

AFFS Champs 2005
by George Car

I did over 16 minutes in the flyoff - and didn't get a place!"-- Comment shows conditions were fabulous - if you weren't there, you really missed out!

It was a vintage AFFS champs, renewing old friendships and the flying was excellent. Attendance was excellent, (strong showing from QLD, WA but no internationals), and entries strong (18 events averaged 7 entries, open rubber having 14, but in scale only 1 qualified). There were thermals aplenty, and drift low, 3 minute maxes remaining within the paddock (agreed, the paddock is large). It was easy to miss the thermals-check the scorecard! Many events were decided without a flyoff, while some flyoffs had huge times, certainly a champs to remember!

Weather - many arrived to practice on Thursday, but it got windier during the day - didn't bode well. By the Friday start it was so windy events were postponed till 2.30, then postponed till the next day. Didn't look good. However Saturday dawned calm, and remained gentle, drift northerly then veering during the day, conditions getting better as the day progressed, perhaps peaking at the first flyoff at 4.30pm. Sunday was likewise an excellent flying day, and though the breeze stiffened somewhat on Monday, and from the south, at the 5 min F1J flyoff at midday the models landed only 1 ~ km downwind. The following event, the Southern Cross Cup held on the same field on the following two days had strengthening wind, so the three days of the AFFS were just the very best-if we could only bottle it!

Saturday:

F1A It was cool and breezy, from at the south, and of the 11 entered, 6 maxed the first round. Of those, 3 dropped the next round, and so on until only Tahn had a full house. The drift changed direction during the day, so that the power models, initially moved to a spot east of the flight line, ended up right upwind, marking lift in the later rounds.

P30 Conditions suited P30, 5 of the 11 entrants making the flyoff-and several of the others lost their models in fly-aways in the rounds! The flyoff was surprising with quite low scores-the best flight being only 136s.

Vintage Power this event flew with open power, and there were power model boring their way upwards-some with "interesting" patterns all day. Col Collyer and Steve Rothewell made the flyoff, Roy having dropped his first flight for third place. In the flyoff, Col, flying his reliable Stomper, outlfew Steve (flying Roy Summersby's old Swayback) - just, both models doing over 11 minutes!

Open Rubber - an event to remember, 15 putting up flights ending up with 7 in the flyoff which was set for 4.30 pm. As there was a lot of thermal activity, it suggested the shootout might be between the traditional OR models (prepared to risk no DT), and the F1B models (setting their longest DT) - usually, in the dead air flyoffs, the F1Bs will win, having the better still air time. At the bell, a large bubble of buoyant air developed, Col Collyer launched first, everyone followed, all models climbing in good air with very little drift. Quite a sight in the sunshine. At prop fold the models were all visible centered on the flight line - some timekeepers lying on their backs. Models drifted in one direction, then back again, some climbed, but many just held their height, circling. At 7 minutes, some began to DT down, with the last DT landing at over 16 minutes - but there were still 3 in the air. At around 10 minutes, the bubble had broken off the ground and models had begun to climb, drifting to the south west - it was then a visibility contest, the three placegetters being clicked off at 23, 25 and 31 minutes - what an event! Incidentally, the first and third placed being OR style models with locked off DT, being retrieved at 3 and 9 km respectively from launch (no trackers - lucky!), while second placed model (an F1B, with the scroll longer than the spring!) was retrieved via tracker.

Open Power was less spectacular - no flyoff - but more spectacular in that many models, off trim, provided crash and near-crash entertainment. Consistency was the key - all models were capable of maxes given a clean climb. Certainly an event for the meticulous - and hairy-chested - flyers! Den Sparker destroyed his Fox 15 powered Eureka, Stu Sherlock - recently returned to FF and over from WA - practicing, practicing - interspersed with repairs. But it was only Col Collyer flying his now very reliable VIT, medium-sized glow powered models that managed 3 maxes.

Scramble was held in the morning, drift was low but even so rules were adjusted to Campbell-scramble. Tahn's veteran carpet held the day following the pilot's stern directives (turn left, Abdul -left! Can't you hear me?), Stu Sherlock had consistency problems while first timer Noel MacMillan also from WA had a lot of fun with a Madcap.

Scale, also held in the morning, had several entrants but only Stan Hinds' diesel powered FW Stosser qualified with several very lovely, classic FF scale flights.

F1B was very popular with 14 entries, the standards high and getting better. Being able to purchase components and models has lifted the consistency and performance of this class. But, only two in the flyoff shows that picking lift was not easy... An excellent 5 minute flyoff flight gave Richard Blackam top spot from Bondy, Leigh dropping one flight and Karen two for the next two places - worst luck must be Peter Sikora's, dropping only the last flight, but badly. Adrian did well, especially as he only put on half winds (to avoid setting VIT etc).

Oz diesel This popular event suffers from lack of consistent models, Veteran Den Sparker attending his "last" champs-for the 4th time in a row) flew his veteran repro-Elfin powered Stomper into first spot (but couldn't repeat the effort with the same model for vintage power).

Sunday:

F1C promised well, some magnificent models showing spectacular climbs and glides-but no one had a full house. Well done to Bill East for winning, and whose model must have put up the flight of the meet-perfect pattern on climb then flew fast and far in a wandering flight, circling the whole flying area before DTing amongst the crowd-safely! Roy's geared model was a magnificent sight and sound, and clearly has a considerable height advantage. Colin Crowley, all the way from WA, practiced all day Saturday with some discouraging results, but did well in the event with some lovely flights. This event may have relatively few adherents, but sure has gut-tightening value!

Vintage Rubber One could see a Supa dupa, Gollywock or other model climb in tight spirals upwards on occasions throughout the day, conditions excellent - but only Col Williamson managed 3 maxes. Wasn't it just marvelous to see Adrian Bryant, with walking cane, flying a Lim Joon 1942 wake into second! Well done, Adrian, A for Effort - and enthusiasm.

Monday:

C/HLG reinforces CLG as a good idea, and the rules are good - the CLG models getting only as high as the HLG on launch. While there are many designs being flown, availability of the Sting series of models justly gives it a strong following. Len Surtees put in his usual well practiced and very focused performance, however it shows how hard picking the thermals was - similar models launched at the same moment, from 10 ft apart, same climb and same height but very different outcomes, one in the thermal the other not.

F1J was characterized by some excellent models, excellent flight patterns - a very potent class. There were 3 in the 5 minute flyoff, again excellent flights but for Stan's - who would rather not talk about it.....

F1G was also hard-fought, but only Mark Armour had a clean set of round flights

Overall, an excellent championships!

Great weather, great companionship, great flying, better put it in your diary for 06, if you weren't there for this one!

Champion of Champions: Phil Mitchell, well done! (and only one point over Col Collyer!)

Bill Gordon Trophy (best overall in rubber events) Paul Rossiter