

CATEGORY CHANGES 3 • COMPETITION TURNS • REGIONAL SERIES

FAA Aerobatics

AUGUST 2006

Bob Heuer

An IAC Innovator Remembered

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Judson Bartlett

"Did They Teach You How to Use the Rudder?"

By Scott Westover

My dad chuckled through the intercom as I skidded into the downwind leg of the first pattern we flew together. "Did they teach you how to use the rudder?" he joked. I was a newly minted private pilot, and he was my first passenger. He was also the reason I learned how to fly. My father, Dean Westover, is a retired crop duster and corporate pilot who lost his medical when I was a little boy. I grew up hearing the best stories and learning to instinctively shield my eyes from the sun and "look in front of the sound" every time an airplane droned overhead.

In my 20s I finally had the time and money to complete my private pilot training. My motivation was the opportunity to catch a glimpse of the world my father had lost a couple of decades earlier. Part of me believed I could get it back for him. I completed my training in secret and shared the news only after I had my certificate in hand. From that moment, our relationship has taken to the sky. With my father as a coach, I became more comfortable in the cockpit. Soon I had renewed curiosity about those crop-dusting stories and sought out some specialized instruction in aerobatics. After an introductory loop and roll I was hooked.

In many ways I really did reclaim part of that world my father had lost. I will never forget watching his collar flap wildly in the front open cockpit as we rolled my Acro Sport II for the first time. We continue to fly together, and he made me feel famous by acting as my personal photographer during my first contest.

The people I have met through aviation and the aerobatic community are remarkable. As the editor of *Sport Aerobatics* I'll work to make each issue of this magazine a reflection of

My motivation was the opportunity to catch a glimpse of the world my father had lost a couple of decades earlier.

this special community that each of us has discovered in our own way. We will balance recreational and competitive aerobatics and offer practical tips for both pilot and plane. Above all, we want to support our grassroots aerobatic base. The IAC was founded on the belief that the strength of the organization will be determined by the strength of local chapters. I am excited to meet more of our members through my work with *Sport Aerobatics*. It's your magazine, and your comments and feedback will make a terrific publication even better.

SPORT Aerobatics



www.iac.org

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The International Aerobatic Club is a division of



The Leader In Recreational Aviation

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SPORT AEROBATICS (USPS 953-560) is owned by the International Aerobatic Club, Inc., and is published monthly at EAA Aviation Center, Editorial Department, P.O. Box 3086, Oshkosh, WI 54903-3086. Periodical postage is paid at Oshkosh Post Office, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901 and other post offices. Membership rate for the International Aerobatic Club, Inc., is \$45.00 per 12-month period of which \$18.00 is for the subscription to *SPORT AEROBATICS*.

Manuscripts submitted for publication become the property of the International Aerobatic Club, Inc. Photographs will be returned upon request of the author. Black and white glossy are requested to assure the best quality reproduction. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *SPORT AEROBATICS*, P.O. Box 3086, Oshkosh, WI 54903-3086. PM 40032445 Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to World Distribution Services, Station A, P.O. Box 54, Windsor, ON N9A 6J5, e-mail: cpcreturns@wdsmail.com.

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President's Page

by VICKI CRUSE IAC 22968

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Hey, pass it on!

Sharing knowledge, inspiration, and equipment is a big part of the IAC

One of the complaints often heard about aerobatic competitions is the unwillingness for the "veterans" to help new people. I think this is the exception, not the rule. I know of several examples of people helping people, including first-timers at contests. This helpful attitude goes back further than this, to the aerobatic instructors. Take Wayne Handley for instance. Most people know Wayne Handley the air show pilot, but fewer people know Wayne Handley the aerobatic instructor. Wayne owns an Extra 300 and flies out of Metz field in California.

By the time the first few minutes of an aerobatic flight are completed, Wayne knows instantly if he's changed someone. When the flight is over, if the student hears the following words, "This could be a very expensive flight for you," then the person is hooked.

One of Wayne's latest victims is Rodger Miller of Pacific Grove, California. Rodger took an introductory flight with Wayne and shortly thereafter found himself the owner of a Christen Eagle and at his first contest in Primary in Paso Robles, California. He placed second and was surprised at how helpful everyone was. He'll be back flying Sportsman in the fall.

Another newbie is Judy Phelps, who with her husband, Clay Phelps, owns CP Aviation in Santa Paula, California. To make a long story short, Judy was a waitress at the airport restaurant and met Clay. She started helping with the maintenance business, married Clay, learned to fly, started running the flight school, became an instructor, got hooked on aerobatics, went to a contest, bought a Pitts, and is currently inspiring people to learn more about aerobatics. Judy and two other pilots, Masa Utsumi (a native of Japan) and Rich Stowell, are partners in a Pitts S-2B used at the flight school. Judy and Masa flew the Paso Robles contest, both in Sportsman. Several people from Santa Paula and the local Ninety-Nines chapter came to watch Judy fly. It's one thing to talk about what competition is and another to have people come and watch it. Before Judy got home, everyone knew how she and Masa had placed (Masa earned third, and Judy was 22nd out of 24...she got the brain fade out of her system early). Shortly after arriving home, several people were asking about aerobatic training and how they could get involved. This is what the IAC is all about!

Sharing goes beyond introductory flights and instruction. It also applies to equipment. At the Paso Robles contest, Norm

Mannery had a radio issue that would have forced him out of the contest had it not been for the generosity of Jenner Knight, who lent him a radio to complete the contest. What makes this more significant is Norm was in first place and Jenner was in second, and this is exactly how they finished. Jenner didn't have to lend his competitor his radio, but he did.

Then there is sharing airplanes, when a fellow competitor finds himself or herself without one. Vicky Benzing of Saratoga, California, found herself the unlikely victim of a canopy loss, and her schedule of contests was in jeopardy. Within days of the incident, three people called and offered the use of their plane. One of these people, Diana Towne, was not even planning on flying the contest, but she came out to volunteer and provide her airplane to Vicky. Vicky also flew Doug Sowder's airplane for contests in the northwest that she otherwise would have missed.

One of the observations often made by people who do not fly is that competitors help each other. Most who don't fly expect it to literally be a "competition," which it is on the surface. If you hang around a little, you'll see people encouraging each other and discussing strategy, all to help each other fly better. Everyone wants to do well and win, but there's more to it than that. This is an individual sport, and you are competing against yourself, whether you realize it or not. Those that come out to "beat Fred" don't last long in this sport, because it simply isn't about that. It is about how well you can fly today based on a standard and on the opinions of the judges. Where you end up should be how close you flew to perfection versus your competition, and there is always room for improvement.

Lastly, an e-mail from Jim Walker of North Carolina came through. The Exploder a few months ago, and I think he hit the nail on the head when discussing the perceived elitism in aerobatics. Jim observed that most pilots are introverts, and their shyness is often mistaken for being stuck up. He also offered some great tips for welcoming new people. A personality study completed in the 1970s on aerobatic pilots revealed these characteristics: introverted, perfectionists, driven, independent, and "derive satisfaction from personal achievement." Notice it doesn't say antisocial. Make an effort to introduce yourself to each first-time competitor and bring him or her into the fold. All veterans were once first-timers, too. Share your knowledge with others, and you never know where it might lead.

*Everyone wants
to do well and
win, but there's
more to it
than that.*

Acclaimed *One Six Right* Aviation DVD Available Through EAA



One Six Right, a full-length documentary highlighting the wonder and fascination with flight, is now available through EAA. *One Six Right* celebrates the unsung hero of aviation—the local airport—by tracing the life, history, and struggles of an aviation icon: Southern California's Van Nuys Airport. Using celebrity interviews, breathtaking aerial photography, and an original score, *One Six Right* producer and director Brian J. Terwilliger vividly depicts the romance of aviation, inspiring pilots and non-pilots alike.

The *One Six Right* DVD, as well as the CD soundtrack, is available for purchase through EAA's secure online store, by phone, or through EAA's merchandise catalog. To order go to www.EAA.org/shop or call 800-843-3612. For more information and to watch the *One Six Right* preview trailer, visit www.OneSixRight.com.

Michael C. Church Renews NAFI Master and Master Instructor-Aerobatics Credentials

The National Association of Flight Instructors (NAFI) takes pride in announcing a significant aviation accomplishment on the part of Michael C. Church, Sunrise Avi-

ation's chief flight instructor and a resident of Costa Mesa, California. Recently, Michael's designations as a Master Instructor (certificated flight instructor) and a Master Instructor-Aerobatics were renewed by NAFI and the International Aerobatic Club (IAC).

To help put this achievement in its proper perspective, there are approximately 90,000 CFIs in the United States. Fewer than 500 of them have achieved that distinction thus far. The last 11 national Flight Instructors of the Year were Master Instructors. Michael is one of only 39 California aviation educators who has earned the prestigious "Master" title. He is also one of only two CFIs to hold both the Master Instructor and the Master Instructor-Aerobatics concurrently.



The Master Instructor designation is a national accreditation recognized by the FAA that is earned by candidates through a rigorous process of continuing education and peer review. Much like a flight instructor's certificate, it must be renewed biennially. This process parallels the continuing education regimen used by other professionals to enhance their knowledge base while increasing their professionalism. Simply put, the Master Instructor designation is a means by which to identify those outstanding aviation educators, those "teachers of flight," who have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to excellence, professional growth, and service to the aviation community.

Red Bull Air Race Brings the Thrill of Aerobatics to TV

The 2006 Air Race series is well underway. The race series consists of nine stops in as many different countries, which include Abu Dhabi, Turkey, Spain, Russia, and Australia.



Each race draws hundreds of thousands of fans, and Barcelona alone topped more than one million spectators.

Precision flying at speeds of up to 300 mph is the name of the game in this competition. Pilots withstand more than 10 positive and negative g-forces as they maneuver a course of 60-foot-high, air-filled pylons. As in car races, every ounce of energy is used in each round by these carefully selected world-class pilots who hail from eight different countries. Now, the races will play out in living rooms and luxury hangars via television.

Fox Sports Net (FSN) will broadcast eight races, so American race fans can rev up for the eighth stop in San Francisco. Currently the race is broadcast in 35 countries worldwide, reaching more than 20 million viewers per stop. This is the first television broadcast of the series in the United States. The broadcast schedule for the series is as follows:

Location	Date	FSN Air Date
Barcelona	May 6	July 29
Berlin	May 27	Aug 5
Abu Dhabi	Mar 18	Aug 12
Istanbul	July 29	Aug 19
Budapest	Aug 20	Oct 2
Longleat	Sept 2	Oct 9
San Francisco	Oct 7	Oct 15
Australia	Nov 19	Dec 11

Info at: www.RedBullAirRace.com.



Supporting the Best of the Best

Exciting opportunity for a lead sponsor to soar!

By Norm Dewitt, President, UAUSA

Next month, from September 24-29, 2006, more than 100 of our IAC members will make the annual pilgrimage to Sherman/Denison, Texas, for the United States National Aerobatic Championships. Pilots in all five categories will compete for flight medals, trophies, and bragging rights as to who are the best in the country. This year will also be a team selection year for the U.S. Unlimited Aerobatic Team, the "Best of the Best." Five male pilots and five female pilots will be selected to represent the United States of America in the 2007 World Aerobatic Championships (the location will be determined by CIVA in November).

Many of us will remember that the members of the 2005 U.S. Unlimited Aerobatic Team that competed in Spain were entirely on their own to cover all of their expenses. Each team member was responsible for training expenses, travel, aircraft shipping or rental, entry fees, team coaching expenses, food, hotel, and I could go on. The cost per member was close to \$30,000. Many of us contributed to the team by making personal

donations through IAC, and several members held their own fundraising events to help offset the costs.

The United States Aerobatic Foundation (USAF) was responsible for funding all U.S. aerobatic teams, but facing financial hardships, it was unable to financially support the 2005 team. The biggest, but by

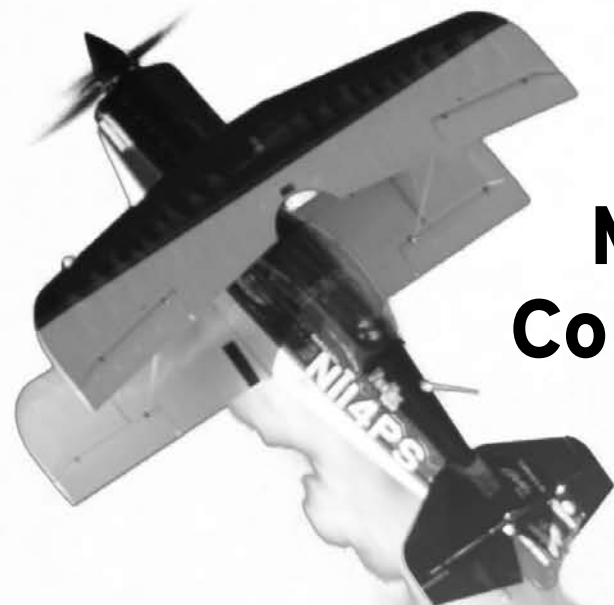
Late in 2005, a decision was made, with inputs from the IAC Board and others, to form a new aerobatic foundation.

no means the only, debt was an outstanding bill to the U.S. Air Force for C-5A transport to the 2001 WAC held in Spain. I am pleased to report that all of the outstanding financial obligations of the USAF have been settled, including the U.S. Air Force bill.

Late in 2005, a decision was made, with inputs from the IAC Board and others, to form a new aerobatic foundation. This foundation is now in place and is named Unlimited Aerobatics USA Inc. (UAUSA). Its

mission is to focus on the fundraising for the U.S. Unlimited Aerobatic Team, while it is the IAC's responsibility to select the team. UAUSA is a separate corporation from IAC, with its own board of directors. Its responsibilities are spelled out in a Letter of Agreement with IAC. The IAC president holds a position on the UAUSA Board, and the president of UAUSA sits on the IAC Board. UAUSA is registered in California, and 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status approval has been granted by both the IRS and the State of California.

It is UAUSA's desire to seek sponsorships that will provide the funds necessary to send our future U.S. Unlimited Aerobatic Teams to the World Aerobatic Championships without the team members having to pay their own expenses. I am interested in finding a lead sponsor that will have its corporate name directly tied to the team, similar to the U.S. Postal Service and later the Discovery Channel being tied to the U.S. Cycling Team in the Tour de France. If you have any ideas or corporate contacts that could help, please contact me at Norm.Dewitt@gmail.com.



Mastering the Competition Turn

By Greg Morris

“Don’t get in the airplane; put it on!”

***Editor’s Note:** We would like to thank the many Sport Aerobatics readers who have offered their praise for the recent recreational aerobatics articles by Rich Stowell. In response to your suggestions, we are expanding the number of pieces prepared by aerobatic flight instructors. In June, Rich addressed the importance of becoming comfortable with stalls. This month, Greg Morris introduces horizontal turning and banking with the competition turn. If you have a specific topic or maneuver that you would like to see Sport Aerobatics address in the future, please let me know at Tookyflyer@tds.net. Please keep your comments coming!*

If a student pilot were to perform a competition turn during private pilot training, his instructor would probably yell at him—and rightly so! By contrast, the competition turn is often one of the first maneuvers presented to a new aerobatic student as he begins a basic aerobatic course. It serves as an excellent warm-up maneuver prior to beginning a sequence, and if practiced and flown with discipline it can yield consistent high scores in competition. More importantly, the competition turn is an outstanding way to learn how to maneuver an aircraft around all three axes based on visual reference and to match control inputs with aircraft-based axes of motion.

There are three key parts to the competition turn, including: **1.** Rolling to at least 60 degrees of bank while maintaining a constant heading and altitude, **2.** Turning at a constant altitude, while maintaining the set bank angle, and **3.** Rolling back to level flight at the same roll rate as used to roll in while maintaining a constant heading.

When students hear the word “turn,” they usually think about a conventional turn. Sometimes this leads to difficulty when learning to fly a competition turn because the competition turn has little in common with its more conventional cousin. In a coordinated conventional turn the heading of the aircraft changes constantly as the nose accelerates into and decelerates out of the turn. Rolling into a competition turn differs because as the bank angle of the aircraft increases, a combination of rudder and elevator are used to prevent the nose from moving off the entry heading. The entry and exit of the turn require the aircraft to be increasingly slipped as the bank angle increases to prevent the nose from moving off the desired heading. In a competition turn, the fuselage plays

a role in generating lift to maintain altitude (remember, the bank of a competition turn must be at least 60 degrees, which causes the wings to lose much of their ability to create lift). As the bank angle increases, most of the lift generated by the wings is trying to turn the aircraft. To reduce this turning tendency, the lift being produced by the wing must be reduced, which is accomplished by reducing the angle of attack.

Once the desired bank angle has been established, the next phase begins: the turn itself. This portion of the competition turn is similar to a conventional turn. Flying the turn is performed just like a steep turn during private pilot training, only at a slightly higher bank angle. To begin the turn the aircraft must be coordinated and the angle of attack increased; the weight of the aircraft is shifted from a combination of the elevator and rudder to just the elevator. After reaching the desired ending heading, the turn must be stopped by again reducing the angle of attack and adding rudder, shifting the weight of the aircraft back to the rudder and elevator. This causes a slip to maintain heading while the nose rolls on point.

Understanding the dynamics of a maneuver provides a foundation to continue the learning process in flight. When flying a competition turn, there are certain steps you must take to be successful. First, using the proper reference during the maneuver is crucial. A competition turn cannot be flown well without choosing—and then actually using—reference points outside of the airplane. This is especially important during the entry and exit rolls.

From straight and level flight, choose a point on the horizon directly in front of the aircraft. While watching this point, smoothly but rapidly bank the aircraft to 60 degrees, using whatever combination of rudder and

elevator is required to keep the nose fixed on the point. As you bank the airplane, monitor the angle by using peripheral vision to see the angle between the wings and the horizon. Keep the nose on your point for a count of two and then allow the aircraft to turn by reducing the opposite rudder while increasing the back pressure on the elevator. The aircraft should now be in a coordinated, level turn. Immediately find the point where the horizon intersects the cowl of the aircraft and hold it there. Be aware that most aircraft will want to roll into the turn even more, so be ready to use some aileron to counteract this over banking tendency. When the nose reaches the exit heading, reapply the rudder while reducing the back pressure on the elevator to stop the nose on point. Hold the bank angle for another count of two and roll out at the same rate as the roll in. It sounds pretty simple, but remember: In aerobatics, as in most pursuits, practice makes perfect. Just as the competition turn is broken into three distinct phases, it is best learned in pieces.

The first piece is establishing the roll into the maneuver from straight and level flight. Slowly roll the aircraft to a shallow bank angle (no more than 15 degrees to start) while keeping the nose on a chosen reference point. Hold the bank for a count of two and then roll out, keeping the nose on the reference point. Once you are comfortable with rolling the aircraft from level flight to the desired bank angle and back to straight and level while maintaining the reference heading, make the drill more challenging. Increase your target bank angle by 10 degrees and increase the rate of roll, then repeat the drill. Continue this until the target bank angle is 60 degrees. When rolling, focus on not going past the target bank angle. If the bank angle is incorrect, just hold it and fix it next time. The



Greg Morris takes flight in an SNJ.

same is true for the rollout to level flight. Learning to set the bank angle and hit the target is something that both recreational and competition pilots should practice to develop confidence and precision.

To master the turning phase of the maneuver, practice steep turns at 60 degrees of bank. Again, guard against over banking the aircraft. If you find yourself in an overly steep bank,

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maintain the new bank angle and complete the maneuver. If the aircraft climbs or descends, simply level the aircraft at the current altitude instead of returning to your entry altitude.

The remaining challenge is to link the previous two training exercises and transition from the slipping bank (established in the roll) to the turn itself and back again. In *Better Aerobatics*, Alan Cassidy describes an excellent drill to practice stopping and starting the turn on heading. He suggests you establish a coordinated turn at a shallow bank angle and then stop the turn on a previously chosen heading. Maintain bank angle and altitude. Count to two and restart the turn. Repeat this drill, stopping at precise intervals. Once the turn can be started and stopped without changing heading, altitude, or bank angle, increase the bank angle by 10 degrees and repeat the drill. The drill is complete when it can be performed

at 60 degrees of bank.

There are common errors and potential hazards associated with every aerobatic maneuver. These are some to watch for as you perfect the competition turn.

Bleeding Into the Turn Bleeding into the turn is when the aircraft starts to turn before the bank angle has been established. To avoid this, remember that a competition turn is not a regular turn. Competition turns aren't appropriate when flying passengers, and regular turns aren't appropriate in contests. They have different purposes and are therefore flown differently. If bleeding into the turn becomes a problem, practice rolling on a point as described above.

Mechanical Control Use A major barrier to successfully flying the competition turn is using the controls mechanically. Ironically, reading books or articles can cause people to

think about the control inputs used to perform the maneuver exclusively, which is then carried into the airplane. When thinking through a maneuver, do not visualize the control inputs. Think about the sight picture from the cockpit and what should be seen throughout the maneuver. Don't get in the airplane; put it on.

Unusual Attitudes Although by its nature a benign maneu-

ver, the competition turn can result in unexpected attitudes or situations. The most common are spinning out of the maneuver and nose-low unusual attitudes. If the aircraft is uncoordinated during the turn and the angle of attack exceeds critical, the aircraft will spin over the top or under the bottom if slipping or skidding respectively. Over banking can lead to a descending spiral

Bleeding into the turn is when the aircraft starts to turn before the bank angle has been established.

with increasing airspeed, a classic nose-low unusual attitude. Bring the throttle back to idle, level the wings under the nearest horizon, and pull. Above all, get good spin and unusual attitude training from a qualified instructor. Without this specialized training from an experienced instructor, a pilot isn't prepared or safe to fly aerobatics.

If you are planning to fly in competition, there are a couple of specific points regarding the competition turn that you may find useful. For example, if the bank is slightly off when entering the competition turn, a pilot can bring less attention to the error by not correcting it until the next maneuver. If judges see an aircraft they think is at slightly less than 60 degrees of bank, they may deduct a point or two, but they will almost certainly be lenient and give the pilot the benefit of the doubt. If the pilot fixes this error, the judges can see not only that the initial bank angle was incorrect, but by exactly how much and can deduct points both for the initial error *and* the correction.

During the turning portion of the maneuver, do not "chase" altitude. In competition, judges will be watching for changes in altitude while the

aircraft is flying toward or away from them. This is a difficult proposition at best. Rapid changes in pitch will be readily apparent, while smooth ones may not. A pilot can even use this to gain or lose energy for the maneuver following the turn. By turning toward the judges, a pilot can descend slightly to gain energy; the descent will be hidden as the angle above the horizon increases when the aircraft moves closer to the judges. Conversely, by turning away from the judges, the pilot can climb slightly to lose energy. The climb is masked by the aircraft's decreasing angle above the horizon. Of course, these tips are no substitute for mastering the maneuver and eliminating the need for corrections altogether!

Both recreational and competitive aerobatic pilots will benefit from perfecting the competition turn. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

Look outside. The instruments are useful to spot trends. If a pilot looks inside more than once every five seconds (and even then for more than a quick glance), she is spending too much time head-down in the cockpit.

Be smooth. Control inputs should be assertive, quick, and smooth. Aerobatics isn't about beating up airplanes or forcing them through maneuvers. It's a dance, not a boxing match.

Consider energy management. The competition turn can be an excellent way to gain or lose energy in a sequence. When planning a flight, look at the maneuvers that follow the turn to decide how much throttle to use, what bank angle to set, and decide whether to try to hide a slight climb or descent in the turn.

Fly safe. No matter what maneuver you are flying, be sure to know your personal minimums and endurance.

Good luck, and remember: With patience and practice you will be rolling and turning with precision. ✈

Greg is an active aerobatic and warbird instructor and has competed up to the Advanced level. He has been flying aerobatics for the past seven years and teaching aerobatics for the past five. A graduate of the University of Southern California with a degree in aerospace engineering and a law student at the University of Chicago, he holds the designation of Master Instructor-Aerobatics from the National Association of Flight Instructors and the IAC. Greg also owns and operates Omega Warbirds, providing warbird training, consulting, and management, and is active in the IAC and the Commemorative Air Force.



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Remembering

Bob Heuer

A life in aviation and aerobatics

By Mike Heuer, IAC 4

Bob Heuer, one of IAC's founders, IAC 2, and our club's first president, passed away June 16 after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. This article gives me a wonderful opportunity to celebrate my dad's life and recall some of his contributions to our aerobatic community. He made a big difference in this world and impacted all of our lives.

For those veteran members who had the chance to know him, perhaps a little stroll through IAC history will bring back some memories. For those who have joined IAC in recent years, this is an opportunity to share our heritage and provide a glimpse into the hearts of those special people who made it possible for us to enjoy aerobatics as we know it today.

Robert Lee Heuer was born on May 10, 1927, in Bureau County, Illinois. He was the only son of Fred and Melvina Heuer, who lived most of their lives in the small town of Yorktown. He was the great-grandson of Karl and Marie Heuer, who immigrated to America from Germany in 1881.

Bob was born just 10 days before Charles Lindbergh took off from America on his way to Paris—an event that shook the world, led to incredible development in aviation, and was to impact Bob's life in so many ways in the decades to come. Bob attended Tampico High School but dropped out at age 17 to join the Marine Corps in 1944. That decision helped shape the rest of his life. He

completed basic training in 1945 and ended his tour in north China when the Marines found themselves in the midst of a civil war there.

After the United States pulled their forces out of China, Bob found himself on a ship on the way home to California. It was on that ship that someone told him of the GI Bill. He subsequently enrolled in an aviation school in Galesburg, Illinois, after marrying my mother in July 1947. They lived in a trailer for the next two years while he completed his aviation training and earned his pilot certificate and mechanic ratings. In 1949, he started a crop-dusting business with his father in Yorktown.

My dad was ambitious. He loved flying and aviation and wanted to develop his career. In February 1953 he was hired as a pilot by American Airlines, his employer for the next 34 years, and was initially based at Chicago's Midway Airport. Chicago was to remain his base for most of his career.

During a wonderful career with American, which ended in 1985, he flew many types of aircraft, as he was fortunate to fly during a period of incredible development and growth for the airline industry. His career started on the Convair 240 and ended with international flying in the DC-10. He was trained and rated

in so many kinds of aircraft that it took two FAA pilot certificates to list them all. He was proud of his airline career and was reluctant to retire.

His profession caused Dad to miss more than one of our birthdays, many holidays, family times, and weekends. Our mother had to cope for days on end with three active and rambunctious children. But we all survived and prospered because of Dad's sense of duty, responsibility, and his clear view of what it meant to

It was quite a different scene from what we know today, and a look back gives you an appreciation for how much our sport has developed. The Aresti System was not used in the United States at that time; there were no catalogues available.

It was all very mysterious.

be a father. He clearly had two loves. The first was his family; the second was aviation.

That second love led to all sorts of experiences, activities, contact, and work that left our world a better place. Outside of the airline business, he loved aerobatics, and sport and recreational flying. His heroes were the air show pilots he met in the 1950s, as he had a particular love for aerobatics. I can recount countless times when he would regale us with stories of the Cole Brothers Air Show

and particularly Marion Cole's performances in his highly modified 450 Stearman. Bob was flying Stearmans in his crop-dusting business and had a particular love for this airplane.

Later, in the 1960s, Duane Cole's books could be found in our house, and I cannot tell you how many times I read or flipped through *To a Pilot* or *Roll Around a Point* as well as Harold Krier's *Modern Aerobatics*. Dad's love for aerobatics was infectious. After restoring a Navy N3N fresh out of Navy surplus, he and I ventured to the Antique Airplane Association Fly-In in Ottumwa, Iowa, in the fall of 1965. It was there we witnessed our first aerobatic contest, which had been held for a number of years under the AAA's umbrella. The contest was chaired that year by Richard Bach, who later achieved fame as the author of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*.

It was quite a different scene from what we know today, and a look back gives you an appreciation for how much our sport has developed. The Aresti System was not used in the United States at that time; there were no catalogues available. It was all very mysterious. World championships in Europe seemed very far away.

The "rules" were printed on one side of a piece of paper with a "list of maneuvers" on the other. To this day I have no idea how these contests were judged, yet there was some

Bob Heuer at Oshkosh with his 450 hp Stearman. (photo by Ted Koston)



Bob with the Ryan ST-A N42X, modified by the 200 hp Ranger engine. (photo by J. L. Dobrilovic)

spectacular flying by Dick Lybarger in his 450 Stearman and Bob Lyjak in his Waco Taperwing that year. Their category was called “Professional” at the time. This contest had a profound impact on our lives, however, and it launched a lifetime of activities for both Dad and me in subsequent years.

There were only two aerobatic contests in the United States in the mid-1960s—the AAA contest in Ottumwa and the U.S. National Aerobatic Championships in Reno, Nevada. The Nationals were held in conjunction with the air races there thanks to the work and foresight of Duane Cole. In about 1965, the first aerobatic organization was formed in the United States, the Aerobatic Club of America, and this set the stage for wider American participation in the

world championships and more competitions on the domestic scene. During this time, there was a lot going on, though it was a bit fragmented.

The Aerobatic Club of America (ACA) was getting organized, a larger U.S. team competed in Moscow in 1966, the EAA was expanding rapidly, and more and more homebuilt aerobatic airplanes were taking to the air. Though we had no idea of it at the time, the golden age of aerobatics had begun. Plans for the Pitts Special became available to the homebuilt community, and the Champion Citabria was introduced. The subsequent developments in aerobatics were in no small measure due to the arrival of these two aircraft on the scene.

A new contest, the EAA Aerobatic Contest, was introduced in 1966. It was held in conjunction with the

EAA fly-in convention in Rockford, Illinois. That contest was staged at Dacy Airport in Harvard, Illinois, and was to continue there through 1969 when EAA moved its huge event to Oshkosh. Then-EAA President Paul Poberezny was keen on promoting safety in aerobatic homebuilts and recognized early on the dangers of the activity if not nurtured in the proper way. At the time, he formed a “Precision Flying Division” of EAA, and though it existed in name only and without any real membership, it set the stage later for further aerobatic development in the EAA community. Ottumwa, Rockford, and Harvard—names synonymous with those aviation events of the time—brought the Heuer family into sport aviation and aerobatics in an intense way, and we liked what we saw. All of us agreed that we had never met a finer bunch of people, and what was happening with airplanes and aerobatics was exciting to everyone. We wanted to be a part of the action. Dad made that historic EAA Aerobatic Contest his first competition, where he flew a Ryan STA.

Dad was always intense about everything he did. In 1966, he bought the Ryan STA from Bill Dodd, and in a winter-long project in 1967 and 1968 we worked together to modify the airplane with a 200-hp Ranger engine. We were both intent on flying aerobatic competition, and the Ryan was a delightful aerobatic airplane, though short on power with its original Menasco engine. Dad first flew Unlimited in 1968, and my own first contest, competing in Primary, was in Monroe, Louisiana, that same summer. The entire Heuer family was there to support us. Marion Cole had organized that contest, and it was one of the first regional events to be held in the United States. That summer, Dad organized the Mid-America Aerobatic Championships

in Aurora, Illinois, offering \$10,000 in prize money (an enormous sum at the time), which helped to attract many of the top aerobatic pilots of the era.

Also in 1968, the U.S. National Aerobatic Championships moved to Oak Grove, Texas, under ACA sponsorship and the leadership of a new ACA president, M.H. “Pappy” Spinks. ACA introduced the first rule book in the United States that same year, establishing once and for all a formal document for aerobatic pilots to go by. It was an enormous development. The ACA rules established Primary, Advanced, and Unlimited as official categories, and the organization began asserting its role as a new division of the National Aeronautic Association—as the sanctioning body for aerobatics in the United States. Aerobatics was moving fast, yet outside of Aurora, Monroe, Oak Grove, and Ottumwa, there were no aerobatic contests.

By 1969 it was obvious that ACA’s principal focuses were the Unlimited category and the U.S. team. This fact as well as other incidents that took place at the Nationals that year led Bob Heuer, with other close supporters like Duane Cole and Don Taylor, to conclude that a new organization was needed. The decision to form IAC (which remained unnamed at that time) was made in a rental car in a parking lot in Dallas-Fort Worth while those men were attending the Nationals.

The Experimental Aircraft Association was the obvious choice for affiliation largely because its expertise in organization of local chapters and regional aviation events was already well-known and respected. Thus it was natural that Bob Heuer would approach Paul Poberezny in Milwaukee to help organize, under the EAA’s wing, a new aerobatic association. At that time the EAA had moved to Oshkosh and had the experience of

four aerobatic contests under its belt. Perhaps the most important part of the “fit” between EAA and aerobatic enthusiasts was the shared commitment to protect flying freedom. Poberezny was committed to making sure that amateur-built aircraft were operating safely, especially when flying aerobatics. He understood that a safe flying record was essential to preventing government intrusion on the wonderful freedoms that EAA had carved out for the new sport aviation movement.

These values were shared by the founding members of IAC. The founders were Bob Heuer, Don Taylor, Jim Dees, Jim Lacey, and John Lumley. Intimately involved on an almost daily basis were Paul, Tom, and Bonnie Poberezny. Others quickly jumped in to help. My role at the time was to observe and help Dad, and I ultimately typed up the first IAC rule book myself on a manual typewriter in the living room. Don

Bob in the Pitts taken at the EAA Airshow in Waukesha, Wisconsin in 1969. (photo by Ted Koston)





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Bob Heuer, Curtis Pitts, and Mike Heuer at Fond du Lac in 1976.

Taylor wrote the entire judging section based on his experience.

From the fall of 1969 and through the early months of 1970, there was a flurry of organizational activity. My father recognized that a few key elements had to be put in place immediately if the club was going to succeed. After the bylaws were finished in the fall, work began on the IAC rule book. This was a period highlighted by numerous meetings in our home in Maple Park, Illinois.

The name "Sportsman" was coined by Dad for the entry-level category, and a new Intermediate category was added. Technical safety standards were introduced and many of the features of contests that still exist today were committed to writing. After a 10-day barnstorming tour in the family Bonanza—which

took us to Louisville, Atlanta, Homestead, New Orleans, Waco, and Kansas City to consult with people like Paul Soucy, Frank Morgan, Curtis Pitts, Bill Dodd, Cotton Hodges, Roscoe Morton, Frank Price, and Dale Drummond during the winter of 1969-70—the final touches were put on the book and it was off to the printer. Our attention then turned to the formation of chapters and a schedule of regional contests, which came together quickly. There was an untapped pool of talent out there and a hunger within the EAA movement for a grassroots aerobatic organization, which was built on local chapters and regional activities.

Bob Heuer wanted to continue the tradition of the EAA Aerobatic Contest started in Harvard, so he and I made a visit to the airport manager of

the Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, airport. The manager was Will Haase, and he agreed to host the IAC Championships there in 1970. This was also the first year the EAA fly-in convention was held in Oshkosh, 20 miles to the north. Things were coming together for the IAC, with 1,000 members joining in the first year. The Fond du Lac contest was to continue for nearly three decades, and hundreds of pilots participated over those years.

Over the course of the next three years, the major programs of IAC were put in place. Thanks to the work of Verne Jobst and Bob Davis, the Achievement Awards program was introduced in May 1971. Dad was one of the first pilots to fly for his "smooth" patches. Smooth award patches are earned by flying a designated set of figures in front of a judge listed on the current IAC Approved Judges list. As I mentioned earlier, Dad was an intense pilot, so it was no surprise that he elected to fly all five smooth categories (Primary through Unlimited) in one flight in his Pitts S-1S N442X. Later that year, he sold that airplane to Charlie Hillard, who went on to fly it to victory in the 1972 World Aerobatic Championships in Salon de Provence, France. The airplane now rests in the EAA AirVenture Museum in Oshkosh. I had the privilege of flying it for two seasons in Advanced in 1969 and 1970.

IAC published a simple, mimeographed newsletter in 1970 and 1971. However, Bob Heuer and the new board of directors of IAC recognized the need for a full-blown magazine. *Sport Aerobatics* was introduced in October 1971 and has been in continuous production ever since. Its first editor was Verne Jobst, a man of incredible energy who went on to succeed Dad as president in 1973.

During those years, aerobatic airplanes were occasionally plagued with structural or mechanical prob-

lems, so the IAC introduced the Malfunction and Defects Program. The program later became the Technical Safety Program under Fred Cailey, who collected most of the information that can be found today in IAC's *Technical Tips* manuals. Bob Davis was the program's first chairman. Dozens of articles have been published in these last 35 years, which resulted in an incredible safety record from a technical standpoint. Also, prior to the IAC rule book's introduction, there were no technical inspections of aircraft at contests. Today, those inspections can be credited with having avoided countless problems.

Local chapters came along quickly and with them a full schedule of regional contests began to develop. Chapter 1 in Chicago was the first IAC chapter, and it was also host to the first Sportsman Only contest, which was held in the spring of 1970. As grassroots chapters appeared all over the country, these groups ended up being IAC's biggest recruiting tool. We learned that people are most enthusiastic about their "local" organization, and that belief continues to guide the IAC's success today.

After setting all of these programs in place, with the help of so many fine men and women, my father retired from the IAC presidency in 1973 and went on to serve on the board of directors and as president emeritus. His advice and counsel were always available to me when I succeeded Carl Bury as president in 1981.

Dad flew his last competition in N442X in 1971, although he continued his air show flying for some years. He was one of the original Red Devils from 1969 through 1971 and moved on to the 450 Stearman in the late '70s. He extensively modified the airplane and was often seen in the air show in Oshkosh through the early '80s. The airplane was featured on the cover of *EAA Sport Aviation*

in January 1980. In my admittedly biased opinion, it remains one of the most beautiful aerobatic airplanes of all time.

In 1985, Dad was stricken with medical problems and retired from American Airlines. The loss of his medical certificate was a real blow as he had always wished to continue flying after his airline career was over. During his last years, however, he enjoyed a life of travel and other recreational activities until Parkinson's began to take its toll.

Having Bob Heuer for a father made me the luckiest son ever. My brother and I went on to become the third generation of Heuers with pilot certificates and enjoyed careers in the airline industry. Everything I have and enjoy today I owe to my dad, including the part of my life defined by aerobatics. This has led to so many experiences, friendships, and travel that it is almost impossible for

me to remember all of it. Fathers are so important, and as I reviewed Dad's life in preparation for his funeral, his eulogy, and this article, I was reminded of a scene from *Saving Private Ryan*.

In the movie, a veteran is visiting the gravesite of a man who saved his life during World War II at the cost of his own. He said to his family, "Tell me I'm a good man." He desperately wanted reassurance that he had lived a good

life that would be partial compensation for the sacrifices this soldier had made for him. If Dad were saying the same to me, my answer would be, "Dad, you were a good man."

When we're all looking around at contests, enjoying our friends, flying those beautiful airplanes, and enjoying such freedom, we can thank people like Bob Heuer because he helped make it possible. It is my hope that I have been able to capture the character of the people who invested their time and energy into organizing our sport. The understanding that flying aerobatics is perhaps the ultimate freedom that cannot be taken for granted is a lesson that must be passed on from the founding generation to today's IAC members. We all play a role in preserving that freedom through our involvement in our local chapters and in supporting regional events. ✈

Mike, Bob, and Fred Heuer on the occasion of Mike's solo on his 16th birthday, Sept. 23, 1965.



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IAC Regional Series



Jeff Granger



Walt Plentis



Scott Francis

At the March 2002 board of directors meeting, an IAC Regional Championship Series format was officially approved. The series format awards competitors who register the highest consistent scores throughout the season. Here are the Regional Championship Series rules:

1. There are six regions: **Mid-America**—N. Dakota, S. Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky **Northeast**—Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina **Northwest**—Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming **South Central**—Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana **Southeast**—Tennessee, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida **Southwest**—California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona

2. Contests in a region's series are based on the location of the contest.

3. A series will consist of a minimum of three contests. (In the Northwest Region, two out of the possible three contests must be flown; the Canadian contest will be allowed.)

4. The average of the best three contests flown in the region will be used. If you fly in more than three, your highest scores will be used to arrive at your total percentage. This format will not only enable pilots to improve their scores by attending more contests, but also should encourage more participation at chapter contests.

5. The IAC will award first-, second-, and third-place titles and trophies in all categories in each region. Titles given will identify the series champion in each respective region—Mid-America Regional Series Champion, Southwest Regional Series Champion, Northeast Regional Series Champion, etc.

6. A competitor must be a member of a chapter that holds a contest in the region he/she declares for. (Note: This means competitors may compete for the Regional Series Champion title in more than one region *if* they belong to a chapter in each region they will be competing in.)

7. Competitors must declare their intent to compete in the Regional Championship Series by the registration deadline of May 1 and send in a fee when they declare. Entry fees for the series will directly pay for trophy expenses.

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As the 2006 season is unfolding, the IAC would like to congratulate the top pilots of 2005. The 2005 Regional Series final standings were as follows:

Pilot	IAC#	Region	Category	Rank	PP	Contests
Craig Henry	19118	Mid-America	Primary	1	84.81%	3
Joe Haycraft	25330	Mid-America	Sportsman	1	86.87%	5
David Scott	24053	Mid-America	Sportsman	2	86.49%	5
Keith Davis	431839	Mid-America	Sportsman	3	75.94%	3
Gordon Penner	429704	Mid-America	Sportsman	4	75.56%	3
Doug Bartlett	431228	Mid-America	Intermediate	1	86.35%	7
Jeff Granger	19907	Mid-America	Intermediate	2	83.03%	4
Robert Butts	24312	Mid-America	Intermediate	3	81.48%	3
Wayne Buescher	23561	Mid-America	Intermediate	4	80.48%	6
Richard MacDonald	4245	Mid-America	Intermediate	5	73.86%	4
Walt Plentis	26595	Mid-America	Advanced	1	85.80%	5
David Underwood	16611	Mid-America	Advanced	2	68.57%	4
Darrel Massman	19779	Mid-America	Unlimited	1	82.59%	4
Hugo Ritzenthaler	7414	Mid-America	Unlimited	2	65.90%	5
Weston Liu	10467	Northeast	Sportsman	1	79.78%	3
Wesley Jones	430707	Northeast	Sportsman	2	73.42%	3
Bill Gordon	28094	Northeast	Intermediate	1	81.02%	5
Scott Francis	430545	Northeast	Intermediate	2	80.97%	5
Rob Holland	27724	Northeast	Advanced	1	80.76%	3



Greg Howard



Matt Lawrence

Pilot	IAC#	Region	Category	Rank	PP	Contests
Matthew Lawrence	431571	Northwest	Sportsman	1	76.56%	3
John Smutny	25010	Northwest	Sportsman	2	73.59%	2
Mike Mulcahy	26416	Northwest	Intermediate	1	77.02%	2
Todd Whitmer	429762	Northwest	Advanced	1	80.81%	2
Doug Sowder	14590	Northwest	Advanced	2	80.17%	4
John Coffey	24357	Northwest	Advanced	3	77.04%	4
David Engh	22388	Northwest	Advanced	4	72.60%	2
Greg Howard	5954	Northwest	Unlimited	1	83.68%	4
Norm DeWitt	13669	Northwest	Unlimited	2	83.28%	2
Ann Marie Smith	27403	Northwest	Unlimited	3	68.09%	3
Sarah Tobin	432115	South Central	Sportsman	1	79.31%	4
Vince Walker	20877	South Central	Sportsman	2	78.76%	5
Todd Whitmer	429762	South Central	Advanced	1	80.36%	3
Norm DeWitt	13669	South Central	Unlimited	1	69.84%	3
Rick Basiliere	23503	South Central	Unlimited	2	36.34%	3
Pat Barrett	431591	Southeast	Primary	1	74.05%	3
Joe Haycraft	25330	Southeast	Sportsman	1	83.71%	3
Paul Lopez	25674	Southeast	Intermediate	1	79.08%	3



Mike Mulcahy




Rick Basiliere

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Pilot	IAC#	Region	Category	Rank	PP	Contests
Hector Ramirez	18975	Southeast	Advanced	1	84.89%	4
Hubie Tolson	18900	Southeast	Unlimited	1	84.49%	4
Howard Kirker	6425	Southwest	Sportsman	1	86.23%	7
James Pratt	432034	Southwest	Sportsman	2	82.54%	4
Ron Rapp	432350	Southwest	Sportsman	3	81.80%	4
Jenner Knight	430277	Southwest	Sportsman	4	81.51%	4
William Hill	20509	Southwest	Sportsman	5	80.74%	5
Jason Wondolleck	430495	Southwest	Sportsman	6	80.65%	3
Reinaldo Beyer	28147	Southwest	Intermediate	1	88.28%	4
Gray Brandt	431786	Southwest	Intermediate	2	85.00%	4
Malcolm Pond	429965	Southwest	Intermediate	3	84.46%	5
Todd Whitmer	429762	Southwest	Advanced	1	81.64%	8
Robbie Gibbs	25291	Southwest	Advanced	2	80.83%	5
Tom Myers	16830	Southwest	Advanced	3	63.40%	3
Norm DeWitt	13669	Southwest	Unlimited	1	80.98%	5
Vicki Cruse	22968	Southwest	Unlimited	2	79.72%	3

We would also like to thank these 2005 Regional Series participants:

Pilot	Homestate	Category	Region
James Hogg	Columbus, Ohio	Advanced	Mid-America
Peter McLeod	Red Lake, Ontario	Advanced	Mid-America
Walt Plentis	Waterford, Michigan	Advanced	Mid-America
Loren Smith	Saint Paul, Minnesota	Advanced	Mid-America
David Underwood	Naperville, Illinois	Advanced	Mid-America
Doug Bartlett	Cary, Illinois	Intermediate	Mid-America
Wayne Buescher	Canton, Michigan	Intermediate	Mid-America
Robert Butts	Saline, Michigan	Intermediate	Mid-America
Jeff Granger	Logansport, Indiana	Intermediate	Mid-America
Richard MacDonald	Brighton, Michigan	Intermediate	Mid-America
Bill Weber	Copley, Ohio	Intermediate	Mid-America
Craig Henry	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Primary	Mid-America
Keith Davis	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Sportsman	Mid-America
Joe Haycraft	Owensboro, Kentucky	Sportsman	Mid-America
Michael Lakin	Charleston, West Virginia	Sportsman	Mid-America
Gordon Penner	Cincinnati, Ohio	Sportsman	Mid-America
William Perman	Grover, Missouri	Sportsman	Mid-America
David Scott	Shawano, Wisconsin	Sportsman	Mid-America
Michael Wild	Kokomo, Indiana	Sportsman	Mid-America
Darrel Massman	Ogdensburg, Wisconsin	Unlimited	Mid-America
Hugo Ritzenthaler	Rochester Hills, Michigan	Unlimited	Mid-America
Rob Holland	Nashua, New Hampshire	Advanced	Northeast
Johnny Hutchison	Damascus, Maryland	Advanced	Northeast
Janusz Becla	Arlington, Massachusetts	Intermediate	Northeast
Scott Francis	South Riding, Virginia	Intermediate	Northeast
Bill Gordon	Greensboro, Vermont	Intermediate	Northeast
Tom Parsons	Aberdeen, New Jersey	Intermediate	Northeast



Hector Ramirez



Paul Lopez



Robbie Gibbs



Norm DeWitt

Pilot	Homestate	Cat.	Region
Wesley Jones	Annapolis, Maryland	Srts.	Northeast
Weston Liu	Brookline, NH	Srts.	Northeast
John Coffey	Lynnwood, Washington	Adv.	Northwest
David Engh	Langley, Washington	Adv.	Northwest
Doug Sowder	Spokane, Washington	Adv.	Northwest
Todd Whitmer	San Jose, California	Adv.	Northwest
Royden Heays	Vancouver, B. C.	Inter.	Northwest
Mike Mulcahy	Mattawa, Washington	Inter.	Northwest
John Smutny	Seattle, Washington	Inter.	Northwest
Robert Harris	McMinnville, Oregon	Srts.	Northwest
Matthew Lawrence	Seattle, Washington	Srts.	Northwest
Norm DeWitt	Atherton, California	Unltd.	Northwest
Greg Howard	Portland, Oregon	Unltd.	Northwest
Ann Marie Smith	Seattle, Washington	Unltd.	Northwest
Jerzy Strzyz	Calgary, Alberta	Unltd.	Northwest
Todd Whitmer	San Jose, California	Adv.	South Central
D. J. Molny	Lone Tree, Colorado	Inter.	South Central
Thomas Pomeroy	Hilltop Lakes, Texas	Srts.	South Central
Sarah Tobin	Colorado Springs, CO	Srts.	South Central
Vince Walker	Boulder, Colorado	Srts.	South Central
Rick Basiliere	Berthoud, Colorado	Unltd.	South Central
Norm Dewitt	Atherton, California	Unltd.	South Central
Debby Rihn-Harvey	LaPorte, Texas	Unltd.	South Central
Hector Ramirez	Huntsville, Alabama	Adv.	Southeast
Kevin Campbell	Ocala, Florida	Inter.	Southeast
Paul Lopez	Tampa, Florida	Inter.	Southeast
Pat Barrett	Brunswick, Georgia	Prim.	Southeast
Joe Haycraft	Owensboro, Kentucky	Srts.	Southeast
Hubie Tolson	New Bern, N. Carolina	Unltd.	Southeast
Robbie Gibbs	Phoenix, Arizona	Adv.	Southwest
Tom Myers	Palo Alto, California	Adv.	Southwest
Todd Whitmer	San Jose, California	Adv.	Southwest
Reinaldo Beyer	Del Mar, California	Inter.	Southwest
Gray Brandt	Huntington Beach, CA	Inter.	Southwest
Dave Hermance	Huntington Beach, CA	Inter.	Southwest
Malcolm Pond	Riverside, California	Inter.	Southwest
William Hill	Laguna Niguel, CA	Srts.	Southwest
Howard Kirker	Fremont, California	Srts.	Southwest
Jenner Knight	San Diego, California	Srts.	Southwest
James Pratt	Irvine, California	Srts.	Southwest
Ron Rapp	Irvine, California	Srts.	Southwest
Jason Wondolleck	Riverside, California	Srts.	Southwest
Vicki Cruse	Santa Paula, California	Unltd.	Southwest
Norm DeWitt	Atherton, California	Unltd.	Southwest

Best of luck in 2006, and we look forward to honoring the next Regional Series champions! 🏆



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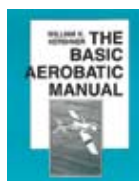
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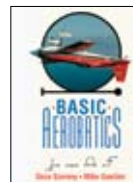
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The Proposed Category Changes for 2007: Part Three of Three

What do they want to do with my category and why?

By Scott Poehlmann,
Chair, IAC Category Realignment Committee



In the first two installments of this series, we explored the rationale behind the proposal to change the categories and the thought process that went into constructing the proposal. Let us now take a tour through the proposed new categories.

Category 1: Entry and Classics

Category 1 is in many ways unique; it serves two purposes. It provides an entry into aerobatic competition for new pilots, *and* it serves as a home for those aircraft whose limitations prevent them from performing the full spectrum of maneuvers of which newer aircraft are capable. All the while it is designed to maintain the interest of the pilots that choose

to fly it, and to remain flyable—a difficult balance indeed.

The category that results from these requirements bears strong resemblance to the current Primary category (which makes sense for an entry category): The Known sequence is constant over several years (at least three), and if a pilot wishes, he or she may choose to fly that sequence for



*They are listening,
and they will respond.
The rest is up to you.*

each of the three flights. The K-factor is limited to 80, and the majority of this is composed of the defining elements that specify the category: a loop, a one-turn spin, a roll, and in addition to these maneuvers, an Immelmann and a two-point roll. It's much like the loop, spin, roll, half-Cuban, and turn of the current Primary category.

At the same time, Category 1 allows the pilot to fly a Free program, which may be designed by the pilot or which may be chosen from several "default Frees" that have been prepared by IAC headquarters. Since the K-factor remains constant, there is no need to change Frees from year to year.

The biggest restrictions that pilots will see in Category 1 are the limitations on vertical lines and upward-directed energy. Category 1 allows only one vertical line, the one that ends in a hammerhead. This figure is not a defining element, so it is not required to be demonstrated, but it is allowed. No other verticals are permitted, and no rolls on any upward line are allowed to allow aircraft of limited performance and pilots unfamiliar with energy management to avoid these types of

lines. In short, this is a category that may be simple or more interesting, and that preserves the advantages of the classic aerobatic aircraft.

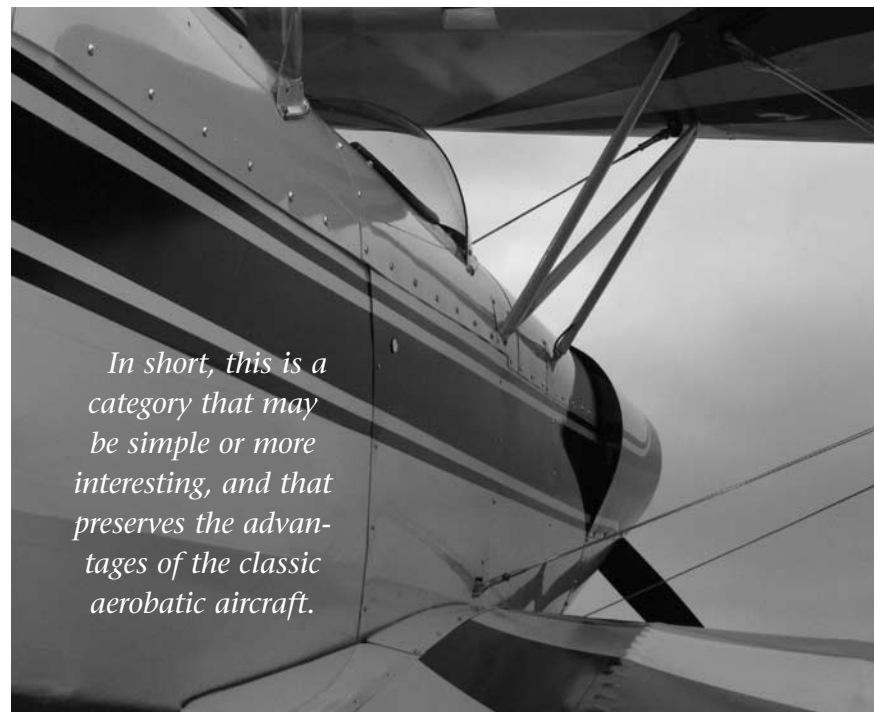
Category 2: The Full Range of Positive Maneuvers

Category 2 serves a different purpose. It is a category for pilots who wish to limit themselves to positive *g* maneuvers, but who wish to explore the entire envelope available within

the limitation of positive *g*'s.

This category includes humpties and other vertical lines. It also includes upward rolls both on 45-degree lines and on vertical lines, as well as some down-going rolls. It includes one and one-half and one and one-quarter spins, and it includes snaps. And it includes a wide variety of point rolls.

The flight programs in this category include the Known, which will change from year to year and which will have in it all of the defining elements of the category: a hammerhead, a pull-push-pull humpty, a vertical quarter roll, a positive full snap, 2 of 4 points, an eight-point roll, and a half-roll down. This program will have a K-factor between 130 and 150. A Free program also is part of the definition of this category with a K-factor maximum of 150, and the pilot is encouraged to design a program of his or her own. Finally, an Unknown of 125 K will test the pilot's ability to read, analyze, and fly an entirely new sequence. This category will fall nearly midway between the current Sportsman and Intermediate categories in terms of



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tages of the classic
aerobatic aircraft.*

difficulty and will provide a home for mid-level performance aerobatic aircraft and an ongoing challenge for the pilots who fly them.

Category 3:

Introducing the Negative

Category 3 is designed to bridge the substantial gap between the current Intermediate category and the CIVA-designed Advanced category. It includes the full range of positive *g* maneuvers, as well as an introduction to negative *g* maneuvers. It includes simple rolling turns as well as nearly the full complement of inside snap rolls (vertical snaps are excluded, as are three-quarter snaps).

Like the CIVA Advanced category, Category 3 includes a Known, a Free, and an Unknown. The Known (which, like all the other new categories, will include all of the defining elements and thus demonstrate the pilot's competence in the category) will have between 200 and 225 K. The defining elements for the category are an inside roller, a hammer, a half-snap, vertical rolls, up and down rolls up to a three-quarter roll, an inverted spin, and a full snap on a 45-degree downline. The Free program has a maximum K of 225, and the Unknown a maximum K of 165.

Category 3 also includes the first collection of negative *g* maneuvers. These pushes are limited to predominantly "soft" pushes, which can be accomplished with low negative *g* limits (typically -3*g* or less). A single "hard" push (more than -3*g*) will be allowed in each sequence. The idea is to bridge the gap between Category 2 and Advanced both in the physical aspects as well as the mental challenges. It should provide a home for pilots who do not wish to expose themselves (or their aircraft) to the demands of Advanced, but who want a considerable flying challenge.

The Rest of the Process

As has been mentioned in previous articles, this category change is an ongoing process. In large measure, what will happen from here is up to you. A web page has been set up with the full details of the proposal, which can be reached from the IAC home page (or directly at http://scott-p.home.texas.net/Category_Change_Index.htm). On this page is a link to an e-mail account that will accept comments from IAC members (see sidebar "Your

Comments So Far"). These comments are transmitted to the members of the IAC Board of Directors and will be accepted up until the next IAC board meeting, which will be held at the end of October. At that meeting, the board of directors will consider the comments and either approve the proposal, modify it and approve it with modifications, or reject it and continue to use the current category structure. They are listening, and they will respond. The rest is up to you. ✈

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YOUR COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROPOSED CATEGORY CHANGES

As of this writing (the end of June), there have been only about 30 comments made to IAC's dedicated e-mail address (*Category@texas.net*). These comments are nearly evenly distributed between those who support the proposed changes and those who do not. Interestingly, however, there are several themes that have emerged from the comments.

The first consistent comment is with regard to the presence of the snap roll as a defining element of Category 2. A number of individuals have expressed concern that snap rolls are hard on the airframes of Decathlons, and that many Decathlon owners are unwilling to snap roll their aircraft. Since Decathlons represent a substantial number of aircraft flown in the current Sportsman category, these people are concerned that including the snap roll will limit participation

in Category 2. This is certainly a reasonable concern. A number of ideas have been tossed around by the Category Realignment Committee, but all of them center on trying to find a way to allow Decathlons to fly in Category 2 without removing the snap roll entirely since removing it would cause a jump from Category 1 (with no snaps at all) to Category 3 (with full snaps up and down on 45 lines and half-snaps), which is larger than the jump from the current Intermediate category to Advanced. One possible solution, which was suggested by several members, is to allow pilots to elect not to snap and substitute a slow roll for a penalty (which is likely to be some multiple of an interruption penalty). This idea has gained some support among the members of the committee and may be recommended to the board as a

modification to the proposal.

The second major theme among the comments is that there may still be a place for the Primary category. This idea has had less support, but certainly could be accommodated. The biggest concern that the committee has had with this idea is that the addition of another (sixth) category adds more to the workload of contest directors and volunteer coordinators. Of course, since the data suggest that the Primary category has been underused in the past, with new categories designed to replace it, it is likely that it will be even more underused. However, this modification has not been ruled out.

The Category Realignment Committee is listening to our comments, and so is the board of directors. Whatever the final outcome is, it will be based on your comments.

Editors' Note: The following is an excerpt from a letter we received regarding the proposed category changes for 2007. Bill's letter went on to offer some advice on flying a half-Cuban, and we're going to save that for another day!

Dear Sport Aerobatics,

Like many of us "old-timers," I am concerned about the current pressure to "re-align" the aerobatic categories. The perceived need to design the Basic or Primary category is based on the fact that pilots don't seem to stay in that category. Well guess what, it was never intended that they would! That category was added in the 1980s as a steppingstone to attract people into the sport who felt that either they or their airplane was not capable of beginning in the Sportsman category. From the very beginning, pilots would fly one or perhaps two contests in Basic and then move up into the Sportsman category.

We've always had pilots who were "career" Sportsman or Intermediate competitors because that's where they felt comfortable or felt limited by their airplane. Doesn't anybody remember Harold Neumann, Giles Henderson, Chuck Alley, or Dale Donaldson? If you're bored with your category—MOVE UP! No, a Pitts S-1S or S-2C isn't going to be competitive in Unlimited any more, but has anyone ever flown those airplanes as well as they could be flown? Any contest that I failed to place in was not the fault of the airplane but [was] because of my mistake or failure to fly the airplane to its maximum potential.

Good luck and fly safe!

Bill Cornick

ASK Allen

A master rigger answers your questions about parachutes

Allen Silver is a master rigger and has been taking care of aerobatic and glider pilots since 1972. Allen has agreed to pass along his knowledge to *Sport Aerobatics* readers. Here are two of the recent questions we have received regarding parachutes.

Q: Hey Allen, how do I select a parachute that fits me **and** my aircraft?

A: You're putting the cart before the horse if you choose an aerobatic aircraft without first considering what kind of a parachute will fit in the cockpit with you. At 5 feet 5 inches tall, I can fit into almost any aircraft comfortably and take my pick of parachutes. However, some of my customers aren't so lucky. I always tell them they should consider a back-style parachute before a seat-pack type. Even though both styles may have the same size parachute, it's much easier to get into and out of an aircraft wearing the back style, especially during an emergency. The back-style chute is generally more comfortable because the load is distributed over your entire back. Imagine pulling 5g's while wearing a 15 to 20-pound seat pack. You might as well have a cement sack tied to your bottom! However, in some airplanes you may have no

room behind you, and you will need a seat pack. Generally it puts about 3-4 inches underneath you and about a 1/2 inch behind. On some seat packs you can add a cushion to the part you sit on. Seat packs are especially good for cross-country flights. However, just because you fly a Stearman with a bucket seat doesn't mean you're locked into a seat pack. Many pilots fill the bucket portion of their seat pan with a comfortable cushion and use a back pack. If you do this, be careful not to fill the seat under you with foam so soft it will compress to nothing when you pull back hard on the stick!

Q: How do I choose the correct size parachute for me?

A: I encourage you to read three articles I've had published over the past few years. The first is titled "All Parachutes Are Not Created Equal." The second one is titled "Is Your Life Worth \$70.00 A Year?" (Both are available free at www.SilverParachutes.com.) The last article is titled "What Difference Does It Make What Parachute I Wear?" (May 2002 *Sport Aerobatics*). These articles explain the criteria that will help you to select the best parachute. Focus on having the parachute that will deliver

the slowest rate of descent possible—and that doesn't necessarily mean a larger parachute!

Sometimes the choices are limited due to space or the size of the pilot. Sometimes you'll have to compromise the size of the parachute so you can fit into your aircraft and still fly aerobatics. If you ever have to bail out, I'd rather have you come down a little faster and maybe be injured, than have no choice but to ride an out-of-control aircraft.

All modern parachutes are placarded with their ratings and go through a series of drop tests. Three of these tests have to be done on the same parachute with no repairs in between drops at 1.2 times the limitations the manufacturer wants to include on the placard. For example, if a manufacturer wants a parachute placarded at 150 knots indicated airspeed (KIAS) with up to a maximum load of 220 pounds, then the chute will need to pass the drop test at 180 KIAS with 264 pounds. Modern parachutes have a built-in safety factor that should give you confidence in their performance, but I'm not advising you to push the envelope.

Allen Silver is the owner of Silver Parachute Sales. Send your questions to Allen@silverparachutes.com.

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Calendar of Events

2006 CONTESTS

Thursday, August 3 – Saturday, August 5
Contest: Hill Country Hammerfest
Region: South Central
Location: Llano Municipal Airport – locator AQO, Llano, Texas
Hosting Chapter: IAC 107
Practice/Registration: Thursday, August 3
Rain Date: Sunday, August 6, 2006
Categories: Primary through Unlimited Power
Contest Director: John Harlan
Contact Info.: 512/259-9028 (home); 512/725-3166 (work); 512/632-9588 (cell); jmharlan@earthlink.net

Friday, August 25 – Saturday, August 26
Contest: Beaver State Regional
Region: Northwest
Location: Eastern Oregon Regional Airport – locator PDT, Pendleton, Oregon
Hosting Chapter: IAC 77
Practice/Registration: Thursday, August 24
Rain Date: Sunday, August 27
Categories: Primary through Unlimited Power
Contest Director: Greg Howard
Contact Information: 503/626-8152 (home); 360/735-9441 (work); grhoward@hotmail.com (e-mail)
Contest Website: www.iac77.org

Friday, August 25 – Sunday, August 27
Contest: Illinois State Open
Region: Mid-America
Location: Illinois Valley Regional Airport – locator VYS, Peru, Illinois
Hosting Chapter: IAC 1
Practice/Registration: Friday, August 25
Rain Date: None
Categories: Primary through Unlimited Power
Contact Information and Contest Website: www.iacchapter1.com
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Friday, August 25 – Sunday, August 27
Contest: Green Mountain Aerobatic Contest
Region: Northeast
Location: Hartness State Airport – locator VSF, Springfield, Vermont
Hosting Chapter: IAC 35
Practice/Registration: Friday, August 25
Rain Date: None
Categories: Primary through Unlimited Power
Contest Director: Hans Bok
Contact Information: 508/994-5957 (home); hans.bok@comcast.net (e-mail)
Contest Website: www.iac35.org

Saturday, August 26 - Monday, August 28, 2006
Contest: Aspen Leaf Aerobatic Challenge
Region: South Central
Practice/Registration: Friday, August 25, 2006
Rain Date: None
Categories: Primary - Unlimited Power on 8/26-8/27;

Sportsman - Unlimited Gliders on 8/28 (glider pilots should call in advance to discuss tow arrangements).
Location: Sterling Municipal Airport- locator STK, Sterling, CO
Hosting Chapter: IAC Chapter 12
Contest Director: DJ Molny
Contact Information: 303-619-4814 (cell); djmolny@yahoo.com (e-mail)
Contest Website: www.iac12.org

Friday, September 1 – Monday, September 4, 2006
Contest: Marta Meyer Memorial Contest
Region: Southwest
Location: Delano Municipal Airport – locator DLO, Delano, California
Hosting Chapter: IAC 26
Practice/Registration: Thursday, August 31 – Friday, September 1, 2006
Rain Date: Monday, September 4
Categories: Primary through Unlimited Power
Contest Directors: Roger Rourke and Gerrit Vanderziel
Contact Information: Roger: 661/766-2753 (home); Gerrit: 805/481-1354 (home), 805/440-2458 (cell); rogrouke@earthlink.net (e-mail)

Saturday, September 2 – Sunday, September 3
Contest: Gulf Coast Regional
Region: South Central
Location: Lone Star Executive Airport – locator CXO, Conroe, Texas
Hosting Chapter: IAC 25
Practice/Registration: Thurs., Aug. 31 – Fri., Sept. 1
Rain Date: None
Categories: Primary through Unlimited Power
Contest Director: Mike Torbett
Contact Information: 281/359-6320 (home); 713/780-6085 (work); 713/540-0408 (cell); mike.torbett@honeywell.com (e-mail)

Saturday, September 9 – Sunday, September 10
Contest: Albert Lea Aerobatic Contest
Region: Mid-America
Location: Albert Lea Municipal Airport – locator AEL, Albert Lea, Minnesota
Hosting Chapter: IAC 78
Practice/Registration: Friday, September 8
Rain Date: None
Categories: Primary through Unlimited Power
Contest Director: Joe Wakely
Contact Information: 507/663-9085 (home); 612-802-0049 (cell); twakely@charter.net (e-mail)
Contest Website: www.iac78.org

Saturday, September 16 – Sunday, September 17
Contest: East Coast Aerobatic Contest
Region: Northeast
Location: Warrenton–Fauquier Airport – locator W66, Warrenton, Virginia
Hosting Chapter: IAC 11
Practice/Registration: Friday, Sept. 15**Rain Date:** None

Categories: Primary through Unlimited Power
Contest Director: Scott Francis
Contact Information: 703/327-3135 (home); 703/272-1064 (work); 703/618-4132 (cell); 703/359-8686 (fax); s.francis@ieee.org (e-mail)
Contest Website: www.iac-chapter11.net

Saturday, October 7
Contest: Harold Neumann Barnstormer
Region: South Central
Location: New Century AirCenter Airport – locator IXD, Olathe, Kansas
Hosting Chapter: IAC 15
Practice/Registration: Friday, October 6
Rain Date: Sunday, October 8
Categories: Primary and Sportsman Power only
Contest Director: Connie Johnson
Contact Information: 816/453-5047 (home); 816/347-1331 (work); 816/560-6404 (cell); cjohnson4532@kc.rr.com (e-mail)

Friday, October 13 – Saturday, October 14
Contest: Borrego AkroFest
Region: Southwest
Location: Borrego Valley Airport – locator L08, Borrego Springs, California
Hosting Chapter: IAC 36
Practice/Registration: Thursday, October 12
Rain Date: Sunday, October 15
Categories: Primary through Sportsman Power
Contest Director: Michael Church
Contact Information: 949/852-8850 (work); mc@sunriseaviation.com (e-mail)
Contest Website: www.iac36.org

Saturday, October 14 – Sunday, October 15
Contest: Rocky Mountain Invitational
Region: South Central
Location: Lamar Municipal Airport – locator LAA, Lamar, Colorado
Hosting Chapter: IAC 5
Practice Registration: Friday, October 13
Rain Date: Saturday, October 21 – Sunday October 22
Categories: Primary through Unlimited Power
Contest Director: Jamie Treat
Contact Information: 303/648-0130 (home); 719/721-8149 (work); JamieTreat@direcway.com (e-mail)
Contest Website: <http://iac5.org>

Friday, October 27 – Sunday, October 29
Contest: Mason–Dixon Clash
Region: Northeast
Location: Farmville Regional Airport – locator FXV, Farmville, Virginia
Hosting Chapter: IAC 19
Practice/Registration: Friday, October 27
Rain Date: None
Categories: Primary through Unlimited Power
Contest Director: Jim Walker
Contact Information: 919/349-0057, Jwslim1@aol.com

CANADIAN CONTESTS

Saturday, August 5 – Sunday, August 6
Contest: Montreal Acro Challenge
Location: St. Hyacinthe Airport – locator CSU3 (N45 36 18 W073 00 51), Montreal, Canada
Hosting Chapter: Aerobatics Canada 2 (Quebec)
Practice/Registration: Friday, August 4
Rain Date: None
Categories: Primary through Unlimited Power
Contest Director: John Wyman
Contact Information: 514/697-4253 (home); ac2qc@yahoo.ca (e-mail)
Contest Website: Not yet available.

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2006 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sunday, September 24 – Friday, September 29
Contest: 2006 U.S. National Aerobatic Championships
Location: Grayson County Airport – locator GYI, Denison, TX
Hosting Chapter: IAC National
Practice/Registration: Sat., Sept. 23 **Rain Date:** None
Categories: Primary through Unlimited Power;
Sportsman through Unlimited Glider
Contest Director: Tammy Kemnitz
Contact Information: 217/676-9782; tkkennitz@hotmail.com (e-mail)
Contest Website: Not yet available
Enterprise Rent-A-Car available at this location

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2006 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Thursday, August 3 – Sunday, August 13
Contest: Advanced World Aerobatic Championships
Location: Radom, Poland
Contest Website: www.AWAC2006.com

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Mishaps Data

Compiled by Bruce Johnson

MISHAPS BY MONTH												
YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2005	0/0	1/2	2/2	1/1	1/2	2/2	3/4	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0
2006	0/0	1/2	1/1	1/0	1/1	0/0						

MISHAPS BY YEAR											
YEAR	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
MISHAPS	20	26	21	24	20	18	12	9	15	9	10

Numbers depict accidents/fatalities of total accidents in the U.S. by aerobatic aircraft. Accidents included are only those which occurred during aerobatic maneuvering (including air shows) or during an IAC-sanctioned competition.

As of this writing, the aerobatic mishap count for 2006 stands at four. This is a vast improvement from years past. Additionally, there were no reported aerobatic mishaps for June. In the second report listed below, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) determination of most probable cause is really more of a statement of what happened, not why the mishap occurred. Was this the intended maneuver, how many times had it been practiced, and what was the physical condition of the mishap pilot that day?

FINAL • Accident occurred Monday, May 9, 2005, in Kissimmee, Florida.

Probable Cause Approval Date: 5/30/2006

Aircraft: North American SNJ-6, registration: N453WA

Injuries: 2 Fatal

The purpose of the flight was to familiarize the student pilot with the airplane within a 30-minute flight lesson, when the certificated flight instructor demonstrated various flight and aerobatic maneuvers. Witnesses further observed the airplane enter a spin and descend rapidly and collide with the ground. Post-accident examination of the accident site revealed that the engine, propellers, main fuselage, left-wing assembly, and vertical and horizontal stabilizers were located in a crater 10 feet in diameter and 6 feet in depth.

The right-wing assembly was located 0.13 nautical miles on a 354-degree heading from the main wreckage site. No radio transmissions were received from the pilot prior to the accident. Post examination of the right wing revealed it separated due to the fatigue failure of the forward lower attach flange at the inboard side of the right-wing attach joint. The fatigue fracture had a primary origin area at the lower surface of the horizontal leg of the flange at the outboard edge of the spot face for the fastener in the outboard fastener row located closest to the forward end of the flange. The fatigue crack propagated relatively slowly upward until it extended nearly through the thickness of the flange and was 2.3 inches long at the lower surface. Additionally, slow-growth fatigue cracks were present at the outboard edges of other spot faces aft of the primary origin area. Beyond the slow-growth regions, the crack propagated relatively rapidly to a length of at least 12 inches aft of the forward end.

Features associated with the more rapidly propagating portion of the fatigue region included relatively rough fracture features, crack arrest marks at up to 9.3 inches aft of the forward end, and wear between the fastener heads and the flange at distances up to 12 inches aft of the forward end. Subsequent to these findings the Federal Aviation Administration issued an emergency airworthiness directive requiring fluorescent dye penetrant inspections of the wing-attach flanges at intervals of 200 hours' time in service.

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows: The failure of the outboard right-wing lower attachment bracket due to fatigue cracking and the subsequent in-flight separation of the right-wing assembly.

FINAL • Accident occurred Saturday, June 25, 2005, in Madras, Oregon.

Probable Cause Approval Date: 3/28/2006

Aircraft: Ellsberg One Design, registration: N555TE

Injuries: 1 Fatal

On June 25, 2005, about 1333 Pacific daylight time, an Ellsberg One Design amateur-built experimental airplane, N555TE, impacted the ground during performance of aerobatic maneuvers at the City-County Airport near Madras, Oregon. The commercial pilot, the sole occupant, sustained fatal injuries, and the airplane was destroyed by impact and fire damage. The airplane was registered to and operated by the pilot. Visual

meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed for the local personal flight that was conducted under 14 CFR Part 91. The airplane departed from the Madras airport at an unknown time. According to a report by an officer with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office who responded to the scene of the accident, the pilot was a "featured stunt pilot in the yearly Madras air show" and was practicing aerobatic maneuvers when the accident occurred.

According to a written statement provided by a witness, who was standing outside a hangar on the airport observing the flight, the pilot made his third pass "to the north paralleling Runway 34 on the east side of the asphalt and transitioned into a vertical climb, (and) at the top of the climb at an altitude of approximately 1,500 (feet) AGL he put the aircraft into a controlled flat spin to the left." The witness reported that the pilot completed four to five rotations before recovering from the spin "on a heading towards the south at an altitude of about 70 feet AGL." The witness further reported that "at this point it appeared that the pitch was lowered to approximately -15 degrees at around 40 feet AGL but for a very short amount of time and very little forward speed was gained. At around 20 feet AGL it appeared that the pitch was increasing but not arresting the vertical descent. The aircraft impacted the ground and immediately erupted in flames."

According to a written statement provided by another witness, who was standing next to the first witness, the pilot made a high-speed low-level pass over the runway at about 60 feet AGL and then pulled up, climbing to about 1,500 feet AGL. The pilot then put the airplane into a flat spin and completed four to five rotations. At about 200 feet AGL, the pilot recovered from the spin. According to the witness, "after his dive recovery it looked like he didn't have enough speed and pulled up and stalled and pitched forward and down and impacted at about (a) 45-degree angle and exploded on impact."

An FAA inspector conducted an on-scene examination of the wreckage and did not report finding evidence of any pre-impact mechanical discrepancies. The inspector reported there was a ground scar approximately 10 feet long leading to the wreckage and the airplane was consumed by fire with the exception of the steel frame fuselage and the engine.

FAA records indicated that the pilot was the builder of the single-seat experimental airplane, which was issued its airworthiness certificate and operating limitations on September 11, 1996. According to a friend of the pilot, he had flown the airplane about 900 to 1,000 hours. The airplane's maintenance logbooks were not located during the investigation.

The pilot held a commercial pilot certificate and a flight instructor certificate with single-engine land and instrument ratings on both certificates. His most recent second-class medical certificate was issued on February 19, 2005. On the application for this medical certificate, the pilot reported a total flight time of 4,000 hours and a flight time in the last six months of 150 hours. The pilot's flight logbooks were not located during the investigation.

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows: The pilot's failure to maintain altitude/clearance from terrain while performing aerobatics, which resulted in a collision with the ground.

MISCELLANEOUS

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Acro Pilots

Mike Close By Vicki Cruse

What experience drew you to competition?

I had always been quite anxious about spins, and even stalls, so I was interested in increasing my skill level by learning unusual attitudes. Then a friend of mine took me up for some maneuvers in his Decathlon and told me about the camaraderie of the IAC competitions and the legendary parties.

What was your first experience with aerobatics?

Last February, I completed a five-day course at Chandler Air Service in Chandler, Arizona, flying in a Great Lakes biplane. The first four days were filled with disorientation and nausea, but on the fifth day everything came together, and it occurred to me that I just might be a gifted acro pilot. I have since changed my mind.

Tell me about your airplane.

It is a 1966 Citabria 7ECA with the standard 115 hp, less than 2,000 hours, and the original paint scheme. The plane has an interesting history. In 1967, while taking off from Moses Lake, Washington, a Boeing 727 did a low pass over it, causing a loss of control and a major rebuild. In 1985, while owned by a crop-dusting company, a student hit some power lines. In 1988, it was driven into another plane on a landing rollout, requiring a wing rebuild. After that traumatic history, you might expect the plane to be timid, or maybe bitter, but not so. It's got the heart of a Stuka but, unfortunately, not the engine. It's a fun entry-level aerobatic plane, and it is ideal for my current skill level. It doesn't have inverted fuel, so the engine quits on negative *g* maneuvers, which isn't a problem, but it does create some limitations.

How did you obtain this airplane?

I was idly browsing *Trade-A-Plane* and noticed that this plane was located just 50 miles from my home, so my friend with the Decathlon convinced me to just fly over with him and just have a look...just sit in it...just start it up...I initially added new radios and a GPS, and after a few maneuvers, I added spades to relieve aileron pressure and a double set of Hooker harnesses. I am in the process of adding an air-oil separator to try and keep from losing so much oil while in negative *g*.

What is your most memorable contest moment?

My sense of relief at finishing my first ever competition Primary sequence, followed shortly after landing with the realization that I must include all the required maneuvers in the sequence in order to get a good score.

What is your favorite part of a contest?

The practice flights before the contest, when you get real-time critiques from knowledgeable people while you practice in the box. Also, helping with recording on the judges' line was interesting and very useful. And, of course, the banquet.



Name: Mike Close

City, State: Friday Harbor, Washington

Occupation: Retired consultant

Family: Jan—wife; Brian, Daron, Caroline, and Katherine—children

Pilot Certificates/Ratings: Private

Aircraft Flown: PPiper Warrior, Cessna 172, Citabria, Great Lakes

E-mail Address: MClose@rockisland.com

What does your wife think of your participation in aerobatics?

She doesn't know about it. I almost had to tell her when she saw the credit card invoice for the Hooker harnesses. She thought she had finally found evidence that I was a pervert, but I convinced her that it was equipment for my fishing boat.

Tell me a person or persons in the sport you admire.

I wouldn't want to give any one person a swelled head, but it really is enjoyable to meet so many pilots who seem drawn to IAC aerobatics not primarily for the glory of a win, but to increase their personal flying skills, and for the fun of the very sportsmanlike competition.

Where would you like to see yourself going in the sport?

I want to win a place on the U.S. PWAC (Primary World Aerobatic Championship) team and to become a living legend in the Primary category. I want to dominate the Primary category until I am so good that no one else will even enter Primary, and the IAC finally cancels the category to force me to move up to Sportsman.

What food would you most wish to see served at a contest banquet?

I'd like a pig roast, corn bread, honey beans, corn on the cob, green beans, and watermelon. Or a Thai buffet.