

## F2D News - March 2012

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Spring is coming, and the US F2D season is now officially underway. Last weekend Lance and the Phoenix gang (now officially called “Team Voodoo,” with the blessing of Riley Wooten) put on another great installment of the March Madness F2D Combat Challenge. The weather was perfect; it doesn’t get much better than 80 degrees, sunny, and a slight breeze, and that’s pretty much what we got for two days in Phoenix. Attendance was great, with 14 pilots including all 3 US Team pilots (Allen Deveuve, Andrey Nadein, and Cary Minor) and our alternate (Josh Ellison).

The organizers decided to run triple elimination, which meant more flying for all, but also a need to keep a good pace to the matches. Things got off to a bit of a slow start, but then picked up enough that we were able to complete 4 rounds (well over half the total number of matches) on Saturday.

There was certainly some good flying on display, though the number of “kills” was rather high. One theory that was floated around the field was that this was partly due to the “F2D Fast” event held the day before, that got many pilots riled up and hungry for streamer. While it’s a reasonable theory, it’s hard to know exactly what was the source of all the string cuts. Most likely the main source was a bit of early-season rust, that had everyone’s reactions a bit slowed down. I don’t know if it was a factor or not, but the string also seemed to be a bit on the weak side. Although it looked quite tough, I heard of 2 incidents where a pilot actually broke the string by mistake while simply tying the knot.

On the ground, it was clear that many cobwebs needed to be cleaned out of mechanics’ heads. I witnessed countless infractions in which mechanics either ran inside the pitting lane, entered the circle at an oblique angle, entered the circle while lines were still tangled but one airplane was still flying, or serviced a model (removed the streamer) before bringing it out of the circle. This is really basic stuff, and the rules are straightforward to follow. I know it’s early in the year, but we can’t be having that kind of lackluster pitting going forward, especially for the team as we go into the World Championships this summer. Some may complain that there are too many rules and that we should just ignore them at home if we feel like it, but I disagree with this view. It perpetuates the wrong attitude, which will never help us build up the standing of the US in the worldwide F2D community. Expecting to simply switch into “compliance-mode” when we get over there is a strategy that has been tried and failed over many years of international competition. In Phoenix, Lance and his judges did their best to try to enforce the rules with limited manpower. It’s not easy to get enough dedicated judges to keep tabs on everyone, but if we’re serious about making USA number 1 we might have to start policing ourselves a bit. Actually, I did see a bit of this already, with some competitors mentioning infractions to each other as a “heads-up.” This is a good start, but I think that without receiving an actual penalty for messing up, the lesson is not fully learned. I’m not sure exactly what the solution is, but it’s some food for thought that I just wanted to throw out there.

In the end, Andrey Nadein put on an impressive display and went undefeated all the way through the finals. Rich Lopez was strong all weekend and flew himself into a solid 2nd place. A three-way tie for third place between Allen Deveuve, Cary Minor, and Chuck Rudner had to be resolved by a fly-off. In the first fly-off, Allen beat Cary. In the second match, Allen beat Chuck to claim 3rd place. All-in-all it was a great weekend of combat and a lot of fun. Thanks again to Lance, Jeff, Sergio, Arlene, and everyone else who helped organize and run the event!