



NatsNews

Daily Coverage of the 2011 National Aeromodeling Championships

August 4, 2011

Friday
RC Aerobatics

Saturday
RC Aerobatics

Sunday
RC Helicopter

Monday
RC Helicopter



For full disclosure, Chris Moon did have some help getting an F3A-level airplane ready for competition is such short order. Some help came from Don Manson. After a late night of building and an early morning competition flight, where would you expect to find Don that afternoon? On Site 4, of course, with all his NSRCA District 2 friends.



Inside:



RC Aerobatics

Photos by Jim Quinn.

It seemed that the lights were flickering on and off early this morning. Then I heard the thunder and knew there could be trouble for the first day of flying for our 2011 edition of the RC Aerobatic National Championship.

After more than a week of intense heat at the World Championship, the first morning of flying seemed cool and wet. Cool felt good, wet did not. True to form, however, our aerobatic pilots undauntedly left for AMA's International Aeromodeling Center. And true to form, the competition was underway within

however, life took over and Don's RC hobby was put on the far back burner. Years passed; his family grew, and Don's eyes turned to the sky once again. By now it was 1993 and Don was scratch-building a Gitano from magazine plans.

Don's first aerobatic competition was a few years later, and in 1999 Don flew in his first Nats. Don was sold on YS power, as were most of the serious competitors in those years. This year, however, Don brought an Integral with electric power for the first time. Why the switch, you ask? Don explained it had



minutes of the original starting time.

Don Ramsey started flying in 1961. He had a Min-X single channel radio which only controlled the rudder, and it was one click and hold for right rudder. If you held the second rapidly pressed click, Don's Bonner escapement would hold full left rudder. If you wanted to fly in those years that was about as good as it got.

A few years later, Don purchased his first true proportional radio system. Don enjoyed sport flying for some time to come. Soon enough,



nothing to do with the excellent performance he received from his YS's.

Richard Verano was always there to rebuild and repair after years of good service. Don just thought it was time to look over another hill and see a new horizon. Earl Haurey's Integral proved a worthy template, as well as an excellent flyer, for Don's new venture. Don likes the Integrals because they are such a great flying airplane as well as an excellent value.

Left: Watching from flightline to flightline, a plane appeared and our contest was officially underway. First up was Site 1, and Don Ramsey was the pilot of an Integral gracefully crossing the morning sky.



While on Site 1, I saw Mark Radcliff getting ready for his first Nats flight in 34 years. I had just spoken to Mark when Mike Mueller stopped me and suggested I interviewed Mark. While talking with Mike, however, I knew the interview needed to include both of these old friends who once again were flying together for the first time in 31 years.

In 1975, Mark was flying a Phoenix 8 in the Team Trials for the World Championship in Switzerland. Mark did earn a spot on that 1975 Championship team by beating none other than Mike Mueller, who was the alternate, finishing in fourth place that year. How much did Mark beat Mike for that third spot on Team USA that year? If you guessed one point, you guessed correctly. Only one point separated these old friends for third and fourth place.

Mark continued to represent Team USA for the next eight years. That first time in 1975, Mark, Rhitt Miller, and Dave Brown came in first as a team. First place team trophies were also won in 1977, '79, and '81. Mark's best finish was in the 1979 World Championship held in South Africa where he finished third.

By this time, Tony Frankowiak joined us. The smiles and laughter level rapidly increased. Tony represented the USA for six World Championships. The conversation turned to why these three highly qualified pilots faded into the background. They all felt that once they had reached a high level of competition, it was not satisfying to simply sport fly every now and again. Mike Mueller frequently drove by an RC airport a few minutes from his house for 14 years and never once stopped in to check things out.

They laughed and passed around the word, "addiction." More laughter followed. These three great competitors quietly and happily understood the deep satisfaction that comes from doing more than 100% on every flight. As our time wound down, the conversation once again turned to life issues. Proudly and happily, Mike Mueller announced the anticipated arrival his first grandchild, soon to be born. This interview was an honor and I

only regret that these words don't come close to capturing the magical atmosphere on Site 1 on a dreary and wet Wednesday morning. Mark and Mike are pictured above.

Below: As I was leaving Site 1, Tim Jesky, the Site Director, called me over for a photo. Tim is holding the battery pack from one of the airplanes that was destroyed on Tuesday.



After a midair, you probably went to your backup airplane, if you were lucky enough to have one. You also might have been lucky enough to have a friend loan you an airplane to fly in the competition. Or, you could be Chris Moon, the owner of F3A Unlimited, and build a whole new airplane as well as give it two test flights before the competition started the next morning. You are amazing Chris.



You can always expect to find the newest designs at our Nats. This year, Matt Kimbro introduced us to the Peridot. This is a Wolfgang Matt design, which is about a year old. The Peridot is designed for electric only. Matt has a Neu motor powering his Peridot. He likes this plane because it helps him fly smoother and more gracefully. It snaps very well and the looping maneuvers are a dream. His Peridot is well under weight at 4,935 grams, using a TP 5000~25C. Matt says this plane comes ready to fly. After 150 flights, Matt and his Peridot are old friends. →

—Jim Quinn

