



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of JIM CASALE



Submitted by WP (08/2002); Transcribed & Edited by SS (09/2002)

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## Career:

- Competed for 15 years in precision aerobatics
- Won four Walker Cups
- Member of the World Championship Precision Aerobatics Team in 1984; placed fourth individually
- Member of four U.S. World Teams
- Won two first places in the U.S. FAI Team Trials
- Won two fourth places in World Championships competition
- Designed and was successful competing with his Spectrum series planes
- His Spectrum series of planes was published in Flying Models magazine starting in 1980

## Honors:

- 1988: Award the Concours D'Elegance Award at the Nationals
- 2002: Precision Aerobatics Model Pilot Association Hall of Fame

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*Wynn Paul, historian of the Precision Aerobatics Model Pilot Association (PAMPA) submitted this biography that PAMPA had on file about Jim Casale.*

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Jim Casale was a competitor first, last and always. He attacked the precision aerobatics event with everything he could muster. The results over his 15-year career were breathtaking.

Four Walker Cup Nationals victories (1983, 1985, 1988 and 1989), a member of the World Championship Precision Aerobatics Team in 1984 (fourth individually), a member of four U.S. World Teams (1984, 1986, 1988 and 1990) with two first places in the U.S. FAI team trials 1985 and 1987) and two fourth places in World Championships competition (1984 and 1988) is a record that speaks for itself. Only Hall of Fame members Paul Walker and Bob Gieseke have won more Walker cups than “Jimmy.”

Hailing from Paterson, New Jersey, Jimmy started flying in 1975 with friends Lou Dudka, Bill Simons, and Bob Hunt. His first contest was in June 1976. His first Nationals (Nats) was in 1978 in Lake Charles, Louisiana finishing 19<sup>th</sup> place with an early version of his Spectrum series. This plane had the typical East Coast futuristic look along with a foam wing and a ST-46 engine. Later he was to use the ST-40, the Max 45 FSR and the ST-60 engines.

He worked his way up steadily in Nats competition finishing 10<sup>th</sup>, ninth, seventh, then made it to the top five in 1982 with a fifth place before winning the whole show for the first time in 1983 – only his sixth Nats.

In addition to his four Nats wins, he also had three second place finishes (1984, 1987 and 1990), all to Paul Walker. Jim Casale and Paul Walker did battle in the years 1983 to 1992 and between them won nine Walker Cups (even though neither was at the Nats in 1986).

Jim's FAI Team Trials record is enviable; in five appearances, he got two first places and two third places while in his first attempt in 1981 he finished a good fifth place.

Along the way, Jim probably built and crashed more airplanes than any 10 other SSF's (that's a term from the 1970s denoting a "Serious Stunt Flyer"). Probably Jimmy even lost count of how many planes he built and crashed during his stunt career. In Jim's 1984 article, Flying Models magazine editor, Bob Hunt, footnoted that "at last count it was 27 planes in five years." With Jimmy, every singly flight, whether it was practice or a local contest or the World Finals, was a 100% effort with five-foot bottoms and blazing corners of the Schaffer/Simons/Hunt genre.

In 1988 at the Virginia Nats Jim won the Concours D'Elegance award and received 20 point for appearance. This particular plane was called the Columbia, a plane built primarily for the 1988 World Championships; it featured a red-white-blue paint scheme with lots of Les McDonald silver stars on the wing and stabilizer.

He started publishing his Spectrum series of airplanes with the July 1980 issue of Flying Models magazine. This issue featured a foam-winged futuristic-type stunt plane with a ST-46 engine. He used six of the seven colors of the spectrum for trim. The construction was quite straightforward. Jim did put a lot of the effort into obtaining a sparkling finish to gain an extra point or two from appearance judging at the Nats.

Later, Jimmy published Spectrum III, designed around the ST-60 engine. This appeared in the March 1984 issue of Flying Models magazine. He flatly stated that in this design he used the Bob Baron Avanti wing and stabilizer and that the size of the plane was the same as used with the ST-46 engine version. He did note that he used heavy-duty control hookup for flying in the wind.

"When I think of Jimmy, I remember his energy, enthusiasm, [and] friendliness. He was totally committed to winning. He was not a technician; if he threw enough stuff on the wall, whatever stuck would work. He built 'dogs' and good planes. When he had a good plane – look out! He was not a natural builder or flyer; he won by sheer will and determination – four Walker Cups in something – there was not an ounce of quit in him," said Bob Hunt.

Jim Casale's contribution to the precision aerobatics events comes as a top competitor during the 15-year period of his active flying. During this time, he won four Walker Cups, flew on one World Championship team, represented the U.S. four times at the World Championships, and

championed his design of the Spectrum airplane raising the foam-winged stunt plane to the highest level for competition.

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