

Tuesday, February 20, 2007

Arrived at the Denver Dark Sky Site east of Deer Trail, CO about 3:45 PM, had the scope setup by 4:15 PM. There are high thin clouds that appear to be dispersing. The winds are calm.


At 6:09 PM, its 31 degrees, clear overhead, light clouds to the NE and a cloud band in the west. Split Rigel - nice. Venus almost a full disk. 3 day old moon was nice. Still getting dark.

At 6:21 PM, saw 2 bright satellites go from NNW to SSE thru Gemini. Looked like they were on the same path, flying in tandem, yet 3 fingers width apart. Watched them dim into the SE.


M41 6:45 PM 19mm – Nice. Fills all FOV. 50+ bright Blue-white stars of approx 4 magnitudes. Loose. Circular. Many stars form lines with 3-5 stars in lines near the top edge of the cluster.

M50 6:58 PM 19mm - Nice. Compact. Many stars of several magnitudes makeup this OC. Several bright blue-white stars seen and them dimmer sets of stars. Sort of boxy. Many brighter stars from chains. An orange star on top, center of OC.


NGC 2316 6:58 PM 19mm - Near M50. Dim, round patch of glowing light. Small. Easy to see with DV. Triangle of 3 faint stars above point at it and appears to be a faint star on glow at bottom right edge. Nice. Glow seems to be a bit brighter right in center of nebulosity.



NGC 2525 7:20 PM 19mm - Very dim. Seen with DV. Uniformly lit, fat oval glow with 2 dim field stars on top and bottom of glow. It's a larger oval, not tiny.



NGC 2283 7:27 PM 19mm - Very dim. Hard to see round glow. Glow is uniformly lit. 4 field stars bound the glow with 2 brighter ones on the 10 and 4 o'clock side and then much dimmer ones at 12 and 6 o'clock.



7:34 PM 24 degrees. Saw M42. Awesome. Saw 5th star of trapezium. Saturn awesome. Frost forming. Clouds moving in from west.

NGC 1348 9:25 PM 19mm - 8 very dim stars seen. 1 brighter, 3 a bit dimmer and 4 more very faint. There is an arrow of stars just above it and just out of the FOV of 19mm EP that points to it. The arrow is made up of 5 brighter stars, 3 on rhs and 2 on lhs with no apex star of arrow.

Sky is fair. Light wind from south. 28 degrees now.

NGC 1491 9:44 PM 19mm - Very dim, round glow with faint field star almost centered on glow. About the limit of what the sky will show now. UHC filter shows the nebulosity nicely. Easy to see with DV. Brighter with UHC and round. Nebulosity appears to be a bit brighter on upper right side of the star, that is, the field star is to the lower left of center of the glow.

NGC 1624 10:01 PM 19mm - 7-8 very faint stars seen on a round, dim glow of nebulosity. UHC filter shows round nebulosity better. Best seen with AV. Very small in 19mm FOV yet stands out. 4-5 of the stars seen are in a tight grouping, with rest up right side. Didn't perceive the "L" shape.

Looked at M51 twice tonight, last time just before breaking down the scope. Almost could see the spiral detail of the arms.

The sky tonight was iffy. For a time before 7:30 PM, with a bit of a moon shining, the sky was real good. Then from 7:30 to 9:30 PM, the sky was overcast with high clouds that seemed to come from the west and allowed the brighter stars to shine through. I was about to pack up at 9:30 PM when the sky opened up a bit more and I observed a few more objects. But the seeing and transparency was fair, not all that good. Then when I was ready to leave at 11:30 PM, from overhead to the east, it was beautiful. Stars at end of evening were fat circles and not pinpoints anymore.