Monday
August 13

nats news

Daily coverage of the 2012 National Aeromodeling Championships

George Ford and his E12.

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RC Helicopter

Today's Events:
RC Helicopter

DAY ONE of the 2012 Helicopter Nats is in the books. The day started after a small delay due to the sun being directly over the left-hand approach, but once it lifted, competition was as tight as ever.

Curtis Youngblood is leading the pack in FAI, with Scott Gray very close to his heels, followed by Nick Maxwell only a few points behind. I mentioned previously that Scott will be representing Canada in the next Worlds, so that means the real third place in the US team trials is occupied by Wayne Mann, who is just edging Daniel Hiatt by only two points (not normalized) on the second round. These two tied in the first round with 236.5 points each. This is some seriously tight competition!

In the Sportsman class pack, Steven Petrotto won both rounds. Don Miller is soldiering Advance class, and ironman Dennis Purduski leads Expert. Dennis judged 30 flights of FAI and then flew his two rounds of Expert—some stamina!

The weather today was absolutely beautiful and cool, which is very uncommon for Muncie in mid-August, but we are not complaining. We are supposed to enjoy the same weather for most of the week except for tomorrow. The forecast is calling for a big chance of rain on Tuesday. Let's hope the weatherman is wrong.

Defending champion Curtis Youngblood flies round 1.

Santiago Panzardi reporting.

Dwight Shilling's Calibers.

Cliff Hiatt waits for his turn to fly.

Nick Maxwell.

Mike Gorza hovering his Ellipse.

Daniel Hiatt waits his turn.

Santiago Panzardi reporting.

Scott Gray's famous transmitter tray.

George Ford observes for RC Heli competition.

Nob Muraki warms up.

The big boss, Craig Bradley.

Wayne Mann's second-round flight.

Bill Tinsley flies his Nitro heli.

Expert class pilot Timothy Tripoli.

Canadian and US Champion Scott Gray.

Rolando Perez.

Gordie, Dennis, and Dwight winding down.

Nick, Wayne, and Jason conversing.

FAI Judges.

Don Miller, advance class pilot.

Cliff Hiatt's Rave helicopter.

Free Flight Ends!

FRIDAY'S WEATHER posed challenges for the fliers. It rained most the night before, and temperatures dropped to the coldest of the week, around the mid-50s. However, refreshing that may have been, the day dawned cool, overcast, and drizzly.

Fortunately, the skies cleared throughout the morning, and the sun eventually came out. But, another item set the tone for the day—the wind. It started at first light at the speed of 15 mph and was 25 mph by midday, with occasional gusts paling that. In short, we had something of a blowout, but at least temperatures were cool and comfortable.

The first category of the day was Dawn Unlimited, postponed from the day before by the weather. Well, nothing had changed in a day. A brave Gerald Brown (Texas) was talked into flying and flew to a respectable four-plus minutes, landing off the field, for a victory.

P-30 proved the most popular category of the day with 19 fliers. Only four fliers maxed out, indicative of the conditions. Ted Allebone (Michigan) earned a well-deserved victory with 602 seconds. Chuck Marcos (Illinois) followed close behind with 579 seconds, and David Sechrist (Indiana) was next with 460 seconds.

Nostalgia Wakefield was also flown by a few brave souls. Joe Williams (Pennsylvania) reprised his earlier Nats wins by winning again with his finely-tuned Bilgri Wakefield with a score of 513 seconds. Ed Sneed (Ohio) followed with 447 seconds, and Gerald Brown (Texas) with 181 seconds.

ORT Rubber Stick was flown well by Jim O'Reilly to the top spot with 499 seconds. Dan Berry (Arkansas) placed second with 364 seconds and Jean Andrews (Arizona), a close third with 346 seconds.

Although Friday had the fewest events of the week, the gas fliers still flew the most categories. The two largest-sized categories of the week, D Gas and Super D, were flown, offering plenty of spectacle.

While the fields this year weren't large, they were very capable and didn't disappoint. Ronnie Thompson (Alabama) won D Gas, going away with 889 seconds, and Jack Marsh (Indiana) won Super D, also going away with 741 seconds. Finishing out the day's gas events was $^1/_4$A NosGas, and although much smaller in size, furnished the much larger field. Mark Troutman (Texas) managed a narrow lead to win with a score of 351 seconds.

Towline Glider provided a hardy 12 souls who braved the stiff breezes. No one maxed out, but hard effort was rewarded with some good performances. Dave Edmonson (Minnesota) won with 486 seconds, followed by Robert Sifleet (Pennsylvania) with 426 seconds and Andy Ringlien (Minnesota) with 402.

Looking back from the comfortable perch of the weekend, what can be said of the 2012 Free Flight Nats? For one, it was well-attended with 201 contestants, down from 221 in 2011. Half of the drop can be explained by the Junior World Championships held overseas the previous week, and perhaps the remainder to memories of the infernal heat from last year. As a result, I'd count this year's attendance a success. Anytime you can get 201 Free Flight modelers in one flying field for a week it's a success.

The weather wasn't a dire concern in 2012. We had two absolutely splendid days of flying on Monday and Tuesday. Wednesday was fine most of the day, and Thursday was okay enough, off and on, most of the day. Only Friday was a bummer in the form of a blowout which deterred a few, but not all. Temperatures only crested into the 90s one afternoon, and for those who camped out on the field, the nights were delightful; sleeping under blankets all night.

The NFFS banquet on Wednesday, and barbecue and raffle on Thursday were well-attended and enjoyable affairs—the latter particularly so. You can't beat free beer and hot dogs!

Nothing as big as the Nats can be done without the work of many others. First of all, we owe Bill Shailor, Free Flight Nats CD, a great deal of thanks. Everything happened when it should have, and without controversy.

Phil Sullivan, the perennial, behind-the-scenes hero of all recent Nats, did his usual yeoman service on this one, too.

George White and all his Flying Aces Club crew did fine work, too. Numerous other people helped—manning the scoring tables, selling NFFS merchandise, and much else. Thanks to all!

It's been my pleasure to be your *NatsNews* reporter again this year. This, too, isn't a solitary affair. I only take the pictures and write the daily contest reports. The AMA's Liz Helms, Ashley Rauen, and Rachelle Haughn take these basic items and produce the visually appealing and informative newsletter you see in front of you every day. My thanks goes to them.

I don't know about y'all, but the 2013 Free Flights Nats is definitely on my agenda. Let's do it once again! *nn*

Jack Marsh's (IN) D Gas Maverick at rest; impressive machine.

Gerald Brown (TX) returns for downwind after a successful flight. (And retrieval!)

Ronnie Thompson (AL) preps his large D Gas model for launch.

A serious Jim O'Reilly (KS) with his Nats-winning and seldom-seen Lidgard Hi-Ho in OT Rubber Stick.

Free Flight's videographer and cottage capitalist, Alan Abriss (NY).

A very happy Jerry Murphy (CO) preps his P-30 for flight.

A Free Flight contestant's best friend around lunchtime: Carter's World Famous Hot Dogs. He sold out every day!

David Mills reporting.

Robert Hanford's (OK) very special model, the design his father flew in the 1949 World Championships. Very cool.

Bob cutting lose his D Gas power model.

Robert Marier (GA) stands proud with his 1/4A NosGas T-Bird.

Andy Ringlien (MN) about to tow up his Classic Towline, with his son Larson, downfield. He placed third.

The winded winners in Classic Towline: Dave Edmonson (MN)-1st, Robert Sifleet (PA), 2nd, and Andy Ringlien (MN)-3rd.

The reserved winners in OT Rubber Stick: Mike Richardson (IN)-4th, Jim O'Reilly (KS)-1st, and Dan Berry (AR)-2nd.

Above: The jocular winners in D Gas Power: Tom Bell (TX)-3rd, Ronnie Thompson (AL)-1st, and Gerald Brown (TX)-2nd.

A proud Tom Allebone (MI)—the National P-30 Champion.

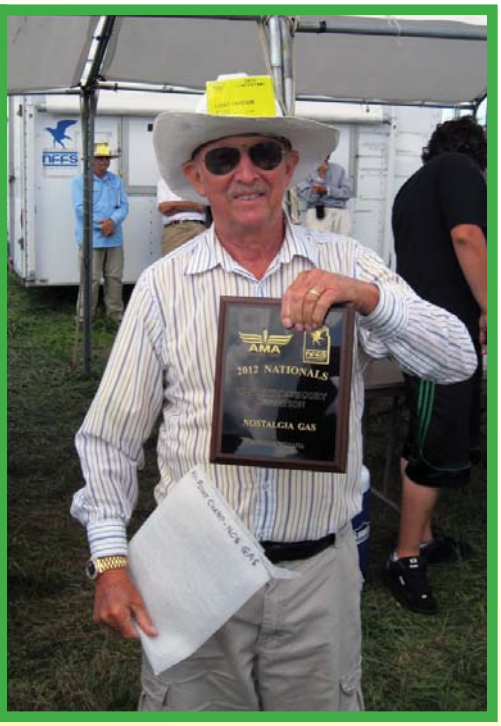
Ian Wicks (IL), National Junior P-30 Champion.

2012 Free Flight Nats High Point Champions

Not pictured: Electric Power: Dick Ivers and AMA Rubber Power: Tony Matthews.

Larson Ringlien (MN), Junior Champion.

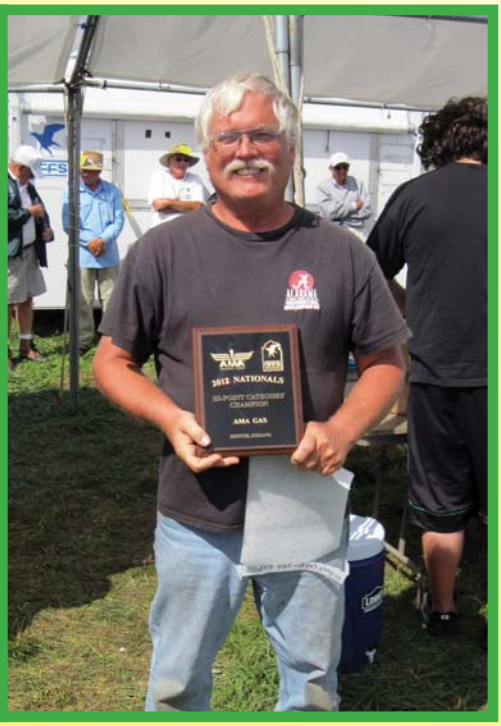
Robert Marier (GA), Senior Champion.



Larry Davidson (VA), Nostalgia Gas Champion.

Joe Williams (PA), Nostalgia Rubber Champion, tied with Ed Sneed (OH).

Dan Berry (AR), Classic Gas Champion.



Ronnie Thompson (AL), AMA Gas Champion.

Flying Aces Club Results

THURSDAY

WW II Mass Launch
1. Pat Murray MiG 3
2. Vic Nippert Ki 61
3. Mike Walshans P-51/A-36

FAC OT Rubber Cabin
1. Ed Hardin Wren 497
2. Jim Cummins Wren 494
3. Jim Gerszewski Wren 340
4. Grant Carson Victory 308

Embryo
1. Ted Allebone 354
2. Dohrman Crawford 282
3. Pat Murray 262
4. Grant Carson 229

Golden Age Civilain/Military
1. Vic Nippert Antanov 2 280
2. Jim Miller Martin MO-1 166
3. Grant Carson Skyfarer 55

WEDNESDAY

Jimmy Allen
1. Carl Redlin Skokie 360
2. Paul Simon Blue Bird 245
3. Pat Murray Skokie 205
4. Ed Allebone Blue Flash 197

FAC OT Rubber Stick
1. Ed Hardin Gollywock 780
2. Jim Jennings Sr. Wanderer 356
3. Ed Allebone Wanderer 354
4. Stewart Cummins Gollywock 342
5. Grant Carson Wanderer 278
6. George Bredehoft The Shaft 90

Dime Scale
1. Chuck Marcos P-51 249
2. Dan Kane Tiger Moth 245
3. Pat Murray Mr. Mulligan 122
4. Mike Walshans Pitcairn 53

Low Wing Military Trainer
1. Pat Murray
2. Vic Nipert
3. Aaron Narance

FRIDAY

FAC Peanut

1.	George Bredehoft	Keith Rider R-2	129.5
2.	Mike Fedor	Jodel	128.5
3.	Jim Miller	Lacey	122.5
4.	Vick Nippert	Lacey M10	115
5.	Pat Murray	Waco	101

FAC Power Scale

1.	Vick Nippert	Storch	179

FAC Rubber Scale

1.	Mike Welshans	Jack Rabbit	123
2.	Vick Nippert	Storch	120.5
3.	Pat Murray	Northrop P61	113.5
4.	Elvin Buchele	Heinkel He 100	84
5.	David Acton	Piper Pa 12	65

WWI Mass Launch
Not flown

David Mills reporting.

Dan Berry (AR) returns for a retrieval in Classic Towline and benefits from a critique by Jim Demerrite (FL).

This week's events:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
RC Helicopter	RC Helicopter	RC Helicopter

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Tom Bell's (TX) javelin launch of his D Gas model.