

F2D News - December 2013

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So here we are – the shortest day of the year has arrived. Christmas is around the corner, and New Years just after. The Pingvinen (Penguins), our local control line club here in Copenhagen, just had our yearly “Julefrokost” (Christmas lunch). After several hours of feasting on kick-ass food, and a (a-chem) healthy dose of schnapps to go around, the discussion eventually turned to combat plans for the new year.

Yup, break time is over, folks. Personally, I didn’t get much flying in this fall. It was a much more extended break than I had intended, but now it’s time to get serious. The World Champs are barely 8 months away, and training needs to quickly ramp back up into gear.

What does it take to get ready for a big event like that? On the one hand, combat is combat. On the other hand, when you go to a champs, there is no “next week,” no time for an off day. One needs to be prepared and ready, and to have total focus in order to be on the ball from the launch signal in round 1. In getting to that point, there is no substitute for flying time in the months/year leading up to the event.

Training and practice matches are great. These activities help make you comfortable, and sharpen your timing and control of your model. However, practice matches are not a replacement for contest experience. While your plane flies the same at the contest as it does back home (apart from any effects of elevation change), your brain may do funny things when it’s game time. If you show up and fly around like it’s Sunday afternoon in the local park, you might make some cool moves, take a few nice cuts. If you want to go all the way, though, every nerve in your body has to be in it to win it. So far I do not know of any way of achieving that state in regular practice. If we could find a way to do that, it would be awesome. However, until that time, no amount of practice matches will fully compensate the experience and learning that can come from competing in contests, both big and small.

If you haven’t already done so, now is the time to start laying out a plan for the coming year. Which contests will you go to? How much practice can you fit in between? What are your goals? Regardless of whether your sights are set on one particular prize, the season should be a learning experience and a chance for constant improvement. How will you measure this improvement?

If one takes a break over the winter, inevitably some of the gains of the previous year will be lost. Even a two week break between practice sessions is enough to notice a drop in performance. Year after year we ratchet ourselves up, slowly reaching higher and higher levels of flying. Over the holidays, it could be nice to use a little bit of that quite time around the fire to dream about how next season will go, all the trophies you’ll win, and how to maximize progress during this time. Then get off your butt and go fly!

Happy new year everyone. All the best for an exciting and successful 2014!