

Ringmaster Roundup III And The Texas State Stunt Championships

The annual Ringmaster Roundup just gets better and better ever year, but this year it took a huge jump because the Texas State Stunt Championships were held concurrently, on Sunday, adjacent to the Ringmaster Roundup circles.

This year we had participants coming all the way from Maine to Arizona and places in-between. The Flying for fun and balloon bust began on Thursday and Friday, Old Time Stunt and Classic on Saturday and then the unique and super fun Team Stunt on Sunday. Both events this year were held at a private flying site with three carefully manicured turf flying-circles. Richard Oliver of ROJETT engines fame and his wife Edie, hosted the event at their beautiful country home, about 60 miles north of Houston and at the end of a five mile long gravel county road. Motel accommodations were prearrange by David Strawn, in Bryan, Texas and most of the fliers commuted the 30 minutes to the site, each day. To make the drive less eventful, David also put up several signs at crucial road junctions to funnel all the fliers in the right direction.

The weather for Saturday was just perfect, with cool temperatures, for Texas in May (low 80s), overcast skies and 0-5 mph winds. This nice weather held up for Sunday too, and although there was a 60% chance of rain for both days, only a light mist dampened a few tail feathers.

Contest Director, David Gresens, kicked things off at 9:30 AM Saturday morning with an upbeat pilots meeting which covered the day's competition and safety issues. Within a few minutes after the meeting, the pilots began putting up official flights in Old Time Stunt and Classic AMA pattern stunt

Dee Rice and David Gresens judged the Classic pattern and old pro Frank Williams soloed with the Old Time event. Darrell Harvin, an experienced NATs judge, took on judging the Beginner pattern as well as being team-lead for one of Team Stunt teams. Richard Oliver was the Event Director for the Texas Stunt portion of the festivities, and he and Les Demmet were the judges.

The Ringmaster Roundup is a flying event for all levels of experience and ability. A "Beginner" pattern was held concurrently and many of the Brothers chose to fly that. There is no disadvantage to flying the beginner pattern, as it awards points for the prizes just as the other events do. Balloon Bust is the same, and most of the inexperienced pilots chose to fly that too, again for lottery prize points.

The Saturday Classic AMA pattern was broken up into skill level classes and the Old Time stunt was come-one, come-all. Joe Gilbert topped the Experts in Classic, followed by

Gaylord Elling in Advanced, Jose Vargas in Intermediate, and Scott Hartford in Beginner. Of course, all the Ringmasters received 20 appearance points in Classic.

Old Time Stunt was won by Joe Gilbert, followed by Gregg Elling and then Gregg's brother, Gaylord. These guys put in some really nice patterns, competitive at any OTS contest, anywhere. The competition was super tight. Joe and Gregg tied at 296. So the other official flight broke the tie. In third, only one point behind at 295, was Gaylord.

Gregg Elling (FFB) took the first event, Old Time Stunt, followed by brother Gaylord, who won the AMA pattern event. The Unknown pattern (still unknown by some) was won by Joe Gilbert (RF), who just barely slipped by Mike Greb (KH).....now, you got that? Right.

The Roundup Team Stunt captains this year were Darrell Harvin (The Four-Foot Bottoms, FFB), Gaylord Elling (The Kanas Hobbits, KH), Joe Gilbert (The Rings of Fire, RF), and Dale Gleason (Kania's Kangaroos, KK).

After the first three events on Sunday, before going into the final Team Pursuit event, Rings of Fire led at 1422.4, second was Four Foot (Feet?) Bottoms at 1419.3, third was Kanas Kangaroos at 1415.7 and fourth was Kanas Hobbits with 1399.1. It is now *anybody's* game for the fourth and final event, Team Pursuit!

Lots of yelling and cheering accompanies the team event, especially the Team Pursuit, which is a somewhat controlled form of combat. When all the dust settled Kanas Hobbits made a "Mine That Bird" charge from last to first, and with a final score of 1699.1, blew away Kanas Kangaroos at 1565.7, Rings of Fire with 1522.4, and the Four Foot Bottoms at 1419.3.

The final tally gave Joe Gilbert a three-peat of "Master of the Ring." Joe also won OTS at the big Brodak Bash last year and is just getting better every year. He will be a force in Expert one of these days soon.

Scott Hartford won Pilots Choice for S-1 Ringmasters, and it was well earned. His ships are unique and beautiful with painted multi colored sub structure and clear covered, to give a distinct, clean and colorful appearance.

The Texas State Stunt Championship on Sunday was also a big success, with lots of the Roundup entrants flying in this event too. In fact Juan Vargas won the Beginner event with his Ringmaster and is now a state champ!

Brother Greg Elling also won the Intermediate stunt with Joe Hildreath 2nd and Brother Jose Vargas 3rd.

Advanced was won by Mike Greb, followed by Roger Olson, Gaylord Elling, Steve Hollier, and David Russum.

The Expert division was a very competitive event, with Tom Farmer in 4th, Dale Gleason in 3rd, Bill Wilson in 2nd and the new Texas State Champ in Expert, all the way from El Dorado, Arkansas.....Taa-De-Daaaaa.....Jooooooooee BOMAN, with his fabulous new Dreadnaught! Joe is going to be hard to beat with his new ship.

Congratulations to Joe Gilbert and Joe Boman. The Joes have it for this year.

Also, thanks to all the volunteer help, because it took many nice folks to help make it such a success. A special thanks to David Russum for all the nice photos, even if he did spend a good part of one day rebuilding his dinged stunt ship.