RC-50 Loop Station

Using Single Mode

RC50WS01

About the RC-50 Workshop Booklets

The BOSS RC-50 Loop Station sets a new standard for performance loopers. With 49 minutes of mono recording time (or 24 minutes in stereo), onboard storage for up to 297 phrases, and massive realtime control, the RC-50 is a powerful realtime performance tool. While looping is its primary function, it can be used in many other ways as well: as a sampler, a backing track player, a practice aid, and more.

Each RC-50 Workshop booklet focuses on a specific topic to help you get the most out of your RC-50 and spark some ideas for its creative use. RC-50 Workshop booklets are intended as companions to the *RC-50 Owner's Manual*.

About This Booklet

Each RC-50 patch contains three phrases. The patch's Play mode setting—Single or Multi—determines how you can use these phrases in your performances. Both Play modes have their advantages, with each being best-suited for different looping scenarios.

This booklet focuses on using Single mode, including pedal operations, important patch settings, and some suggested performance applications. To learn about Multi mode, see the RC-50 Workshop booklet *Using Multi Mode*.

Understanding the Symbols in This Booklet

Throughout this booklet, you'll come across information that deserves special attention—that's the reason it's labeled with one of the following symbols.

A note is something that adds information about the topic at hand.

A tip offers suggestions for using the feature being discussed.

Warnings contain important information that can help you avoid possible damage to your equipment, your data, or yourself.

Terminology

- On the RC-50, a "phrase" is a container for audio data.
- An RC-50 patch contains three phrases, and each can loop indefinitely or be triggered sampler-style using the "One Shot" function.
- When a phrase is empty, capturing audio into it is called "recording."
- While recording a phrase, pressing the REC/PLAY/OVERDUB pedal stops recording and starts the phrase playing back from the beginning. This action determines the phrase's length, and we call it "closing the phrase." Alternately, a phrase can be closed by pressing the STOP pedal during phrase recording.
- When a phrase already contains audio and you wish to layer more—or replace some—you "overdub" audio into the phrase.

A Note About Patch Settings

An RC-50 patch contains many settings that determine how its phrases play, and among them is the Play mode selection. Single mode—one of the two Play modes—is the subject of this booklet.

While discussing Single mode, we'll describe some other patch settings that are important to using the mode effectively. Focusing on them in particular doesn't mean that other patch settings are irrelevant while working with Single mode—we're only highlighting them here because they so fundamentally affect the use of the mode. Additionally, the suggestions made here are just basic recommendations, and we encourage you to experiment and find the settings that best suit the way you like to work.

To learn more about patches, see the RC-50 Workshop booklet *Patches* and Chapter 4 in the *RC-50 Owner's Manual*.
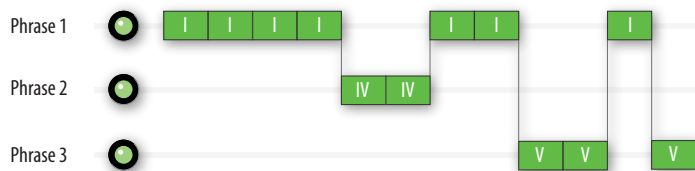
About Single Mode

In Single mode, the patch's three phrases are all available for recording, playback, and overdubbing. However, only one can play at a time. This mode is best for situations where you want to record and play phrases in a sequential order.

For example, Single mode's ideally suited for building song sections one at a time. Just use a separate phrase for each song section, as shown in the following illustration:

Phrase 1	⬤	Verse		Verse	
Phrase 2	⬤		Chorus		Chorus	
Phrase 3	⬤					Ending
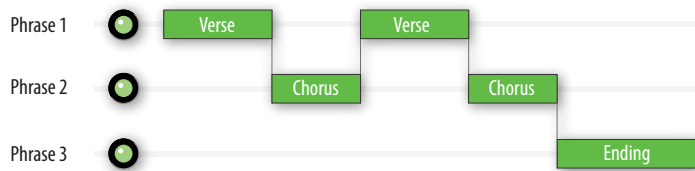
✎ When shipped from the factory, the RC-50 contains an example of this Single mode use in Patch 2.

Single mode also works great for storing the individual chords of a chord progression. As shown next, you could use each phrase for one chord of a standard "I-IV-V" blues progression:

Phrase 1	⬤	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
Phrase 2	⬤			IV	IV		
Phrase 3	⬤					V	V	V

✎ When shipped from the factory, the RC-50 contains examples of this Single mode use in Patches 1 and 3.

Selecting Single Mode

To choose Single as the Play mode, press the PLAY MODE button so its indicator isn't lit.
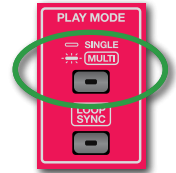
✎ The Play mode can't be changed during recording, overdubbing, or playback.

Important Single Mode Patch Settings

Here are a few patch settings you'll want to think about before using Single mode.

Phrase Change Mode

When the RC-50's in Single mode, the Phrase Change mode affects what happens when a new phrase is selected while the current phrase is playing or being overdubbed. When it's set to:

- *IMMEDIATE*—the newly selected phrase begins playing or recording immediately.
- *LOOP END*—the newly selected phrase begins playback or recording when the end of the current phrase is reached.

✎ The Phrase Change mode also affects how patches load during phrase playback. This behavior is discussed in the RC-50 Workshop booklet *Patches*.

Which mode you choose depends on the needs of a particular performance. For example, LOOP END works well when using phrases for song sections, while IMMEDIATE is often better when using phrases for individual chords. Of course, you should experiment to find out which Phrase Change mode works best for you.

To set the Phrase Change mode:

1   Press NAME/PATCH twice.

2   Use the PARAMETER buttons to display the Patch:PhraseChng screen.

```
Patch:PhraseChng
          LOOP END
```

3   Turn the PATCH/VALUE dial to choose the desired setting: IMMEDIATE or LOOP END.

4   Press EXIT when you're done.

Loop/One Shot Playback

A phrase's One Shot setting determines how it plays. When it's set to:

• *LOOP*—the phrase loops continuously.

• *ONE SHOT*—the phrase plays once and then stops. While a One Shot phrase is playing, you can:

   • *restart it from its beginning*—by pressing REC/PLAY/OVERDUB.

   • *make it loop continuously*—by pressing and holding REC/PLAY/OVERDUB.

When a phrase is set for One Shot playback, its front-panel ONE SHOT indicator lights.

Audio can't be overdubbed in a phrase when it's set to ONE SHOT.

Most of the time, you'll probably want to set your phrases to loop continuously. However, the One Shot setting is excellent when you want to play one-off sounds such as a single vocal line, a sound effect, etc.

In Single mode, when the Phrase Change mode is set to IMMEDIATE and One Shot is set to LOOP, a playing phrase can be restarted from its beginning by pressing its PHRASE SELECT pedal. This gives you a re-triggering behavior similar to One Shot without having to commit to that setting.

To set a phrase for loop or One Shot playback:

1   Press the PHRASE EDIT button for the desired phrase: PHRASE 1, 2, or 3.

2   Use the PARAMETER buttons to display the selected phrase's One Shot screen.

3   Turn the PATCH/VALUE dial to choose the desired setting (ONE SHOT or LOOP).

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Phrase2:One Shot
             LOOP
```

In this example we've selected Phrase 2's One Shot screen.

4   To adjust the One Shot setting for another phrase, select the phrase by pressing its PHRASE EDIT button, and then use the procedure described in Step 3.

5   Press EXIT when you're done.

The Guide

The RC-50's built-in guide provides a rhythmic backing you can play along with while recording phrases. It offers numerous patterns in a variety of time signatures, so it's easy to find a backing that works with most any musical style.

The guide can be used in either Single or Multi mode. When it's on, Loop Quantize is always enabled during phrase recording. When a phrase is closed, Loop Quantize automatically adjusts the phrase's ending so it matches the tempo—and therefore the measure length—of the guide sound. This ensures that all phrases play in sync relative to the guide.

To learn more, see the RC-50 Workshop booklet *The Guide and Loop Quantize*.

Tempo Sync

The RC-50 has a feature called Tempo Sync that has a great impact on how phrases are recorded and played back.
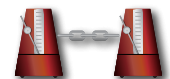
Tempo Sync's primary function is to make a previously recorded phrase play at the current patch tempo. This is accomplished using a time-shifting algorithm that changes the phrase's speed without changing its pitch.

A secondary use for Tempo Sync is to allow the recording of a specific phrase to set the patch tempo. (This functionality is available in both Play modes, but it's best used in Multi mode.)

Each phrase has its own Tempo Sync switch, so you can decide whether you want to use it—or not—on a per-phrase basis.

We won't get into the nitty-gritty of Tempo Sync and Loop Quantize here; they're covered in detail in the RC-50 Workshop booklets *Tempos and Tempo Sync* and *The Guide and Loop Quantize*, as well as the *RC-50 Owner's Manual*. However, here are some general guidelines for setting the phrases' Tempo Sync switches while working in Single mode:

- *When recording and playing phrases with the guide off*—it's usually best to turn all phrases' Tempo Sync switches off.
- *When recording and playing phrases with the guide on*—make sure all phrases' Tempo Sync switches are set the same (on or off).

To adjust Tempo Sync settings:

1 With phrase playback stopped, press the PHRASE EDIT button for the desired phrase: PHRASE 1, 2, or 3.

2 Use the PARAMETER buttons to display the selected phrase's Tempo Sync screen.

In this example we've selected Phrase 3's Tempo Sync screen.

3 Turn the PATCH/VALUE dial to choose the desired setting: ON or OFF.

4 To adjust the Tempo Sync setting for another phrase, select the phrase by pressing its PHRASE EDIT button, and then use the procedure described in Step 3.
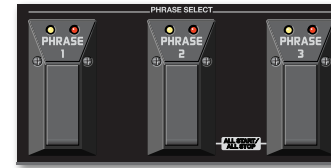
5 Press EXIT when you're done.

Pedal Operations in Single Mode

Selecting a Phrase

To select a phrase for recording, playback, or overdubbing, press its PHRASE SELECT pedal: PHRASE 1, 2, or 3. A pedal's left indicator lights solid when its the currently selected phrase. (For the sake of brevity, we'll refer to a selected phrase as the "current phrase.")

Audio can only be recorded/overdubbed into one phrase at a time.

A PHRASE SELECT pedal's right indicator lights solid or flashes in different colors to inform you about the phrase's current condition.

When a phrase is selected while playback is stopped, the right indicator:

- *flashes red*—if the phrase is empty.
- *flashes green*—if the phrase contains audio.

The RC-50's Play screen shows the audio content status of all three phrases at once. To learn more about the Play screen, see the RC-50 Workshop booklet *Patches* and Page 18 in the *RC-50 Owner's Manual*.

A new phrase can be selected while recording, playback, or overdubbing is taking place in the current phrase. This allows you to create and play phrases one-after-another without stopping the RC-50.

When you select a phrase in this fashion, one of two things will happen: it immediately becomes the current phrase and begins recording or playing, or it's temporarily put on "standby" until the current phrase plays to its ending. The behavior that occurs is determined by the Phrase Change mode, which we discussed earlier.

While a phrase is on standby, both indicators on its PHRASE SELECT pedal flash. The right indicator flashes in a specific color to tell you what will happen next:

- *When the right indicator flashes red*—recording will begin when the current phrase ends.
- *When the right indicator flashes green*—playback will begin when the current phrase ends.

When recording or playback begins, the left indicator on the new phrase's PHRASE SELECT pedal lights solid, showing that it's now the current phrase.

Using the REC/PLAY/OVERDUB Pedal

Press the REC/PLAY/OVERDUB pedal to record, play, or overdub audio in the current phrase. All of these actions can be initiated in real time without stopping the phrase.

The sequence of actions that occur each time the pedal is pressed is determined by the current phrase's One Shot setting and its audio content.

The REC/PLAY/OVERDUB pedal's indicator—as well as the right indicator on the PHRASE SELECT pedals—light solid in different colors to show the current operation:


Red=Recording   Green=Playback   Orange=Overdubbing

When a Phrase is Set for Loop Playback

When a phrase's One Shot setting is LOOP, the phrase loops continuously once audio's been recorded in it and playback is started. While the phrase is looping, overdubbing can be started and stopped at any time by pressing REC/PLAY/OVERDUB.

If the current phrase is empty and stopped, the following actions occur each time REC/PLAY/OVERDUB is pressed:

Phrase → | Record | Play | Overdub | Play |
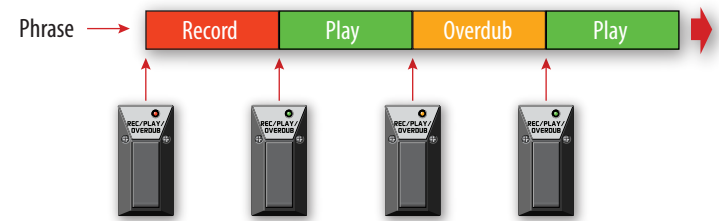
If desired, the RC-50 can be set so that overdubbing begins—instead of playback—when the phrase is closed. We'll show you how coming up.

If the current phrase contains audio and is stopped, the following actions occur each time REC/PLAY/OVERDUB is pressed:

Phrase → | Play | Overdub | Play | Overdub |
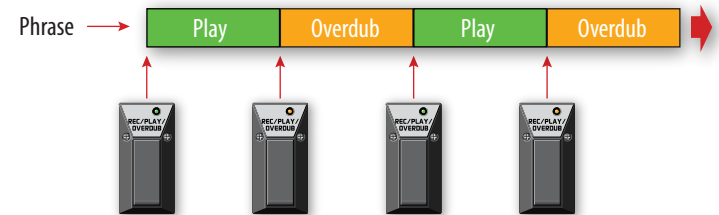
Overdubbing Immediately After Recording

Normally, a phrase begins playing back when it's closed with the REC/PLAY/OVERDUB pedal. In some circumstances, you may prefer to have overdubbing begin instead of playback. Here's how:

1 Press SYSTEM/USB.
2 Use the PARAMETER buttons to display the Sys:REC Pdl Act screen.

Sys:REC Pdl Act
          REC→PLAY

3 Turn the PATCH/VALUE dial to change the setting from REC→PLAY to REC→OVERDUB.
4 Press EXIT when you're done.

Now, if the current phrase is empty and stopped, the following actions occur with each press of the REC/PLAY/OVERDUB pedal:
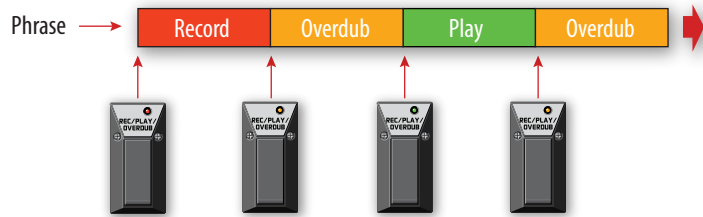
📌 This setting is system-wide, affecting all patches. If you want to return to the normal REC/PLAY/OVERDUB pedal behavior, use the above procedure to set the Sys:REC Pdl Act setting back to REC→PLAY.

📌 The current OVERDUB MODE setting determines how audio is overdubbed in a phrase. To learn more about the Overdub modes, see the RC-50 Workshop booklet *Patches* and Page 47 in the *RC-50 Owner's Manual*.

When a Phrase is Set for One Shot Playback

When a phrase is set to One Shot, its playback behavior is like that of a traditional phrase sampler.

Once audio's been recorded in a One Shot phrase and playback is started, it plays to its ending and then stops. While the phrase is playing, it can be re-started from its beginning at any time. This allows you to perform the popular "stuttering audio" effects that DJs accomplish with phrase samplers. The only downside is that you give up the ability to overdub audio in the phrase while it's set to One Shot.

💡 If you have a One Shot phrase that you'd like to overdub audio into, you can temporarily set it for looped playback, overdub the desired audio, and then set it back to One Shot. The caveat is that you can't do this in real time—you must stop the phrase each time the One Shot setting is changed.

If the current phrase is empty and stopped, the first REC/PLAY/OVERDUB press starts recording, while each subsequent press starts the phrase playing from its beginning:
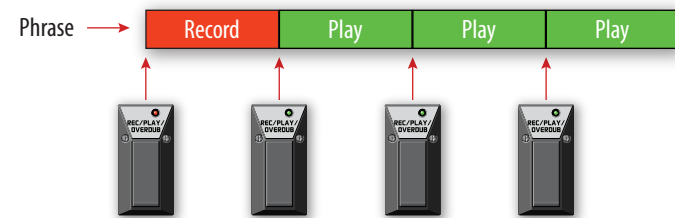
If the current phrase contains audio and it's stopped, each press of REC/PLAY/OVERDUB starts the phrase playing from its beginning:
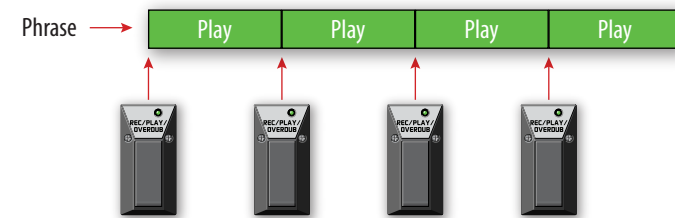
If desired, you can make a One Shot phrase loop continuously by pressing and holding the REC/PLAY/OVERDUB pedal.

Stopping Playback

To stop the current phrase, press the STOP pedal.

Depending on the phrase's Stop mode setting, it may not stop immediately—it could play to its ending and then stop, or slowly fade out instead. If this is the case, you can immediately stop playback by pressing STOP a second time.

📌 To learn how to set the phrases' Start and Stop modes, see the RC-50 Workshop booklet *Patches* and Chapter 4 in the *RC-50 Owner's Manual*.

Undo and Redo

If you wish, you can undo the last recording or overdub by pressing the UNDO/REDO pedal.

After performing an undo, the pedal's indicator lights. When it's lit, you can press the pedal again to cancel—or "redo"—the undo.

If you continue to have commitment issues, you can toggle between the previous undo/redo action with each press of the UNDO/REDO pedal.

Undo/redo isn't just for phrase recording perfection—you can use it to bring audio content in and out in real time, giving you an additional "virtual phrase" to use during your looping performances.

The UNDO/REDO pedal—and the TEMPO pedal as well—can be reassigned to control alternate patch functions (see Pages 70-71 in the *RC-50 Owner's Manual*). If the UNDO/REDO pedal has been reassigned, it can't be used to undo and redo phrase recordings.

Clearing a Phrase

If you wish to clear the contents of the current phrase while it's playing or stopped, press and hold the STOP pedal for at least two seconds. When the contents of the phrase are cleared, the right indicator on its PHRASE SELECT pedal flashes red.

As a reminder, this pedal function is provided on a label next to the STOP pedal.

A phrase can't be cleared during recording or overdubbing.

The End

We hope you've found this workshop helpful. Keep an eye out for other RC-50 Workshop booklets, available for downloading at *www.BOSSUS.com* and *www.RolandUS.com*.

For the latest RC-50 updates and support tools, visit the BOSS U.S. Web site at *www.BOSSUS.com*. If you need personal assistance, call our amazing Product Support team at 323-890-3743.