

2017 Annual BuzzardAir Senior Pattern Contest

The beginning stuff:

BENBROOK, Texas - July 15, 2017: The mid July heat wasn't enough to keep flyers and spectators away from the annual BuzzardAir Senior Pattern Contest in the SPA West, hosted by the Fort Worth Thunderbirds on beautiful Benbrook Lake. The day was filled with fantastic flying, food, frolicking and fun, and a few frauleins, who kept everyone in line. Twelve registered pilots flew four rounds on one flight line. Flying started by 9:00 a.m. so as many rounds as possible could be completed before the hottest part of the day. The last flight was complete by 3:30 p.m. Winds were light and variable from a generally southern direction when the contest started and eventually switched to the north for part of the day. Unusual for Texas in July, the northerly breeze and high clouds helped keep the temperature down to only 96 degrees.



More than one judge commented to the CD that these folks have been obviously practicing and their flying has improved, as reflected by the scoring.

The usual stuff:

Though participation was light, all five classes were flown with the following results: Frank Cox, with the Golden Triangle club, walked away with the **Novice** top spot. Tommy Scarmardo from the Houston area and Fort Worth Thunderbird Steve Ehlers battled for top honors in the **Sportsman** class with Tommy pulling out the win. Bernie Olson from WAMS took top honors in **Advanced**, followed by Thunderbird Chris Berardi in second place and Bobby Zikes from Temple, TX, picking up the third spot. Thunderbird and CD Pat Ensign faced Wichita Falls flyer Robert Redmon in the **Expert** class with Pat taking first. Rounding out the contest was Thunderbird Ken Knotts, who took home the **Senior Expert** prize.

The ending stuff:

The contest was well-supported by J.T.'s Hobbies in Fort Worth. Many thanks to J.T. for outstanding contest raffle prizes. Congratulations to the winners: Steve Ehlers -- case of fuel, Bobby Zikes -- Contender kit, and Bob Redmon -- battery checker. Each registered pilot also won a door prize such as epoxy, glow plugs, and other hobby sundries from J.T.'s.

All in all, it was a good contest, though a smaller than usual crowd. There was excellent support from Thunderbirds volunteers, especially Tab Bowland, Dave Dingman, Gary Cummings, and Jeanne Alphin, who helped out all day. And a special thanks to Leslie Ensign for keeping official score, serving as photographer, and creating awards for the contest.

It all wrapped up at a local BBQ joint, where once again, the world's problems were considered and sometimes solved, including politics, ecology, economy and occasional important topics, such as model airplanes.

CD Pat Ensign