

AWA F3F Sportsman Glider Competition 9th October 2021

AWA Sportsman Class F3F Competition 2021

The 2021 Sportsman Class Competition consisted of seven pilots flying a variety of two metre and under wingspan craft. The event was tagged onto the end of the State F3F Competition in six to seven metre per second winds. Against the forecast the wind was shaped up pretty well perfect to the slope which was a bit of a god send given some pilots, including myself, were concerned that the wind strength was on the limit for their craft to fly.

I was the first pilot required to perform. although I had two weapons of choice, I had no choice but to fly my Wookie TNT as a matter of showing respect to its creator Paul who has gone above and beyond for myself and others in the shed. I decided to fly her empty and chucked her off. She flew tail down and was a real handful to navigate the course without any speed. I felt like I was flying for Wookie TNT's survival! I even tip stalled her at one stage going a bit heavy handed on the controls, as others would experience too. Thank god there was a drop in effect! CD Paul makes us come back to the centre with crow on for your second run/round which is great to make you earn your entry height each round. Although it was not ideal for Wookie TNT in the light conditions, I managed to navigate the lift areas better to gain some additional height allowing me to execute more of an energy management approach taking out round two. For rounds three and four I flew my Carbon Bird which I have spent considerable time chasing my tail trying to tame this beast. The Carbon Bird being a V tail has given me an extra tool in this process which compliments a bank and yank style I have been playing with of late. My efforts payed dividends with a round three win and a respectable round four posting.

Forgive me if I muddle up the order as F3X Vault does not seem to show the flying order. I am pretty sure Jen0 was up next with his Kevin Bennett RPM. The RPM is a fantastic looking model with a really good build quality. Jen0 had flown her the day before in ten metre per second winds and had to make some adjustments with the aileron differential the night before the competition to hopefully see her right. His punt payed off and he flew a smooth base A to base B course with pretty much precision knife edge turns. This pedigree of dynamic soaring model is new to Jen0 and he came unstuck at one stage badly tip stalling her out of a turn. I was feeling for him fighting a tip stall right then left and was relieved when he escaped the spin part to regroup and exercise a nervous discipline in flying her. As the rounds for Jen0 continued he settled into the RPM and was getting better and better times. I must say that I am super excited to see Jen0 put the RPM through its paces at Jurien and possibly Yanchep when the season creeps in hopefully soon! Two metre pilots who have not flown on a smaller straight line ridge, different compared to Turbine 10 Albany, have no idea of the buzz and adrenalin they are missing out on!

Next up was Paul the surfer shaper TNT master! I have seen Paul chuck his TNT's off the slope in dead air so I knew he was going to feel at home. Paul was straight into the energy management style after watching his apprentice weave his round two magic. I am sure this is Paul's go to style but it is good to feel I have got one up on the master anyhow! My switch to the Carbon Bird payed dividends as Paul was only able to achieve a round four win with his round one drop in effect evaporating another round win. Paul flew exceptionally smooth and polished as always making sure he was all over a top podium finish.

Simon was up next I believe and flew consistently really well to achieve a podium finish also. Looking at Simon flying his TNT it is apparent that Paul possibly prompts Simon in regard to his settings but the rest is up to him. I think from memory Simon suffered from a tip stall

during one of his runs too. Simon was happy to fly well and achieve a podium finish especially after not doing as well as we would expect in the three metre F3F State Competition. Although it was a bit of a handful flying our tricky and touchy two metre ships straight after a big day of three metre F3F, it was great to fly in a different class where you were able to have an opportunity to achieve a better result.

I think Sir Oselot (Glenn) was up next. Everyone was watching to see what the past champ would do with his unique, sleek, smaller machine. Given I was chucking gliders all day it was no exception that I would have the honour for Sir Oselot. Duty called and I was surprised to feel there was no weight in his sword. Glenn tried his best with some aggressive flying but I suspect some weight may have complimented his style. Although Glenn's performance was not on par with his past achievements I am sure Glenn, as well as all of us, enjoyed the challenge in flying this unique different class.

Brett stepped up to the plate next with his brightly coloured Tucan which he purchased from Colin Crowley. It was a photo finish to have her ready and flying for Brett so it was no surprise she was light with no time to prepare for ballast addition. Brett flew exceptionally smooth and precise but a lack of weight and setup let him down I suspect. Brett can hold his head high amongst Paul and Glenn to fly all four rounds without a tip stall. No tucking Tucan!

Last but not least was Captain Park who was sporting a mongrel, a glider put together from separate acquisitions. It was a nice Mini Graphite which was not so mini compared to some of its competition. Rob I believe was in a similar prediction to Brett where his preparation time was lacking. Unfortunately he damaged his Storm Bird earlier in the day and the Mini Graphite was his only weapon of choice. Rob guided his glider smoothly and expertly through the course until an act of aggressive controlling tipped him over the envelope again. Rob recovered and flew out the four rounds.

The Sportsman class was a great way to end a challenging days flying with even more of a challenge to test even the most experienced pilots. I was blown away with the longer times achieved in comparison with the three metre sailplanes. Preparation is key and I have learnt of late with the two metre gliders in regard to control throws that less is best. I believe the two metres are much more of a challenge to setup and do well. I think it would be great to have a whole day set aside for the two metre battle. Mixing it up on differing slope styles would be great too. Something for us connoisseurs to think about and work towards maybe?

1st - Paul Marshall - 2965.66
2nd - Stuart Hamilton - 2965.59
3rd - Simon Watts - 2830.05
4th - Mark Jensen - 2782.47
5th - Rob Park - 2745.18
6th - Brett Moffatt - 2734.77
7th - Glenn Twaddle - 2505.48

Congratulations to Paul for taking out the 2021 F3F Sportsman Class with his own built TNT glider pipping me by 0.07 points!