

F2D News - May 2006

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Hi everybody - it's me again. Sorry for missing last month. Time is pretty tight right now as I'm preparing to leave for the World Championships tomorrow morning. I'll have to be brief, but they say that brevity is the soul of wit so maybe I'll still manage to drop something enlightening on you this month.

Last month, Neil mentioned in the New England Combat News that I ran out of time to write a column. To add to that, I want to fill you in on some of what's been going on for me recently. Of course a big part of that was work related, but my other primary occupation of late has been training for the upcoming World Championships. Last month I had the opportunity to join US F2D team pilot Andrey Nadein in Philadelphia for two weekends of intense training. On the first Sunday, Aleksey Topunov of Chicago, Illinois also joined in on the effort. Aleksey will be Andrey's official mechanic in Spain.

My flying sessions with Andrey have always seemed to be quite fruitful. After a long lay off we will both show signs of rust, but very quickly get back into shape. By the end of our training together, I felt like we were both flying very solidly.

This time, we took our training to a new level stole a bit out of the old Russian training books. In particular, for each match we predetermined what each of us would be working on and carefully followed these rules throughout the session. The benefits of this method seem to be twofold. First, because we have discussed our plans in advance, there is less risk of midair. Not only does that save equipment, but it also saves time as constantly having to swap engines off of broken models can really cut down on flying time. Second, having specific goals for each match gives each pilot a purpose, a plan, a palpable measure of performance. To paraphrase Mike Willcox, the point of training is not to win every match; rather, the point is to gain more familiarity with your models, try out new tricks/maneuvers, and to get your confidence up for a contest.

Speaking of Mike, he, I, and a few other combat pilots were interviewed by Larry Driskall for his recent Combat columns in Flying Models magazine. I've written about my views on training in the past, but Larry takes it a step further and gathers a variety of viewpoints to present to readers. I found it very interesting to read these comments, and I encourage all of you to track down those issues and read them for yourselves.

Shortly after returning from Philadelphia, I turned around and flew back to L.A. for two weeks of training with my dad Chuck Rudner (also US F2D Team Pilot) and the rest of my old crew (Rich von Lopez, Pete Athans, Don and Chris Jensen). Chuck and Rich have been practicing hard every weekend all year, and it really showed. They were both in excellent shape when I arrived. After 5 more days of flying with them, I can safely say that Chuck is in tip top shape.

All of our team members have put in a very serious effort, and have been doing everything in their power prepare for the World Championships. We should all be proud to have such a dedicated group of pilots to represent us in Spain.

I must leave now, but I hope all of you are flying a lot and getting ready for the Fall contest rush. Hope to see you all real soon,

Mark