

F2D News - August 2008

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This past weekend (sunday August 17) we held the 5th annual District I F2D Championships in Kingston, MA. This was a big event for combat in New England, in a variety of ways. First and foremost, with a great field of contestants adding up to 11 entries, it was the biggest and perhaps most hotly contested F2D contest we've had to date. On top of that, this was also the first time that we were able to run a by-the-book F2D contest with 2-airplanes and all the bells and whistles. For many of our pilots this was their first experience even seeing 2-airplane F2D in all its glory, and above all I want to say that they did great, and really impressed me by stepping up to the occasion and taking to the event with enthusiasm and a great effort.

In some ways, this contest was the culmination of a 5-year dream that I've had of bringing F2D to New England. It was almost 5 years ago to the day that I moved to Boston to begin graduate school, and at that time there was not a soul in sight flying F2D. That very first weekend that I lived out here, I flew in the New England Championships (Formula GX combat). For the first time, I had a chance to meet and fly with all those guys we'd seen in the MACA points for so long, but never seen in person; to be honest, I had no idea what to expect. What I found was a really great group of super friendly and supportive guys, who in fact showed a lot of skill and thoughtfulness in their brand of flying.

I had a good time flying GX that day, but the event was quite different from my true love – F2D. Before leaving for Boston, many people asked me how I was going to keep flying once I was there. Many were skeptical when I suggested the possibility of introducing the guys to F2D, but I figured it was worth a shot. At the New England championships, I saw a group of highly capable pilots with plenty of skill and potential to succeed in F2D; the other question was whether or not there would be interest. After discussing it with Neil Simpson, we decided to give it a try and held the first (single airplane) F2D event in New England at the Connecticut Ringer Invitational, on October 26, 2003. We had a sizable field of 8 guys there, which included Roy Glenn making the trip up from New Jersey. Roy has been a great supporter of the F2D effort in New England, and has made the long drive up here countless times to join in our contests. I want to offer him a big thanks for that!

Since that time, the New England F2D crew has evolved, and now includes about 9 stable, dedicated pilots. The quality of flying has steadily improved, with a noticeable rise this season. I'm not sure what instigated this change, but I really feel like the overall quality of flying at the last couple of contests has made a good leap. Until this weekend, our previous competition was the largest to date, featuring 9 pilots. Up to then, we never had the manpower required on site to even dream of running a "true" F2D contest with 2 airplanes, which requires an absolute minimum of 6 contestants and 3 judges per match. This time, Chuck Rudner from southern California, Andrey Nadein from Philadelphia, and Alex Prokofiev from New Jersey joined us, along with Roy Glenn and the rest of the New England regulars minus two who unfortunately couldn't make it that day. Andrey's wife Tatyana, an experienced and certified judge from their time back in Russia, lent a great hand in running the event and acting as chief judge throughout the day.

Of course there were some small problems here and there with the guys getting used to the new rules, but overall I was really impressed, and so happy to see everyone out there giving it a go. Because we needed pilots to also judge other matches, the pace of the contest was a little slow. With more people on site to help and some more experience getting ready and entering the circle efficiently, that can be fixed. Overall it was a great day, and from the feedback I've been getting, I think most people really enjoyed the experience! Really, I couldn't have asked for anything more.

Any contest report would be lacking without a list of results. Here is the final tally for the 2008 District I F2D Championships:

1. Mark Rudner
2. Alex Prokofiev
3. Matt Stas
4. Neil Simpson
5. Andrey Nadein
6. Chuck Rudner
6. Roy Glenn
6. Ken Hargreaves
6. Brian Stas
10. Paul Kubek
10. Jeff Vader

There were some great matches out there. I want to thank everyone who came and participated, especially Roy, Andrey, Alex, and Chuck for coming so far, and Tatyana for all the hard work judging the competition, and Svetlana Prokofiev, and my mom for helping to tie streamers all day long! Next year I hope we will get even more people to come join us!

For Neil Simpson's take on the event and some awesome pictures provided by Jeff Vader, check out <http://necn.homestead.com/DistrictOneChamps08.html>