

2021 SPA Spring Opener



Pilots left to right – Pat Ensign, Adam Rush, Blake Arnold, Chris Berardi, Gary Alphin, Dave Dingman, Alan Schreiber, Todd Blose, Ken Knotts, Nathan Haycock, Max Blose, Danny Jackson, and Bobby Zikes. Not pictured – Stephen Byrd and Wayne Gallagan.

The SPA spring opener was at Thunderbird Field on April 24. As always, weather for this time of year can be very iffy. The predicted strong winds from the northwest were a little gentler and the bright clear sky turned into a partly cloudy, rather cool day. A total of 15 pilots tried their skills on the new 2021/2022 maneuvers.



Todd Blose

The competition was fierce, and the scores showed how close they were, especially in Expert. Winner Todd Blose won two of the four rounds and Stephen Byrd also won two rounds and finished second. Pat Ensign was third and Wayne Galligan fourth.

Senior Expert winner David Dingman won three rounds and second place finisher Danny Jackson won one. Ken Knotts was third.



Dave Dingman



Gary Alphin

Advanced winner Gary Alphin won two of the three rounds flown second place finisher Chris Berardi won the other. Max Blose was third.

Sportsman winner Blake Arnold won the last two of four rounds while second place finisher Bobby Zikes won one round and third place finisher Nathan Haycock won one round.



Blake Arnold



Adam Rush

Basic had two competitors with Adam Rush winning all four rounds and Alan Schreiber in second.

There were no airplanes lost during the competition though the gusty winds gave some pretty bumpy landing approaches.



We tried some new scoring helpers. It is a wheel that you grip between your thumb and a finger with your index finger on top of the 10. When you see a ½ point mistake you move your finger down into the notch, then to the top of the next point for the next ½ point mistake, etc. You can move it two steps for a more serious mistake. When the maneuver is completed, look at the score. Works well and eliminates the impression scoring.

Before the competition got underway, Pat Ensign ran a “Create your own Routine” competition. All the experts participated and the results matched the finals in the contest.

We want to thank the Fort Worth Thunderbirds for the use of the beautiful facility. We would also like to thank cook Tab Bowland and Jeanne Alphin, score entry Brian and Kelli Alphin, photographer Keith Knotts, score runner Ian Waring and others who I have failed to mention.

Ken Knotts