

CaptainAB VATSIM Training Flight

Atlanta was the host ARTCC for CaptainAB's training group flight. Event traffic departed Houston, Orlando, Memphis, and Charlotte airports. The event was structured to support new pilots as they fly into busy airports with "helper pilots" guiding the new pilots through each phase of flight.

Traffic Levels/Controller Saturation

Approximately 200 slots were booked using CaptainAB's booking system. A few streamers including XP72 flew during the event, resulting in increased volume. The Atlanta ARTCC was able to successfully handle about 250-260 arrivals total across the 5-hour event window. A SimAware is available [here](#). The Atlanta ARTCC was able to handle the volume of this event successfully due to staffing and airport capacity. We had approximately 6 controllers on Atlanta Center, 7 controllers on Atlanta Approach, 5 controllers in the Atlanta Tower, and 1 dedicated controller-in-charge/TMU. No controller was overwhelmed for more than a 15 minute period, as tactical relocation of controllers was deployed successfully. Runway balancing in the Atlanta TRACON also resulted in a relatively smooth operation.

Controller Feedback

A post-event debrief was conducted in which the Events Coordinator asked each individual if they had any feedback including criticisms, suggestions, and comments.

- **Pilot Quality:** The majority of controllers came to the conclusion that their biggest critique was the quality of pilots. The controllers were aware that there would be worse pilots than usual, but it seemed as if the "helper pilots" employed by CaptainAB were not doing a lot to help the new pilots as they flew into busy airspace such as the Atlanta TRACON.
- **Event Duration:** Most major events in the Atlanta ARTCC are four hours long and start at either 2300z or 2359z. The CaptainAB VATSIM Training Flight was five hours long, starting at 2200z and ending at 0300z. Every Atlanta TRACON controller, when asked if they would like to remain controlling for event clean-up, stated that they would like to close and were seemingly fatigued. The ZTL Events Coordinator expressed this concern during planning with CaptainAB, yet no action was taken to correct this.

Events Coordinator Feedback

This event was a great opportunity for the Atlanta ARTCC to control some high levels of traffic, and to be able to do it a week after a similarly busy event, *Honoring the Dream in Atlanta* (2022), was something that our controllers enjoyed. The training part of the event was not implemented very well from CaptainAB's side, and the Atlanta ARTCC had too much traffic to be able to be as supportive as possible with every pilot, but there haven't been any complaints so far from pilots about controllers being mean. The slot system did not work out as intended from Charlotte, and I instructed the Charlotte Tower controller to just depart everyone like usual. The Command Center and all Tier 1 facilities involved (ZME, ZHU, ZID, and ZJX) in the event did a great job supporting us and provided us with all that was necessary for a smooth operation. Atlanta is arguably one of the only airports/facilities in VATUSA that could host an event like this. Although a successful event for the Atlanta ARTCC, we elect not to participate in future CaptainAB events for now. This decision is tentative and will likely change if appropriate action is taken to ensure the success of future group flights.

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