

Gauteng Aerobatics Association (GAA) CHAMPS 2020

Held at Henley on 26 September.

The GAA Champs was held at Henley instead of Barnstormers, as this event coincided with the Power Nationals hosted by SAMAA. MAASA decided that it would not participate in the NATS, due to the consequences of Covid-19. The Cape Town pilots and judges could not travel and participate due to these circumstances.

The GAA wishes to thank the management of Henley for the well-groomed and clean facilities, as well as SAMAA for hosting the day. Thank you to Oom Danie Potgieter for performing the duties of Contest Director - getting the flow of contestants and judges at the right place, at the right time. Thanks to all the Pilots who pitched in as judges and helped to prepare the flightline by putting up the flags. Thank you Chris for organising of the flight and Judges rosters, collating the scores and arranged for the Trophies.



It was an early 4am start to the day in order to be at the contest site at 6 am to assist with the flight line preparations. The sun just rose over the horizon as we pulled into the venue after an hour's drive from home.



Judges: Roston, Grant and Joshua

Everybody had to pitch in to ready the field before flying could commence at 7:00. The flightline was prepared by rolling out the lines to mark out the box position and putting out the flags. Grant used his trusty drone with great effect to help to position the flags. Pilots briefing was at 6:45. Each class had to fly 4 rounds, with 5 pilots in Sportsman class, 3 pilots in Advanced class, 3 pilots in Masters class and 4 pilots in F3A class. Sixty flights had to be completed before sun set, which meant approximately 10 hours of continuous flying. Chris was proactive to do the draw a few days beforehand, in order to set up the roster, saving precious time. The draw was able to be witnessed by video link.

Oom Daan as per usual, performed the duty of Contest Director, getting everybody on the line on time, and he made the whole event run like clockwork. This was a challenge, as there were Large Scale, Pylon and Jet flights that ran concurrently, with some pilots participating in these events as well. The LOMAC guys, Barry, Sarel and Alec, as well as Roland and Burt, had to move with great enthusiasm and energy between the Northern and Southern flight lines in order to participate in all their disciplines. All judging was done by pilot judges, so there was not too much time to relax and lounge around.

The skies were clear, but the wind started to pick up from 8:00 and was gusty and got stronger through the day. This was quite a factor in the event, adding to the challenge for the pilots and taxing on the batteries of the aircraft.

In the Sportsman Class there was quite a fierce competition. The guys from LOMAC really enjoyed the day with very stiff competition amongst themselves. Barry, Sarel and André jockeyed for 1st position. André's 3rd round win of 68.64% and 1097 normalised points, helped him to secure 1st place. The second place was a draw between Sarel and Barry on normalised points, but was awarded to Barry due to the higher average that he had achieved.

The Advanced Class was closely contested by Burt, Neil and Roland. Burt and Roland were flying Pierre Marais's Amethyst and Legend, while Neil was flying a Peridot. Burt was struggling with power, but managed to fly a smaller, precise schedule, earning him 1st place. Neil also flew well, but at times the cross wind caught him off guard. He managed to get back on line during the turn around manoeuvres, earning him a 2nd place, closely followed by Roland in 3rd place.

In the Masters Class, it was closely contested by Chris, Dereck and Pieter. It was a big tussle to keep it together, and to try not to score a zero for manoeuvres. Chris won the first 2 rounds, followed by Dereck taking the 3rd. Pieter won the 4th round with the highest score of 66.69% in the Masters Class. Chris took top honours, followed by Pieter in 2nd and Dereck in 3rd place.

In the F3A Class it is good to see that Roston is back competing, after being absent for a while. He did well and took 2nd place. Joshua performed extremely well as a junior, giving the seniors good competition, scoring 80+ percent for the P Schedule, and for the tough F Schedule he was within a couple of percentage points behind the leaders. Joshua took 3rd place. André flew extremely well, with precision and finesse, and took every round. He took 1st place, and was awarded the Greg Casson Floating Trophy for the 24th time.

A summary of the placings is shown below.

Sportsman Class

Pilot Position	Pilot	Normalised	Percent
1	André Wentzel	3129	64.62%
2	Barry van der Vyver	3093	63.79%
3	Sarel Venter	3093	62.73%
4	Alec Groenewald	2696	54.82%
5	Doug Kay	1866	38.61%



André Wentzel 1st



Barry van der Vyver 2nd



Sarel Venter 3rd

Advanced Class

Pilot Position	Pilot	Normalised	Percent
1	Burt Botha	3013	65.65%
2	Neil Twomey	2983	64.12%
3	Roland Shurmuller	2956	62.37%



Burt Botha 1st



Neil Twomey 2nd



Roland Shurmuller 3rd

Masters Class

Pilot Position	Pilot	Normalised	Percent
1	Chris O'Connell	3017	63.20%
2	Pieter Botha	2979	62.92%
3	Dereck Butow	2950	61.25%



Chris O' Connell 1st



Pieter Botha 2nd



Dereck Butow 3rd

F3A Class

Pilot Position	Pilot	Normalised	Percent
1	André Stockwell	3036	83.85%
2	Roston Dugmore	2984	82.12%
3	Joshua Twomey	2929	80.43%
4	Grant Brook	2685	73.59%



André Stockwell 1st



Roston Dugmore 2nd



Joshua Twomey 3rd