

SlopeAerobatics.com (1st) 2007 Video Contest

Videos judged by Ian Cole - AKA Ian Downunder

Judging these types of contests is always going to be difficult when the rules do not give specifics on how to judge. This is also a sore point in slope aerobatics events we have here in my home state, where judges are not given any guides to go by despite being offered sensible and logical guidelines which I have developed over a number of years. You can see these on my website at slopesoaring.com/competition/australian-official-rules Look for the Guides & Templates Manual.

But getting back to this contest, there are several ways this can be looked at, remembering first and foremost that this is a **slope aerobatics contest**. So we should expect to see plenty of aerobatics.

So, do we judge a video:

- on the overall presentation? i.e. good aerobatics, great music, flawless performance, nice venue, daring and skilled flying.
- if it is an exceptional production, even though it may not contain much in the way of aerobatics?
- purely on its aerobatics content but not necessarily on how well the manoeuvres were performed?
- if predominantly disciplined aerobatics only are performed, i.e. strictly controlled well-known aerobatics manoeuvres linked together by turns as opposed to non-conformed aerobatics, better known as freestyle aerobatics?
- if it was filmed at a fantastic venue which had great scenery that made the production stand out?
- because it had mind-boggling, heavy metal music which made your hairs stand on end?
- which contained manoeuvres that required incredible skill and daring, even though the rest of the video may not necessarily have been well-edited or have had great music to match?
- because it contained lots of well-linked aerobic manoeuvres performed flawlessly, even though the rest of the video may not necessarily have been particularly well-edited?

While all of the above had to be taken into consideration, the point that stands out the most for me and the one in which I based my assessments on (as well of course taking into consideration some of the other points) was point 8.

I thought long and hard about marking all 17 videos from 31 down to 14, using Daeman's mark of 31 set as the benchmark for all the others. But somehow this didn't seem fair because the distance between the top and bottom videos I felt was not 17 points, bearing in mind that there were 17 entries. So I picked the 6 most outstanding videos to give a mark, then put the rest in 4 other categories.

Below are the sequences of judging which enabled me to produce a fair outcome

Stage 1: View all videos individually and exactly as presented. Mark each video as an overall performance as seen for the first time. This included the music.

2: View all videos in pairs with the music muted and judge purely on the aerobatics content, i.e. view the highest scored video alongside the second highest video without the music, then the second highest video with the third highest video and so on. In doing this, one sees each video from a completely different perspective and several positional changes occurred during this viewing.

3: View the lowest scored video with the music muted and compare it with all the other videos from the bottom up. With the judge's brain (that's me) now finely tuned and very familiar with the videos, more positional changes took place at this point. The more I watched the videos, the more aware I became of the things that were important to look out for.

4: View all videos again individually as presented with music, comparing each video with the one above and the one below. More positional changes were required.

Some of the 4 procedures above were repeated several times during the judging process and overall, each video was viewed 6 to 10 times. The whole judging period, for this the 2007 aerobatics contest, took approximately 10 hours over a period of about a week.

I should point out that multiple entries by the same person were allowed for this contest but this was changed in future contests to only one entry per person.

Entry: Daemon
Video: Carbon, Air and Rock
Venue: Mt Zion Colorado, USA
Model: 3m Fazer F3J
Music: Unkown

Judging: Being the first contest held by SlopeAerobatics.com this video was leaps and bounds above the rest. Though the performance was predominantly that of Dynamic Soaring (DS) consisting mainly of Immelman turns and loops and not too many other aerobatics manoeuvres, the daring nature of the flying made for good viewing. It was obvious too that this was not the cameraman's first video. In fact, when I Googled the entrant's name, I found that he had made dozens of videos. Clearly, the professionalism showed in all aspects in this video. The quality was excellent, the footage was well edited, the tracking of the glider was superb, the relationship from lens to glider was spot-on, the day was right and the slope was almost perfect for the task at hand. The music was contrary to what one could expect for this type of video in that it was slow and spiritual. Nevertheless, it was eerie, deeply moving and well-suited to the flying performance. No time wasted on special effects - just all great flying. If this entrant entered future contests of this nature but threw in a few more aerobatics, he would be hard to beat.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 31)
1st place - score = 31

Entry: Lavawing
Video: Feels Like Flying (Slope Aerobatics)
Venue: Unknown
Model: Guppy
Music: Gregory Luck

Judging: Plenty of aerobatics to be had in this video. Nice inclusion with the boy, *Ben Credible* doing his human aerobatics - though to be correct, humans do acrobatics. Loved the ending. This video was only let down by its rather poor quality. Rather scratchy in parts and too much camera movement, causing some blurriness. Overall, a well put together video with a bit of humour thrown in along the way. Nice music and fun to watch.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score = 12)
Equal 2nd place - score = 20

Entry: Tom in Tennessee
Video: 3minfreestyle
Venue: Unknown
Models: Bird Of Time, Moth 48, M60, Thorn, Home Grown
Music: Unknown

Judging: This video had great potential to be number one if not for the poor camera work and a not so good production. The performance contained some of the best, high speed, freestyle aerobatics I have ever seen. Who says foamies can't fly at great speed! Incredible flying at times with great precision. Had only one glider been chosen accompanied by a well-rehearsed routine, instead of five gliders and one only inspirational sound track, we could have seen a fantastic video. Perhaps something to work on next time. I took at face value that the video wasn't sped up during editing because the flying wings seemed to move like rockets.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 1)
Equal 2nd place - score = 20

Entry: DawsonH
Video: Le Fish at Greens Peak
Venue: Greens Peak, Flagstaff, Arizona, USA
Model: Le Fish
Music: Joe Satriani *Always with you, always with me*

Judging: Nice video. Model in clear view all the way through. Excellent viewing. Plenty of good aerobatics here almost all throughout the routine. Not spectacular viewing by any means but nevertheless a very smooth and well strung together performance. Music not upbeat but a soundtrack with feeling which suited the occasion to a tee. The overall production is what got it into 3rd place.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score = 4)
Equal 3th place - score = 16

Entry: DawsonH
Video: Guppy at Greens Peak
Venue: Greens Peak, Flagstaff, Arizona, USA
Model: Guppy
Music: Trademark - by Eric Johnson

Judging: Nice video. Model in clear view all the way through. Excellent viewing. Similar comments to Dawson's other video at Greens Peak. Not spectacular by any means but nevertheless a graceful performance. A good upbeat soundtrack to suit the occasion.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score = 1)
Equal 3th place - score = 16

Commendable

Entry: Mike_Y
Video: Voltage at the Bwlch
Venue: Mickey Slope Bwlch
South Wales, Britain
Model: Voltij
Music: Unknown

Judging: The best part about this video was that we got to see a performance with the glider relatively close in to the camera and in particular, close to the pilot for a good deal of the performance, making the relationship to the pilot and glider more meaningful. While there were quite a lot of aerobatics, the pilot played it safe for the most part, preferring to fly slow and steady with only the odd hair-raising moment. Nevertheless, a well produced video, only lacking a few more exciting manoeuvres. Loved the music - powerful and inspirational.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 3)
4th place - score = 14

Entry: Wingtech
Video: Acacia
Venue: Moulded High Speed Soarer
Model: Unknown
Music: Unknown

Judging: This video had great potential but was let down by the poor quality. The overcast day didn't help either. This saw the model getting lost in the background at times, which reflected on the score. While there were plenty of aerobatics to be had, they appeared to be unrehearsed with mostly loops and more loops, though there were a few unusual manoeuvres thrown in. But not enough to impress. This was a safe routine rather than a spectacular display of aerobatics. More practise with the right choice of day and more controlled camera work, would see a much more refined performance in future videos. I felt that the music could have been a bit more upbeat as well.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 1)
5th place - score = 12

Entry: Endless Sloper
Video: Rick Weaseling
Venue: Unknown
Model: Weasel
Music: Unknown

Judging: The camera work was a bit unsteady which made it rather hard to appreciate the performance. Not a lot you can do with such a small flying wing without becoming repetitive, which was noticeable in this video. Some unusual spins which kept the interest up. While the flying appeared to be on a slope at great height, the actual flying area did not appear to be all that steep. I think this type of model needed more than just strong winds. It needed a near vertical slope to make up for the shortfall in momentum that flying wings have on less powerful or not so steep slopes.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 0)
6th place - score = 10

Well done

Entry: Endless Sloper
Video: Guppy @ Joe Watt Canyon
Venue: Unknown
Model: Unknown
Music: Unknown

Judging: Good clear day. Some close-in flying and the glider was in clear view for the most part. A very smooth routine but no outstanding aerobatics - only axial rolls and turns. An upbeat soundtrack would have added considerably to the performance. Interesting transitions and overall, pleasant to watch.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 1)

Entry: Endless Sloper
Video: Rick's Le Fish
Venue: Unknown
Model: Unknown
Music: Rage Against The Machine
Ghost of Tom Joad

Judging: Another pleasant clear day for making a video. However, the camera work was unsteady and at times out of focus. It appeared like an un-rehearsed routine and more like someone out to just have fun. Not that there's anything wrong with that, as long as your expectations aren't too high. Soundtrack was low-key which did not add to the routine. The introduction was interesting, showing the model being built from plan to completion. Would have liked to see the introduction last for 8 to 10 seconds. 4 seconds was too quick to take in all aspects of the building procedures.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 0)

Entry: Endless Sloper
Video: Duelling Fish
Venue: Unknown
Model: Unknown
Music: Music not provided

Judging: Very poor quality video. Hard to appreciate any aerobatics during the performance. Rather scratchy indeed. A short video showing a routine which looked un-rehearsed. No accompanying soundtrack with the footage which did not add to the performance.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 0)

Good effort

Entry: Garydog1
Video: Bee ds video
Venue: Unknown
Model: Unknown
Music: Unknown

Judging: The text introduction summed up the video. *Grab the worst plane in the poorest conditions and fly a contest video*. Well, I wouldn't exactly agree with the worst plane part. Flying wings can be fantastic to watch, given the right conditions and a good video production. However, as this was predominantly Dynamic Soaring (DS), the performance consisted of mainly turns with only a few aerobatics manoeuvres. I did not think the music was entirely appropriate. Better luck next time.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 1)

Entry: Mr_Wizzard
Video: Slope Gliding Red Rock Canyon
Venue: Red Rock Canyon USA
Model: Wing Unknown
Music: No music provided

Judging: This was the maiden flight of the pilot's model. Always good to get a new glider launched, flown and retrieved in one piece. However, the video lasted for only 1.09 minutes and was basically a trim flight with some minor aerobatics thrown in on the odd occasion. Hence, it could not be given a high mark. The cameraman's footage was very poor in that the camera was very jerky, the model was too far away from the camera for the most part and the camera was not always focused on the glider. Good first time effort but plenty of room for improvement.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 3)

Not available for judging

Entry: PLA0242
Video: Cobalt Video
Venue:
Model:
Music:

Judging: This video was not available at the time of judging.

(SA online poll score - 1)

Entry: F Jones
Video: Video Kultissime
Venue:
Model:
Music:

Judging: This video was not available at the time of judging.

(SA online poll score - 3)

Entry: DawsonH
Video: Guppy Video 1
Venue:
Model:
Music:

Judging: This video was not available at the time of judging.

(SA online poll score - 3)

Entry: DawsonH
Video: Guppy Video 2
Venue:
Model:
Music:

Judging: This video was not available at the time of judging.

(SA online poll score - 3)