

Thunderbird Spring SPA

April 25, 2015

Beautiful weather with a bright sun shining greeted the pilots attending the spring SPA contest held on April 25, 2015. Of course the sun was directly in the eyes of the pilots most of the morning. There were 26 pilots who flew including some first time ever pattern flyers and one who is getting back into flying pattern.



It seems there is always something to overcome at a contest. It was a west wind blowing up 18 MPH with gust to 23 and blowing the airplanes out from the runway and some of them way out. It was neat to see how much some of them yawed on landing.



Logan Higby and Gary Nelson

Running two flight lines and keeping someone flying most all the time we were able to get 5 rounds in. There were a lot of tired bodies that went to the Mexican restaurant after the contest.

Each class from Intro to Expert had at least 3 pilots competing for prizes. Advanced class had 8 pilots with 3 different ones winning a round. Mark Ehlers took first with Tony Stelly in second and Tim Reed third.



Mark Ehlers



Bobby Zikes

Sportsman had 6 pilots with Bobby Zikes taking first with a pretty black and white Trouble Maker. Fourteen year old Grant Schroeder won the last round and took second followed by thirteen year old Logan Higby. It is really good to see the young guys competing and doing very well.



Benny Throne

Novice class had 5 pilots with first time SPA competitor Benny Throne won with Novice Points Champion Gerry Stanford was right on his heels with less than 6 points separating first and second. Kansas native Scott Murry took third.



Frank Cox

Frank Cox took the Intro class flying a really nice yellow Super Kaos with Dennis Niles took second followed by first time pattern pilot Mark Wheeler who had some bad luck when his engine flamed out and the nose gear was broken on the deadstick landing. Frank also won the ARF Intruder raffle prize.

Expert class had a real shootout between winner Pat Ensign and Bill Rutledge with Pat taking first place. Pat flew a Curare (second in picture) kit that is really fast and Bill flew his Intruder (first airplane in picture) with .91 four stroke



Pat Ensign

engine slow and smooth. Long time pattern pilot Bob Redmon who had retired from flying is back in the hunt and flew an electric Compensator (third airplane in picture) to third place. Welcome back to pattern flying Bob.



As always, we need thank all those who helped make the contest a success. They include field preparation, registration, score entry, cooks and servers, score sheet runners, flight boss and set-up and take-down of all the equipment. Thanks guys and gals, we really appreciate you.

Gary Alphin