



2023 South Island Akro Fest Results and Report



Over the first weekend of December, at Ashburton Aerodrome, Mid Canterbury, 25 competitors and volunteers gathered for the 9th edition of the South Island Akro Fest. Enthusiastically supported by the Mid Canterbury Aeroclub and Ashburton Aviation Museum. In total, we had 17 pilots registered to fly across the full complement of classes. The exciting news, was the Primary and Recreational classes, seeing one competitor returning to the competition arena with a handful of others competing for the first time. Richard Button assisted me with the safety pilot jobs, thanks a lot for your help with that Richard. I also rode along with two competitors in the same capacity. It was great to be contacted by both Alexandra Watson and Darryn Franklin to be a safety pilot. Both had current Aeros ratings but for a combination of currency and their first time in a New Zealand Aerobatic Club event, they felt more comfortable with a safety pilot. Gill Philips and Brendon Wellington both competed for the first time and both were super helpful with extra roles at the event too. Thankyou to you both!

The other competitor in the Primary and Rec classes was Iain McPhail, who has become a bit of an Akro Fest regular, flying both his Rans S10 and more commonly, the Alpha 2160a, and now Ross Brodie's Air Tourer. Iain did a very, very good job and has improved beyond all recognition. Iain has become as much of a regular to our event as his venerable Campervan. Which appears to have superseded Pam Colling's equally reliable camper on our judging line. Thankyou to all your help across the entire week Iain.

Contest Director Lachlan Falconer did, as ever, a brilliant job at the helm. His morning briefings have set a new standard. It must be an ATC thing, as Mike Slack set an equally good standard in his years as CD at our National Championships. Lachlan and I, joined enthusiastically by Mike Fowler have sought to add as much as we can to the members, both competitors/enthusiasts alike at these events. This year, we consolidated in many areas. Lachlan's partner Sarah Ross and Mike's wife Kylie also hammered away behind the scenes with paperwork, data entry and Sarah largely ran the spotter

radio out at the judging line. All these jobs are immense and chew up immeasurable time. I cannot say enough how much I appreciate your help team.

In recent years, I have begun to judge (or, try to at least follow the sequence without missing anything!) Unlimited. Since I first met Russell Bell 10 years ago, I took some advice of his and made a point to judge the class above where I am competing. It has certainly been of benefit to me in my flying. So, for this year, we were privileged to witness Ivan Krippner, in his Pitts challenge Russell for the Alister Yeoman Trophy. I can only describe Ivan's flying across the two flights as courageous. I tried in vain to convince him to fly with me in the Advanced class but he refused outright. Meow).

Due to the weather delays, that have become a little too familiar at some of our events in recent years, we were unable to run the Unknowns, for the first time as it happens at SI Akro Fest. We did comfortably complete the first two rounds, along with a 5 entrant 4min free style class.

Else where in the event, it was very satisfying to see Ross Brodie and Lincoln Jones, along with their Sportsman rival Chris Schadler, all competing in the Intermediate class for the first time. All turned in impressive performances first time out. I am particularly looking forward to seeing these guys at Nationals and behind. All three also competed in the 4min free style for the first time.

In Sportsman, we had Alex Ingrosso, flying a Yak 52 and up from Recreational the year before, he made a solid start in the event but had to pull out before flying the free due to the little lack of energy, perhaps more Powerade on hand next time Alex? 😊

Mike Fowler was Yak 52-less this year unfortunately, but still flew the Alpha enthusiastically in the class. He is really, really looking forward to a more solid build-up to Nationals and Akro Fest later next year. Richard Button again flew Sports and cemented himself as the new Chris Schadler. NZAC President Morris Tull again made his Pitts Special, FRJ available and Richard flew it beautifully. Intermediate category next year Richard!

Morris had to pull-out of Advanced just before the event kicked off due Covid aftereffects, so I was left on my lonesome, but with no lesser job to complete. I was very happy with my two flights, all things considered. Plenty to work on as soon as 2024 arrives that it is for sure. I was very fortunate to get some critiquing from Alister Yeoman, Russell Bell and some from Ross Brodie over the Winter months, which has all helped enormously. I have made a small change to my Free-Known for Nationals (Which I should have done for Akro Fest!), the judges will be happier!

Most competitors arrived early in the week, so we achieved a huge amount of pre-comp critiquing, which was a big hit with everyone. Apart from the late arrival of the Alpha, all were on site by Tuesday afternoon. When the weather delayed our start on Thursday, Morris and Lachlan ran a couple of seminars on designing your first free sequence and a general outline on considerations when you prepare for a competition. We will continue to come up with wet-weather options at future events. Lachlan's aim is, to simply increase value to our members for their registration fees.

Saturday morning, we completed the Free and Free-Known sequences early afternoon. With the weather deteriorating steadily, we elected to cancel the Unknowns and run the 5 pilots in the 4min free style. Given the weekend was also someone's 40th, with a much, much bigger Saturday night dinner/prize giving, we were keen to run the free style event for the considerable crowd at the Aeroclub. Due to our article with the Guardian two years running, we have enjoyed a very impressive number of spectators from town. We engaged with as many as we could, particularly the kids.

While we were on hold late in the morning on the Saturday, I was able to take both my kids up for their first aerobatic flight in Ross Brodie's Air Tourer. They had both been up in the Tiger Moth several

times but their first Aero's flight was truly memorable. Ella's flight in particular, was literally my highlight of 2023. She just loved it. I won't be selling my single seater but I can tell you but there is considerable scope for a two seat aerobatic aircraft at some point! I plan to put the business case to my wife in due course.

So, all in all, we had a thoroughly successful event. Slightly marred by unpredictable weather. Lachlan Falconer has added a huge amount of value to our event, and I look forward to seeing him tearing around in the Yak 52 in 2024 and not only in the chair running the event. I will return as Contest Director next year. Mike Fowler, another member in the Rangiora Yak 52 Syndicate has contributed hugely to the event since he first came along in 2018 respectively. Along with his wife Kylie, thank you to you both!

To all our volunteers, many came from literally hundreds of miles away, including Noel Kinvig, Chris' good friend from Whakatane, who drove himself down, along with all of Chris' loot from the 2023 event, and Richard Wallace who flew his Cherrokee down, thank you for your support. Our event would not run like it does with out the enthusiastic support from the Mid Canterbury Aeroclub. Thanks very much guys, particularly to Club President, Graham Closey. NZ Warbirds Association continue to approve our events and Mark continues to do a great job here in creating the framework for us to run the event.

Xmas is literally just around the corner so on behalf of Lachlan, Sarah, Mike, Kylie, Iain and myself, have a safe and enjoyable break, thankyou to all of our members who continue to support this event on the mainland, and to those planning to come to Nationals, I cannot wait to catch up with you all in the Wairarapa next March.

Andy Love

**Akro Fest Event Organiser / NZAC Secretary / Treasurer / Birthday boy.
New Zealand Aerobatic Club**





Full Results

South Island Akro Fest, Ashburton Aerodrome

Organizing Club: NZ Aerobatic Club Contest date: 30th November – 2nd December 2023

Primary – Power

Pilot A/c type Reg Known Free/F Known U/Known Total %

Iain McPhail Air Tourer ZK-DAC 578.8 560.2 1139 74.95%

Gillian Phillip Alpha 2160a ZK-VCA 535.7 532.2 1067.9 70.25%

Brendon Wellington Alpha 2160a ZK-VCA 458.8 525.0 983.8 64.75%

Recreational – Power

Pilot A/c type Reg Known Free/F Known U/Known Total %

Alexandra Watson Alpha 2160a ZK-VCA 741.3 696.2 1437.5 72.6%

Iain McPhail Alpha 2160a ZK-VCA 612.8 701.0 1313.8 66.36%

Darryn Franklin Yak 52 ZK-JPW 581.5 581.5 58.7%

Sportsman – Power

Pilot A/c type Reg Known Free/F Known U/Known Total %

Richard Button Pitts S-1S ZK-FRJ 1049.0 1058.59 - 2107.59 81.06%

Alex Ingrosso Yak 52 ZK-JPW 921.8 - 921.8 69.4%

Mike Fowler Alpha 2160a ZK-VCA 747.0 934.7 1681.7 63.5%

Vintage – Power (Wayne Edwards Memorial Trophy) *Pilot A/c type Reg Known Free/F Known U/Known Total %* Not Contested

Intermediate – Power

Pilot A/c type Reg Known Free/F Known U/Known Total %

Ross Brodie Pitts S-1S ZK-PUG 1673.1 1759.3 - 3432.4 82.0%

Chris Schadler RV-3 ZK-WCO 1678.5 1370.8 - 3049.3 76.1%

Lincoln Jones Pitts S-2C ZK-LDJ 1593.3 1583.5 - 3176.8 75.9%

Advanced – Power

Pilot A/c type Reg Known Free/F Known U/Known Total %

Andy Love Pitts S-1S ZK-PUG 2386.7 2684.7 - 5071.4 76.85%

Unlimited – Power

Pilot A/c type Reg Known Free/F Known U/Known Total %

Russell Bell Giles G200 ZK-LGT 3419.3 3875.2 - 7294.5 80.05%

Ivan Krippner Pitts S-1 ZK-RTP 2514.3 3081.9 - 5596.2 68.3%

4 Minute Free Style

Pilot A/c type Reg Known Free/F Known U/Known Total %

Andy Love Pitts S-1S ZK-PUG 82.0%

Chris Schadler RV-3 ZK-WCO 73.0%

Ross Brodie Yak 52 ZK-JPW 2nd = 73.0%

Ivan Krippner Pitts S-1 ZK-RTP 69.5%

Most Improved Pilot Iain McPhail Alpha / Air Tourer

Best newcomer Gillian Phillips Alpha

Highest Scoring Biplane (Rangatata Island Trophy) *Pilot A/c type Reg Known Free/F Known U/Known*

Total % Ross Brodie Pitts S-1S ZK-PUG 82.0% Richard Button Pitts S-1S ZK-FRJ 81.06% Andy Love Pitts S-1S ZK-PUG 76.85%

Dipstick

Not many nominations, not awarded. However, making oneself sick whilst flying competition aeros, then calmly sliding canopy back to eject said articles down the side of the fuselage does deserve a mention.







Congrats to first time competitors; Brendon Wellington and Gillian Phillips, its like first solo over again but better. And nicely flown Iain McPhail to take the trophy.



Thanks to all who organised the event, well done. Congratulations to all who competed and well done to those that won your categories. A huge thanks to the volunteers and helpers, without you, we can not run these events as successfully as this one. We hope you all had fun. We look forward to see you next year or next NZAC event.