

Top Gun 2007



A special WNL Report

As is always the case, I had a very enjoyable time attending this year's Top Gun scale extravaganza in Lakeland, FL. For 2007, everyone enjoyed wonderful weather, (I didn't even get sun-burned!), and there was an almost total absence of the infamous Top Gun crosswinds that keeps things interesting. Where in year's past, the heavily-loaded turbine powered jet dominated the competition, this year, it seemed everyone had an equal chance for the gold, whether you flew a big 1/3-scale Piper L-4 Grasshopper or a BVM F-100.

Most noticeable this year was the increased number of planes flying with approximately 117 registered. The most popular

class this year, with 31 pilots registered was Pro-Am (Pro). There were some new and first-time entrants but since there is no "builder of the model" rule, several pilots flew with borrowed airplanes to compete. There was an impressive amount of flying done over the course of the event and it is good to see several airplane favorites still flying, albeit with different pilots.

After all, Top Gun airplanes are meant to fly, not sit around!

By comparison, there were 29 pilots registered in Pro-Am (Sport), 26 in Expert, 11 in Masters, and 20 pilot/builder partnerships in Team Scale. The breakdown of aircraft types chosen by the pilots included, 41 WW 2 military aircraft, 38 jets (all turbine powered except for one elec-



Dean DiGiorgio's FW-190

tric powered ducted fan,) 17 civilian aircraft, four modern military aircraft, four WW 1 airplanes, and two modern turbo-prop aircraft (also turbine powered.)

Mr. Top Gun

This year's Mr. Top Gun title went Masters class winner Dave Ribbe with his impressive MiG-15 turbine jet. Dave designed the prototype model for the BVM MiG-15 kit and Dave showed everyone that he had what it takes to win with his turbine powered Soviet-era jet.

For those with a military mindset, there seemed to be no end to the WW 2 warbirds at the event, and for me the one that sounded most like a real-live fire-breathing axis fighter was Dean DiGiorgio's FW-190A. Flow in Pro-Am (Pro) Dean's 1/4-scale Butcher Bird was powered by the AirWorld 215cc 5-cylinder radial engine. Built from the AirWorld kit, Dean's model took first place and earned the Best Gas engine performance award.

My all time favorite jet at the meet was a beautiful straight-wing F-84G Thunderjet. Flown by Sprinkapaibulaya Kaivuth, the 1/5.6-scale F-84G was built by Saechour Kumpol and the pair finished in 13th place in Team scale. Powered by a PST 1300R turbine, the jet has a 78 inch span and weighed 35

Top Gun Winner's List

Expert class

Place	Contestant	Model	Static	Final
1,	Jack Diaz,	F-86 Sabre,	95.333,	191.833
2,	Bob Violet,	F-86F Sabre,	94.917,	191.542
3,	Greg Hahn,	B-25 Mitchell,	95.083,	190.750
4,	Dennis Crooks,	P-38 Lightning	95.333,	189.458
5,	Dustin Buescher,	F-86F Sabre,	92.500,	189.083

Masters class

1,	David Ribbe,	MIG-15,	96.500,	192.583
2,	Dave Johnson,	Albatros DVa,	94.250,	190.045
3,	Nick Zirola Sr.,	Beech D-17	95.000,	187.373
4,	David Foster,	Nakajima Jill,	92.833,	185.332
5,	Ed Andrews,	Fokker DR-1,	93.917,	185.250

Team class

1,	Ian Richardson/Steve Elias,	F-86F Sabre,	96.917	192.417
2,	Graeme Mears/David Shulman,	Sabre CL13,	96.083	192.333
3,	Octavio dePaula/ Eduardo Esteves,	Piper L-4,	97.000	192.151
4,	Wayne Siewert/Scott Russell,	Mooney M20L,	96.750	191.000
5,	Michael Selby/Ray Johns,	Tucano 312,	96.917	189.584

Pro-Am Pro class

1,	Dino DiGiorgio,	FW-190A,	25.000	122.717
2,	Jason Shulman,	F-86,	25.000	122.583
3,	Marco Benincasa,	P-47D,	25.000	121.034
4,	Tom Dodgen	MIG-15	25.000	120.792
5,	Kirby Cole,	P-51 Mustang,	25.000	120.403

Pro-Am Sportsman class

1,	Sean Curry	T-34 Mentor,	25.000	119.625
2,	Doug Harper,	Piper L-4,	25.000	118.552
3,	Eric Karl,	Panther F9F,	25.000,	118.250
4,	Marco Mascia,	MIG 15,	25.000,	118.208
5,	John Boyko,	Pitts S1-S	25.000	117.836



Dave Ribbe's MiG-15



Saechour Kumpol's F-84G

pounds. And talk about being driven, these two jet jocks came all the way from Thailand--that's about half-way around the world! If I were ever to invest in a turbine powered jet it would be

this straight-wing classic! Other standouts were Best Military winner Ed Newman for his Feissler Storch, and Best Military Runner up, Barry Raborn with his big and impressive swept-wing

F-84F Thunderstreak. There were a slew of big turbine powered jets at the event, but one that quietly did its job very well, was the F-86 Sabre Jet flown by Frank Tiano. Frank's Sabre was powered by a BVM electric Ducted fan setup and it performed absolutely



Ed Newman's Storch

perfectly. I was very impressed with its performance inside a standard BVM Sabre airframe. If you ever want to get into jets, this seems to me, the way to avoid any of the old glow ducted fan pitcalls without investing in a fire-breathing turbine powered project! Check the BVM website www.fly-BVM.com for more information!



Barry Raborn's F-84F

Turbo Props
Of particular interest was Mike Selby's turbo-prop powered Tucano 312. His impressive 1/4-scale modern day military trainer had a 114 inch span and was powered by a JetCat turbine. It was incredibly quiet and had amazing performance. Mike paired up with pilot Ray Johns for a 5th place win in Team scale, and the model is shown in the opening photo for this special report! Just amaz-

STATIC & FLIGHT AWARDS

Award	Sponsor	Winner	Aircraft
Masters High Static	AeroTech Models	David Ribbe	Mig-15
Expert High Static	Kempinski Hotels	Jack Diaz	F-86
Team High Static	S.O.S. International	Octavio Depaula	Piper L-4
Best Civilian	Air-World USA	Wayne Siewert	Pors/Mooney
Civilian Runner Up	Red Bull	Mike Barbee	Waco YMF-5
Best Military	Zirola Plans	Ed Newman	Feissler Storch
Military Runner up	Glenn Torrance Models	Barry Raborn	F-84F
Best Biplane	RC Report	Bob Gonzalez	Waco YMF-5
Best Pre WW2	Futaba	Ed Andrews	Fokker Dr.1
Best Jet	JR Radio	Graeme Mears	Canadair Sabre
Best Pro-Am	PST Engines	Brian O'Meara	SeaFury
Engineering Excellence	Robart Mfg.	Carlos Rangel	Zenith Air
Best Cockpit Interior	Sarasota Avionics	Ian Richardson	F-86
Charlie Chambers			
Craftsmanship Award	Bob Violett Models	Octavio DePaula	Piper L-4
Top Buns Award	S.O.S. / TG Hussies	Geraldo Diaz	
Special Recognition	The Pizza Company	Geraldo Galvez	P-26
Special Recognition	Composite-ARF	Dean Copeland	N9MB Wing
Critics Choice	Airtronics & Zap	Octavio DePaula	L-4
Critics Choice Runner-up	FLYRC	Mike Selby	Tucano
Best 4-Stroke Performance	Saito Engines	Frank Annett	A-26 Invader
Best 2 Stroke Performance	O.S. Engines	Tom Wolf	Mosquito
Best Gas Performance	Fuji Engines	Dino DiGiorgio	FW-190
Best Multi Performance	Ocean Beauty Seafood	Dennis Crooks	P-38 Lightning
Best Jet Performance	RCJI Magazine	Ali Machinchy	BAE Hawk
Best Total Flight Score	The ZAP Gang	Jason Shulman	F-86F



Greg Hahn's B-25



Mitch Epstein's B-17

ing! So there you have it. Another Top Gun special report. I only had room for a few model photos so I will be sure to show off some more in future issues of the Warbird Newsletter. If you have not ever made the trip down to Lakeland, FL to see Frank Tiano's Top Gun Scale Invitational, you really should plan a vacation around this great RC scale event. For the warbird lover, there's plenty of military hardware to make the trip worth it and there are also a few aviation museums in the area as well! So go ahead! Book that trip now!