

## F2D News - June 2013

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The Team Trials and NATS are upon us. There's just one month to go. This year, the AMA site in Muncie will host an F2D double header of epic proportions. Are you ready? If you haven't made up your mind about whether or not to come, here's your answer: Just do it (thanks Nike, just put the check in my account).

So now that everyone is definitely going, it's time to make sure everything is in order. At a big event like this, time will inevitably tight, so it's important to make sure that you're organized and ready. Let's make a checklist.

1. Models. How many will you bring? Have you test flown and trimmed all of them? Does every model fly exactly like the others, or are there some "oddballs?" While this may be obvious to many, I can't stress enough the importance of eliminating those variations. It's not enough to test a plane and make a note that it may be a little touchy, or a little stable. If one model is flying a bit different from the others, figure out the reason and make some adjustments until it falls into line as best as possible. Combat requires precise flying, and if you're spending the first minute of a match getting used to your plane, your chances of success will be greatly diminished. Even when you've done your best to trim all of the models to fly the same, there will inevitably be some small variations left. Taking the philosophy above one step further, Alex Prokofiev gave some advice about how to decide which plane to use first in an upcoming match: whenever possible, always fly the last plane that you flew before this match. In this way, you will be as well adjusted as possible to your primary model. I think it's a good rule to live by.
2. Engines. Are they all cleaned? How do the bearings feel? If you notice than an engine is starting to blow a lot of plugs, take it out of service and see what's wrong inside. If you're running pure castor oil as the lubricant in your fuel, be sure to get the black carbon build up off of the top of your pistons before starting an intensive competition like the one ahead.
3. Props. Have you balanced them? Many props come close to being balanced, but it's a good idea to check. Do you have more than one type of prop, or will you pick a single type and use it uniformly throughout the contest? It can be a good idea to have a backup type, in case the weather conditions turn out to be very unfavorable for your first choice.
4. Bladders. It is going to be hot out there. This could be a good time to make some new bladders with fresh tubing, to avoid any messy mishaps. One note on this, however. Recently I ran into a bad batch of tubing. I made all new bladders before a contest (and unfortunately had also distributed some of the tubing to friends who did the same), but then discovered that the tubing would develop a large bulge after one or a few runs. If you just got a new supply of tubing, I suggest making at least one test bladder from it first to check that the material is in good shape. In addition, it's a good idea to keep tubing from different shipments labeled, in case any problems like this arise. Unfortunately, I had mixed all of my tubing together, so now it's not so easy to identify which is the unreliable stuff. Since I only had about 1 foot left in total, I decided to just totally renew my supply.
5. Shutoffs. Make sure they're tested, and won't misfire on you in the air. An untimely flame out can be one of the most frustrating ways to lose a match.
6. Lines. Don't forget them.
7. Helmet. Don't forget that either.

Of course there are many more things to get in order before the contest, but I hope this should be a good start. Most importantly, don't forget to "bring it" in the circle. See you in Indiana!