

Variable Star of the Year RZ Cassiopeiae

Although not the brightest eclipsing binary in the sky, RZ Cas is one of the easiest to observe visually. Its range is 6.18-7.72V and the minima last for only 4.8 hours. Its period is 1d.19525 but this has varied by a few seconds over the last century. In the past, visual observers have done useful work in tracking the period changes in eclipsing binaries, but now most of the brighter ones such as RZ Cas are adequately monitored photoelectrically. However for newcomers to variable star observing, RZ Cas still offers the possibility of practice at estimating magnitudes, seeing clear variations and getting feedback in the form of a light curve, all within a single night! Start observing 2-4 hours before the predicted time of minimum if possible, and make magnitude estimates every 15 minutes until 2-4 hours after minimum. Do not plot the light curve until you have finished observing for the night to avoid subconscious influences on your estimates.

Times of primary minimum for RZ Cas can be found in the *BAA Handbook*, the BAAVSS Webpages (<http://www.britastro.org.vss/dpredict.html>) and the *BAAVSS Circular*.