

## F2D News - October 2010

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A beautiful field. Spectacular weather. A great bunch of high-spirited combat pilots ready for an exciting weekend of F2D action in the birthplace of our nation. Such were the conditions on Saturday morning, the 25th of September, at Silver Lake Regional School in Kingston, MA as we prepared for the first running of the New England Cup. Twenty one pilots were on hand from all over the country. The atmosphere and camaraderie we great, and I was personally very happy to watch as new friendships were forged between combat pilots from previously isolated parts of the country.

In addition to the coveted New England Cup (yes, an actual cup does exist), competitors vied for a few additional awards: Top Score (for the pilot with the highest single-match total score), Sportsmanship (for an outstanding act sportsmanlike behavior), and the Team Prize. The team competition was organized by AMA District. District I (New England Combat Team) was represented by: Paul Kubek, Mark Rudner, Neil Simpson, Brian Stas, Matt Stas, Jeff Vader, and Greg Wornell. Districts II and III (The Tri-State Combat Team) were represented by Roy Glenn, Andrey Nadein, Alex Prokofiev, and Alexey Voytenkov. District VIII (Team Texas+) was represented by George Cleveland, Lester Haury, James McKinney, Bobby Mears, Richard Stubblefield, and Howard Williams. Finally, Districts V, VII, and X (Team Sunshine) were represented by Ron Colombo, Bill Duane, Richard Lopez, and Chuck Rudner. Notably absent was the Pacific Northwest, and much of the mid-west (big thanks to Ron Colombo for driving all the way out to fly without his regular teammates). Due to an unfortunate scheduling conflict, The New England Cup had to compete for contestants with an F2D competition in Toronto, Canada. All things considered it was an excellent turnout for the first year of the competition, and we look forward to growing the event in years to come.

The level of flying was quite good throughout the weekend. In the first round, Jeff Vader and Rich Lopez had an excellent match that lasted essentially for the entire four minutes. By not longer than a minute or minute and a half into the match, Rich had removed all of Jeff's streamer. Through a valiant effort, he flew excellent (and clean) defense for the entire remainder of the match, and managed to hang on for the win. For this display of skillful and clean flying, Rich was awarded the Sportsmanship Award at the end of the competition. Several other pilots were flying quite well throughout the weekend. Out of our New England clan, Neil Simpson carried the torch the farthest into Sunday morning. He was flying very solidly, but unfortunately his efforts were undone by problems on the ground. Most of all, however, it was the flying of Alex Prokofiev that stood out from start to finish. Throughout the contest, Alex's flying was smart and to the point. For those who watched, I think it was a good demonstration of mental focus and execution.

No contest report can be complete these days without some mention of shutoffs. Here I will mention two incidents. First, unfortunately, we had one flyaway (swing-arm shutoff) that went over the trees and into the forest. Miraculously, Chuck Rudner and Bill Duane ventured into the forest, and walked right up the model at the edge of a clearing. At the opposite extreme, we had a spectacular demonstration of the power of electronic shutoffs. Towards the end of a match between Lester Haury and Alex Prokofiev, in which both were using Alex's e-shutoff, the guys got themselves into a massive line tangle. By the time the match ended, both models were still in the air looping dangerously close to each other and the ground. Then with the flip of a switch, both pilots shut down their models and glided down safely. Very cool.

In the end, Alex Prokofiev was the champion, and recipient of the first New England Cup. James McKinney took second place, and Lester Haury took 3rd. The team prize, which was calculated as in a World Championships using the total wins of the top 3 pilots from each team, went to District VIII (Texas and Louisiana). As mentioned above, the Sportsmanship award went to Rich Lopez for his clean defensive flying against Jeff Vader. Finally, the Top Score award went to George Cleveland.

Given that this was my first time organizing a big event like this, I learned a lot from this experience. Most of all, I learned that organizing a big competition is way more work (and more expensive) than I ever imagined, and would be impossible without the help of many others. Greg Wornell was my partner in crime in this endeavor, sharing the burden and responsibility at every step of the way. Early on, we received invaluable advice from Pat Willcox, who has done an incredible job organizing the Houston World Cup year after year (which I now can appreciate that much more). Howard Shenton also provided us with an administrative boost, supplying us with a

database full of information that could automatically print personalized scorecards for each pilot. Locally, we had a great batch of helpers, with Joe Fustolo, Kirk Hargreaves, Chris Sarnowski, and Tatyana Nadein volunteering their time as scorers all weekend. Ken Hargreaves worked hard keeping everyone in line all weekend long in the pilot's circle. Dick Sherman helped out with the line-check and pull-testing on Saturday. Brian Stas got us the heavenly field, arranged for awesome lunches both days, handled the contest fuel and shipping of models. Paul Kubek spent countless hours producing art gallery worthy jet black dyed streamers. Muffy Rudner took control of contest administration, and kept track of the scores and the matchings throughout the weekend. Jeff Vader supplied us with the most awesome combat photos of all time. I hope I'm not forgetting anyone.

Additionally, I want to give a huge thanks to our sponsors. CME Hobbies got us the fuel at cost, and graciously paid the shipping on the fuel out of pocket. This was a huge help to us, and we are most grateful for it. Additionally, SIG Manufacturing generously provided us with gift certificate coupons, which went to the recipients of the Top Score and Sportsmanship awards.

All-in-all, I'm extremely pleased with how the event turned out. As I mentioned in a previous column, this contest was a dream of mine for a long time. Now that it has come and gone, I can say that the real thing exceeded my highest expectations. We learned a lot, and hope to make things even better the next time. If you didn't manage to make it this year, talk to someone who did. You may not want to miss it again (and we certainly don't want you to either)!