



LATEST SAC NEWS

February

2009

Well the silly season is finally over and it seems we are all back to working hard. It's good to see the guys and girls have been out in full swing preparing for the first contest. Valentina has been back and has been putting some of the boys through their paces. Aircraft are already changing hands, interest rates are down and there seems to be a good "Aerobatic Buzz" about! The Rand based Extra's have been serviced, the MX in Cape Town has already worn out its first set of tyres, Charlie has upgraded from his Yak-52 and Annie finally got to fly her Zlin! Please make sure that all your ratings and fees are up to date with Aeroclub for the new Season!

Gauteng Regional Champs

WHAT A WAY TO START THE 2009 SEASON!!!!!! 26 PARTICIPANTS – surely a record for a regional contest!

I think that the bar has been raised yet again! A Huge thanks from the entire SAC to the contest director Elton Bondi for organizing a truly awesome day of flying. It seems a pity that results have to be given as we all had a superb days flying and it would only be fair to announce Aerobatics as the winner on the day. The Vereeniging troops certainly made us feel welcome. Morning coffee, a scrumptious lunch and a great carnival atmosphere. Well done! The standard of flying was very good and it was GR8 to see some new faces. Welcome to Mike and Donovan Waite and to Paul Lessing who all flew in their first contests. To Paul- Respect Dude. All the results are posted on the website www.aerobatics.co.za click on results and then results from the Acro scoring system.

Features of the event:

ATMOSPHERE: There was a great carnival atmosphere and many of the families came along and enjoyed the day. A fair crowd also spent the day enjoying the aerobatics.

COMARADERIE: It always amazes me how Pilots involved in a competitive sport run around and help fellow competitors. From walking sequences to landing aeroplanes. It is such a wonderful thing to be part of. Thanks guys and gals you, warm my heart.

COMMITMENT: The commitment of all our members astounds me. The judges spent the entire day in the sun, there were Pilots that were unable to fly for many reasons yet they all made it out and pitched in to help. Yvonne ran around all day trying to sort out all our poor planning and fix technical glitches with the computer and all the pilots made plans to get the flights in despite the weather issues. "Well done Team".

MODEL AIRCRAFT: Now these things were impressive. 40% Scale aerobatic models! Boy can these chaps fly! This turned out to be a great addition to the program and certainly kept the crowds entertained during our weather breaks. Well done to the Henley Aero Modelers.

FAMILY "FUEDS":

Ludwig- Trish and Helm debating zero's on the judging line!

Beamish- Will Larry finally beat Jason? Answer: No

Billing- Looks like the 15 year old got his "flying" and "smiling" skills from Dad. A Champion in the making for sure.

Du Plooy- Finally Pierre teaches Pa a lesson in aerobatics!

Hopkins- Derek is sick of his son's abuse at the controls of the Extra so resorted to the Cessna 210!

Waite- Both Donovan and Dad Mike flew their first competitions. The youngster flew the best first sequence of the day but the "Old Man" remembered the second. Go figure!

Hensman- Well Bugs may not have got to fly but 7 year old Will certainly did. A little elevator and that swing would have gone all the way round. No Fear!

GRASS CUTTING: Ever seen a 3 million rand lawnmower? Well it is built in a factory in Germany, this one painted silver and blue, gets grumpy, prefers to cut inverted and scares judges. Very entertaining!

THE GOUWS MAN: When I asked Pierre why he was flying Sportsman and not Classic he said that if he did well we would all be impressed and if not we would all say hey that was great considering, Win-Win! Well we were all very impressed. Thanks Pierre, great flying and a true Aviator!

Special Thanks

ELTON BONDI: Contest Director extraordinaire. Well done!

JUDGES & ASSISTANTS: John, Q, Trish, Helm, Laz, Jenny, Annie, Bugs, Grant, Quinn and Alex. Thanks for your efforts out in the sun.

YVONNE: Pilots are worse than sheep. Thank you for herding!

MARK SHEP: Despite no plane you did a sterling job getting the boys airborne.

STAN THE MAN: Thanx for keeping us entertained behind the microphone.

MARK X2: To Mark Sampson and Hensman for your efforts in getting up from the Cape! Sorry about the plane, would have been GR8 to have the MX there!

ALL THE PILOTS: for making this a safe and very enjoyable day!

Comments

FROM THE CONTEST DIRECTOR:

During yesterday's competition, I had opportunity to chat with Bob Hay a previous SA National Champion and highly regarded aerobatics pilot who flew at the most senior levels in South Africa and internationally from the 1960's through to the 1990's; and based on what he saw yesterday he was both astonished and greatly impressed by the vibrancy of aerobatics in South Africa.

Indeed, it could be argued that there are few places in the world that can boast a starting field of 26 entrants for a 'little' regional aerobatics competition; spanning Extras through to Harvards and everything in between.

Thank-you to all for attending, and especially for everyone's great efforts in enabling us to get through the second round of flights in looming weather conditions. There were several uncontrollable factors which conspired to threaten our ability to finish the competition successfully; the two main ones being –low cloud which led to the prolonged break in the middle of the day; and the scoring software which suddenly froze necessitating that the officials had to revert to the old and highly time consuming manual system. Yet despite these hindrances all the pilots certainly came though, the standards of flying and airmanship remained high throughout and we did successfully complete the contest.

We did however learn a few valuable lessons which will hopefully assist in future. Paramount amongst these is the necessity for efficient pre-registration. Of the entire field, only 5 entrants had pre-registered and up until Saturday given a few last minute cancellations we thought that we were down to about 16 or so competitors. When 26 arrived on the day we were delighted and overwhelmed. I invite any pilot to prepare that volume of paperwork in just 40minutes, it's not easy. SAC committee briefly discussed a means of incentivizing pre-registration (or rather penalizing 'on-the-day' registration) which I am sure Nigel will communicate soon.

A few special thanks are due –

- To Yvonne for maintaining a cool temperament and keeping things going under extreme pressure
- To Mark Shepard for a great job in running ramp / flight operations (at one stage he had one aircraft landing, one in the box, and three in the hold with no confusion or risk to safety, we look forward to seeing him on the competitors list again soon.
- To Stan for excellent commentary, we also look forward to see him compete again soon.
- To Kyle, Alan, Barrie, Annie and Nigel who helped in many ways both during and before the competition.
- To the Judges for tolerating many last minute and often unannounced changes to the flight sequence, requiring them to speedily shuffle through mounds of paperwork.
- And to the competing pilots for your great sportsmanship and airmanship. It was particularly hearting to witness the camaraderie that permeated this competition. As evidenced by things such as rivals who could be seen helping each other out with encouragement and advice, pilots sharing aircraft (especially the Beamish / Hopkins clan, who were as usual very generous with their aircraft); it was particularly heartening to see Paul Lessing compete - a brilliant show of character. On reflection I think that it is this spirit (and not just great flying) that keeps the sport strong in South Africa.

There is no question that competition aerobatics can be an intense sport. This is the first time that I have been involved in "other side" of the flight line (e.g. the organization, admin and judging), believe me the background aspects of competitions are equally if not more intense than the flying. I certainly learnt much and have a new respect for the administration / management side of our sport. There is much that we can do as pilots to help, assisting on the judging line when not flying, or pre-registering are just two examples; and generally just being a bit patient at times is a good start.

Look forward to seeing everyone at the next one. Warm regards, and again thank-you,

Elton.

FROM VEREENIGING:

Hi Elton

Congratulations, you managed the competition very well...never saw you stressing....

I have received compliments from highly-valued spectators on the number of participants that took part in the competition. Gavin and his team are also praised for their contribution and the outstanding displays they delivered. The day was just too short and a lot of good aviation was lost -.. The cherry on top was for sure the display by Nigel - it was absolutely amazing! It was a great pleasure to assist you, please let me know how we may support you in future events.

Please send regards to all participants and thank them for supporting Vereeniging.

Warm regards

Sarie

FROM THE AERO MODELERS:

Hi Elton, Sarie & Nigel,

Many thanks for the invite to participate in your competition on Sunday. Not only did we meet and make new friends we learnt a lot about what we should be doing in trying to mimic the full size aircraft. We had a large group of our association come out from all over Gauteng to enjoy the event and I'm sure there will be ongoing support for future events. Should you require us to participate again it will be a pleasure.

Best regards,

Gavin Walton.

FROM THE JUDGING LINE

By Annie Boon

OMG! Ordered chaos is the only way I could describe it. I decided that my punishment for not being able to compete myself, would be to assist on the judging line. In effect what I did to myself would be akin to sending a pick-pocket to death row, as opposed to fining him!!! Never again! It's one thing to assist occasionally between flights, it's another thing to spend the WHOLE day there! I have a new found respect for our judges!!!

Well the day started late as only 5 pilots had pre-registered, causing a delay in paperwork and the line-up order. But finally we were under way as the competitors slowly climbed into the box, then suddenly there were so many planes in the sky, nobody knew who was coming into the box next. Perhaps we can get some more radios sponsored or donated?

The day was very full and very busy, with no food or drinks for what seemed like forever. The judges sit out in the hot sun, all day, waiting for some kind soul to deliver anything. On Sunday, water finally arrived, but nothing else. Then poor old Elton had to run around trying to organize cool drinks and finally food for the judges: a hot lunch served on a plate with crockery and cutlery, etc. How does one sit, while trying to watch the skies, and often write, while trying to eat a plate of food balanced on their lap, with a knife and fork. Hee hee, you should have seen it! I dare say, these judges are super human!

And then nature calls! With the nearest toilet at the distant clubhouse, and planes entering the box one after another...picture the scene! Which brings my next question: How do the judges pee? The guys could possibly go in the bush (if there happens to be any), but not the women. I tried to persuade them, but learnt a few horror stories of bugs and bees, etc!!!

Assistance is also so often needed, and easy to remedy. Pilots who are not flying should offer to scribe, etc, even if only for 15 minutes at a time. Every little bit helps. And then there is another thing they have to contend with...the noise factor. Do you know how many well meaning spectators/pilots stand behind the judges, chatting away and cracking jokes, and talking on their cell phones in raised voices? How the judges concentrate is beyond me! After the experience I had on Sunday, I have come to believe that all judges secretly attend some type of boot camp, where they are hardened to the point of complete numbness. **You** try and focus all day long on little speckles in the sky, while your tummy grumbles, there is noise all around you, and your bladder is screaming at you! Eish!

And then there is the mirth and camaraderie that comes from years of working together on the judging line. They know each other well, and each others' sore points! Comments fly around and digs are made at each other. Amongst all the seriousness, there is also tons of laughter, not only at each others' expense, but occasionally at some poor pilot who has really stuffed up! At one point I had tears in my eyes from all the laughter, and my stomach ached (or was that my bladder!). Bottom line is this...I **WILL** be competing at the next comp, as I couldn't go through this hell again! Ha ha...that'll learn me! Cured for life!!!! So from me, on behalf of all the pilots, a big thank you to the judges for all their hard work. It is greatly appreciated.

Annie

FROM A PILOTS VIEW

By Alan Geldenhuys:

With great excitement all the competing pilots arrived at Vereeniging airport to be pleasantly surprised by the excellent facilities laid out for the day. With scores of food vendors and a large amount of public spectators already camped out next to the flight line combined with a great turnout of at least 26 competing pilots the stage was set for a regional competition of the highest standard.

After a very professional briefing conducted by the contest director Elton Bondi, pilots were dispatched to their crafts to start preparing for the tight schedule of flights ahead. Hats off to Elton to have invited and included the lads from the Model Aeroplane Club to compete against us as well as show us what they are capable of with their scale models. All I can say is wow! These pilots fly a flawless sequence and their mastery of those fast moving radio controlled A/C is unbelievable! Luckily they did not insist on cashing in on the bet Elton made with them that if they beat us they can have a go at flying our aircraft. I am sure there would have been a few of us nervous pilots around looking on to these RT pilots strapping themselves into our aeries.

The flight line was well coordinated and Shep made sure there were no delays in the box during the flights. Running commentary during the competition kept everyone informed and helped the public understand the dimensions of the flights being executed.

With a brief pause early afternoon due to low cloud flying was resumed and the second sequence was competed against a backdrop of the most spectacular Highveld thunderstorm with lightning flashing over Johannesburg while Nigel finished his unlimited sequence.

I am sure all will join me in congratulation Elton on a fantastic effort, you have set the standard high for the remaining competitions of the year. Seeing the camaraderie and friendships that exist between the competing pilots makes all of us a very fortunate bunch and will help grow this great sport of ours – Aerobatics!

By Mark Sampson

Gauteng Regional's 2009

Dear Nigel,

A very big thank you for such an amazing day, this has to have been one of the best regional's competitions yet. What an amazing turn out, 26 competitors and a brilliant interest from the public and media. Arriving in a two ship Harvard formation flown by Larry and Pierre kicked the day off to a great start. A special treat to see a Harvard competing, and I wonder if this was the first time? I was not expecting to compete after our MX2 sadly went u/s on the way up from Cape Town, so thank you so much for

allowing me to use your Extra. Very valuable experience and lessons learnt in my early days of competing!

The sport continues to grow with great enthusiasm thanks to your huge efforts and the committee! By drawing in the RV's and classic planes the numbers are growing, and by making the competitions more interesting for the public, we are at last getting the crowds and media. Hopefully the sponsorships will follow. The large scale model aircraft were another great new addition to the day, and an excellent alternative when the cloud base drops. I personally would like to see more interest from the SAAF pilots, but perhaps the competition is just too tough for them! Hint Hint!

Every competition should end in a solo display, and who better than yourself. What a brilliant display that was! Hearing the comments from the public I think it made their day, good job Nige!

Lastly, a big thank you to all the organizers, Elton, Yvonne, Mark, Stan, John and his judges for making such a great day possible.
See you all at Nationals, I can't wait!

Regards,

Mark Sampson

First Stage Nationals

By now you would have had me hounding you for a response to your participation. The entry forms will be out soon so please get these back to us ASAP. Shirts need to be ordered and I am pleased to announce that Barrie Eeles and Shad plumbing will sponsor shirts for the 2 Nationals this year. We have also received a generous sponsorship of 2000 liters of Avgas from the local Shell vendor and flying School operator Francois Viljoen and we are in current talks with Shell S.A for a further sponsorship. Any additional assistance with sponsorships would be greatly appreciated. This is going to be one not to miss!

Paperwork

A pilot's worst nightmare, the job isn't done till the paperwork's done etc, etc, etc. Well there is a solution to all our problems! It is fantastic to have such a large number of entries but this in itself creates administrative issues. Yvonne is going to complete a database of everyone's paperwork. So please scan and mail or fax copies of all your documents: Pilots License, Medical, Aerobatic Rating, Parachute packing slip, Aircraft C of A or Authority to fly. She will then only need to obtain updates of renewals and not have to sift through all the docs at the contest. Also to save time at registration if we have all your documents, you will then only need to bring your sequence paperwork. 8 copies of form A,B and C of your free sequence. Please arrange them as 8 piles of ABC. If all of

this is confusing please phone a friend! Your free sequence needs to be sent to Quintin pak02496@pixie.co.za . If Q already has your free then simply send him a message saying same Free as last time. It is also a learning curve for the organizers having such a huge field. In future the judges will be given a file with blank form A's for all the known sequences. This will allow us to start flying immediately after the briefing and the Free paperwork can be prepared during this time. On that subject we are looking for volunteers, possibly some of the wives to lend a hand at the contests with some admin and scoring. We ask all of this so that we can speed things up on contest day in order to finish early and allow Pilots to get home, and for weather contingencies. To incentivize all of us, 'cos I am also guilty, the entry fee will be doubled or bring a bottle of Johnny Blue for Q if you don't have a good excuse for not pre-registering!

Don't forget to check out the Website: www.aerobatics.co.za

"Happy and Safe Flying!"

Nigel
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