

2008 FAI Southwest Regionals Model Airplane Championships

The weather for the 2 days of FAI flying at the 58th SWR in Eloy was close to perfect with blue Arizona skies. On Saturday, Jan. 19 the temperature ranged from just a bit below freezing to about 60°F and winds from 0-7 mph. Sunday, Jan. 20 started out nearly as cold but breezy up to 12 mph. But after 10 AM the wind speed dropped and was never more than 4 mph with total calm for long periods and the temperature at 65°F.

We had a total of 47 sportsmen flying the FAI events. They came from PA, VA, FL, LA, OH, MI, OK, TX, NM, AZ, CO, CA, OR and all the way from Great Britain (Dave Oldfield F1A, Mike Woodhouse F1B, John Bailey F1C, F1J). F1A had 5 flyers in the 1st fly-off. Sunday morning the cold, breezy air saw then the final fly-off between 3 sportsmen, which was won by René Limberger, the 2007 America Cup winner. F1B had 6 flyers with all maxes. Bob Biedron from Virginia won Wakefield after 2 fly-off rounds. Unlucky Jim Bradley could not get a flight off in the 2nd fly-off after breaking 3 motors. The 6 pilots with all maxes in the combined F1C/P event chose to fly off on Sunday. Don Chesson won with a long distance flight of 8min 35sec with his new flapper. Bobby Hanford came in 3rd with his Astro-Pearl F1P. On Saturday he set a tentative 2008 record of 29min 14sec. Bernie Crowe was the sole electric flyer so he won F1Q.

The windy conditions in the first 2 rounds on Sunday made it difficult for the mini event flyers. But in F1G 6 sportsmen still managed to max out all 5 rounds. The fly-off in F1G was exciting and went for the 3, 4, 5, 6 minute round in the late afternoon with less and less thermal activity. Tiffany O'Dell with her electronic timer Coupe came out ahead after 9 rounds of flying to win the "Bear" and carry him off for a year in Oregon. The F1H glider flyers Mike McKeever and Jim Parker were the only ones clean going into the 3-min and then the 4-min round. Mike had a big smile after he made the 240 seconds flight while Jim missed it by 1 second. F1J had only 2 sportsmen flying. They were Faust Parker from Texas and John Bailey from the U.K.. John had an overrun in the 2nd round, which did not let him get a score before the round closed. This gave the win to Faust Parker. He is taking the "Bear" again to Houston, which will make Julie happy.

A big thank you to all participants and helpers who made this contest a memorable event.

Peter Brocks