

Hot Air



Message from the President

April 2021

Although the Covid-19 situation is improving due to folks getting vaccinated and following the safety protocols, our meeting facility is still off limits. So, once again, we will not be holding a meeting this month.

Our charter with the AMA has been approved for 2021. A big thanks to Don Rohweller for pulling the package together and working with the membership to get this task completed. If you have not completed your 2021 club membership paperwork, please do so and send it to Don so that you can use the fields. The package can be found [here](#).

I decided to make the drive to the Central Valley Radio Control (CVRC) flying field at Visalia, Sunday March 28th. This was the second and final day of an F5J soaring contest. I was curious to see competition and learn about the F5J format. The following are my impressions and understanding of the rules.

The CVRC field is located on a farmer's property on the outside of town. The club has a paved runway as well as a large grass area for launching and landing gliders. The club has multiple storage containers as well as a covered meeting area. A backdrop of the High Sierra's to the east adds a nice touch. The flying area is open and expansive, quite the opposite of the Los Angeles area.

The F5J format has a variety of rules that make the event challenging. The planes are large, at 4 meters wingspan. Most planes are made in Eastern Europe and are molded graphite or fiberglass. The planes are flown with geared electric motors. Many planes have six servos in the wings operating ailerons and flaps. A lot of mixing is used to control the surfaces.

Flaps are often mixed with the elevator to create what is called snap flaps which increases sink rate. Down-linked telemetry is not allowed. However, a timer is used to limit the initial motor run to 30 seconds and altitude at motor cutoff is recorded. Although ballasting is allowed for high wind conditions, I got the impression that most planes weigh in the mid-40-ounce range.

The basic rules are interesting. Timed rounds are flown and vary from 5 to 15 minutes in length. Each pilot flies with a timer/observer who records the scores. At the beginning of the round, pilots can run their motors for a maximum of 30 seconds. Once the motor is shut down, you cannot restart or points for the round are zero. At this point, the search for lift is on and pilots require a lot of skill reading the environment to gain altitude to make the time duration.

To achieve maximum points, the pilot must land as close to the allotted time as possible without going over. If the round is five minutes and you land at 5:01, you get a zero. Bonus points are given for landing accuracy with the goal to land at the head of a long ribbon exactly on time. At the end of each flight/grouping, scoring is normalized to 1000 points.

There is a lot of strategy involved in the launch. Bonus points are given for the lowest altitude launch in each round. The idea being that a low launch that can find lift and make the overall time should be rewarded. The better pilots will launch at the buzzer and fly low and slow around the area looking for lift. If none is located, they will do a quick climb before the motor will shut down. Other pilots will climb for max altitude to ensure they complete the flight.

Next Meeting

No meeting in April

Upcoming Fun-Flys

**Del Cerro April 10th
Entradero None**



There is a lot to watch during a flight. Some pilots land early and far away due their inability to find lift. Others sky out riding massive thermals. With ten planes in the air at a time all working the same thermal, mid-air do occur. For this reason, many entrants have back-up aircraft. The skill of the pilots to get the airplanes down on time can be just as impressive as thermalling out. It is common to see a pilot shed several hundred feet in twenty seconds and land at his feet.

There were forty pilots registered for the contest. Following the Saturday and Sunday qualifying, the field was reduced to eleven. Three finals rounds were flown, with each round being fifteen minutes in duration. These were excellent pilots who were challenged with sink during the final three rounds. Only four pilots made time in all three flights.

Obviously, to participate in these events a lot of practice is required. Being able to consistently achieve spot landings from altitude with a 4 meter ship needs space. I talked to one pilot from the South Bay area who practices and does programming check-outs at Eldorado Park in Long Beach. He can't practice thermalling, due to the altitude restrictions. Beyond the considerable investment required, (these planes aren't cheap), one needs considerable, convenient practice space, in order to be competitive.

The F5J format is interesting and challenging. While I don't know that I will be taking the plunge anytime soon, it was fun to get out and observe the event. I probably wouldn't have gone at all if I weren't already Pfizered. The folks in the Central Valley aren't big on masks.

There is another F5J contest this month, April 24th and 25th at Perris, CA, if you'd like to see a contest for yourself. I have included some of the photographs I took so you can get a taste of the activities. One of the attendees put a video together that you can watch [here](#).

Baseball is being played on the fields at Entradero Park. Most of the activity is in the late afternoons and on the weekends. Please remember that we do

not fly if there are organized baseball activities underway on any of the fields at the park. Contact a club officer if you need the gate combinations for the park and field.

If you are new to flying at Entradero Park, you will need to fill out the City of Torrance Release of Liability form for COVID-19. If you have previously submitted the form, you do not need to fill out the form a second time. Face coverings and social distancing are required at the field. Please follow these rules.

Please contact a club officer if there are any issues with gate or field access. Remember that only club officers can distribute the combinations to club members.

This coming Saturday, April 10th, is our scheduled Fun Fly at Del Cerro Park. The long range forecast is for sunny skies and southwest winds of 16 miles per hour. This could be fun if you have a plane that likes to zoom. Guys usually show up between 11:00 and noon.

Parking continues to be a challenge. This is especially true with the nice spring weather we are experiencing. The City of Rancho Palos Verdes continues to study the problem but no easy solution is in sight.

Once again, please get your membership package submitted for 2021.

Take care and I hope to see you at one of the fields.

All the best,
Jeff

PS - You can find the A.M.A. event schedule for April [here](#). There are a lot of interesting events this month. If you attend an event, please consider providing a write-up and some pics for the newsletter.



F5J Soaring Contest in Visalia, CA



*Please send in your
2021 membership today.*

Thank you!



More F5J from Visalia, CA

