

SlopeAerobatics.com (2nd) 2008 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 11 videos from 27 down to 16, using Neil walker's mark of 25 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 11 points, bearing in mind that there were 11 entries. So I picked the 4 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 2008 aerobatics contest, took about 10 hours over a period of about a week.

Entry: Thepasty
Video: Team Monkey - Swinger doing its thang
Venue: Unknown
Model: Le Fish
Music: Unknown

Judging: Nice music which complimented the footage. Plenty of aerobatics - and some clever ones at that, which is what this contest is all about. Good camera work, though not outstanding. But the cameraman captured some good close-in footage. Not a moment lost on gimmicks. Just good fun and interesting free-flowing aerobatics. A less overcast day would have added that extra polish. But I guess you can't ask for the perfect day when it comes to slope soaring. This video just scraped in ahead of Dawson's video, only because of the better camera work.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 18)
Equal 1st place - score = 27

Entry: DawsonH
Video: Le Fish at the NE Bowl of Elden, Flagstaff, AZ
Venue: NE Bowl of Elden, Flagstaff, AZ
Model: Le Fish
Music: Unknown

Judging: This production in my opinion certainly had the best sound track. It would been one up on the others if it came down to just the music. This is a good reason why when judging, that you should watch the video with the music muted, so as not to be fooled into thinking that the content is or isn't as good as it seems. Having said that, there were some great aerobatics performed here. One manoeuvre in particular caught my eye which I have never before seen. Whether by design or accident it was spectacular. I would describe it as a three and a half barrel roll of sorts but transitioning into horizontal spins half way through manoeuvre. It reminded me of those spins the ice-skaters do where they flip one leg over the other at speed then fly into a triple spin. Absolutely amazing. I wonder Dawson, could you perform this manoeuvre again, lol?

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score = 9)
2nd place - score = 26

Entry: Hexosex
Video: Swinger 46 Slope Comp 08
Venue: Unknown
Model: Le Fish
Music: Unknown

Judging: This video is identical to Thepasty's. However, the organiser did pick this up in the early stages of the voting and decided to let the poll run its course and count both videos as one when the tally was finalised. But as mentioned in my opening comments, if random visitors/voters came into the forum to vote, wouldn't you think that these two videos would score similarly? Could this suggest that voters voted for the pilot and not the video?

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score = 2)
Equal 1st place - score = 27

Entry: Neil Walker
Video: Green 'N' Blue
Venue: Unknown
Model: X-Tazi
Music: Steely Dan

Judging: Although this was the winning entry in the voters' opinion, this is not how I viewed it. Yes it was a very expensive model. Yes it was a BIG model and stood out like the proverbial. And yes the colour scheme was green and blue. But for its aerobatics content I thought it was a rather safe, conservative performance. No dare-devil tricks here. It was basically across-the-slope flying, left to right, right to left with a some inverted passes, well-known disciplined manoeuvres and variations. The music matched the footage - rather sedate. For my mind, this did not live up to what this contest is all about, which, daring, out-of-the box aerobatics. Pleasant to watch all the same.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 25)
3rd place - score = 25

Commendable

Entry: Garydog1
Video: DS South Dakota
Venue: South Dakota
Model: Unknown
Music: Unknown

Judging: This video was let down by the poor camera work. The cameraman wasn't able to keep the model relatively in centre screen. The video quality wasn't the best either. But having got the negatives out of the way, it did contain what we all wanted to see and that is, full-on, free-flowing, daring, skillful aerobatics. Although this drew with my own entry (though you all now know that I rigged my votes) I ranked this performance above mine because even though my production might have been slick, Garydog's video contained far more in the way of aerobatics content.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 11)

Entry: Ian Downunder
Video: Soaring High - Downunder
Venue: Unknown
Model: Voltij
Music: Unknown

Judging: Well, having to adjudicate one's own video is a challenge in itself but I will try to be as objective as I can. While I thought I did a pretty reasonable job, upon reflection, I realised I had made the most fundamental mistake - too much in the way of special effects and not enough actual flying. While on the day of filming I thought my cameraman had filmed some worthwhile footage, in reality there really wasn't much in the way of outstanding aerobatics to be had which is what these contests are all about. I hasten to add, this was my fault entirely and not that of my cameraman.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 11)

Entry: F. Jones
Video: Coquillaj
Venue: Unknown
Model: Unknown
Music: The Rapture
Whoo! Alright Yeah... Uh Huh

Judging: This performance was rather mild and not very smooth or free-flowing. The routine was almost entirely based on axial rolls. Nothing really outstanding or daring. Also, the video quality was not particularly good nor were the segways. Good effort all up and I'm sure those involved would have learnt much from this experience. Better luck next time.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 3)

Good effort

Entry: Cliffhanger
Video: Don't stop me now
Venue: Fall Bay, Gower, Wales
Model: Wasabi
Music: Gerry Rafferty *Baker Street*

Judging: Great looking day, complemented with a beautiful venue. Very slick routine by Cliffhanger. Some nice aerobatics but in general a fairly safe performance. In other words, *let's get it back in one piece*. Having said that, there were some very interesting variations some well-known aerobatics manoeuvres, as well as some risky inverted flying which would have kept the pilot alert. Cliffhanger's headcam was very sharp and steady, which made for good viewing. Overall, this was a very smooth performance, accompanied by a good sound track.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 10)

Entry: Focker
Video: Untitled
Venue: Unknown
Model: DWA Le Fish
Music: Unknown

Judging: An Interesting effect with the 180 degree stabiliser. However, this performance was not well rehearsed, resulting in a not-so-smooth routine and not too many spectacular aerobatics. The day seemed very misty or perhaps it was just a poor quality camera. In either case this did not add to the performance. Very nice upbeat music to boot.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 2)

Room for improvement

Entry: Wr Mizzard
Video: SoCal Slope Trotting
Venue: Unknown
Model: DWA Le Fish
Music: Unknown

Judging: A very cool introduction - different to all the others. Commencing with a view of Google Earth from space and homing right into the slope - very clever indeed. Unfortunately, the contest was about aerobatics and this video was about Dynamic Soaring (DS). So there's nothing more to add.

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 9)

Not available for judging

Entry: Wingtech
Video: VTPRXXL08
Venue: Unknown
Model: DWA Le Fish
Music: Unknown

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

(SlopeAerobatics online poll score - 8)