

The 2016 Junior FAI World Champs in Prilep, Macedonia

By Bob Stalick

Flash: US F1A Team takes Fifth Place. Joel Yori takes Third Individual Honors

Wednesday dawned early for the F1A flyers at the Junior World Champs in Macedonia. On the field at 7 am, Cade, Alex and Joel were getting their ships ready for a bit of early last minute test flying. The contest had an 8 am announced start, but when the designated time arrived, the contest management was just getting organized. Start was postponed to 8:30, and our team was ready to go. We were assigned pole position number 9 for our first round flight. This was the 4 minute round, and supposedly a calm wind round, but the winds were not that calm. Unfortunately, the winds were to get less calm as the day wore on, sometimes reaching gusts of over 15 mph. As with the previous 2 days, temperatures were to get into the mid to high 80's.

The 3 team members determined who would fly first, so Alex was up, with Cade in the on deck circle. Alex's first flight was a nice max followed closely by Cade, who suffered a line interference and an attempt. A reflight gave him his second max. Joel got off a high speed launch that must have doubled the line length. His was an easy max. A nice start. with perfect scores.

After a 15 minute break, round 2 started, after a pole position switch. Alex went first again, and made an easy max. Cade went next but a decent launch into some tricky air left him with a score of 1:45. Our teams first non max. Talk about tricky air, it was generally thought that the thermals were hard to pick but if you got in one, you would be in for a nice ride. All the while the winds kept on blowing. Air picking continued to be tricky, but Joel got into nice lift for his second max.

Round 3 began with Alex dropping a flight as he went a few seconds early and just missed centering in lift. His flight scored 2:47, 13 seconds short. Cade went next and had another line snag, allowing him to reflly. This time he centered his model in a nice boomer and scored the max. Joel had another immense zoom launch and got his third max in a row.

After a 30 minute break to allow for models to be retrieved, the fourth round started. Once again, Alex got his max, but Cade dropped out of his weak thermal for a disappointing 1:34. Joel continued his winning ways and got an easy fourth max.

About this time in the meet, I witnessed some serious flapping from the Czech team. It seemed about a dozen or so Czech supporters were running under a model waving their arms, and flailing shirts attempting to break loose some lift. It seemed to work. I am sure that anyone not used to freeflight would see this Keystone Cops routine and wonder just what is going on with these crazy people!

After another 30 minute break, It was time for the fifth and final round. A quick look at the scoreboard showed that only one team, Germany, had no dropped flights.

Alex started the round again and after waiting for over 30 minutes launched into what seemed good air, but rapidly it became apparent, it was not. At this point, our own troupe of helpers went running downwind waving their arms and flailing their shirts. It worked. Alex squeaked out his fourth max. Because Joel was having a good day flying, Cade allowed him to fly in second position, and he did the most spectacular zoom launch of the contest. There was no

question that it would max, so he was our only team member with a perfect score and would move on to the flyoffs. Cade got his final flight in, another Max.

Joel ended with a perfect 960 seconds, Alex had 943, and Cade had 794. Joel qualified for the flyoffs which were set to begin at 6:30 PM. He was joined by 12 other flyers who had maxed out.

The flyoff was conducted at 6:30, and two contestants made the 6 minute flight, with the Russian, Lomov, taking first place after a second flyoff. Joel Yori, who performed with distinction on the US team, took third with a flyoff flight of 4:40. Congratulations to all our fliers for their performance and special congratulations to Joel. His mom, Amy, and grandad, Bob Sifleet, sported happy and tired smiles when the final scores were tallied.

Tomorrow is F1B (Rubber) day. The routine is the same (start at 8 am and one hour rounds), but hopefully, we will start on time and the winds will be kinder to all contestants. We believe we have an excellent team of seasoned veterans in Troy Davis, Sevak Malkhasyan and Jace Pivonka. All have competed at the Jr. World Champs before and are expert fliers.

F1B

Flash: US Team places second in F1B Wakefield.

Updates from yesterday's F1A event. In addition to Joel Yori's third place finish, Alex Stalick placed 15th and Cade Fedor placed 39th out of 47 contestants.

You can keep up to date on the scores by individual and team on the Jr. World Champs website <http://wjchamp2016.prilepcup.info>

Unofficial results from the field show the US in second place as a team, only 3 seconds behind the Russians. Interestingly, the US was firmly in first place at the end of the 4th round and needed to max its final flights to secure the victory. Here's how it happened.

The contest got off to the prescribed 8 am start and the winds were not anywhere to be seen. In fact, what wind there was was light and variable. Since the first round was a 4 minute max, the lack of strong thermal activity would be a challenge. The team decided the order of flight, and Sevak Malkhasyan went first and easily secured the max with a strong climb into lift. Troy Davis followed, and he made his with ease. Jace Pivonka flew third, and his flight looked good to start then ran into some trouble with a prop blade, but due to some vigorous flapping by the support team, he sweated it out for his first max. So far, we were in great shape.

The second round saw Sevak put in another strong flight for an easy 3 minute max, followed by Troy's 166 second flight--a real disappointment as he had a good climb but was done in by some tricky air, even though the support team did their bit again.

Jace broke a motor as he was preparing his model, and had to replace it for his next official, which was a max.

At this point, I'd like to interject an observation about current Wakefield rubber equipment and winding. Motor weight allowed is 30 grams, and all the motors I saw used 1/16" rubber strip, so a made up motor looks like a foot long bundle of spaghetti. Jace had 96 motors made up and stored in a cooler bag, and I'm sure the others had similar arrangements. Winding takes place outside the model, and the wound motor is fastened to a U shaped tray and slid into the front of the model, where it is anchored in the back and fastened to the prop assembly in the front. The tray is then removed and the model is ready. If a motor breaks, it typically breaks outside

the fuselage thereby causing no damage to the model. The sound of a breaking motor, however, is very distinctive. A loud POP, then a ping as the shreds hit the U shaped tray. As the day progressed and the temps reached for 90 degrees, the POP-Ping sounds became commonplace.

Round three began with another strong flight from Sevak, but once again, Troy had some bad air and a 131 second flight ensued. Jace had some model difficulties as well and had to launch as the horn was ready to sound to end the round. He got the max.

Team Manager, Jim Parker, decided that since Sevak and Jace had perfect scores and a chance for individual honors that they should go first and second, so Troy was relegated to cleanup position. Round four saw Sevak get another max, but only after a motor broke in the model while he was in launch position. It was replaced and the flight went off well. Jace followed up with another strong flight. Troy got his model performing better and he recorded a perfect flight as well.

At this point, at the end of 4 rounds, the US team was in the lead only 63 seconds away from perfection. Round five was a wait and see round. Winds were nil. The air was tricky. Thermals were spotty and small, waiting patiently (or not) was important. Sevak waited for nearly half the round before launching into a boomer thermal, but at 20 seconds or so into the climb, the model seemed to power stall and come to a near stop. Then, it veered left out of the main body of lift and headed away from the pack of other models. He recorded a score of 153 seconds, his first non max of the day. After his strong performance in the first 4 rounds, this dropped flight was a heartbreaker.

Jace was next, and he waited for about 20 minutes before picking a nice patch of air and a perfect launch. Then, for some reason, the model began the glide left in an odd pattern. It later was determined that a prop blade had not folded correctly, causing the model's glide to be affected. Jace's perfect string of maxes was broken with a score of 173 seconds. Now Troy was under the gun as time was ticking away. The CD announced 5 minutes remaining when Troy got to the launch area. Air was dead, thermals nowhere. Then, with about a minute to go, some life. A whisper of wind, LAUNCH! Troy went off in a great climb, his best of the day, and he recorded his third max.

The official results were not available when this article was completed. So we believe the team placed second to the Russians by 3 seconds, but information about the individual placings and how other teams fared will be contained in tomorrow's report or can be viewed on the JrChamps website.

Our team was one to be proud of, even though they lost out on the chance for individual honors, they worked very well together and helped each other, a mark of true teamwork.

Tomorrow is F1P (power) day. Team members are: Cade Fedor. Sevak Malkhasyan and Alex Stalick. In a quirk of the FAI rules, power flies by a different rounds system. Whereas F1A and F1B have a first max of four minutes and 4 subsequent maxes of 3 minutes prior to flyoffs, F1P has a seven round format with 3 minute maxes. This anomaly might be worth a review at the next CIAM meeting.

F1P

Flash: US F1P team places second in the Jr. World Champs. Alex Stalick secures third place individual

Recap from Wakefield Day: At the time of my last report, the F1B Wakefield scores were not official. Since then, the scores have been posted on the <www.Prilepcup.MK> website.

Although it appears some errors are in the results, here are the places as reported: Mekzilamov from Ukraine was the eventual first place winner after posting perfect flyoff scores in the 6 minute and 8 minute rounds. The final 10 minute flyoff was held beginning at 6 am on Friday morning and the Ukrainian was the top of the field at 348 seconds. This was a masterful achievement with excellent competition. Since flyoffs do not count in the team standings, the US team placed third overall. Ukraine and Russia placed first and second in that order.

Individually, US Team members were: Jace - Ninth, Sevak, 13th and Troy 22nd.

F1P Power Event Report:

From a weather standpoint, it appeared that Friday would be a repeat of Thursday with weather in the 80's and light winds variable. As noted earlier, this was to be a seven round event with all maxes set at 3 minutes. The rounds were set at 55 minutes with a five minute break between them. Since there were only 5 teams, there were only 5 pole positions, so we rotated through two poles twice.

The team decided Alex should go first, followed by Cade with Sevak flying last.

With light air, Alex went early in the round flying an Astrostar that was tissue covered. This model had been flown several World Champs ago by Cody Secor and had won the championship for him. It was the most retro model on the field, since most of the designs were carbon constructed with plastic film covering. The Astrostar was of all balsa construction with Japanese tissue covering.

Alex put the model into lift, but needed a bit of flapping help to get his max. Cade was next and put in a solid max. Sevak was having some engine issues, but got it sorted out in time for his max. So far, so good. Six rounds to go!

Round two was another calm one with drift uncertain but not strong. Alex found some strong lift, and got into it well. He had set the Texas Timer to d.t. at 4 minutes (just to be sure), and it got so high that after the d.t. it took another 6 minutes+ to come down. Cade flew net and had a disappointing 134 second flight even though the flapping crew was active. Sevak got his model into another boomer and scored an easy 180. Sevak's model features an electronic timer and is state of the art.

Round 3 saw Alex give an out of character less than perfect launch and score 169, just 11 seconds short. Cade had a shallow launch but the model got into a nice patch of air and got the 180. Sevak did his max.

Round 4, Alex returned to form and had a 4 minute d.t. that was in the air for another 5+ minutes. The model landed on the road on the north side of the field. Good thing Jace, who runs cross country in high school, was there to pick it up, as a local motorist had stopped just as he arrived. Cade was next and once again had a shallow launch, scoring a disastrous 42 seconds. Some speculation was that a cracked pylon might have been the culprit, so the model was retired in favor of model #9, which he flew for the remainder of the contest. Sevak was up and secured an easy max.

Round 5 began with the weather heating up and the thermals getting scarcer. When they came through, they were in short duration but strong. Alex was up and just missed the lift scoring 174. Cade, with model #9, was solid for his third max of the day. Sevak was Mr. Consistency with his fifth max.

I should point out here that Alan Jack team manager for Great Britain had joined the US contingent, as his team had no power fliers. His comments on the US team's exploits are priceless and full of typical British humor. He was a fun addition to our crew.

Round 6. Alex is solid for another max. So is Cade and Sevak. We are doing well and appear to be on target for a first place team award, and Sevak is the only flier on the board with perfect scores in each round. However, the heat and the number of rounds seem to be sapping energy. The fliers on our team are not complaining, but everyone (including this writer) looks pretty droopy.

One round to go.

Round 7. Now, it's a waiting game. Alex finds a big boomer and scores his fifth max. Team manager, Jim Parker, decides that Sevak should go next as he has a chance to win it all. So, after a long wait some lift comes through and Sevak launches in an off wind direction and the model is off in a shallow climb out of lift for a 63 second flight. This is devastating for all, but especially for Sevak. Cade follows with another max and the round is over.

No flyoffs are needed as no competitor has maxed out. The top three finishers are called to the CD table to have their models processed. While Alex is waiting in line, a Russian team supporter edges closer and squeezes the balsa fuselage of the Astrostar and exclaims, "Is balsa!". Alex's model makes the grade and he is pronounced the 3rd place winner, as with the previous two placers, he is given a round of applause. Pictures follow.

The final result: Winner was Bogomaz from Poland with a score of 1253. Second was Moisiadi from Ukraine with a score of 1249. Alex's 1243, just 10 seconds away from the lead. Unofficial team placing is Russia for first. Second USA, Third, Ukraine.

The USA had the first place in our grasp, but it got away from us with some uncharacteristically odd launches.

Unofficial individual placings are: Alex - third place, Sevak - ninth place, and Cade - 10th place.

I have been impressed all through this competition at the quality of our team and their supporters. They are a pleasant mix of laid back and competitive young men. I am proud, as should everyone who cares about our future. These are quality human beings, and I was proud and fortunate to be included in the group. One example: After Sevak had dropped his final flight and the contest was over, he called to Alex and Cade to gather around him for a team picture. He didn't sulk or hang his head, but wanted all of his teammates to be together. He's a classy young man.

Jim Parker did a masterful job of interceding when needed, but staying in the background for most of the action. He is to be congratulated as are all of the fliers and supporters.

Final Report and Closing Ceremony

The day after the final event at the World Champs was billed as a makeup day (for flyoffs, if needed). It wasn't needed, so we had most of the day, until 6 pm, for sightseeing. The entire team and most of the supporters decided to go to a village, named Krushevo, about 15 miles from the field where a hang gliding competition was being held. We arrived around noon or so, and were amazed at the number of enthusiasts who were there. We watched takeoffs, thermal soaring and long glides. At one point, it appeared that several dozen gliders were in a huge thermal at a very high altitude, so high that with the telephoto lens, they appeared as specks in the sky. It was quite a show. After late lunch and a brief tour of Krushevo, we headed back to the Crystal Palace to clean up for the closing ceremony.

The ceremony was held in downtown Prilep at the same location where the opening event took place. Trophies were awarded to first, second and third place individual and teams. Some winners received perpetual trophies as well, including a set sponsored by the Magnificent Mountain Men of Colorado. Our individual winners were Joel Yori, who took third in F1A glider, and Alex Stalick, who took third in F1P power. Team placing was second in both F1B rubber and F1P power. The best part is that each one of our team members received at least one award. Some great memories were made this day.

The event concluded with some local girls dancing to traditional music. Then, it was off to the "banquet." At this dinner, much trading goes on--T-shirts, hats, pins and the like. It's a great opportunity for our guys to meet the other team members. Our T-shirts were a big hit this year, and most of them got traded. The service and the food quality was incidental to the informal talk and activity. Cade Fedor even got in a good natured armwrestling match with one of the Russian fliers. I wonder whether the Russian realized that he was beaten by a 13 year old? And so this wondrous week came to a close. There were a lot of "What ifs" with this team, but in the end, I believe they acquitted themselves well. They made good friendships that will last, and they showed what teamwork can do. I am proud to be associated with them.

So, where does next year's team come from? Of this group. Sevak heads off to college to study engineering next year, Troy and Jace go back to high school and will graduate in a year. Alex will be a high school junior but just a bit over the deadline to qualify for the 2018 team. All of these young men will be too old to compete. that leaves Cade and Joel as the only potential returners. We need to recruit some more team members! So, what is needed from a potential member? interest and enthusiasm to fly free flight. If you have the interest, you will be helped to improve yourself. This is a terrific opportunity for young men and young women to experience other cultures and have a great time. You cannot be over 18 years old by January 1, 2018. Contact AMA or Jim Parker to express your interest. If you'd like more information, I can be of help as well. Contact me at <freefliter@aol.com>

A few Thoughts about the 2016 Jr. orld Championships.

This is a world class freeflight site. The field is large and off field chase area is also large with no fences. The field has a short grass cover and off field areas vary from rough ground to more grassy area--some with plantings. Weather conditions for this meet, at least, were generally good, with pretty steady winds from the SW on F1A day. Since the wind was steady, the flight line could have been set up at least a half mile further upwind and fewer models would have left the field. The other two days were calm with variable winds up to 3-4 mph. Temperatures were warm to hot. Thermals were tricky to locate.

The contest management had some difficulty getting into the groove at the start, but Per Findahl of Sweden, who was a member of the Jury and a top F1A flier, stepped in and got things organized and by F1P day, the contest seemed to be humming along smoothly. The timers, who were young to middle aged local men, were competent and attentive. Some of them belonged to the local aero club which also shares this field. No protests were filed.

We found that WiFi on field wifi was nonexistent, so the criticism of slow score posting is accurate, but seeming unavoidable at this time.

I think the Macedonian contest organizers are to be commended for their willingness to put on this meet. For future consideration, the cost of food, lodging, and just about everything else is very inexpensive by American standards. The organizer was Zdrabko Todoroski and the Contest Director was Dimche Velkoski, and they deserve our appreciation for the task they took on and performed for our benefit.

I want to personally thank my son, Ted Stalick, who invited me to come to the meet (and paid my way) and my grandson, Alex, for making grandpa proud. I suggest if the team wants to have a reporter in the future, a special blog be set up so that regular posts can be made to include the pictures that were taken of the action. I thought I had arrangements made for daily posts on Facebook, but those didn't seem to work out. A better way would be to have a dedicated Blogspot.

In all, it was the experience of a lifetime! It was a blast to be here!