaMaKey sits between that of a Palm Mini and a conventional portable for use as a main station key.

In terms of price this paddle is similar to the low end of the Begali magnetic range.

German engineering has a reputation for quality and the BaMaKey does not disappoint.

I have been using the paddle for some time now and it has become my paddle of choice at home. It is the first paddle I have owned that uses magnets instead of springs for the return force and I think magnets are definitely a better technique if you prefer a light touch and close spacing.

I have not had to make any corrections to the adjustment since I've had the unit. People who prefer a wider gap & lots of tension might not notice any difference from springs.

I use the paddle for my regular two-hour long CW Sunday morning sked, and for the Monday morning RAOTA CW net. The paddle feels entirely comfortable to use even over long periods of operation.

The 'tension' provided by the magnets can be adjusted from 5g to 45g. As supplied the tension is set to 12g and I haven't felt any need to change it.

When it arrived I noticed the rubber feet were not a tight fit in the holes in the base. Even with magnets pulling down, the mechanism moved very slightly sideways on the base during use.

This is actually mentioned in the instructions. By gently tightening the bolts inside the rubber feet you squash them, and they spread sideways until they are a perfect fit in the holes.

The paddle mechanism is supplied with a 1.4metre long connecting lead, terminated with a 3.5mm stereo plug. For use in the field I would prefer a detachable lead.

Markus said he might consider the change in the future, but there isn't enough room for even a 2.5mm jack socket within the base of the existing mechanism.

At the time of writing there were no agents outside Europe so you need to buy direct from Germany, using Paypal or internet banking, but I found the process very easy.

If your country is not listed, email Markus to get shipping costs to your location. You will find him very helpful and his English is good. The website is in German, but you

can use 'Google-translate' to understand it. Click on the 'SHOP' link & you'll find the amateur-related items in there.

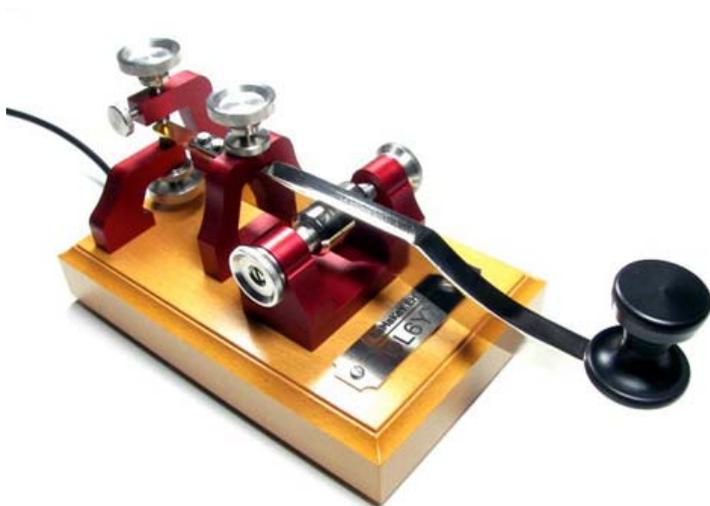
If you are looking for paddle that is suitable for use at your main station and also when /A or /P then I think the BaMaTech TP-II is worth considering.

Incidentally....

For those of you who prefer straight keys BamaTech make a really nice looking one of those too.

Like the paddle it uses magnets instead of springs to generate the return force.

I'm hoping to be able to test drive one & compare it to the Junker key I've had since the 1970s.



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