



#### **Mercer Airport, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023**

Nine competitors braved the heat and humidity of the northern summer to compete in the delayed (by awful December weather) Summer 22/23 North Island Akrofest, awarding the Langley Marshall Trophy. This trophy, contested for over 30 years, commemorates past aerobatic competition stalwarts and instructors Brian Langley and Paul Marshall, from North Shore Aero Club. Paul was also a past president and lifetime member of the NZ Aerobatic Club, and both are sadly no longer with us.

The format of this competition awards the Trophy to he or she who achieves the highest percentage score across all three flown sequences (Known, Free and Unknown), regardless of category. Generally, but not always, a lower category pilot will 'beat' a higher category pilot.

Saturday dawned fine and clear, with light winds - until the start of competition flights! Towering cumulus buildups rolled in from the south, the low cloud base necessitating the Chief Judge's call for unlimited weather breaks, although several highly fancied pilots would rue not taking advantage of this opportunity. As well, a nasty towards-the-judge-line, cross-box wind also popped up, and many end-of-sequence maneuvers were marked down as they were too close to see, being flown almost over the judge's heads. Additionally, and for the judge's entertainment(!), an impromptu and unofficial cross-wind landing competition was observed from the well-positioned judge-line, this being of less fun for the competitors...

Andy Hope, the token Australian competitor, advised us all at the briefing that the direction of flight was "towards Australia". Amongst a field on monoplanes, he was the only (openly) 'bi' pilot in the competition, flying his beautifully refurbished Pitts S2E ZK-ELI now resembling the black and gold Ray-Ban Pitts Special aircraft of yesteryear. Unfortunately, he was only able to attend on Saturday.

After lunch, blue skies prevailed, the cross wind remained, the heat and humidity increased and under bubble canopies, in the words of the great Darryl Kerrigan, we were 'suffering in our jocks.'

At the end of day one, after flying the Known and Free sequences, Chris Sadler in RV-3 ZK-WHO was in the lead with 88.5%, closely chased by David Wilkinson in DR107 ZK-EZG on 81.8%, and John Ashman subbing his DR107 One Design for Giles G202 ZK-NUT on 80.9%. All three were flying in the Sports category. With such a dominant lead, and some impressive flying, it would be a tough ask for the field to catch Chris...

Sunday was cooler, with little wind and a high overcast – a perfect day for flying the Unknowns. It was great fun to watch- but maybe a challenge to fly - the Sports category, as competitors, some still very new to the sport, battled with 1/4 turns and cross box manoeuvres. The competition heated up when overnight leader Chris Sadler turned the wrong way coming out of the cross-box stall turn, 'zeroing' the maneuver and creating an opportunity for those chasing to catch up. However, as a seasoned competitor he immediately recognized his mistake, took a 'break' and regrouped, missing out on only(!) a possible 190 points from the zeroed maneuver. It could have been much worse.

All of the competitors completed their Unknown sequences before the lunch break, allowing Chief Judge Grant Benns and second judge Steve Geard to crunch the Acro software scoring system for the final results, while the competitors relaxed and watched the Warbirds Roaring 40s Harvard display team carry out a practice nearby.

And so, to the results. Despite Chris' mistake, in the end the overnight order remained the same as the previous day, albeit the scores did close between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Chris Sadler finished first on 83.75%, David Wilkinson came in second on 81.2% and John Ashman scored a very credible 80.1%. Of note, John out-performed Brent Griffin, owner of NUT but flying in the Intermediate category, and David Wilkinson did very well to come second despite exploring the outer limits of the Box! Special mention must be made of Brent Hempel in Yak 52 ZK-DSJ, flying in his first ever competition and placing fifth with 74.8%. Perhaps a move to Recreational may be in order.

For the record, Greg Morris flying Vans RV-8 ZK-ATE won the unofficial landing competition on Saturday, with all landings apparently carried out with his eyes very wide open. The judges wondered if all competitors were using (or should have been using) the same technique.

In accepting the Langley Marshall Trophy, Chris offered some sage advice – practice, practice, practice! And just keep going – don't give up. Chris also shows what can be achieved in a very modest aircraft – a fixed-pitch Vans RV3 that he built himself in less than a year – by flying in a controlled, disciplined manner. Time taken to practice round loops and perfect lines pays off, however many of the competitors displayed similar skills, albeit without the relentless consistency that Chris exhibited throughout all of his flights. Taking out the 'zero' on day two, Chris set a high bar, but one that a number of the attended pilots had the capability of matching.

Many thanks to the volunteers/helpers, Keith Wheele, Trish Stevens, Clive Whitfield, Hilaire McDonald (thanks for the coffees!) and to judges Grant Benns and Steve Geard. Also, thanks to Mark Heliwell / NZ Warbirds for the help with the event approval and the biggest thanks to airfield owners/operators Neil Young and Dee Bond for their continued support of our Mercer events and providing such a great venue.

And from the smaller group of house-bombers, thanks to Grant and Kelly Benns once again for your hospitality in opening up your home, fridge and BBQ to some smelly aerobatic pilots, to rest, recover and tell some lies on Saturday evening.

**Event Organizer and Contest Director; Grant Benns.  
Judges; Grant Benns and Steve Geard.**

## Results: Final results

Summer 22 23 NI AkroFest, Mercer, 22 January 2023

### Consolidated multi-level Report

Rank	Level	Pilot	Aeroplane	Registration	Known	Fr/Known	Unknown	Known #2	Free	Totals	O/all %
1	SPT	Chris Schadler	RV3	ZK-WCO	1211.00		1093.00		1213.50	3517.50	83.750
2	SPT	David Wilkinson	RV8	ZK-WLK	1079.25		1167.25		1162.50	3409.00	81.167
3	SPT	John Ashman	DR107	ZK-XSG	1082.50		1144.25		1135.50	3362.25	80.054
4	SPT	David Cranna	RV7	ZK-RVQ	1058.75		1169.00		1070.25	3298.00	78.524
5	PRI	Brent Hempil	Yak 52	ZK-DSJ	555.75		629.25	520.50		1705.50	74.803
6	REC	Christoph Berthoud	Yak 52	ZK-DSJ	706.00		663.50		831.75	2201.25	74.116
7	SPT	Greg Morris	RV9	ZK-ATE	986.25		1017.50		1038.75	3042.50	72.440
8	INT	Brent Griffin	G202	ZK-NUT	1133.00	1714.00	1399.00			4246.00	67.611
9	SPT	Andrew Hope	Pitts S2E	ZK-ELI	1009.50				1072.00	2081.50	49.560
10	REC	Andrew Hope	Pitts S2E	ZK-ELI	696.00				720.75	1416.75	47.702



Multiple calculation methods used  
Aerobatic Contest Results Organiser, ACRO Version 5.1 Build: 13/10/22  
This report created at 20:09 on Sunday 22 January 2023

### Final Results Approvals

For Chief Judge:

For CIVA Jury:

## Trophies;

The Grand prize of the Langley Marshall Trophy goes to Chris Schadler.

Intermediate; Brent Griffin in the G202, ZK-NUT.

Sports; Chris Schadler in Vans RV3, ZK-WCO.

Recreational; Christoph Berthoud in the Yak 53, ZK-DSJ.

Primary; Brent Hempil in the Yak 52, ZK-DSJ.

Well done to all.



The photographic evidence;















