



2025 National Aerobatic Championship Report.

It has been another very successful and safe championship. In normal fashion, it was a challenge for many to get to the event with some rainy weather around Kaikoura. It was a shame to lose a few competitors due aircraft, rosters or illness at the last minute, but great to see Darrell Brown turn up anyway and Brad Pearpoint come along for a few days and Morris was unable to fly aerobatics due recent surgery. Morris and Grant Benns were then able to be dedicated to running a great event. Those that made it early were treated to some good practice weather on Tuesday after we got the box markers out. Masterton airport decided to do some work alongside the runway during our event! We got some good Judged practice in on Wednesday morning before weather prevented the planned competition commencing on the Wednesday, so Grant Benns ran a LLDA ground course. Grant then cooked a great BBQ for the welcome night.

Thursday morning was a little cloudy and we did not fly until about 11am, but we got through the Knowns and Free Knowns on Thursday. Thursday evening, the AGM was held with Morris Tull re-elected as President and all of the committee being re-elected plus the addition of Gill Phillips added to the committee. Mike Fowler as Vice President, offering to do more duties to unload Morris.

As it was late after the AGM, we decided to delete the Free Unknown designing and Grant worked late to deliver some more Unknowns to be flown on Friday, so Friday we flew the UNKNOWN's and then the second UNKNOWNs and finished off with a BBQ superbly cooked by the Grant Benns and David Cranna. Saturday dawned with clear skies and was a great day so we finished off the 4-minute FREESTYLE flown by the 4 competitors.

Mumma Darla's again provided catering for our Awards dinner at the clubrooms and the excuses began to roll over the beers.

Notable events over the week were scarce as the procedures were working well and of course Steve and his antics were missing. It was great to have Martyn Gosling back, we have missed you Martyn. Richard Wallace upgraded to a judge. We put out an extra box marker to indicate the centre point at the Judges position and it worked well as the flights were better centred than ever before. Poots was showing his practice and flying well, Mike Fowler dropped in in his new Senneca, Russell Bell dazzled us with the awesome flying in Unlimited category, Chris Schadler racked up high score after high score and flew well in the freestyle as well. David Cranna showed the lines of the Extra to good advantage and deservedly took home the

Champion of Champions trophy plus the Intermediate category one too. John Ashman has made great progress since buying his own DR107 and received the Most Improved trophy for his efforts. Iain McPhail flew the Alpha really well and the enthusiastic newbie Gill Phillips flying the Cessna 152A did really well in her second Nationals competition, competing in Recreational this time. Will Siakifilio was a burst of new energy and was always ready to start the show on time in the Alpha or Yak.

The volunteer spirit and workload sharing were strong, the box markers were put out and collected by a big team, volunteers Richard Wallace, Darrell Brown, Nick Howard, Nol Kinvig, Brian, Frank Van Der Hulst and Murray Callister and the important barman were much appreciated. Thanks everyone, we look forward to see you at our next event.

Morris Tull; Contest Director and 2025 President.

Full Results

National Aerobatic Championships – Hood Aerodrome

Organizing Club: NZ Aerobatic Club. Contest Director Morris Tull.

Event Organiser Grant Benns. Chief Judge Grant Benns

Volunteers; Martyn gosling, Darrell Brown, Nick Howard, Frank Van Der Hulst, Nol Kinvig, Richard Wallace. Murray Callister.

Contest date: 26th Feb – 1st March 2025

Unlimited – Power

<i>A/c type</i>	<i>Reg</i>	<i>Known</i>	<i>Free/F</i>	<i>Known</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown II</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Pilot</i>
Russell Bell	Giles G-200	ZK-LGT	3152.57	3928.5		3246.8	3397.3	77.15%	

Advanced – Power

<i>A/c type</i>	<i>Reg</i>	<i>Known</i>	<i>Free/F</i>	<i>Known</i>	<i>U/Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown II</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Not flown</i>	<i>Pilot</i>
<i>this year</i>										

Intermediate – Power

<i>A/c type</i>	<i>Reg</i>	<i>Known</i>	<i>Free</i>	<i>Known</i>	<i>U/Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown II</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Pilot</i>
David Cranna	Extra 330LX	ZK-XLX	1613.7	1731.3		1521.0	1530.8	81.38%	
Chris Schadler	RV3	ZK-WCO	1557.7	1704.3		1422.0	1469.5	78.29%	
John Ashman	DR107	ZK-XSG	1484.8	1646.2		1418.7	1312.5	74.58%	
Brent Griffin	Giles G-202	ZK-NUT	1310.7	1659.5		1401.3	1432.8	73.85%	

Sportsman – Power

<i>A/c type</i>	<i>Reg</i>	<i>Known</i>	<i>known II</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Pilot</i>
Pierre Pechon	Super Decathlon	ZK-REF	1110.0	1138.8	940.5	79.90%	
Murray Rogers	CT4	ZK-JMV	1117.5	1117.5	893.0	78.40%	
Iain McPhail	2160a	ZK-VCF	1006.8	1092.2	825.5	73.30%	

Sportsman Unknown

<i>Pilot</i>	<i>A/c type</i>	<i>Reg</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>	
Pierre Pechon	Super D	ZK-REF	940.5	77.7%		
Murray Rogers	CT4	ZK-JMV	893.0	78.40%		Iain
McPhail 2160a		ZK-VCF	825.5	73.30%		

Recreational – Power

<i>A/c type</i>	<i>Reg</i>	<i>Known</i>	<i>Known II</i>	<i>Known III</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Pilot</i>
Will Siakifilio 2160a	ZK-VCF	764.0	717.2	804.2	76.94%		Gill
Phillips C152A	ZK-ETJ	770.5	743.5	763.7	76.69%		

Recreational Unknown

<i>Pilot</i>	<i>A/c type</i>	<i>Reg</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
Will Siakifilio	2160a	ZK-VCF	804.2	81.2%	
Gill Phillips	C152A	ZK-ETJ	763.7	77.1%	

Primary – Power

<i>A/c type</i>	<i>Reg</i>	<i>Known</i>	<i>Known II</i>	<i>Known III</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Pilot</i>
William Siakifilio 2160A	ZK-VCC	0	561.8	572.7			

Best Newcomer – Will Siakifilio

Most Improved – John Ashman for confident improvement in Intermediate category. Noteworthy is Gill Phillips for progressing from primary to Recreational in the C152a

Grey Wings – Grant Bennis for continuous Mentoring and Leadership.

Dip Stick – David Cranna for coming unprepared without spare underpants. Will Siakifilio for direction confusion and Brent Griffen for Fuel donation.

Most helpful – Gillian Phillips for helping out with local tasks and media updates, Nick Howard for being there every day, Nol Kinvig for 4-wheel driving to box markers. Brent Griffin for donating fuel by leaving his fuel card at the pumps.

Champion of Champions – David Cranna for highest percentage across all categories.

North Vs South – NORTH, North pilot's average 77.5% / South pilot's average 75.1%

Alan Hogan Trophy (Highest Unknown – Intermediate / Advanced / Unlimited)

1st Place: David Cranna,
2nd Place: Chris Schadler,
3rd Place: John Ashman,
4th Place: Russell Bell,
5th Place: Brent Griffin

4minute Free Style –

1st Chris Schadler.
2nd Murray Rogers.
3rd David Cranna.
4th Brent Griffin.

Morris Tull; Contest Director and President NZAC.



The early arrivals of the very keen Primary and Recreational competitors.



Dave Cranna arriving.



New member Brad Pearpoint came for half the event.



Chris Schadler and the RV3



Box marker team training.



1. Circle
 Tanked RWY 06 – Left hand Grass RWY 10 and Grass RWY 06 – Left hand
 24 – Right hand Grass RWY 26 and Grass RWY 24 – Right hand

2. Avoid aircraft flying below glides in this area or the southern sector of aerodrome. If red flashing beacon atop tower disappears indicator when in operation.

3. Avoid aircraft flying below glides in this area up to 400 ft AGL.

Closed taxiway and runway.

Effective: 25 FEB - 2 MAR 23 S 43 52 24 E 175 26 03"
 © CNR Aerodrome Authority MASTERTON AERODROME

Another great BBQ from Grant.

Hood aerodrome closed half the airfield for works!



The one cloudy day

Iain McPhail, Gill Phillips, Will Siakifilio, Mike Fowler

Grant Bennis running a Low Level and Display course.



Air Training Corp visit.



Local arsonist at work.



Gill, Russell, Murray, John, Will and Iain.





Iain McPhail and Will Siakifilio taking the loot home to Canterbury.



Hood Aerodrome Open day.



The Corsair brought some raw power to the open day.

Sadly, missing this time.....



Lincoln was almost there. Rostering sucks. FRJ is neglected since been replaced by the MXS



This Zlin is for sale.



EES almost ready to compete again.



Thanks Everyone, it was a great week; let's do it again next year! Cheers Mo and Grant.

Martyn Gosling's opinion piece on the Nationals.

National Championships 2025: the view from the front line

We have to begin with couple of disclaimers. Firstly, as an aged academic I have trouble remembering what I did this morning and have no hope of remembering what I am supposed to be doing this afternoon. Next, some of the names have been, should have been, or might have inadvertently been, changed. This is not to protect the innocent, merely because I can't remember who I was talking to. On the other hand, as an aged academic, I am an adherent of peer review (look it up, but essentially it means sharing the blame). All that this suggests, is that what follows is a hundred percent accurate when it is, and less so when it isn't.

The second disclaimer is that I spent the entire week out on the judging line, and therefore was absent from the most important events of the week which take place in, or near, the club house kitchen. The steady stream of dip-stick nominations supports this claim. What follows then, is a very narrow and extremely constructionist interpretation of what occurred at the National Aerobic Championships that took place at Masterton from 25 February to 2 March 2025.

Speaking of constructionism, which I know is constantly in your thoughts and a subject of intense debate around the barbecue, perhaps not enough research has been devoted to the complex social practices of aerobic championships. Seldom do the most important aerobic constructionists get the recognition they deserve. I'm talking, of course, about scribes.

Scribes enjoy the same heat and cold as the judges out on the line but seem excluded from all the glamour and media attention. It's generally thought that scribes provide the same ardour as the most fervid disciples and acolytes and with pained accuracy scribble down commentary and scores uttered by the guru-like judges. This is not so. Indeed, for those who haven't witnessed it first hand, it is a master class of constructionism that allows complete

communication and interpretation between observer and observed. For example, a judge will scream "what the f#\$@! was that!?? Four!!" The scribe will never write that down, but instead will craft something erudite like "leaning forward on the way up. On back at the turn around. Positive on the way down. Short line after the roll. 4.0." When the competitor gets their score sheets, what do they say: "Four!?? What the f#\$@! was that!!" Perfect.

There has always been debate about the objectivity versus subjectivity of judging aerobatics. I will say here that there are strenuous efforts to obtain and maintain objectivity. For example, a discussion is held after every flight where judges may explain their scores and reasoning behind each manoeuvre, with the intention of gaining a unified and objective view. The scores are *never* changed, but there is genuine effort to understand each other's perspective on our route to unanimity. For example, a judge like myself might suggest that a particular manoeuvre was worth a 9.0, but another, such as Grant, will then come out with ~~utter rubbish and total tosh~~ an equally erudite view that it was really a 6.5. Similarly, Grant might suggest a rolling circle was worth a 7 at least, while someone like myself, with such arm waving and gesticulation worthy of an Italian taxi driver arguing over price, will proclaim in pained and astonished tones that such a score was impossible due to the aircraft turning and then rolling and being yawed around the last quarter, and it was more like a 0.0 but, in unbecoming generosity, would warrant perhaps a 2. Unanimity will take a while.

So...what did we see? What did we objectively observe? In brief, there was some solid flying, as the high averages suggest, but we could all benefit from some serious practice and critique. I say that every time. In more detail...

Let's start off with the less complex. Will and Gill (you couldn't make it up) turned in remarkably competent performances in aircraft famed for their lack of... They showed you don't need to spend a fortune on an aircraft to compete, only that it helps. The smiles were wide as Gill Phillips won the first and second sequences, but Will Siakifilio saved his best till last and flew a sublime third round to win overall. Will had 76.94% total and Gill 76.69. A hair's breadth.

Sportsman provided another fine contest between Murray Rogers, who always gives a master class in grace and tactics, and Pierre who seems destined for the more complex categories. We like having Pierre around, partly because he's such a cool dude, but more realistically so many of us have so many ailments that having a surgeon available as first responder has its benefits. Murray won the first round by a margin of only seven points, but Pierre nudged him out on the next two flights and took the trophy with 79.9% against Murray's 78.4. Iain gave it heaps in the Robin getting 73.3.

On to Intermediate.... And what a contrast...and no, you couldn't make it up... but this contest put the long mean machine of Dave Cranna and his Extra 330 XL against Chris Schadler in his dinky RV3. The Extra screams performance and the RV just begs to go and have some fun. The proverbial Dobermann against the Fox Terrier. The lead bounced back and forth with each taking two rounds, but Dave flew a magnificent Unknown and won the contest with 79.9%. Chris was second with 78.29. John Ashman in his DR107 One Design came third with 74.58% and Brent Griffin was fourth with 73.85. There wasn't a lot in it.

There was NO advanced!!!! I need to rob a bank.

Russell Bell flew the yellow beastie with customary flair to beat himself in an Unlimited contest to be forever famed and framed by his radio outburst to some distant aircraft operating on our box frequency. On the one hand, the frequency is available to everyone, but on the other we have a box frequency to enable the competitor to fly undisturbed by chatter, to be able to focus entirely on the flight, and yet knowing that when silence is broken there's an urgent and immediate need to respond, possibly to a life-threatening intrusion. To be interrupted in those circumstances would unsettle anyone and may be the difference between winning, losing, and ~~braining the twit~~ discussing the matter in friendship with the other pilot.

The scores can be seen elsewhere, but it's worth noting that to get an average of around 8 per manoeuvre means there were a lot of 9s and 10s awarded. Each one was the result of serious hard work and application of no small amount of skill. And all over the country there are pilots thinking about the next contest and what they need to practice and have critiqued. Those of us from the lower North Island are already plotting....

We can't end without something on the four-minute free. This was something everyone judged to provide some form of objectivity to a pretty subjective subject. There were only four competitors who did their best to entertain us. What did we see...we saw Chris fly his heart out. That little black and white fox terrier gave it everything. It was a good win. The smoke system alone was worth a medal. Murray flew the most elegant and educated sequence – there's not much power but what grace! There's no way he could win with the criteria we were given (auto-rotations and flying backwards in a CT4 anyone?) but he showed how to create beauty with an aeroplane, and that's a rare and sublime thing.

What else did we see? We actually saw a lot of really happy people both in the air and, perhaps more importantly, on the ground. I was reunited with some old and dear friends like Mo and Grant and Chris and John and Murray and Brent and Russell and Dave and on and on, while making new ones like Will and Gill and Pierre and Iain and on and on. Such a glorious experience. Indeed, on the very first practice day I was out on the line with John as my scribe and just as he didn't write down "John!!! Stop looking and keep writing!!!!", he also didn't pen "Y'know...I'm really enjoying this." Which is a shame in some ways, because I really meant it. And you don't need to be a constructionist to feel as I did. See y'all next year.

Martyn