Ignoring MIDI Time Code Chase Dropouts
New Version 1.3/1.4 Feature

Here's a new feature that was added to the latest Mackie HDR/MDR software that didn't make it into the release notes, and I neglected to include it in The Last Mackie Hard Disk Recorder Manual.

Background
The Mackie hard disk recorders don't really chase time code. When operating in the Time Code Chase mode, the transport quickly locates to the incoming time code position and starts running. It doesn't adjust its speed if the speed of the time code changes, however (unless you're using an external word clock that's resolved to the time code rate) it continually checks for the presence of time code. If the time code is interrupted, the recorder will stop. It will start running again when the time code is restored, but if you were recording when the dropout occurred, when the deck restarts, it will restart in PLAY.

To mitigate this annoyance, Mackie added a feature that allows the recorder to tolerate a dropout when chasing MIDI time code. This doesn't apply when using SMPTE time code. If you're having problems due to SMPTE time code dropouts, consider using a SMPTE-MTC converter and setting the HDR/MDR to chase MIDI time code rather than SMPTE time code. Not a great solution, true, but a solution none the less.

This feature works for both the HDR and MDR, but it doesn't appear on the front panel LCD menu, so it's only "visible" on the HDR. The factory default is 500 ms so with the latest version of the software installed, you already have this feature set to a reasonable value. If you want to check or modify it, here's how:

Setting the MTC Freewheel Time (HDR)
Open the Setup window and select MIDI SETUP.

Note the box at the top of the window labeled "Stop MTC Chase After." This is the length of time that the recorder will continue running after MTC drops out or becomes erroneous.

Adjust the setting by left-clicking in the box and dragging the mouse up or down. You can't make a direct numerical entry in this box, you have to drag your way there.
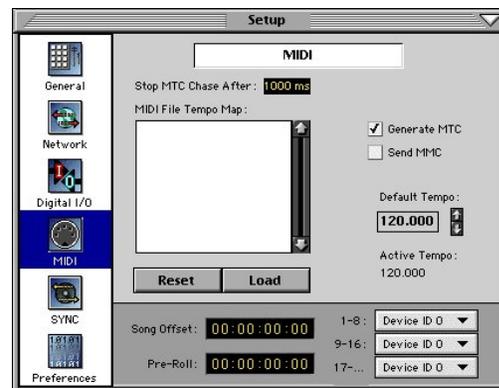
The default is 500 ms. Setting this value to Inf (infinity) means that once the recorder has located the time position and started running, it will continue running even it MTC stops entirely.

Setting the MTC Freewheel Time (MDR)

If you have an MDR, you can set this value by editing the GLOBALS.TXT file. See Appendix F in The Last Mackie Hard Disk Recorder Manual for the file listing. You can use FTP to copy this file to a computer, edit it with a text editor, and then transfer the edited version back to the recorder. Just to be safe, keep a copy of the unedited version.

About ¾ of the way down in the file listing, you'll see the line:

locator,StopMTCChase:25

The number in this line sets the allowable MTC dropout time, but it doesn't directly correlate to real time. Here's a short list of values that you may find useful:

0 = 250 ms
25 = 500 ms (default setting)
75 = 1000 ms
124 = 1490 ms (largest setting less than infinity)
125 = Infinity (ignores loss of time code completely)