

INSIDE:



July 26, 2010

Sunday- Saturday
RC Sailplane

NATS NEWS

Daily coverage of the 2010 National Aeromodeling Championships



Gregory Smith shows off a beautiful example of the popular Challenger Nostalgia Class sailplane.

Academy of Model Aeronautics
2010 National Aeromodeling Championships

Nats

Muncie Indiana • Johnson City Tennessee

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RC SAILPLANE

Photos by Gordon Buckland

NOSTALGIA

First day of Glider Camp is always one to look forward to and 2010 threatened to be memorable because of forecast very windy conditions. With the LSF Nostalgia rules allowing only sailplanes kitted or published prior to 1980, most of the ships flown in this class are old wooden machines that no sane sailplane pilot would ever consider launching on today's winches if the wind was over 10 mph. Today we were to see gusts of 20 mph and above! At dawn there was scarcely a breath of wind, but it wasn't long before the forecasters' plans for us became a reality and the breeze was certainly over 5 and going on 10 by the time the pilots meeting was underway at 8:30 a.m.

Mike McGowan, Contest Director, made all the pilots very aware of the importance of safety as a priority on the Muncie site, and the landing zone and flying field boundaries were also established. The landing zone was to be an in-or-out affair with 50 points earned for being inside the 25-foot tape. (This sounds easy but with these old birds just getting back to the flying field was always a challenge, let alone hitting a tape.) Marc Gellart, Soaring Event Director, also assisted with the official announcements and cleared up some soaring etiquette questions like avoiding mid-air and having fun, responsibly, etc.

Round 1 was underway by 9 a.m. in warming conditions with the breeze at about 7-10 mph. Dave Beach, flying a Aquila Grande with zero ballast in the first flight group, showed that having a light ship helps in limited lift conditions. He was the only pilot to get close to the 7-minute max for the entire round with a great 5:33-minute time and a landing. A couple of the flight groups saw decent



The first sailplanes are launched in Round 1 of the 2010 RC Soaring Nats for Nostalgia class.



A gorgeous Challenger rests patiently in the grass for its turn to soar with the eagles.



Peter Schlitzkus was one of the vendors with specialized soaring equipment like these hands-free winch retrievers.



Your NatsNews reporter Gordon Buckland shows off his Aquila Grande.



Tom Broeski pedals his Sailaire up as his flight group prepare for their launches.

No sailplane was nicer than this bird displayed by Mark Groves prior to launch in the third round.



enough lift to turn but it wasn't sufficient for 7 minutes of flying time in most cases.

Round 2 saw more of the same, with pilots struggling to eek out 7 minutes in air that was moving fast and what lift was found broke up very quickly. Those who had the courage to go a long way downwind with the spotty lift very often found themselves struggling to guide these old girls back to the landing zone. Paul Weise was the only pilot to actually get the 7:00 time in Round 2 and the first for the contest with a 7:04 and 50.

Round 3 finally saw more consistent air, but the pilots certainly had to work it hard to make the time. Mike Lachowski, flying a Mirage, scored the first of many maxes with a 6:56 and 50 landing to take max points in his group. Also flying well were Peter Schlitzkus and James Vanderzyl, both scoring within 10 seconds of the max.

But a silent achiever by name of Mark Groves, flying a Sailair, was atop the leader board after 3 rounds topping his flight groups. Peter Schlitzkus was in second position with 3 solid flights and Mike Lachowski in third.

Marna announced a 45-minute lunch break and the contestants consumed some great Muncie dogs served up by a local dog master. CD Mike McGowan announced we would continue with



David Beach guides his Aquila Grande while Preston Heller works the clock for hm.

7:00-minute maxes and flight Group A was called up for Round 4. Both Johnny Berlin (Sailair) and Mike Lachowski made their times in the first group, riding pretty decent lift well downwind. Mike had added a lot of lead to his very lightly built Mirage to give it some legs and he showed a lot of skill, first getting up and then getting back to the landing zone in very blustery conditions.

Over lunch Johnny Berlin had also added some whopping lumps of lead to the cavernous belly of the Sailair.

But the air was fickle as the conditions deteriorated and the following flight group was won by Chuck Pinnell with a 3:30-minute flight. In fact not a single pilot got the 7:00 minutes during the remainder of the round. Don Harris flying a Gulf Coaster scored the 1000 points for his group D with a 2:56 minute flight.

Round 5 was definitely the Mike Lachowski round as he not only buried his group

with a perfect 7:00 and 50 but he buried the entire field in a memorable display of Nostalgia piloting in conditions where not one single pilot could get a max in the entire round. It wasn't that there was no lift; in fact,

there were numerous bubbles, but hanging in and gaining sufficient height to stay with the bubble took skills that only Mike seemed to possess in that round.

Going into Round 6, the leaderboard had changed somewhat with Mike firmly in command at the top with 4940 points. Second position was still Peter Schlitzkus with 4644 points, and Rob Robinson was in third with 4285. Don Harris started Round 6 well with a 7:07/50 max in the first flight group to nearly match Mike Lachowski's 6:59/50. Once again Peter Schlitzkus also buried his group (including myself) with a 6:43/50. The final 2 flight groups once again suffered miserable blustery conditions with 3-minute flights taking the max points.

By Round 7 the wind had picked up to

CD Mike McGowan points out the field boundaries and the landing zone during the pilots' meeting.



James Vanderzyl and his Challenger impressed many today with his solid consistent flying.



Chuck Pinnell with his beautifully prepared and quite enormous Aquila XL.

The landings were not easy today with the wind playing a big factor, but this Sailaire did make it back to the zone for 50 points.



better than 25 mph at times, with some gusts probably even more. In the sixth and this seventh round, a few fliers fell foul of the wind gods as their machines unfortunately clapped hands on launch. A lot of care had to be taken during the launch phase with light tapping on the

winches as powerful gusts of wind made these old ships groan.

With temps in the low 90s, decent warming of the air was creating enough lift for adventurous pilots who could take the tight bubbles downwind and get back. Some flight groups just missed the train



Marna Jeffreys organizes the transmitters as she manages the winch impound area.

though and Mike Lachowski showed us that he was human with a 2:41 in some rotten air. Other pilots saw a glimmer of hope and Tom Kallevang flew his AstroJeff to a great 6:01 to win his group. Don Harris, flying his Gulf



Today's top seven pilots were each rewarded with a beautifully engraved plaque.

Coaster, also showed his depth of experience with a great 7:21 where getting down seemed to be his problem. Ray Hayes also maxed with his Gulf Coaster as did Jack Iafret flying a Paragon.

At the conclusion of Round 7 with the wind speed constantly increasing, Mike McGowan announced that we would conclude the contest with a final 2:00-minute precision flight in Round 8. The logic was that less stress would be placed on airframes in this wind without the need for a high launch. It seemed like an easy task but many pilots made the mistake of taking it too easy on the pedal and couldn't even make 2:00 minutes in air that was so windy at times there was no way forward—just drift from the launch back to the landing zone and get her on the deck. Both Mike Lachowski and I hit the perfect 2:00

and I even managed 50 landing points to

brighten up what was a miserable soaring day for me and my Aquila Grande.

Many fliers were relieved the contest was over and I think I can say for sure that many of these Nostalgic ships had never been flown in such windy conditions. It was great to be going home with machines in one piece as some did not fair quite so well.

The presentation of awards for the top seven pilots was done by Mike and Marc under the shade of the big tent.

Don Harris flew well to take the seventh award even with one off field landing and a zero on his score sheet. James Vanderzyl also put in a strong performance with a sixth-place finish and he also had a zero on his sheet. Great flying.

In fifth place was Greg Smith with solid flying all day. Fourth was Ray Hayes who is always a contender with these ships that he loves. Peter Schlitzkus with a great performance never looked like missing a round all day until a 25-second effort in Round 8 dropped him to third.

Our runner up was no other than Mr. Jack Iafret as he moved up the ladder with strong finishing rounds.

That leaves our winner. US National Champion in Nostalgia class RC Sailplane is Mr. Mike Lachowski. A great display of skillful piloting by a guy who

Far left: Mike Lachowski puts his Mirage on the spot for another 50-point landing.

Left: Our deserving Nostalgia Champion for 2010 was Mike Lachowski who really demonstrated great flying skills in very difficult conditions.





Above: Bubba Glover prepares to launch his Oly 2 prior to Round 1.

Below: Mike McGowan CD prepares to send Bubba Glover up in Round 3.

Below: Tom Kallevang sends his AstroJeff on a sortie as the rest of his group line up at their winches.



Marc Gellart and Jack Lafret exchange a few pointers on their way to the launch area.

knows how to get a sailplane up and back.

Many thanks and appreciation for the sterling job done by all the volunteers without whom we could not have such a smoothly run contest. There are many others I have not mentioned here by name but thanks specifically to Larry Jeffreys (winch master), Marna Jeffreys (transmitter impound), John Lyndsay (official scorer), and Barbara Robinson (transmitter impound).

A memorable day no doubt was had and for me and probably many others. It was definitely a learning experience that we would not usually practice for. Tomorrow is the first day of RES with a forecast of wind again. See you there.

—Gordon Buckland

RES DAY 1

Overnight storms well and truly dampened the flying site for the first day of RES. The dawn on Sunday brought more rain and it looked like the start of RES would be delayed.

By the time 8:30 had rolled around for the scheduled pilots' meeting, the sky was clearing and the sun was occasionally peeking through holes in the heavy clouds as it rose.

The wind had swung through 150 degrees from Sunday's contest which required repositioning the 11 winches and landing zones. Even with the time taken to do this, the contest was underway with less than an hour lost. The pilots' meeting was presented to 60 pilots by Contest Director Glauco Lago and Soaring Event Director Marc Gellart. As always the greatest emphasis was placed on safety with attention given to the areas where flying (and landing) is okay and where it is not. The flight task was set at 10 minutes for the day with a standard 100-point tape for landings.

Round 1 saw very difficult air for the majority of the field with high humidity and what lift was available was extremely light. The wind was fairly steady across the flight launch line from the left at about 7 mph. Even in these conditions, some pilots got the time with barely a turn in buoyant air but most of the longer flights were accomplished by following the lift downwind as far as one could dare and then gradually returning to the landing zone in the best air available.

Mike Lachowski, flying an AVA Pro, scored in the 80s for his landing with a great max to lead with Josh Glaab second and Robert Robinson in third place.

The second round saw an improvement in the conditions with more warmth reaching the ground and significant lift cycles developing allowing for many more maxes than Round 1.

Once again Mike Lachowski scored the most points with a landing in the 90s to go with his max. The top three positions didn't change but hot on their heels were Jerry Robertson, Peter Goldsmith, John Diniz, Mike McGowan, and Craig Greening.

Lunch was announced by Marna and once again Muncie's famous HotDog trailer—Mark Carter's Hot Dogs—provided the goodies. Flying soon got underway again for Round 3 as the sun began to break out in earnest and the day really started to heat up.

Jim Thomas made some of us look pretty silly as he campaigned a 2M



The winch trolls are a most important part of a smoothly run contest and these guys' efforts are really appreciated.



Josh Glaab timing for his 11-year-old son, Josh Glaab Jr., on their way to the flightline.



Pilots line up to register for the event and give their transmitters to Marna and Barb in the Impound tent.



Sagitta 600 to score consecutive maxes and landings in Rounds 2 and 3 while many of us flying AVAs and other super RES ships couldn't make our time. It just proves again the point that it is not necessarily the tools that are needed to get the job done but more the person who uses them.

Highest score in Round 3 was posted by Ken Bates with a 1092. Yes, that's the Ken Bates of "Merlyn" fame. Ken designed a very large RES ship back in the 70s for the Cross Country tasks like the LSF 10km goal and return. It was great to meet him here at the Nats and get to hear how these wooden machines were developed in those early days. It's one of the best things about being at the Nats—meeting people and making new friends.

The lift available in Round 4 was probably the easiest we had all day with pretty well-defined thermals cycling through the launch area every 7 or 8 minutes and many pilots achieved their maxes with some boomers taking them very high downwind. Once again Mike Lachowski was the picture of consistency with another max scoring 1082 to be leading Josh Glaab by 84 points. Peter Goldsmith had also been flying very consistent rounds and had moved into third place just 15 points behind Josh.

A lot of cloud had built up during the afternoon which obscured the sun for extended intervals and getting a good read on the lift became a little more difficult as

Above: CD Glauco Lago explains the field boundaries to an attentive group at the pilots' meeting. Above left: Glauco did a sterling job of smoothly running the contest all day.



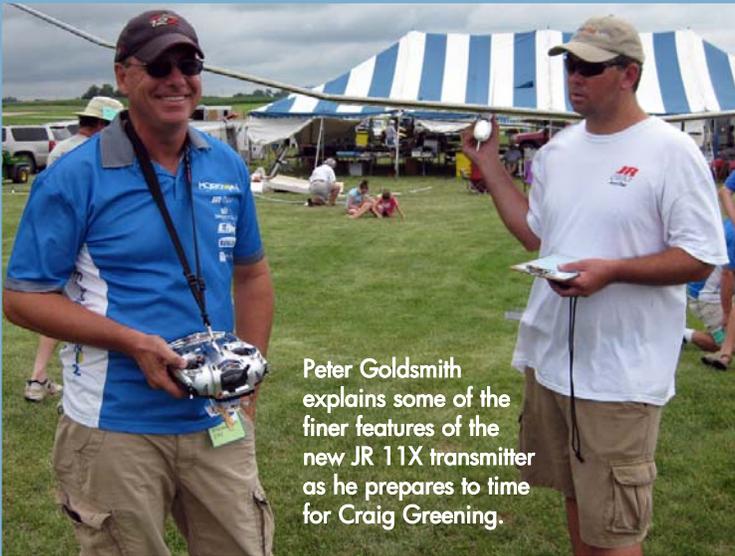
Ken Bates of Merlyn fame having a chin-wag before the contest begins.

the up cycles softened. The order at the top of the leader board remained unchanged after Round 5 with Josh closing the gap to Mike with a great 1092. Peter continued his consistent form to stay third and Craig Greening moved up to fourth with Mike McGowan right on his tail. These five had quite a gap on the rest of the field with nearly 400 points back to Robert Robinson. Craig Greening really demonstrated the depths of his talent by flying this class with basically no practice and scoring really well. But

for a few more accurate landings he could well have been even better than fourth.

The last round was called by Glauco Lago with the wind gradually decreasing and the lift cycles almost abating entirely. Some flight groups in Round 6 were won with times around 6 minutes as the ships gradually descended without finding an up ride. Muncie seems to produce many varied and strange flying conditions in a single day compared to what most of us fly in at our home fields.

Mike Lachowski once again held onto



Peter Goldsmith explains some of the finer features of the new JR 11X transmitter as he prepares to time for Craig Greening.

his lead with a good max to finish with 6437 points but Josh closed the gap to within 37 points with 6400. Peter Goldsmith also tightened it up at the top with a great closing round of 1078 to finish on 6327. Mike McGowan swapped places with Craig Greening to finish on 6090 and Craig with his best landing of the day finished on 6074. John Diniz had one bad flight in Round 4 but still shot some great landings to finish Day One in sixth place. Happy Don Cleveland also stepped up the pace to round out the top seven.

RES is flown over two days and conditions can vary tremendously in Muncie so tomorrow promises to be a very interesting tussle to determine the National Champion in RES Class. The top pilots have flown tremendously well in conditions that could never be called easy. They will need to continue the same form tomorrow to retain their places as many good pilots are snapping at their heels.

—Gordon Buckland



Dan Myers flew his AVA consistently all day to finish in the top 10.

Charles Bair launches his RES ship in Round 4.



Left, above: Mike Lachowski demonstrates good launch technique with his Ava Pro in this two-photo sequence. The follow through with the aircraft already pointed skyward at the correct attitude assures a safe and higher launch.

An Aquila Grande is dwarfed by her bigger cousin the Aquila XL.



Merrill Brady with his famous Marauder.



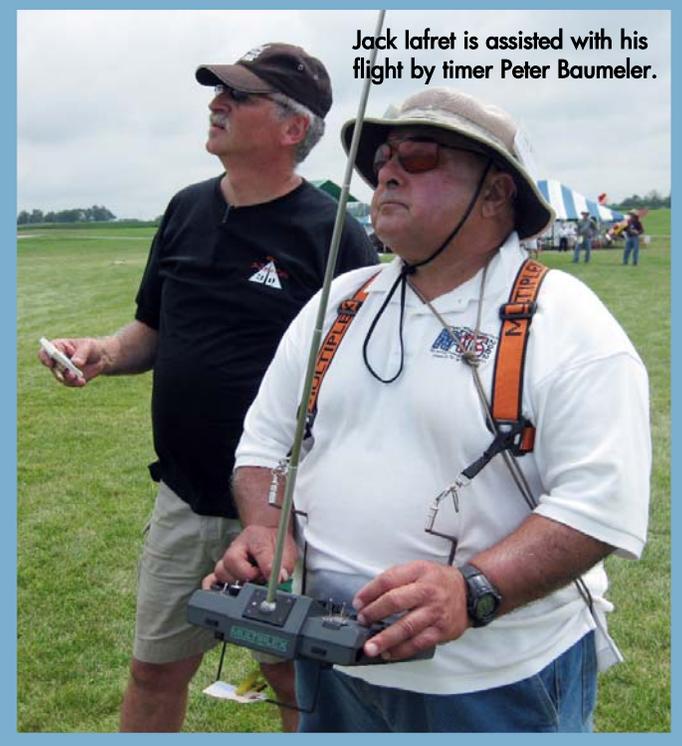
Jim Deck with an uncommon design for RES: a Gnome.



Kerry Cochrell guides his sailplane while his wife works the timer.



Jack Lafret is assisted with his flight by timer Peter Baumeler.



John Diniz flew great all day to finish sixth on Day One.



Right: Tom Kallevang shows his wounded AVA while John Diniz looks on.



Below: The landing tape indicates a great score in the 90s here for Mike Lachowski.



Sailplanes wait quietly in the pits as Round 5 fliers launch their ships in the background.