

# NATS 2009 NEWS

July 28, 2009



Children of the Corn? Cody grins in relief after Steve Meyer finds his Espada RL safely in the corn field.

*Bringing Modelers Together  
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MEMBERSHIP DRIVE 2009  
APRIL 1 - SEPTEMBER 14

**Tuesday**  
Outdoor FF  
RC Electric  
RC Soaring

**Wednesday**  
RC Electric  
Outdoor Free Flight

**Thursday**  
RC Electric  
Outdoor Free Flight

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Edited by: Liz Helms

A special thank-you to members of **AMA's Flight Support Team**. Our community partners recognize that AMA onsite events bring thousands of visitors during the flying season who spend dollars in our community. Their generous donations help AMA continue to host the many competition events held annually, and in turn, AMA promotes and encourages our members to look for and support members of the **Flight Support Team**.

## Soaring F3J, Day 2

After just three rounds of F3J completed on Saturday, it was with great anticipation that we arrived early at the Muncie Soaring site for the Sunday showdown. At 7:30 a.m., many teams were preparing their sailplanes and by 8:30 a.m. lines had been run, pulleys set up, and the teams were raring to go.

The weather was forecast as much milder wind than Saturday, but wind nonetheless. A short pilots' meeting was held by CD Bill Christian to announce the plan for the day. We would need a minimum of six rounds flown to have a "throw-out." (Every pilot would drop their worst scoring round for final positions.)



**Doug Pike, from Ontario, Canada, pilots his ship while Pat Mackenzie works the watches and calls the air for him.**



**Bill Christian our F3J CD announces the beginning of another round.**

It was also necessary to have the preliminary rounds complete and the four fly-off rounds underway by 2:00 p.m. so the contest could be wrapped up in

good time. It sure sounded like we were in for some exciting nonstop F3J action.

This being my first time at an F3J contest, I am sure magnified the excitement, but this TD flying is exciting. I asked Jim Monaco, USA F3J Team Manager, how he would describe the F3J experience for those who haven't seen it and he said, "It's a Thermal Duration contest on steroids!" That sure is the understatement of the Soaring Nats!

I would describe the initial launch of 10 or more aircraft at the same time as "totally insane." I have never seen anything so amazing in RC Soaring. The final 15-25 seconds of the working time is also just as exciting as 10 aircraft return home to hit their spots before the working time is up.

If any readers have never attended an F3J contest, I can thoroughly recommend it as a must-do experience if you are any sort of a Soaring aficionado. Better still, for the complete experience I would recommend that you fly in an F3J contest as I did. I am so grateful I was offered the opportunity by my team (Team Butt Hut), and I would like to thank Don Richmond, Bubba Rob Glover, and the best caller I have ever had, JT Thomas, for providing me with the chance and helping me to

**Cody Remington casually sticks a 100-point landing with his Espada.**





Multiple sailplanes landing in the same few seconds at the end of each round is an exciting moment.

problem as some pilots (including myself) just didn't reach the buoyant pockets of air in time to capitalize on them. Enough good air was available though, as pilots maxed in every group in the light conditions early before the sun started its work in earnest.

By the end of Round 4 we had good lift developing with substantial drift in the light wind and nearly everyone made their

learn the ropes.

F3J requires new skills if one is to participate competitively. Skills such as holding the aircraft against great line tension before launch are required. Throwing the aircraft cleanly while tensioned up also takes practice. Learning when to kick just before working time begins, to send the towers (runners) on their way is also important. It doesn't sound difficult but F3J is all about teamwork and each member of a four-man team must know what to do and do it right.

Round 4 began



The sun was often a hindrance on launch and during the light as Skip Miller navigates his Pike late in the day with the help of Mike Verzuh and Cody Remington.

on Sunday in light winds of about 8 mph. Lift was scarce as Flight Group A was to discover, and only Josh Glaab and Cody Remington steered their sailplanes in good air for the max while the others fell short by two or three minutes.

Certain areas of the AMA site seemed to produce morning lift that provided sufficiently buoyant air for a 10-minute ride but if you happened to head in the wrong direction off the launch you could sometimes just not find it in time to save the flight.

Flight Groups B and C found the same

time in the last group. Mike Verzuh remained our leader with another 1000-point-round win. Jon Padilla flew a 9:53 with a 98 landing for 999 points and moved up to second. In third place was Skip Miller and his Pike Perfect with another solid 1000.

Mario Scolari, a fine pilot from California, was in fourth place just 11 points in arrears from Skip. Fifth was Blayne Chastain who started the contest very strong on Saturday with consecutive round wins had faded to fifth with an 8:49 flight in Round 4.

With stronger lift available and a stronger breeze, our CD quickly got Round 5 underway and the day's drama in the top 10 began. As each flight group launched, some pilots found lift and everybody else tried to get to it.

Most succeeded and achieved their max but found themselves returning from



The towing rig can be seen lofted into the air here as the sailplanes are towed skyward by each pair of runners.

deep downwind. Most returned home successfully, avoiding areas of sink along the way, and some very good scores were turned in. Others like Jon Padilla (7:14 and 99) had to fight hard to make a decent time and flew scratching flights for less than their full 10 minutes. Mario Scolari also had a difficult round with a 4:45 and 94, dropping him to 10<sup>th</sup> place and in danger of missing the 10-pilot fly-off.

Round 5 ended with Mike Verzuh still solid as a rock on top and the experienced Skip Miller just 8 points behind. Blayne Chastain, who's daily practice was paying off, flew a great 9:45 and 90 to hold down third. Peter Goldsmith had started the F3J with a first-round 848 on Saturday but since then had been flawless with maxes and landings every round to move into the top four.

Fifth place was now occupied by Jon Padilla who was a slight casualty from Round 5 with a 7:14 and 99. This was actually a pretty good score as his group flew last in the most difficult air of the round with stronger wind and sink that surprised many good pilots.

The scene was now set for the last round of the day. It was now clear that we would be dropping our worst round so the leader board would suffer a radical change as a result. Some fliers would be able to make the 10 with a great last-round performance. Others already in the 10 with one weak round already in the books would be in danger of missing out if they did not score well in Round 6. It is this kind of drama that makes the fly-off format very exciting.

As the day had gone on, the flying conditions had become more difficult and during Round 6 and the fly-off rounds, the Muncie Soaring site was to really bare her teeth.

The top 5 remained unchanged through Round 6 with each putting in great scoring flights in their respective groups. The next five were a different story. Cody Remington had scored a zero on Saturday so he sat in 17<sup>th</sup> place coming into Round 6 in spite of two perfect 1000s on Sunday. With another perfect 1000 in Round 6 he had earned a final placing of 12<sup>th</sup>. Once he dropped his zero round from Saturday, it was clear that Cody would make the 10.

The raw scores after six rounds saw Josh Glaab in sixth, "JT" Jim Thomas in

seventh, Rich Burnoski in eighth, Jim McCarthy in ninth, and Ben Clerx in tenth. This was not the order they would be in for the fly-off though, as once a round was dropped and the scores tabulated, the final 10 pilots were as follows:

Mike Verzuh and Skip Miller each with 5000 points  
Peter Goldsmith, 4989  
Jon Padilla, 4987  
Cody Remington, 4981  
Josh Glaab, 4978  
Blayne Chastain, 4968  
Jim Thomas, 4754  
Ben Clerx, 4745  
Rich Burnoski, 4744

Peter Goldsmith and Ben Clerx were unable to stay for the fly-off so Jim McCarthy on 4645 and Mario Scolari on 4531 were brought in to make the final 10.

The fly-off was to be four rounds of 15 minutes with five minutes of prep between each round. This was to be quite a test, even for pilots of the caliber of this group. By 2:00 p.m. when the fly-off began, the wind had increased to around 12 mph and gusting to 16 mph and the cycles of lift though strong were farther apart than earlier in the day.

The first fly-off round saw everybody catch the same piece of air and get their max except Josh Glaab, who had to relaunch and finished with an 8:16 and 90.

Round 2 was quickly underway and immediately the casualties began, as the next cycle of lift was not easily found. Some pilots missed the train and had to relaunch after finding heavy Muncie sink. The bean field downwind really got a workout as pilots worked great lift very deep only to find that there was no easy road home. Mike Verzuh found his first flight at an end in this way and relaunched with his spare just to record a time.

Round 3 saw the conditions equally as savage as pilots navigated their way up in great lift but found themselves in huge sink trying to get back. As many as four aircraft outlanded either in the beans or farther out in the corn in this way and this is where your intrepid reporter found himself at work at retrieval duty.

Mike Verzuh already had one aircraft in the beans and my son Jamie was out

trying to find it. Now his backup was also beamed, so I found myself in a bean paddock high stepping my way along the line Mike had given me. I found his aircraft with minimal damage and returned it to him in time for the start of Round 4. Meanwhile his first plane had also been found so I stayed and assisted with his next flight.

Round 3 was simply characterized by great lift followed by heavy sink which made the return of many ships to the spot impossible. Many zero scores resulted as there seemed to be more sailplanes in the corn and beans than there were on the flightline.

By comparison Round 4 went fairly smoothly with most of the 10 getting their max and a landing. When the dust had settled on the most exciting and drama filled fly-off you can imagine, we did have a deserving winner who stayed out of serious trouble for four rounds. That flier was Jon Padilla.

Jim McCarthy also kept his sailplane in scoring position for 4 rounds to finish in a deserved second place. Third was Skip Miller and Cody in fourth. Blayne Chastain completed the top 5.

It was at the completion of Round 4 that I teamed up with Steve Meyer and Cody to retrieve his Espada RL which in an earlier round had been lost very deep in the corn. We marked the line with a golf buggy and took the road trip past the Hobby shop to the corn field across the road. Once lined up with our marker, Steve and I entered the corn and tracked downwind about eight rows apart for about 200 yards. Though we could see little farther than 10 feet through the corn, Cody's accurate markers and our careful plotting led us straight to an undamaged Espada RL for an unlikely retrieval.

As a result of the corn field exploration, I missed the trophy presentation and apologize to the winners for being unable to provide photos.

This was the culmination of eight straight days of Soaring for me and my son Jamie who I must thank for working tirelessly to assist me to fly every event. Thank you also to all the wonderful people I met during the week who provided amazing help and encouragement. You made my first Nats an experience to remember for a lifetime.

See you all next year.

—Gordon Buckland

# Scores and Standings Please note: Scores are unofficial until tabulation is confirmed.

Denny Maize - Contest Director

Tom Kallevang - Soaring Event Director

## RESULTS

Place	Contestant	Rounds									Total
		Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6	Round 7	Round 8	Round 9	
1	Barnes Phil	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	776	1,000	1,000	8,776
2	Lee Chris	1,000	1,000	1,000	737	1,000	1,000	811	1,000	795	8,343
3	Davidson Bruce	1,000	1,000	1,000	899	575	856	1,000	1,000	955	8,285
4	Zastoupil Scott	830	981	1,000	665	965	792	896	955	1,000	8,084
5	Siler Tom	862	959	1,000	710	793	901	778	626	913	7,542
6	Ruble Larry	843	719	917	1,000	856	690	758	724	1,000	7,507
7	Mackenzie Ivan	902	974	757	839	620	1,000	617	882	809	7,400
8	Meyer Steven	913	998	660	689	580	955	1,000	616	903	7,314
9	Carr Jeff	747	905	1,000	1,000	437	420	1,000	847	835	7,191
10	Olson Robert	802	607	1,000	686	926	747	645	796	639	6,848
11	Roberto Ben	926	647	628	805	556	588	880	827	950	6,807
12	Samuels Robert	825	898	1,000	709	383	631	639	824	808	6,717
13	Gauding Mark	847	731	1,000	651	784	296	738	783	871	6,701
14	Taylor Gerald	793	520	413	774	497	998	1,000	712	788	6,495
15	Pike Doug	798	614	0	633	1,000	654	948	863	890	6,400
16	Thompson Ryan	947	886	359	638	501	616	926	708	778	6,359
17	Knudtson Tom	848	941	627	596	350	573	891	570	744	6,140
18	Mekina Joe	797	883	310	836	476	658	831	712	623	6,126
19	Mackenzie Patrick	839	649	750	695	571	437	617	648	879	6,085
20	Whitney Bob	762	580	577	602	640	633	675	747	842	6,058
21	Register David	844	991	483	684	685	464	495	636	733	6,015
22	Walter Jeffrey	812	938	199	804	290	823	850	701	552	5,969
23	Schwerin Alan	840	759	407	621	629	245	836	728	838	5,903
24	Meek Robin	805	766	468	596	906	509	265	588	755	5,658
25	Logg Doug	727	707	500	602	622	385	502	451	659	5,155
26	Lago Glauco	719	723	303	657	484	407	505	486	619	4,903
27	Maxwell Steven	684	806	455	551	459	121	485	616	519	4,696
28	Glover Robert	659	533	287	524	491	356	681	509	591	4,631
29	Carlton Jim	628	386	380	641	450	222	447	744	643	4,541
30	Trussell Gavin	260	445	0	554	736	660	0	628	816	4,099
31	Atchison Lee	429	482	183	392	369	367	453	464	612	3,751
32	Bauer Barney	541	520	117	491	216	277	372	513	648	3,695
33	Waitulionis Richard	812	465	423	593	332	504	0	0	0	3,129
34	Ferguson John	0	688	343	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,031



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# Hand Launch Thermal Duration

There are many changes this year in hand launch. We are now recognized by the FAI as a world-class event! The FAI designation is F3K. This means there will be a World Championships, starting likely in 2010 or 2011.

With this in mind, this year's hand launch is conducted following FAI rules and procedures in an attempt to start preparing for world competition.

We were greeted this morning with beautiful weather and, for Muncie, uncommonly cool temperatures. Lift

was a bit fickle in the morning rounds with less-than-normal temperature differential and partly cloudy skies, which quickly overdeveloped to provide challenging air all day long. Lift was available but either you got it or you missed it. One wrong move and it was gone.

There was some great flying all day long from the expert fliers we all recognize, but also some great efforts from up-and-coming pilots who are very quickly progressing to challenge the

traditional winners.

Phil Barnes is leading after nine rounds by a nice margin after an excellent performance all day long but tomorrow is another day. I expect some of the newcomers to step up and offer up a very real challenge.

F3K is on the rise nationwide, and you can expect to see some very good pilots developing over the next few years to help make the USA a very real threat at the first World Championships!

—Denny Maize



Traditional launch (right) versus the discus launch (left).





# Electric Soaring Launched Monday

Monday's 1/2A Electric sailplane contestants were rewarded with perfect weather for their event. The AMA staff really shined, preparing the site with virtually no notice. Hats off to the Maintenance team that put up a 20 x 20 tent, added water, tables, chairs, and a porta-potty before the fliers could even get their first round flown! (I wish you could insert a photo of those two AMA MTC fellows who did a great job for us!)

1/2A Sailplane is a great mix of old and new technology: old Speed 400 motors and new LiPo batteries! The new batteries allowed fliers to fly much quicker as they do not need to recharge so often between flights.

This year's event was flown "man-on-man," so one's flight time was only compared to those who flew in the same conditions. Thus, each flight started with a simultaneous launch and ended with

probably take a few months of investigation to discover the root cause of all the disassociated malfunctions. These issues and the fact that there were seven rounds flown meant that the final standings, including first place, were not locked in until the last aircraft landed!

First place went to Ernie Schlumberger, who was experiencing radio receiver problems on his first flight and was almost ready to withdraw before he finally found one that would work. Despite all that frustration, stress, and distraction, he refocused himself made a maximum score on the following rounds to go from well behind to first! (Last photo)

The lift was very dynamic, to say the least, hence, so was the sink! One round was won with a flight of less than three (3) minutes. Considering that those pilots had 90 seconds of motor run climb, they came down in a *hurry!*

The perfect score was 7175. Ernie's winning score was 6843. In years past, a score of more than

15 points off perfect did not finish in the top three! Yet, Ernie was more than 1000 points ahead of second place after the final round!

There were numerous issues with both Spread Spectrum radios and speed controllers. However, the most common issue was landing off field due to the dynamic conditions! Final standings were:

Ernie Schlumberger	6843
Mike McGowan	5639
Ed Franz	5582
Ric Vaughn	5535
Robert Burson	5180
William May	5056
Robert Johnson	4941
David Dean	3931
Don Richmond	2511
George Parks	WD

—Mike McGowan



Left: The winner, Ernie Schlumberger, is congratulated by Event Director Tom Kallevang.

Below: A group photo of Electric Soaring contestants.



everyone who made the target time of 10 minutes, landing simultaneously!

Very dramatic and exciting ... except ... the technology was not quite there! Panic and frustration abounded as flier after flier experienced "technical difficulties." It will

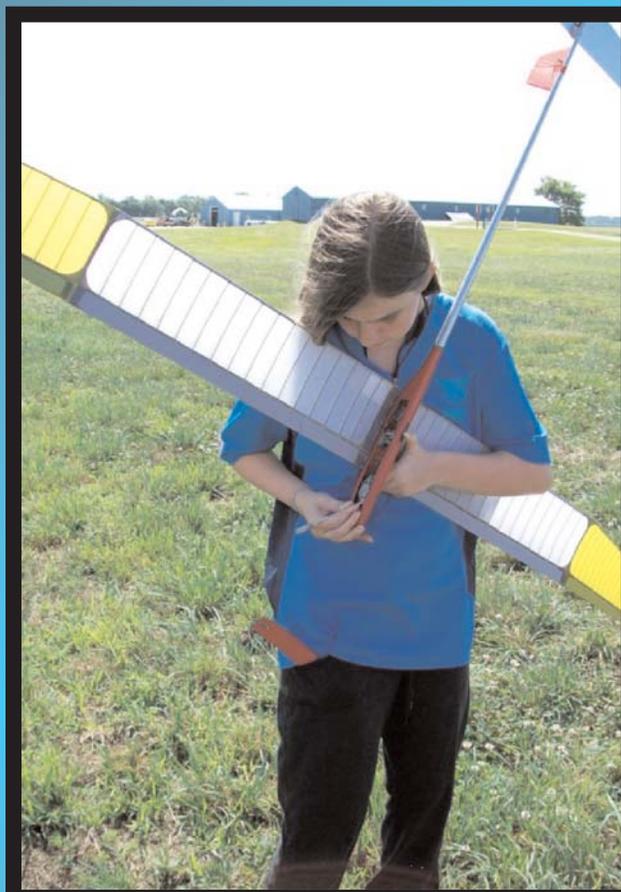
# Free Flight Sunday's Junior Competition



Chinmay Jaju with his F1P model. The rules for this type of model stipulate a minimum of 400 square inches of wing area and 60 inches maximum span. This model has a powerful Russian Cyclon 1 cc engine and in the expert hands of Chinmay it maxes easily on each flight. Another popular engine used in this category is the Norvel 1 cc, of rather similar performance.



The F1B category was also well supported, and the level of expertise shown by Juniors was commendable. Here Breda awaits good air in the Sunday competition. All contestants had to complete seven rounds, followed next day (Monday) by another seven rounds. The model used here is the typical high-performance Russian design, today the standard of this category.



Michelle Barron sets the mechanical timer in the F1A glider she flew in the Sunday competition (right). Above, job completed, the front cover is reinserted.



Above: Brian Van Nest, well known competitor who has represented the USA in World Championships on numerous occasions, had a rough day, dropping an early round. Here he examines the settings of his F1A glider. Conditions in Sunday morning were difficult, with much turbulence generated by the line of trees immediately upwind of the launch area.



We move now to one of the classics of Rubber competition, the Moffett Cup competition, one of the most closely fought categories. This well-established category goes back to the prewar era, but after being suspended in the after-war years, it was resurrected by Jim Bennett in 1992, and has been a feature of the US Nats since then.

The magnificent Moffett Trophy (left) is shown above in its protective case. The case displays also a list of the winners of the Moffett Trophy from its inception.

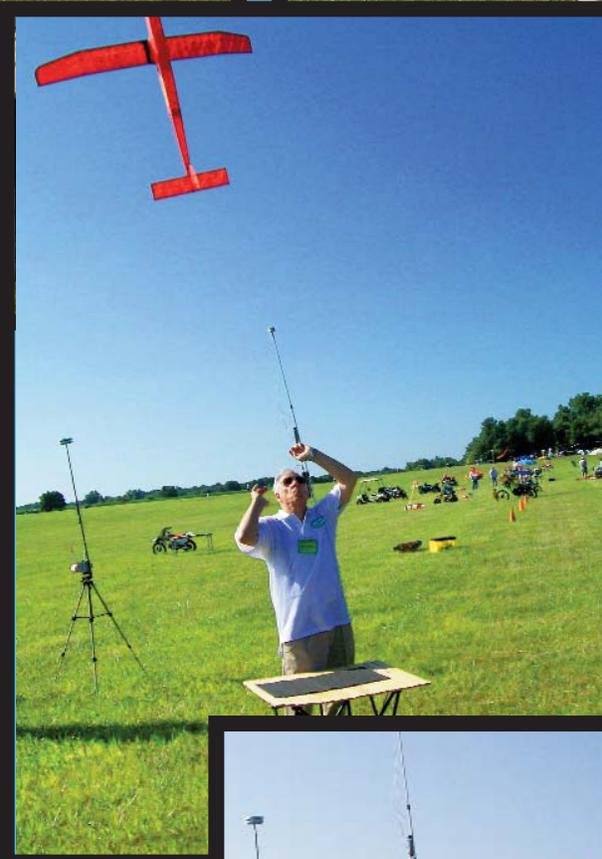




The Moffett category requires a departure from the ground (ROG), represented here by a table. Due to the powerful motor of these models, the "run" is very short, in fact the models can take off in a vertical direction (VTO) just as well as the powerful gas models of a few decades ago. This sequence is illustrated by Bob Bienenstein and his Rogue design. Bob is a five-time winner of the category and his skill is legendary.



The motor has been wound and the model is quickly set on the table in the vertical position (above left and above).



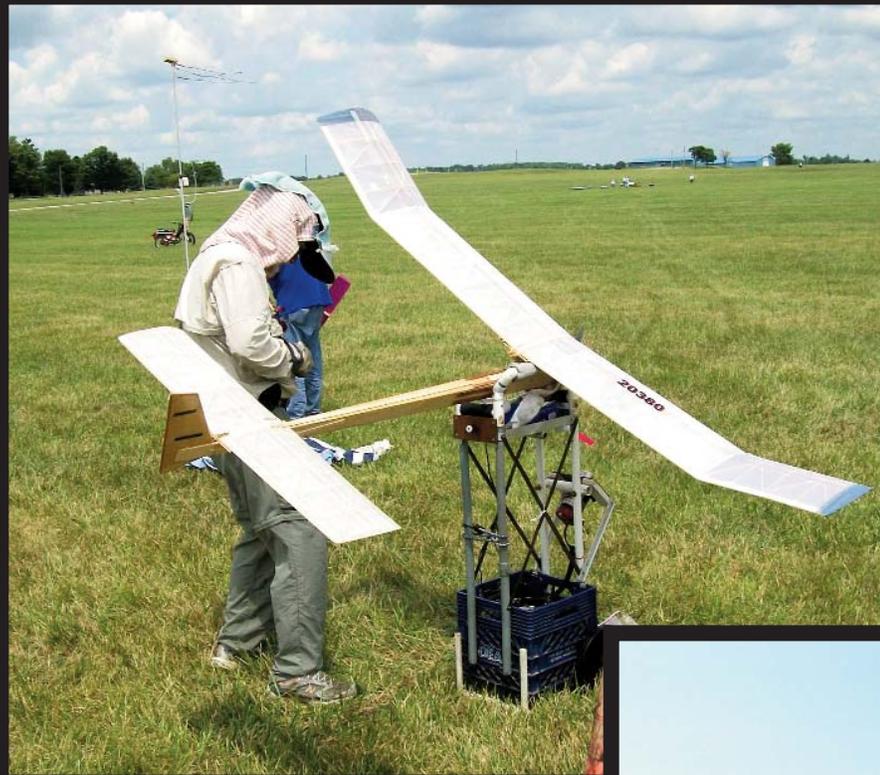
In a couple of seconds the propeller is released and the model leaps out of the table in a steep vertical climb that carries it to a great height (left). The potential of the better models in this category exceeds six minutes duration.



Prior to launching the model, the air is carefully studied for temperature rise that announces the presence of the thermal. Here Bill Shailor, Bienenstein's helper and retriever, studies the conditions and okays the launch sequence shown above.



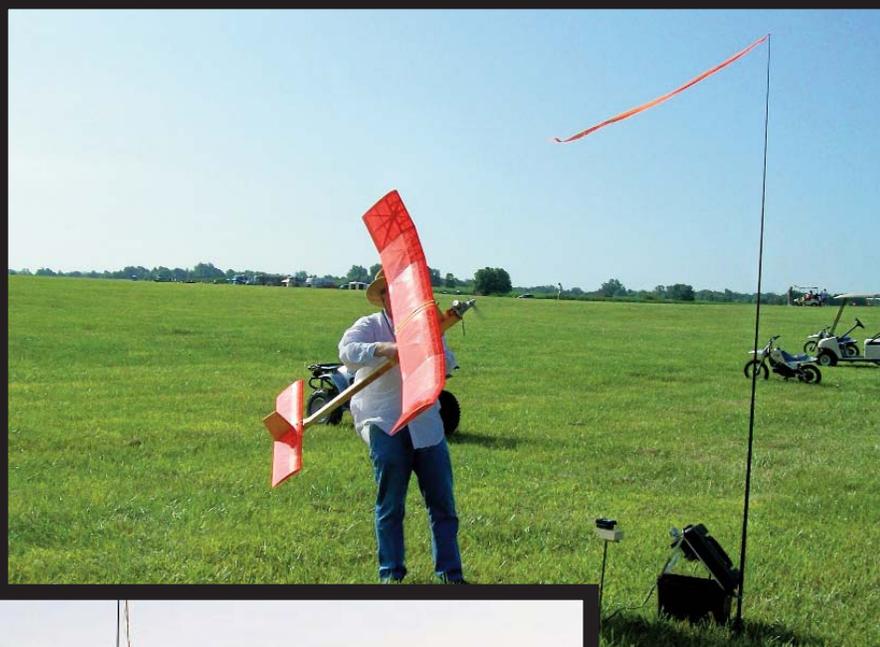
Not everyone favors the vertical take off of Bienenstein. Here another competitor has just released his model that leaps of the table in a more shallow initial climb, but after a second or two it went up in a similar vertical climb. The left wing drops due to the high initial torque of the rubber motor.



Above: Monday hosted the D Gas and Super D Gas competitions, this last one specifying a minimum of 1,000 square inches of wing area. Here Roy Stewart sets his model for a quick test launch.

Right: Motor set at maximum revs, thermal conditions found optimal, this D Gas model is prepared to launch. Rules do not require a take off from the ground (ROG), so seconds later, a quick push and the magnificent roar of a 0.6 cu. inch motor at 20,000+ rpm heralds the superb climb of these models. D Gas is a unique spectacle of the US Nats, a feast for the competitors and bystanders.

—Text and photos by Sergio Montes



The D Gas model line reveals an intense activity mid-morning.