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RS Oph - disappearance of optical flickering after the outburst

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CCD photometry of the recurrent nova RS Oph has been performed with the 1.2m telescope at OHP. On 2006 June 9.02 UT, we estimate $B=12.72$, $V=11.36$, $R=10.21$ with an accuracy ± 0.02 in all bands. The brightness of the object is already low and B magnitude is dropped below the pre-outburst level.

For a 5 hours long observation run, we obtained 143 points in Cousins B, with mean $B=12.728 \pm 0.014$ mag. During our run, only a trend of fading from $B=12.71 \pm 0.01$ (on 2006 June 08.863) to $B=12.74 \pm 0.01$ (on June 09.083 UT) was visible.

We have not detected flickering on minute-to-hour time scale with amplitude greater than 0.03 mag. The full amplitude of variability was < 0.053 mag (including the observation errors of ± 0.010). The standard deviation for the 143 points was only 0.014 mag. To the best of our knowledge, it is the first time when no rapid photometric variability in B band is observed in this object. Usually in B band, RS Oph exhibits variability on minute-to-hour time scale with amplitude 0.2-0.3 mag, and standard deviation 0.050-0.090 mag (Gromadzki et al. 2006, Aca 56, 97; and references therein).

The absence of flickering indicates that the accretion disk around the white dwarf, is destroyed after the 2006 outburst. For our understanding of the disk-flickering connection in the symbiotic binaries, it will be important to follow the B band and to detect when and how the flickering will re-appear (i.e. will it appear first on minute or on hour time scale).

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