

AFFS Champs 2001
By George Car

I wasn't able to get there for all 4 days - family commitments - OK so it's a poor excuse!

It was quite a reduced number of competitors (compared to previous years, that is!) that took advantage of the excellent weather and field this year. Quite likely the smaller number was mainly due to all the other contests on offer around this time - these champs were immediately followed by the NSW state champs (on the same field) and then shortly after followed by the Australian national championships over in west Australia. Over 10 days of top flying contests in a row. Many contestants just couldn't get to them all!

In the end FF scale was cancelled - only two entries- and the scramble competition for the Russ Hammond trophy (3 entries) was declared cancelled, to be held later in the year as organised by NSW FF soc. The last was due to an error in signalling the end of the contest - it caused confusion for 8 minutes, which was longer than the difference between the competitor's times! (and that was at the end of an hour of scramble!).

Apart from that, the level of competition was high, many events going to a flyoff - so the F1B flyoff was held soon after dawn on Monday and the models managed around 6 1/2 minutes before being lost OOS. The same happened at midday in the coupe (F1G) flyoff, when both models were launched into the same strong thermal and both were lost OOS at about that same time. But interestingly, the HLG entrants had difficulty picking thermals - there wasn't a max amongst all the flights (and it was also on the Monday)!

Contest Report - 24th AFFS Champs - Narrandera NSW, Easter 2001
by Jon Fletcher (Convener AFFS and contest director).

The keen ones had arrived a day or two earlier to get in some practice at this site, the first time the AFFS Champs have been staged here and only the second time any Free Flight competition has been run here.

The site is dead flat grass covered grazing land several kilometres square (like 5 by 10kms) The paddocks can be big here - the Farmer tells of ones over 3,000 acres.

The first competition to be run at Narrandera was the Trials in October of 2000 and was a very windy affair. This time we were all hoping for little or no wind and we weren't disappointed. The weather was truly fantastic throughout and even though some flights went OOS upwards including some light models under DT, all the models were eventually found. The only complaint seemed to be lack of trees to get a compass line by.....

I elected to place the flight line in the middle of the field as I was uncertain which way the drift would be. This is my strategy if I believe the wind will vary in direction a lot. During the contest the wind took models through all points of the compass. Some models landed within a few tens of metres of the line and others went a few kilometres. Those that went the furthest were usually launched during the strong infill accompanying a departing thermal. It was unnecessary to move the line throughout the whole contest.

Friday 13th April

There was a cool run to the field before sunrise as just 6 degrees was recorded on the way. Great care had to be taken as kangaroos cross roads at this time of day. I counted between eight and twelve each day sitting by the verge ready to leap into the path of unsuspecting motorists.

As an opener the Combined % Open contest with unlimited re entry attracted the usual high entry and enabled most contestants to get their models sorted. Five

made the fly off with perfect scores over the three flights and the fly off was an interesting combination of P30, Open Power and F1A & B models.

My money was on the formidable P30 models of Terry Bond and Kookie Tibbet and I was right with Terry Bond beating all others by a fair margin.

At the end of the day there was talk of light wind and rain for Sunday/Monday but all kept their fingers crossed for continuing good weather.

I spot-checked many flight times during the contest with no deviations found.

Saturday 14th April

A warmer start to the day with 9.5 degrees being recorded on the run to the field before sunrise. More kangaroos on the way which strangely no one else seemed to notice.

In F1A the line was laid out and the contest started dead on time. Some of the Contestants left it fairly late to start the contest and were still arriving well into the first round. The drift was quite low and there were signs of only weak lift. Many left it quite late to fly in the hope of improving conditions at the end of the round. Just three made the first round max with Richard Blackam taking a break from F1B flying to miss out by just three seconds. As the day heated up the wind speed dropped and by round three all but one of the sub maxes were under 100 secs. It seemed as though you were either at great height in a tremendous thermal or bombed out in the accompanying sink. In round four all but one maxed out in one of these great thermals. By round six just Vin Morgan and Phil Mitchell had full houses, Peter Summersby having dropped the third round. The temperature was up around 28 degrees. The last round proved to be tricky too, with lift appearing to die out well into the flight. These conditions claimed Phil's last flight giving an outright win to Vin. I processed all the top three placegetters to find Martin William's model he used for the last flight to be under weight by 3grms. I determined to null his score for this round, which lifted Peter Summersby to third place. All but the bottom two place getters had their lines checked throughout the contest and were found to comply.

For Open Rubber, there were just three entrants with Bill Gordon and Ted Woolley maxing out for a full house. In the fly off Bill had the better performance by far against Ted's F1B making a flight of over six minutes to win it.

The Open Power contest had Roy Summersby and Col Somers both on full houses for the last round but both missed it on the last flight. Col's was the bigger miss, giving an outright win to Roy.

In P30 just two people maxed out, Terry Bond and Kookie Tibbet. Mark Gordon was unlucky to score 119 secs on both the first and second flights. Leigh Morgan was going well until a dropped flight in round four. In the fly off Terry was heard to remark to Kookie that she was now the "enemy" in a good-natured way, but Kookie got the better air even though they launched together to win by 14 secs.

Sunday 15th April

It was warmer again on the way to the field with 11.5 degrees being recorded.

The F1B and F1C contests started dead on time with the F1C contestants flying from one end. As the entries were relatively low and the ground dead flat and even, I elected not to rotate poles this year as I could see no competitive advantage being gained from different pole positions. The simplicity of flying from the line rather than moving poles each round seemed to be quietly appreciated. Also I elected to run both these classes with the same round times, which avoided the confusion of earlier years where they have been staggered by 30 mins.

In such perfect conditions it was not surprising that only two of the ten F1B Contestants missed the first round max, Bill Gordon missing out by just two seconds. This performance was repeated for the next two rounds, claiming Linc Vincent's full house. In round four the conditions were becoming tricky as the earlier wind speed fell off and there were long periods of the deathly still conditions which seem to have models most likely at your feet for flights of one quarter of their still air times. Both Don Blackam and Leigh Morgan fell victim to such conditions in round four. Line hook up trouble claimed Don's fifth flight and he pulled out. Round six claimed Terry Bond's perfect score and it looked like we were going into a big fly off until round seven, when all but three dropped flights. This left Richard Blackam and Michael Seifert clean for the first fly off round of 5 mins, held at 15.30hrs. Both managed this easily and they were to make the subsequent 7 min round. After discussion with the contestants I decided to hold the third fly off round the following morning on the reserve day to avoid the thermally conditions which were going to make it very unlikely to decide the contest that afternoon. With the promise of timekeeper support for an early morning fly off the following day we agreed to a 6.45am period start. During rounds five and six all the models had their motors check weighed at the conclusion of flights and complied.

In F1C just Dave Thomas made the first round max by just 3 tenths of a second (!) with both Roy Summersby and Stan Hinds missing out by just two and three seconds respectively. Bill East flying at the end of the first round was unlucky enough to have the engine fail to shut despite having practised with that model all day the day before. Roy also ran into bad luck damaging three models throughout the course of the day. With just two seconds down, Stan chased Dave hard throughout the day until the last round where he dropped the flight to give the contest to Dave, who was delighted with his performance of a full house on his first triple wing panelled wing wiggling model.

In Vintage Rubber it turned out to be the bigger models' day for the '40 Pomoma Champ of Terry Bond making a full house to win it outright against Grant Empen's little '37 Flying Aces Moth. Col Somer's '52 Flip Flop followed with Ted Woolley's '40 Lanzo Stick somewhat surprisingly trailing the field.

Vintage Glider was keenly contested with the 300 ft long line making the difference against earlier years. None were to max out however, with all but Col Somers managing two maxes each, the third eluding them. Vin Morgan's '54 Seraph won the day ahead of Phil Mitchell's '51 Revenge followed by Des Slattery's '50 Odenman, a little known Swedish design. Col's '52 Guilly Chopper brought up the rear.

Vintage Power yielded a convincing full house for Roy Summersby who flew a '53 Fifteen to good effect. Col Somer's '53 Stomper ran second with Terry Bond's Stomper failing to perform. (Terry was heard to say some very disparaging things about his Stomper, serve him right!) and Des Slattery's '42 Kerswap closing the field.

Scramble was flown by three flyers but did not yield a result. I was attempting to run two events concurrently, the second being the F1B second fly off. The result was that the signal I gave could not be heard by the Scrambler's timekeepers as they were too far away. This resulted in my receiving a very public, abusive and unwarranted personal verbal attack from the wife of one of the competitors which ensued for several minutes. When I got free of this and the F1B fly off, I discussed the issue with the three flyers and their timekeepers and as they are all from the NSWFFS it was agreed to re-fly this event at Richmond to determine a winner of the Russ Hammond perpetual trophy.

Monday 16th April

On this morning the temperature was up at 17 degrees and the sun rose shortly after 6am. Just before the F1B fly off I publicly expressed the hope that there was sufficiently visibility, but as I could see the trees some 3 to 4 kms away I judged there was. A foretelling remark as it turned out. As on the previous day

two timekeepers were assigned to each pole and all equipped with binoculars. One of Michael Seifert's timekeepers was using a tripod. All the others sat in chairs with arm rests to steady their gaze. Both contestants flew almost together at the end of the period but drifted off in quite different directions maybe 30 degrees apart. All four timekeepers lost their models OOS and quite low to the ground. Michael Seifert's chair bound timekeeper lost the model at the end of the flight as he rose from the chair to get a clearer view, but left his watch running listening to the commentary from the second timekeeper. One of Richard Blackam's timekeepers told me "it was at about 10ft" when the model went OOS. The models had drifted a very long way, much farther than I think anyone anticipated. When the scores were in Michael Seifert's score was just 8 secs ahead of Richard Blackams' and was thus declared the winner. Not unexpectedly there was some discussion about the timing, with claims of Michael Seifert's model being timed for another 40 odd seconds and over a minute until the beacon quietened for Richard's. It is a pity that we all weren't familiar with the rules which state that there should be three timekeepers per flyer, one of which is to have a tripod. A disquieting end to a truly great contest. After their flights both models were processed for rubber and airframe weight and found to comply.

The mini comps started at 7:30am with F1G attracting three flyers. As the day progressed the wind became calmer and the thermals bigger. Terry Bond and Bill Gordon full housed all the way to the fifth round when unbelievably they both sub maxed, but with the same score! A fly off for first place was quickly arranged on the basis of the longest flight wins. Both launched together and Terry won with a score which was half as big again as Bill's.

F1H attracted five Contestants with Tahn Stowe resolutely pursuing the top spot after dropping the first round. Phil Mitchell's first flight was a case of 'if only' as he maxed all the others. As the conditions improved with boomer thermals aplenty, every one maxed the fourth round and just one contestant missing the last.

F1J Looked good to start with, all three contestants maxing the first round. However Stan Hinds dropped the third round leaving Des Slattery with a full house and an outright win of which he was deservedly proud.

HLG attracted five Contestants with Mickey Towell winning it. The wind was fairly strong during the HLG contest and perhaps this contributed to no one scoring a max though Mickey came closest with a 55sec. flight.

Scale was not flown this year as there were just two entries and the participants elected not to fly.

The 2001 AFFS Championships concluded with the prize giving of uncollected trophies from the days before and those for the F1B and the mini classes.

This years Champ of Champs trophy with a score of over 600 goes to Terry Bond!

Results

Below is a link to the 2001 results. They are contained in an Excel file so you might want to right click with the mouse on the link and choose 'save As' and save the file to your computer, rather than opening it.