

F2D News - October 2009

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The F2D News has been on hiatus for the last few months, but rest assured it's not for any lack of F2D action. Perhaps most crucially here in the U.S., the Team Trials took place over Labor Day weekend in Detroit, Michigan. Cutting to the chase, our country will be represented by Mike Willcox, Lester Haury, and Greg Hill in the World Championships next summer in Gyula, Hungary. You may be interested to know that Gyula is home to the second oldest cake shop in all of Hungary. In a place called Hungary, there's no doubt they've been in demand for a very long time.

Back to the Team Trials, the event kicked off Friday night with a tenses-than-usual pilots' meeting and banquet at the House of Leon in Livonia. Contest Director Marc Warwashana presided over the meeting. His well-intentioned efforts to set the stage for the weekend by laying down a clear set of policies perhaps backfired slightly, as strong opposition was voiced on several points (in particular the issue of whether or not the pit area would be considered part of the fly-away zone). This led to some lengthy arguments which in the end seemed to all be more or less resolved. The draw for the first 3 rounds was presented, and we all went home to rest up for the grueling days ahead.

The turnout for the contest was great. In total I believe we had 37 pilots entered, which must make it the biggest Team Trials in recent years. As a result, however, it was clear that pace would be a big issue for the contest. At 10 minutes per match with no breaks and no reflies, a triple elimination contest for 37 pilots requires 18.5 hours of combat. It doesn't sound that unreasonable for two days, but maintaining such a pace requires diligence from all parties involved. On Saturday we got off to a bit of a late start and weren't able to hold the pace. Round 3 was only half-finished by the time the mosquitoes emerged for their evening feast. To everyone present, it looked like we were heading towards a Monday finish.

Sunday morning, we got off to an on-time start, and contest management really reigned things in. In particular, for each match, a 6 minute countdown (minute-to-the-minute) was initiated as soon as both teams arrived in the circle. This helped to keep the ball rolling, though at times it looked like more time could have been saved by eliminating the extra minute and going straight to minute-to-launch. In the end it didn't matter, as miraculously the contest came to a conclusion with some daylight to spare. It was a great triumph for the CD and all the judges to pull off that on-time finish.

On the whole I have to say that this was a very successful Team Trials. Rouge Park was in excellent condition due to the tireless gardening efforts of Ron Columbo over the past year. Once combat got underway, we were relatively free of controversy. I think the judging was pretty fair. There were a few calls that some may have disagreed with, but everything was done in good faith and the judges gave their best without a doubt. In the end the proof is really in the pudding. The contest managed to select a very strong team, and by that measure alone we can all agree that the Team Trials 2009 was a success. Let's all thank CD Marc Warwashana and everyone else who pitched in to make it happen!