

Balls Launch Report

In September, NOTRA members Steve Eves and Mark Coburn made the long trek to Gerlach, NV and the Black Rock Desert, the home of the annual Balls launch. It was Mark's first time. Every rocketeer needs to go to Balls at least once to see just how outrageous high-power rocketry can be.



Steve and Mark pose with Steve's "Starchaser" a 3" minimum diameter rocket being flown with Steve's first Research moon-burning motor which simmed out to a L400. It took the rocket to an altitude of 12,300 feet and landed for a perfect recovery.

Mark (right) with his "Arcas" which he flew with a 75mm Research 2-grain K660 Red motor to 4760 feet.



Steve Eves poses with his rocket named "Yellow Sunrise," a 4" diameter rocket which he flew with a 75mm Research M1850 motor. It had a beautiful flight to 13,000 feet. The rocket gods smiled on the launch this year as many said it was the best Balls launch, weather-wise they had ever seen. Clear skies, no rain, no wind, no dust storms and temps in the low 80's.



At right is Mark Coburn's LOC/Precision "Magnum" which he did a first flight with a 75mm Research M2240 using NASSA K2 Fast propellant which took it to an altitude of 8550 feet.



Steve recovers his “Yellow Sunrise” rocket from the playa. One of the great things about launching at Black Rock is that you can watch your rocket fly and then drive your car to recover it! No trees, in fact, no vegetation at all! Those mountains in the background look close by, but in fact they are more than 10 miles away! On hot days it is not recommended that you attempt to recover your rocket by walking to it.



Mark recovers his “Arcas” after the second successful flight on a Research 75mm L1175 using NASSA K2 Fast propellant. The rocket flew to 9500 feet and was recovered undamaged. About the only way to lose your rocket at Balls is if the recovery system fails and it lawn darts into the playa. They can go pretty deep depending on impact velocity and many are unrecoverable.

Steve's last flight was with his 6" all-fiberglass "Frankenstein" rocket, which he flew with a Research 13,000 n-s Blue motor. It was only 400 feet short of 20,000 feet in altitude and landed 50 yards from his truck.



Steve (right) poses with Mark's LOC/Precision "Magnum" ready for its second flight on a Research 75mm M3200 motor using NASSA K2 Fast again. It hit 9,800 feet and had a perfect recovery.