

AMA NATS

2019 NATIONAL AEROMODELING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Muncie IN • Blytheville AR • Springerville AZ

CONTROL LINE COMBAT: TEAM TRIALS

July 15



By Phil Cartier

The first day of the 2019 F2D Team Trials had plenty of interesting incidents. A total of 28 fliers registered and flew. It's not a record number, but a good turnout, nonetheless.

About half of the matches had loads of very intense, close-quarters flying. Actually, there really were not many cuts. The pilots were so good at evading them that it was hard to run up a big score.

The most interesting part happened at the end of the second round. There were three matches that had to be reflown. All three reflays ended in time. Pilots got out another four or five new planes and flew round two. That ended in three tied matches and more broken equipment. Finally, after two rounds, all three matches had clear cut wins.

Day 2 started midway through round 5, which quickly cut the field to 15. Only two pilots, Bill Maywald and Chuck Rudner, still had just one loss. After a short on pilots but longer on time, round 6 reduced the fliers to 10. The pace of the matches slowed further due to the number of midairs. Pilots were digging deep into their cache of planes.

Round 8 had all of the pilots for the team (6) in the 8 fliers. The first match got the pilots the first yellow warning cards of the contest. Radik Magzianov and Dave Fisher got into some arm wrestling and were warned for rough flying.

We needed to sort out the team. The last round only had to turn out three pilots directly for the team and the three alternates—who usually flip coins to determine the first, second, and third alternate.





CONTROL LINE COMBAT

July 17



Austin Minor and Richard Stubblefield mix it up in a big way in the finals match.

By Phil Cartier

The closing day for the F2D Nats went pretty slick right up to the end. Flying started promptly at 8:04 a.m. It ended just before 1 p.m., before the rain came.

The early weather was very nice—about 80° with mild breezes. It got windier before noon, and the last 45 minutes or so were flown with gusts up to 25 mph. Most of the fliers handled it pretty well. The crashes were mainly dead-stick, or when the wind mixed the planes up and the lines tangled.

The final results were thanks to the pilots and workers. Both contributed to a well-run contest and got some real applause. A lot of the matches were real demonstrations of top piloting, with lots of chasing going back and forth.

2019 NATS F2D

- 1st Richard Stubblefield
- 2nd Austin Minor
- 3rd AndyMinor
- 4th Cary Minor
- 5th Greg Wornell
- 6th Rylan Rich

This was probably the smoothest-running event so far. Dave Edwards ran things very clearly and orderly, the judges were always ready, and the pilots and pit crews cooperated to get the matches up quickly.

The flying was excellent, except for those minor little things such as midairs and ground excursions. All the fliers did well, but kudos to Richard Stubblefield (1st). This is the first time that he has won the event. He's been recovering from surgery on both knees, with lots of complications and setbacks. This time you could see him getting his flying back up to snuff, match by match.



Rylan Ritch(top) tries for a cut on Jeff Rein.



Back row (L-R): Greg Wornell, 5th; Cary Minor, 4th; Andy Minor, 3rd; Anna Minor, Best Junior; Dave Edwards, Contest Director; Austin Minor, 2nd; Arlene. Mears; Matt Brow, judge; Jan Mears, tech. inspector. Front row: Roy Glenn, circle marshal and judge; Chris Gay, circle marshal and judge; Pete Athans, flier and judge.



Jeff Rein against Rylan Ritch.



Cary Minor launches for Andy Minor.

CONTROL LINE COMBAT

July 18



Bob Mears and Jeff Rein meet in the losers' round. Jeff had to restart from a bad engine run. He got a cut here, but later on, Bob got a kill.

By Phil Cartier

F2D Fast is a favorite with some F2 fliers. Any F2D plane from 2010 to present is allowed. They all have the same technical specs. The rules are AMA Fast Combat rules otherwise.

The bugs have been worked out. The planes fly the same as F2D. The shorter line length makes up for the slower speeds. Flying seems just as fast as AMA combat, but the line pull is a lot less. The planes have to be trimmed a little better because they don't pull 15 or more pounds.

The entry size this year was 20 fliers. It seems that word has been trickling out that F2D Fast is a fun event. It requires instant reflexes, lots of practice, and excellent pit work—giving everybody something worthwhile to do without the 20-some pages of F2D rules.

The contest used the simplified match with a qualifying round. The winners went to the main bracket. The losers got their own round to qualify. The winners also went to the single-elimination main bracket. The CD, Dave Edwards took a lot of care that flights between people from the same part of the country were kept apart as much as possible—also separating any rematches between opponents in the first round and the losers' round. It takes a little brain power but completely does away with any possibility of favoritism.

The flying was pretty clean and intense. Kills, midairs, and the occasional unscheduled landing pretty much decided all of the matches. There were a few matches decided just by airtime when one pilot couldn't get started, broke a plane, or hit the ground too hard.



An early morning test flight.



Greg Machen and Don Jensen. In a tussle, Greg got a kill (black streamer), followed very shortly by Don taking the orange streamer. Both guys came from the California, where they meet up pretty regularly.



Judges and pilots.



Greg Machen and Ed Bryzsun tangle the lines while Greg's streamer floats down.

CONTROL LINE COMBAT

July 19



Winners of Speed Limit Combat.

By Phil Cartier

Speed Limit Combat keeps the speed below 75 mph. A total of 21 fliers turned out, including some who generally don't travel extensively except for the Nats. This year brought out a more-limited range of engines. The list included Fora 15, LA and FP, Fox 36, Nelson, LA 40, and probably one that I missed.

This year also brought a new rule for enforcing the speed limit. Instead of a speed without a streamer, it specifies a speed with the streamer: not less than 7.3 seconds. There are also guidelines for some procedures for timing, and how to determine whether or not to disqualify a pilot in a match.

The weather wasn't perfect. The temperature pretty quickly went into the 90s and humid to boot. But this time, the rain missed Combat, mostly. There was one brief shower and some lightning and thunder that delayed flying for half an hour or so. Plenty of water was on hand so nobody had any reason to get dehydrated.

There was lots of furious flying, but the speeds were not quite as fast. The number of midairs just made quieter bangs. A number of matches went "all the way" without a midair but still had close flying. There were not as many spectators as other contests, but those watching got a good, close look at the action.

Many thanks to the judges who put in a lot of effort: Roy Glenn, Chris Gay, Pete Athens, and Dave Edwards and Buddy.



Buddy, Pete Athan's dog, oversees all the judging.



Bob Mears and Ed Bryz.



Mike Evans watches Craig Campbell launch EdBryz's airplane.



Bob Mears runs into an Earthquake flown by Ed Bryz late in the contest.



Ed Bryz's Earthquake heads for the ground after a collision with Bob Mears.

CONTROL LINE COMBAT

July 20



(L-R, back): Roy Glenn, judge; Russ Willcox, first; Dave Edwards, CD; (front) Sam Londke, Best Junior; Mike Willcox, second; Jeff Rein, third; and Neil Simpson, fourth.

By Phil Cartier

1/2A Combat is a bit like swatting mosquitoes. The planes are small (proportional to Fast Combat aircraft), have very tight turning, and are difficult to see. It's hard on spectators, but great fun for the pilots. The planes are scaled down and look like Fast Combat aircraft to the pilots. They just pull a lot less—a couple of pounds instead of 12 to 15 or more. The aircraft are cheaper too.

Eighteen fliers squared off for a double-elimination, first-round contest on July 19. A loss in the qualifying round puts a pilot into a catch-up round to get into the final, single-elimination match pyramid. Here's some first-round action:

Mike Evans and Russ Willcox had a good match with plenty of action. With a lot of maneuvering, they got into a line tangle and Russ went down. After a quick pit by Chuck Rudner, they got into a midair collision, putting Mike's aircraft on the ground. He got the match after losing the inboard wingtip. Ron Colombo and Ed Bryzs got Mike up first.

For a bit of a backstory, Mike Evans and Russ Willcox met in the first round, which Mike won. Russ won his match against Don Jensen in the flyoff bracket. They both won their next three matches to get into the first and second place flyoff. There was lots of good flying and it's a rare comeback story in CL Combat.



Sam Londke and Pete Athans during Half A first round.

Half A first match between Brian Stas and Jeff Rein.



Greg Machen and Chuck Rudner tussle in the first elimination round. Chuck went on to win.



Mike Evans and Russ Willcox flying a first round.

CONTROL LINE COMBAT

July 21



(Back) Dave Edwards, CD; (middle row) Ron Colombo, 7th; Chuck Rudner, 5th; Brian Stas, 6th; Mike Evans, 1st; Jeff Rein, 2nd; Ed Bryzs, 3rd; Neil Simpson, 4th; (front) Roy Glenn, judge.

By Phil Cartier

Fast Combat has been growing slowly at the Nats the last few years. This year saw 10 fliers competing. Most of the action has moved to F2D, mainly from the chance at getting on a US World Cup team and the ease of buying and shipping top-performing models at a fairly reasonable cost.

The Fast Combat rules are simple, and virtually all of the discrepancies and complexity have been written out. Basically, it is fly fast, cut the string (kill), and win. That happens pretty often. If the pilots and planes are evenly matched, there might be two or three cuts, followed by a kill or a midair collision. It's rare that the judges need any discussion or have to consult the rulebook, as in F2D.

The match for first and second places was a classic match between Mike Evans and Jeff Rein. Mike got a clean start. Jeff had to flip some. They got separated and the judge signaled Combat. They did roughly two Figure Eights. On the backside of the second one, Mike got lined up, turned behind Jeff, and got a clean kill.

In the third and fourth match, Ed Bryzs and Neil Simpson squared up. It was a bit of an up and down match. After the launch, Ed got a cut. Neil tried to get behind him, but his plane slowed upwind and the shutoff tripped, bringing him down. Ed's plane quit early with a short tank. They both got up again with Ed winning by the cut.

During the final bracket of the first match, Neil Simpson fought to keep his plane under control while Ron Colombo tried to untangle the lines. Neil ended up going down too. They both got back up, with Neil winning on airtime.



Mike Evans takes first from Jeff Rein.



Ron Colombo versus Neil Simpson in the final bracket.



Neil Simpson and Ed Bryzs battle for third.