

F2D News - February 2013

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Here we are, another season just about to lift off. In the US, this year's F2D circuit will kick off with the March Madness, March 16-17, in Phoenix, Arizona. Unfortunately I won't be able to make it since I'm now based in Europe, but Lance and the boys never fail to put on an awesome contest so I encourage anyone who can make it there to do so. This is a Team Trials year, so it's time to start whipping those reflexes back into shape!

Out here in Denmark, the thaw is not yet on. Nonetheless, this weekend we had our first training of the year out at the Penguin Club in Borup (an awesome site, complete with heated clubhouse, about 40 minutes west of Copenhagen). Henning Forbech made the 2.5 hour drive down from Aarhus, and Ole Bjerager gave me a lift from town. The others were apparently too scared of the cold. More circle time for the three of us!

It was a bit nippy in the morning (probably around 28 or 30 Fahrenheit), which wasn't so noticeable until the first time I had to needle an engine. At those temperatures, the prop blast will suck the heat out of your fingers in no time flat. It was a good day of flying, though. We got in about 10 or 11 matches each. Something interesting that I noticed while flying on snow for only the second time in my life was that, on a cloudy day, there isn't much contrast between the ground and the sky. I suppose if it were actually snowing, it would be pretty surreal.

Speaking of Denmark, in the spring (long after the thaw!) there will be a World Cup competition in Aalborg, Denmark on May 18-19. Since I'm living out here now, I hope I can help our guys in the US come out here for some international competitions. If you're thinking you might like to check it out, just let me know. I'll be happy to do whatever I can to assist. We're hoping the Aalborg World Cup will get a good turnout. Henning Forbech has put up a web page with more info (<http://www.f2d.dk/konk/danish-worldcup-2013.htm>). One interesting feature is that they're planning to offer a minimum of 3 matches for every competitor, by arranging one extra round for anybody who had the misfortune of going out 0-2. It's of course not an outcome that anybody wants to see, but perhaps the extra guaranteed bit of flying will be enough to tip the expected returns in favor of making the trip. It'll be great if we can get a strong American showing here!

In other news, I recently received word that Bobby Mears won a speed limit combat contest with an electric model. From our subsequent conversation it sounds like he sees a lot of room for improvement, but I think it's a great milestone for electricians. Lothar Hentschel in Germany recently reported that he broke the 24 seconds/10 laps barrier with his electric F2D model. Over Christmas I picked up a few more motors to test, and am hoping to one-up him in the coming weeks. Interestingly, we each discovered that LiPo batteries don't hold up well in the cold. Lothar says that, by heating his battery to around 85 degrees Fahrenheit just before the flight, he was able to get maximum power out of it on a winter's day. Apparently this is a problem that doesn't only affect toy airplanes, at least according to the recent New York Times report on a failed DC-Boston road trip of an electric car using similar battery chemistry... Anyway, in Texas or California this shouldn't be much of an issue, but if anyone in the frozen north is planning to experiment with electric before winter's end, it's something to keep in mind (don't be discouraged!).

I guess that's about it for now. Remember the new streamer dimensions for this year (2 meters string from the knot to the ink mark, 3-3.5 meters of paper), and especially the new scoring rules (match stops as soon as both streamers are cut). Initial tests with the new streamers seem to show an increase in the number of cuts, which would be great to see if it holds up in competition. It will also be interesting to see how combat is affected by the new match termination rules. Please see the resources page of the F2DNews website (<http://f2dnews.homestead.com/Resources.html>) to pick up a copy of this year's rules.

Happy Flying!