

NATSNEWS



CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF COMPETITION

July 22

Indoor Free Flight | Rantoul, Illinois



Mike Kirda launches his 54-inch Comet Taylorcraft.

INDOOR FREE FLIGHT

Text and photos by Mike Kirda

Greetings from Rantoul! The day started out with the Scale time slot, but for some reason few scale modelers came. Previous Nats typically had several tables of Scale models to be judged. There were so few entries that we did not even have a table set up.

Of the FAC events, the most hotly contested event was Phantom Flash, won handily by Don S. Speaking of hotly contested, today was the hottest day so far here in the hangar. Outside it was over 90° F between noon and 6 p.m., and inside reached into the upper-80s with high humidity levels. It isn't clear if it was the heat or the humidity, but nearly all of the competitors today seemed to have issues getting their motors wound up and put onto the model without breaking.

Leo Pilachowski and I both had F1D flights where the motor broke after launch. There were dozens of "snap!" sounds heard throughout the day, often followed by some unprintable words.

Thursday I reported that the time to beat was in the 19-minute range. For comparison purposes, the record for Cat2 F1D flight is more than 26 minutes. With two former world champions in the room, you might expect times in the 22 to 24-minute range.

There were many beautiful flights—many reaching the 18 to 19-minute range, but I don't believe anyone reached 20 minutes. Everyone was struggling in the heat. By 5 p.m., many had already packed up and left. A few soldiered on until the last launch at 8:59 p.m.

So far, the score is building 0, lift 4. Not a single model has been lost this year thanks to the lift provided by Bud Layne. There were three more recoveries Thursday with no damage to the models.

Friday's program begins with more Scale modeling. David Aronstein arrived late Thursday, so we have another Coconut Scale model for tomorrow morning. The Coconut "Mass Watch" might just become the Coconut "Mass Launch" this year! 🍌



Hope Finn's Phantom Flash Mass Launch nearly ends in disaster.



Larry Loucka and Joshua Finn pose with their World War I models.



Don's Phantom Flash is the last one flying.



Al Stone sneaks in a Gowen A6 test flight.



An F1D aircraft is climbing out.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



Evan Guyette's unusual Science Olympiad model sneaked in some test flights before noon.

