

“SUPER SUB”

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“One of the most affordable subwoofers around, that in true Paradigm fashion doesn’t skimp in delivering the goods.”

by Joel Kopping

Soccer fans should remember a gent by the name of Roger Milla who, if memory serves me correctly, played for Cameroon during the World Cup a couple of years ago.

Being a tad older than his teammates, he only ever came on as a substitute and as soon as his aging feet touched the turf, he made a whole lot of difference to his team, inspiring them to greater heights.

There are – believe it or not – a number of similarities between soccer and audio. A sound system, as with a soccer team, will only play to its maximum ability when all components, be they called woofers or tweeters, strikers or defenders, play as a cohesive unit.

It doesn’t really help the team if it has one superstar who never gets the ball because the midfield players forget how to pass, or in the case of a system, if the crossover design is flawed.

Sometimes though, when a sub is added – a specialist player that has the ability to



take some pressure off some of the allrounders – the team starts to play better. This is particularly true when midfield players or in sonic terms, midrange drivers, are relieved of the extra pressure of having to play deep into the opponent’s territory.

Paradigm’s PDR-10 subwoofer is just that, a real subwoofer that can play low enough to be called a sub rather than a low frequency effects speaker, and when correctly set up, can make a sound system sound more dynamic.

It looks, as do most subwoofers, like a box that sits on the floor. Although this particular box has a 10-inch speaker, covered by a black grille at its front, a port and control panel incorporating an amplifier heat sink at its rear, and plastic feet on its bottom.

Paradigm call the PDR-10 a single driver, bass reflex, high velocity low turbulence resistive port, built-in amplifier design. The amplifier is rated at 100 watts RMS/300 watts

max, frequency response at down to 27 Hz at -3dB in a typical room, and features auto on/standby and soft clipping. The built-in active crossover adjusts from 50 to 150 Hz, accepts low level inputs via a single RCA connector, with line level sensitivity listed at 75 mV. Additionally, the sub features a high level input and the actual sub driver uses a carbon fibre reinforced composite cone.

Readers should remember (and what I'm about to say might upset a few dealers), that one of the best ways to upgrade a pair of stereo speakers, is to add a sub instead of going out to buy a new pair of speakers.

In most cases, particularly for those people who don't have space for big floorstanding speakers, you'll get more low end response by adding one decent sub than by upgrading from full range speakers with 5-1/4-inch drivers to 6 or even 8-inch drivers. Even if the sub you choose doesn't have a high level input, it is often as easy as using the Record Out from a conventional pre-amp, into the sub for signal.

Setting the Paradigm up in our review room was far easier than it usually is. The reason being that I had been using its little brother, a PDR-8, in a review system and simply had to disconnect the smaller sub and put the bigger one in its place. I obviously had to reset levels, as the PDR-10 had a lower input sensitivity, a slightly more powerful amp and was more efficient than the 8. This however didn't take long. Crossover frequency was set on the AN receiver.

Differences between the PDR-8 and 10 were minimal, with the most obvious difference being that the overall system volume could be cranked up quite a bit more as the larger sub kept pace with the satellite speakers. Low frequency extension was also improved.

For a sub in the more affordable end of the market, the PDR-10 offered good pace and integration, although I did find it a little slower than the PDR-8. That was, until I used an old tweak on the sub. I blocked the port with some foam, and this made the sub sound cleaner, leaner

and more musical. The down side of this was a slight reduction in the boom that makes movies sound exciting.

Overall, the PDR-10 is a really good value for money speaker; it offers good control and output, is simple to set up and can be used to make a pair of small shelf mounted speakers sound like a pair of more expensive floorstanding models.

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VERDICT

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