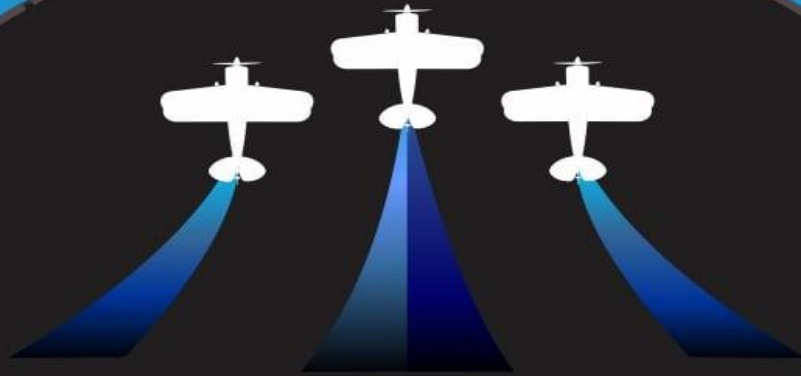


NEW ZEALAND

AEROBATIC CLUB



AEROBATIC DISPLAY TEAM

SOUTHERN

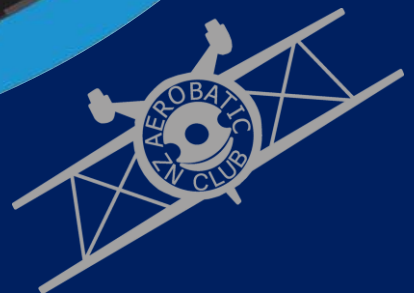
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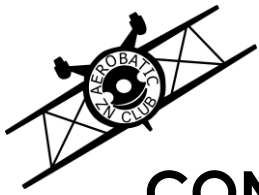
NEW ZEALAND



JULY 2026

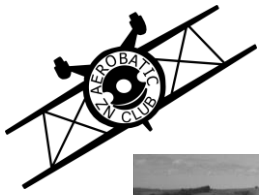
Newsletter





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Nationals 2026 Hood Aerodrome Masterton- Photo courtesy of Walter Taber

STRAPPED IN TIGHT FROM THE PRESIDENT – Morris Tull

Hi everyone, thank you to everyone that came to the Nationals 2026, including our judges, volunteers and helpers. It was a great event, and the weather was very good for us.

The new sequences for the 2026 through 2027 aerobatic season are on the website and you can start practicing with these sequences.

As we experience the shortest days of the year, it's a good time to catch up, complete some winter maintenance on your aircraft, and enjoy a few good books on aerobatics.

Also, I hope you get to enjoy some winter sports, grab the skis out or go on a summer holiday somewhere to the islands.

Since my retirement, I've never been so busy, I've done the maintenance checks on the MXS and the Pitts Special and I'm now working on my next project the RV7 where we are completing the upholstery and soon to start on the paint scheme, I'm hoping to have it ready for this summer. Then I will get back to assembling the next Pitts S1S, ZK-PPS.

I was extremely fortunate to be invited to do race training with Air Race X and this was an amazing experience, an article included.

I used to be an Aircraft Engineer, and this has allowed me to upgrade my

qualifications by doing an Inspection Authority course and now I have an IA certificate, this will keep my Aircraft and other Aerobatic aircraft serviceable, which should be a help to the community.

If you have not been to EAA Airventure at Oshkosh, I strongly recommend you go and I hope to see you there.



Mo in his gorgeous MXS in Dannevirke - Photo courtesy of Walter Taber

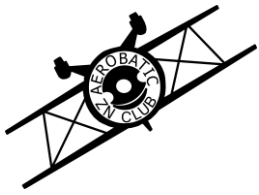
Nationals for 2027 is back to the first week 3-8 March, we have one rental Airbnb already booked, so go ahead and book your accommodation or contact us.

South Island Akrofest is 4-8 November, and it is always a magnificent event. North Island Akro Fest date still to be confirmed.

All the best with getting the paint, engines, and wings on your projects. We hope to see you flying aerobatics in the summer of 2026.

Kind regards,

Morris Tull - President NZAC



FROM COMPETITION FLYING TO AIRSHOWS

– Andy Love

I have just completed a detailed article about my path to leading our new Aerobatic team at Warbirds Over Wanaka in the Winter edition of Sport Aircraft Association magazine, so look out for that. In the meantime, I was asked to do an article for our newsletter. So, with this in mind I decided to focus on the preparation we went through and other common areas familiar to our world of competition aerobatics.

The biggest change and adjustment to flying in a team is the environment itself. One is no longer flying and practicing for oneself, it is a team effort and you are now working closely with fellow pilots. The most critical aspects here, are trust and respect. One must trust and respect the others in the team. So, in my case, I need to have total trust in my wingmen that they will not hit me and they must be comfortable in trusting me to lead them safely and not fly them into the ground.

It all sounds a bit obvious, or dramatic, or both but this the clear contract between lead and wing is the foundation of an aerobatic team to ensure total safety at all times whole aloft.

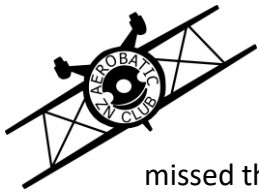
In his book 'Aerobatics', discussing airshow flying and preparation, Neil Williams said: the ideal display pilot is tasked with making



the easy look difficult, the difficult easy and never attempting the impossible. While there are other very well-written books on the subject including Better Aerobatics by Alister Cassidy, Neil's book remains my bible. This quote sums up the art to display flying very well indeed.



I attended my first airshow, Warbirds Over Wanaka, in 1994. I was 10 and well versed on the various aircraft of the WW2 era but when confronted by formation aerobatic teams, Roaring 40s and the Red Chequers, I was absolutely blown away. It was an exhilarating day and I will never forget the sheer excitement I felt for watching these displays at my first few shows, I haven't



missed the Wanaka airshow since. Another display that caught my attention straight away, was Richard Hood in his Pitts Special ZK-EES. I had never heard of the Pitts Special and I didn't appreciate what aerobatic flying was all about and while seeing the warbirds was exciting, the dream, I never was quite the same after seeing those aerobatic team displays and Richard put EES through its paces.



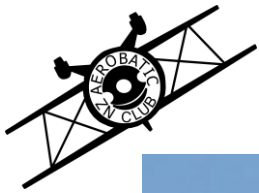
Fast-forward to 2026, I was able to achieve this lifelong dream of being a part of the formation of a team and debut at Warbirds Over Wanaka. I can't begin to explain the work and preparation that went into that display. Working up for a competition demands a huge amount of resources in terms of money and time from the individual, to achieve perfection or as close to it as is possible. Preparing for an airshow whether a solo act, or a team is equally demanding.

Our coach, Jeremy Miller, is extremely well known in Australia as an experienced aerobatic and formation instructor, coach and display pilot certifier. Jeremy has been our coach for the past 2 years and what a journey it has been. Jeremy's obvious passion for the world of formation flying, his incredible experience and background flying virtually all aerobatic aircraft I can think of, made him the obvious choice to mentor us through this process. Put simply,

we couldn't have achieved what we did without his support, mentorship and patience. The level of professionalism he demands, and the culture we have started to build as a group, all stems from his meticulous approach to this discipline.

As a team, our internal SOPs and procedures have evolved into a routine and structure that we follow each time we fly together. One of the biggest safety points prior to flight, is currency, or a lack thereof. While we all fly numerous other types regularly, we do not fly as a team every week like military display teams. So, we spend a lot of time at high altitude working up the various elements of our displays or just focusing on individual manoeuvres with key emphasis on certain aspects, which is all covered in the briefing.

As a competition pilot, when I set out for a sortie, whether it be in the aerobatic box or at altitude, clear of the airfield, I always have a clear plan of what it is I want to achieve in that sortie. At the start of the competition season, which is about now for me, I start flying the list of individual Free Known compulsory figures to build familiarity, I then take a look at the Known, fly it once or twice, then zero in on the Free-Known and develop several sequences to go experiment with. Once Spring arrives, I focus on Unknown sequences only and will revisit the Known



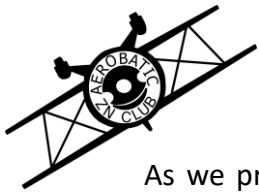
closer to the competition normally. I get every 2nd or 3rd flight critiqued as the competition nears.

As a team, we break the whole process down and work through a timetable methodically. Our training airfield for the last two years has been Omaka Aerodrome, geographically, the easiest for us all to get to but not always the easiest to organize low level sorties overhead although the local operators are fantastic to deal with as is Woodbourne Tower.

The goal was to debut our team at Wanaka over Easter. Having spent last Summer on a routine that we were scheduled to fly at Classic Fighters, we had some good background of flying a low level routine which set us up well for the 6 month build up this time round. Classics Fighters was unfortunately cancelled.

There were some technical aspects to this sequence which we worked on with Jeremy, several of which I still cannot believe we actually included in the routine. These include the opposing pair crosses, our finale break and the VIC barrel roll.





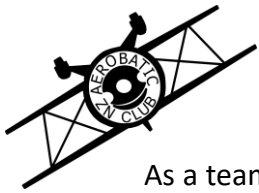
As we progressed through our final week with coach, we got ourselves setup for the final run to Easter with a very clear plan for how we needed to execute this newly created routine to be totally safe and to present it as well as possible to the crowds. Every single low level sortie we did was filmed and critiqued which proved crucial, as they were the season prior. As with competition flying, if you can have your flying critiqued and voice recorded, or better still filmed, the benefits are 10 fold. You will progress so much more efficiently.

Display pilots register for the airshow just like we do in competition. The Display Director wants to see your routine and all relevant docs. Register early, don't wait for the DD to chase you up. I had added logistics of making sure we had adequate supplies of our smoke oil on site as well. Lincoln and I ferried our aeroplanes down the week prior. NZAC VP Mike Fowler kindly picked us up and flew us back to Chch. We were then able to drive down at the beginning of the week, having all our extra gear for the aeroplanes in the car. As I am also the Display Planner, I had meetings and tasks daily from Tues morning, which tapered off as Practice kicked off on the Thursday.

As airshow week looms, your preparation continues. All major snags and issues should be well under control a month out, and one is essentially staying current and sharp. Good quality critiquing and honest debriefs are key to getting to this point. As with competition flying, I personally need to be sorted with Unknown figure practice, the F/Known is locked in of course, and the Known is very familiar by this stage. I like to get a bit of a 'reccé' in prior to competition or airshow week. So, at Nationals, this means some box work at low level the

week before, to get my bearings and references again. Down at Ashburton, I have home advantage so logistically it is straight forward. At the airshows, I prefer to get a session in the week prior as well. For this Easter, Lincoln and I flew a 2 ship practice around the lakes then had a slot booked in with the Airport Corporation for a set time once we returned from our upper air sortie. This helps settle things down a bit and in the case of Wanaka, get used to the higher airfield elevation which makes a significant impact on aircraft performance which I need to take on board as Flight Lead.

There are normally two practice days where a slot is booked in advance, then it is straight on to the two main flying days. The Pilot Briefing is of course compulsory and is run at the same time daily, normally 08:45. From there, it is over to the individual crews and groundcrew to coordinate themselves, their team or scenario for the predetermined slot times. As we say in competition, be ready early to avoid rushing. Logistics are always more complex when you are in a team or scenario, the later typically can involve in excess of a dozen people so can be quite a challenge to organize. When preparing for my solo displays at Classic Fighters, I find it so easy because I just have myself to sort out, in terms of when to do the walk throughs, and go through a bit of a pre-flight routine which I do for competition flights and airshows alike, involving music and just settling myself down, getting into a mental headspace where I am relaxed but focused. It can get distracting to say the least when after briefing, it is like the family are back together and everyone wants to chat. Not ideal for those who are flying in 30min!



As a team, we follow a similar routine, I do this pre-flight routine separate to the guys prior to us getting together for our walk-through of the full routine. All aircraft were prepped first thing in the morning and re-fuelled and had smoke oil topped up the day prior.

The most important thing is safety, keep the team safe at all times. Bottom line. The display is second to this primary goal. Everyone returns home safely is number 1.

All in all, we were rapt with the debut display, we flew all week, excluding Saturday due to weather which was doubly disappointing but we made up for it Sunday. There are always things to work on and we debriefed several aspects to improve next season. Of course, the public don't see these small details, it is just us and our peers that see the 1% but it matters to us and we won't gloss over any such error, they all need to be discussed and analysed.

For the future, we're keen to continue that is for sure. We have been asked back to Wanaka for the 40th Anniversary in 2028,

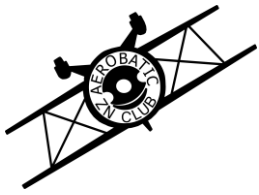
we will begin training next season in Spring. We are currently sorting out details for Classic Fighters 2027. I have been involved with the Classics in recent years too. I made my airshow debut at Wanaka in 2012 flying in the Classics in Tiger Moth ZK-BAA. In 2024, I led the formation of 8 and scenario of 11 and for 2026, I also helped train up the team and handed over lead responsibilities to NZAC member Lachlan Falconer, who did a fantastic job as always. We have a few plans for the classics for CF'27 so let's see how that all pans out.

And for Winter, we are celebrating International Aerobatics Day on the 27th June at Ashburton Airfield. I will be there most of the week doing all sorts of training, we have pilots flying in from all around the country for it. Hopefully we get some nice crisp flying conditions!

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Andy Love - Secretary / Treasurer
NZ Aerobatic Club
Torque_Roll@hotmail.com





WE ALWAYS NEED AIRCRAFT ENGINEERS MAINTENANCE AUTHORITIES & IA's – Morris Tull

When you own an aircraft in the general aviation, amateur built or special category that is capable of aerobatics, you will know that we have maintenance checks every year and an annual or biannual review of maintenance.

I was fortunate to start my aviation career as an apprentice aircraft engineer with Air New Zealand, including working on the Air NZ flying club planes before I went on to the airline part of career, I got my engineering licenses and many general Aviation ratings at that time and this has helped me work on general aviation aircraft, and also my own Aircraft.

To assist my qualifications, I recently did a course with the CAA for an Inspection Authority and I have now been issued an IA certificate to assist with the ARA's and modification conformance, so I hope this will help my own aircraft and other people in the aerobatic world with our aircraft.

There were a lot of subjects discussed, and questions asked of which I focused on amateur built and aerobatic type aircraft.

Hopefully, I can guide you on these things in the future. One thing pointed out was that even if your aircraft is in aerobatic aircraft, you are still required to carry your flight manual and legal documents, so keep this in mind please.

We all want to improve our aircraft from year to year, but there is a safety process for doing modifications to prevent unintended consequences, so please be careful and follow the process. Technically, once your aircraft has finished its test flying and been issued with a CofA, you are not allowed to modify without asking for approval and conformance. There is a lot of experience and knowledge out there and the aim is to stop you doing something that you think is a good idea, but other people know more information.

The obvious thing I learned during the course is that if you can have your logbook well prepared and accurate and you check the airworthiness directives and bulletins before you bring your airplane in for a check, you will save yourself a lot of money, time and potential downtime while things are sorted out.

Cheers Morris.

LAME and Inspection Authority.



GETTING RATED IN SINGLE SEAT AIRCRAFT

– Mike Slack

Firstly a disclaimer - I'm not an instructor and therefore this is not a "How to obtain..." type of article. If you are looking to qualify to fly a single-seat aircraft, I suggest you speak with someone suitably qualified, and/or your local aeroclub / training organisation / or Warbirds. These contacts will know the legal "ins and outs" of what is required. With that said, what this article is about, is my own experience when confronted with obtaining a rating in an aircraft where my first flight in said aircraft would be solo!

A little background... My path in aviation started relatively young - Trial flight at 15, first solo shortly after my 16th birthday, and PPL a month after turning 17 years old. I trained in an aeroclub, financed through after-school and holiday jobs... and selling anything I owned that wasn't nailed down. Having done my entire training in the venerable PA38 Tomahawk I immediately wanted experience in something bigger so I could take three friends instead of just one on cost-sharing flights so ratings the PA28 Warrior and Cessna 172 followed. After a couple of years then a C206 (and CSU) rating followed. A brief sojourn from flying (and a university degree) later came the Turbo Arrow IV (retractable) ticket. All of these ratings followed basically the same format - some ground-work to learn the theory, followed by dual flights (including engine handling, steep turns, stalling, forced landings, etc, etc), solo practice, and an all-up weight check before being signed off as "competent". Fast forward a few years and

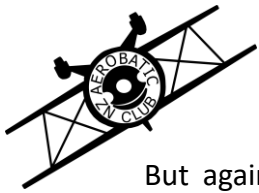
tail-wheel ratings (PA18 & CH7B) followed, again following a similar procedure.



Mike Slack with ZK-ZSO at Mercer

As most who will be reading this, I had always yearned for aerobatic flight and had started down the rating path in a 152 Aerobat but university scuppered that ambition. The desire was re-ignited a few years later having taken an aerobatic joyride with the late Tom Middleton in a Pitts after one of the early Warbirds Over Wanaka shows...

But the realisation of that dream didn't occur until many years later when (having done the OE, the wife & kids, and the midlife crisis career change into the aviation industry as an air traffic controller) I spied an advertisement for a share in the Pitts S2B ZK-MAD. Now this was a rating that truly excited me! To be honest, it took longer than I expected to obtain the desired signature in the logbook but I am grateful for the expert guidance by JK and Grant before being let loose, solo and then qualified, in such a thoroughbred.



But again, the formula for obtaining the ratings was very similar to all those that I had experience and would subsequently experience when Richard cut me loose in his Giles G202 ZK-NUT.

It wasn't until the second iteration of The Great Stunt Company who then owned ZK-NUT was wound up and the aircraft sold to one of the members, that I was again without an aerobatic mount. David Cranna came to my rescue, generously offering the use of his Zlin 50LS ZK-ZSO - a single-



Tom Middleton and Mike Slack in ZK-FXT

seater. I distinctly remember thinking, "Now this would be a different training experience!"

Thinking back, though, I guess it started like all the previous ratings... Grant Benns (my Zlin instructor) and David (the obviously slightly nervous owner) led me through a very thorough walkaround and pre-flight of the aircraft, noting the subtleties and peculiarities of the type including (but not limited to):

The mix of fabric, aluminium, and titanium
Drum brakes! Hadn't seen them since my 1980s motocross bike!

The cute wee "wiggle" that only one of the ailerons does as it passes neutral position (don't ask me why, but a marvel in precise cam engineering)



Preflighting ZK-MAD in front of the Waikato Aero Club

The mixture of European (metric) and US (imperial) hardware. The airframe is Czechoslovakian and the engine / prop are American (Lycoming and MT)

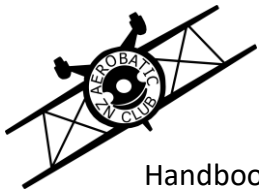
The instrument panel has a few more curve balls... including the ASI that is calibrated in kph and has a needle that rotates around twice, a manifold pressure gauge calibrated in atmospheres, and a wind-up clock/stopwatch (that I never really mastered) to name but a few

The operation of the fuel totaliser... now which buttons was it again to reset? Was it left right left or right left right or right left left or left right right?!?

The fuel selector that had OFF LEFT RIGHT MAIN selections but only one of which would work in aerobatic trim as the LEFT and RIGHT were for the removable wingtip ferry tanks - mental note... leave it on MAIN!!

But overall, what struck me most (apart from the sheer size of the aeroplane compared to other aerobatic mounts I'd flown) was the elephant in the room - there was ONLY ONE SEAT!

Once strapped into the ONE seat, Grant took me through the Pilot Operation



Handbook noting starting procedures, runups, standard power settings for takeoff (all ahead full!) climb cruise and aerobatics, emergency procedures, and suggested speeds for manoeuvres. One interesting restriction relates to the rather puny looking, archaic drum brakes - they can only be used at speeds under 50 kph! David refined some of the settings for fuel burn in different power settings, including strategies for getting too and from the Mercer Training Area, and how to arrive back at Ardmore with more than fuel vapour in the tank. Being powered by Lycoming's 300hp AEIO540 that can display a fuel burn in excess of 100 lph when everything is firewalled and exciting, but only carrying about 60 (usable) litres in the MAIN tank, requires some precise fuel management and only time for one, maybe two, sequences once established over Mercer when operating out of Ardmore..

"Any questions?" asked Grant.

"Ahhhhh..... I guess not?!" I replied.

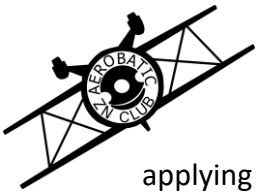
"Well, off you go then!" said Grant... and lowered/latched the canopy. David smiled, I might have half smiled, half grimaced back.

And with that, I was alone (albeit with two interested onlookers hovering nearby)... immediately remembering my first solo in the Giles, the Pitts, and definitely the Tomahawk (for some reason, my first solo flights in the Cherokees, Cessnas, and Arrow illuded me)... but this time with no actual experience with the aircraft within which I was seated!

After a deep breath or two I commenced the startup procedure which, being injected Lycoming, was comfortingly familiar. The only peculiarity was the different (high speed) starter motor that bought the big Lycoming to life faster than I was expecting, requiring a healthier stab on the drum brakes than I was already



On approach into Mercer in ZK-NUT

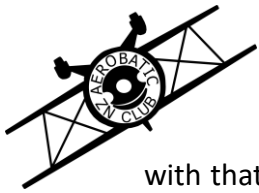


applying (a foreshadow of events to come) ... mixture rich, adjust the throttle... and the AEIO540 settled into it's familiar beat (ZK-MAD had the 260hp AEIO540). The Zlin has a "graduated" warm-up procedure when following the POH and soon enough temps were in the green so I began taxiing. The Zlin, like most aerobatic mounts, has ample control authority and bags of power pushing a featherweight bulk (despite its size), so releasing the brakes and advancing the throttle causes the Zlin to leap forward. Turning onto the taxiway from the hangar proves more difficult than expected... a gentle tap on the brakes results in no direction change. A harder stab only gives the slightest suggestion of a turn towards the desired direction of travel. Full rudder, standing on the brake, and a small burst of power was the only recipe that gave the required result on grass. David's advice that "...the brakes are more of a suggestion, than a control..." rang true in my ears... and he had adjusted them just that morning in anticipation of my first flight! Like many aerobatic aircraft, visibility straight ahead is extremely limited (that AEIO540 again!), requiring S-Turns whilst taxiing to ensure you don't run over anything or anyone directly in front of you - a task made more difficult with a bit of wind and the piss-weak drum brakes that I had at my disposal. It wasn't helped by the considerably faster and probably less patient pilot, Doug, who was following behind me to the RWY03 runup area in his MX! Thankfully, I took somewhat longer with my runups than he did, and he was long gone by the time I entered the runway for takeoff.

As I was well used to the performance of both ZK-MAD and, more recently ZK-NUT,

the takeoff wasn't really a surprise. What was comforting was the comparative lack of rudder gymnastics required in ZSO. Those huge control surfaces made the aircraft a breeze to fly - nicely weighted and perfectly balanced, although that huge joystick did feel a little "overkill"... very similar to the Sukhoi and other old eastern block aircraft. I've had the privilege of flying with Jurgis Kairys, the Lithuanian aerobatic master, and he said (words to the effect of), "Grab it and make it do what you want it to," so I did!

Economy cruise (about 55%) set I headed for the Hunua Valley and Mercer Training Area. I didn't go all the way to NZME as I wanted to maximise my time learning the aircraft. I worked my way along the northern boundary of the Training Area, turning, stalling, gliding (both course and fine pitch setting), did a few effortless aeros, spinning (both upright and inverted), and then it was time to return to Ardmore. It's scary how fast fuel disappears when it doesn't feel like you departed with enough in the first place, even though the flight commenced with a full tank! An overhead rejoin and I hit the circuit with a little trepidation... David had requested I use the grass for landing in an effort to save some rubber. As I thought I was about to find out, that massive titanium landing gear flexes hugely on touchdown giving a fair amount of lateral loading on the tiny tires if you land heavily, leaving more rubber than desirable on the sealed runway, so grass it would be. As I'd found out in the Training Area, the Zlin retains control authority right up to (and past) the stall... approach felt much slower than both MAD and NUT, quite sedate, in fact. My first touchdown can only be described as "butter" - love at first touch



with that huge titanium spring!. I resisted the urge to touch the brakes (not that I expected them to do anything anyway) and prepared to roll to a stop. There was no drama, no panic, no bounce, no swerving/chasing rudder pumping... and bugger all landing roll so I powered up and leapt back into the circuit.

"I'll do 3 circuits, then I'll at least be current and be able to take a passeng....oh hang on!" I stopped that line of thought, reminding myself of the lack of

pilot! In reality, the rating is just a passport to learn with all aircraft but particularly when exploring all dimensions of an aerobatic aircraft flight envelope. We are lucky in NZ to have a small, but dedicated band of enthusiastic aerobatic pilots and instructors who are only too happy to give advice and critiquing, and dual (if there is another seat). I love the Zlin. It's a big pussycat to fly. Who doesn't love the sound of an angry AEIO540 in front (although I don't love the fuel bill)?! It is honest and quite capable of Advanced

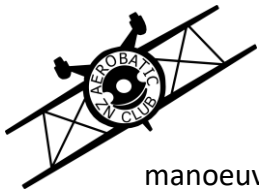
Mike Slack with previous owner David Cranna



accommodation for anyone else but me. One more landing, as good as the first and I figured it was time for fuel. I returned to the hangar for a debrief with both Grant and David, called the fuel truck, and then did it all again! More aerobatics, this time including my usual simulated aerobatic engine failure (usually on an upline) to see how it handled a sudden loss of thrust at the most inconvenient time...again, no drama. On returning to Ardmore (with another greaser), Grant signed the required pages in my logbook, David gave me a further rating on his hangar doors, and I was a fully qualified, Zlin 50LS

category competition in NZ...and oh, does it tumble! In all the time I competed in the Intermediate category I only used 75-80% power. Subsequently, when I dry-leased the aircraft from David (he became "distracted" by his stunning new Extra 330LX) and based it out of Mercer, I started building up to Advanced sequences.

Advanced required all of the 300 ponies, meaning a lot more gas, and a huge amount of oil that it didn't burn but tended to spit out of the overflow at an alarming rate during negative or botched



manoeuvres... of which there were a few of each!

The Zlin has its handicaps: It is range-limited without tip tanks, and is non-aerobatic with them. The tip tanks are a bit of a phaff to fit and remove. All that extra fuel weight on the ends of the wing makes its flying characteristics pretty horrible...but at least you can get to where you need to go, although it lacks space to stow the wingtip aerobatic sights. Zlin operators need support from either a kind

warming the engine than flying a couple of sequences but once airborne I was inside the box doing safety manoeuvres only a minute or two from takeoff. Fuel became available at Mercer shortly after I leased the hangar, and the aerobatic box was easy gliding distance even from the back of the box - I know, but that's whole other story!

In summary, there are a few single-seat aerobatic aircraft around. Morris Tull has kindly offered me his Pitts S1 ZKFRJ on a



Mike Slack looking badass pre-start in ZK-ZSO at Mercer

flying mate with excess luggage space, or ground vehicle. Much of the limited luggage space (pretty standard in most aerobatic aircraft) in ZSO is occupied by a dedicated smoke tank leaving only room for a small overnight or helmet bag. Mercer, therefore, was the perfect location. More time each flight, was spent

couple of occasions but the stars have never quite aligned. I always felt I needed to be more current in an S2 before accepting his offer. The Zlin, however, didn't come with quite the same reputation as the short-coupled Pitts and is, therefore, probably the best introduction to single-seat aviation!



MY AIR RACE X EXPERIENCE

– Morris Tull

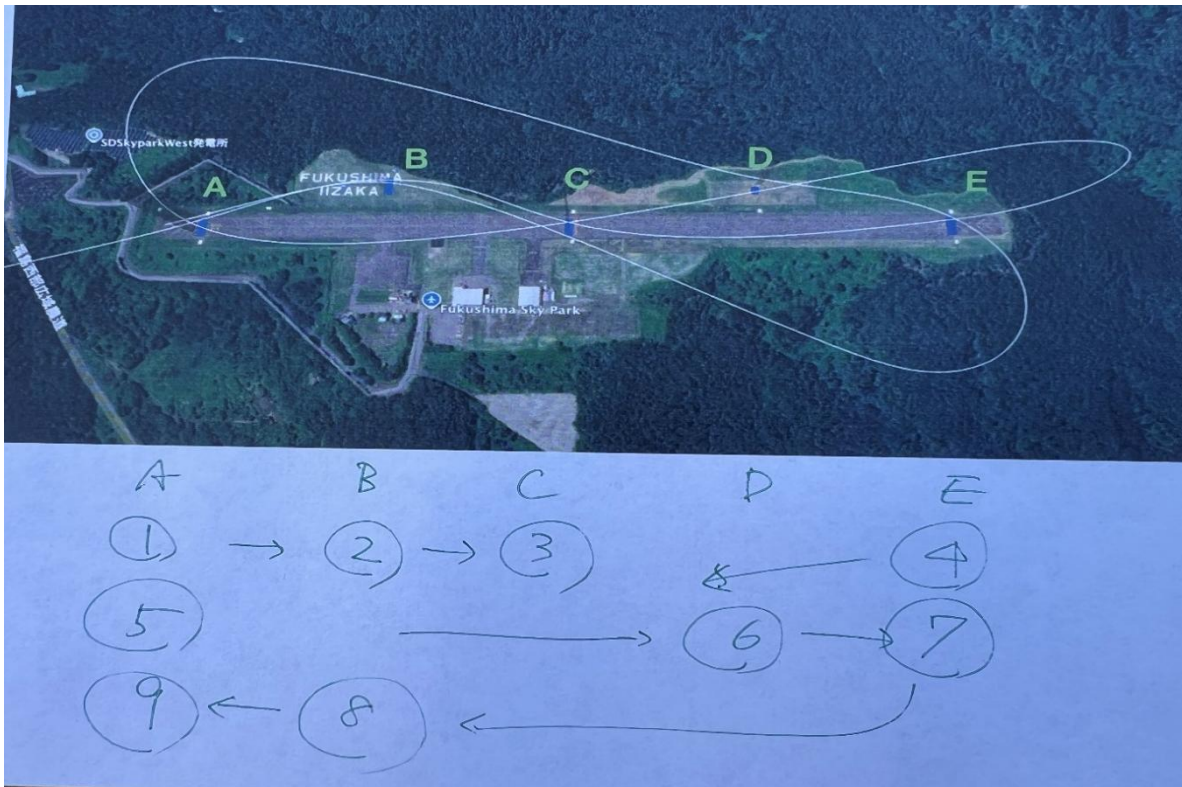
I have followed Air Racing since the beginning of the Red Bull Air racing series and now the new concept from Air Race X. I have always wished to be able to have a go myself.

The aircraft used were either MXS Aircraft or Edge 540 Aircraft and I am very lucky to own an MXS, as a result, I was approached to see if I was interested to do the training as an Air Race Pilot with Air Race X in Japan, I absolutely wanted to do it and it was just a scheduling decision whether I could make it happen, and I did.

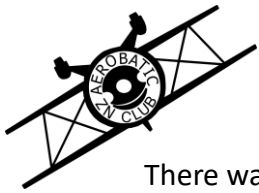
The criteria to even be offered the experience was that you had to be a professional pilot, own an MXS or Edge 540 and have competed in at least unlimited competition or be a regular

airshow pilot, so fortunately I met the criteria. You also had to have the capability to mount a team effort, commitment to race all of these races and potentially move your airplane around, so I guess the amount of pilots is a bit limited.

Air Race X is now training and qualifying their new pilots to ensure a minimum standard for the operation, and I was offered to go to the first training camp at Fukushima Sky Park in Japan. I was on the camp with Mike Tryggvason and Melissa Burns. In addition to the flying, we were taught aspects of the business, aspects of gaining sponsorship, media presence. We were given some interviews, and also some media shots were shared with us.



The racetrack



There was a lot to learn about this high-tech equipment, using very accurate GPS and sensors and recording devices to be able to do this remotely in multiple locations around the world.

After a dual check out with Yoshi Murora, that included handling high speed stalls, high G manoeuvring, and operations

progressively getting lower flying through the gates down to 50 feet and targeting 8-10 G turns and vertical reversals!

At the end of the week, we had a small competition between the three of us trainees of the full race course with all of the equipment recording us, smoke on and fully videoed with the set up for a

Left to right: Morris Tull, Yoshi Murora, Melissa Burns and Mike Tryggvason

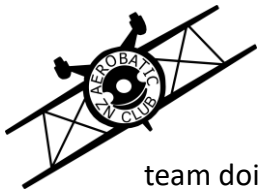


around the local airfield, I was cleared to fly solo in the Extra 300L for the training.

The training built up slowly, encouraging us to practice high G manoeuvres, stall recovery from flick stalls in steep turns including negative push outs away from the ground at low level. It was very impressive. We started with the target entry speed of 180 knots and the first three or four gates and then as we were given the feedback and analysis we learned perhaps there's better lines to take and we built up to the full course

media production and it was a good opportunity to see how we went amongst the other guys, I wasn't the fastest, but I wasn't far behind. Yoshi then got his race plane out and showed us how to do it properly, and he was certainly impressive. His edge 540 V3 with all of the aerodynamic mods is a work of art, just like his hangar is a beautiful place.

Ben Freelove, who is Yoshi's tactician and one of the tech wizards who sets the racecourse, gave us lots of feedback and analysis of all of our flights. There was a



team doing photography and video, overall, probably about 18 people looking after the three of us.

At the end of the week, they assessed whether we met the standard to be in Air Race X Pilot and if we did, we were given a Super License to race and fortunately I made the cut, so I have one of nine licenses in the world at this point. We had a great celebration at the end of the week, and it was excellent to enjoy the team in an informal environment.

The Pilots for the 2026 season had already been contracted for the season, so I am like a standby or ready for the future. I now have to continue setting myself up, obtain approvals in New Zealand, get some more practice and see where this opportunity takes me.

YouTube is the main platform for the videos and races at this time so search and subscribe to AirRaceX. The 4 races will drop on YouTube on 28 June, 19 July, 16 August and final on 13 September 2026.

I will require a bit of a team around me; somebody managing the data and transmitting it back to Japan, a video

person recording the race days and managing the onboard GoPro's and tail cameras, and maybe some other people in the process, so maybe you've got some skills to help me that would be awesome.

So far, the Civil Aviation Advisors are proactive, so there's hope we can make it work in New Zealand. The minimum experience required and the extent of the training that we went through confirms it is a high-stakes, dangerous operation, so please do not go out and try it yourself because it is not easy.

We are incredibly lucky to have a New Zealand Aerobatic club member as the CEO of Air Race X, Des Barry, and I'm very grateful for his support for this opportunity that I had.

I was required to choose a name and a race number and I went with "Morris Tull Racing" and racer number 44.

This was one of my aviation experience highlights, thank you Air Race X.

Morris Tull

Air race pilot #44.

Check out Air Race X at www.airracex.com





2026 JUN / JUL / AUG / SEP

SEASON BEGINS

4 RACES / 8 PILOTS



AIR RACE X

We are proud to officially unveil the AIR RACE X 2026 season races and pilot lineup.

This season will feature world champions and rising stars competing across four rounds in our revolutionary remote racing format.

We look forward to sharing more details with you.

AIR RACE X UNVEILS 2026 PILOT LINEUP

World Champion Yoshihide Muroya and Global Elite Set for Four-Round Championship Battle

Six Confirmed Pilots Include Multiple World Champions and Rising Stars: Two Debut Pilots to Be Announced in March

February 18, 2026 – AIR RACE X announced six confirmed pilots for its highly anticipated 2026 season, featuring a lineup of world-class competitors headlined by two-time reigning champion Yoshihide Muroya and 2025 series winner Patrick Davidson. The championship will consist of four rounds conducted through AIR RACE X's revolutionary remote racing format, with global broadcast coverage via the official YouTube channel.

Racing at speeds exceeding 400 km/h while enduring gravitational forces of up to 12G, pilots will compete across three-dimensional courses in the most demanding test of precision flying in motorsport. The series represents a new chapter in modern air racing competition, bringing together the sport's most accomplished pilots and breakthrough talent.

The 2026 Pilot Roster

#31 Yoshihide Muroya (Japan) – 2023 & 2024 AIR RACE X Champion. The sport's dominant force returns to defend his consecutive titles.

#77 Patrick Davidson (South Africa) – 2025 AIR RACE X Champion. Last season's title winner enters with championship momentum.

#8 Martin Šonka (Czech Republic) – Former world champion and veteran tactician. One of air racing's most decorated competitors.

#26 Juan Velarde (Spain) – Precision control specialist and accomplished international competitor.

#86 Emma McDonald (Australia) – Rising star and standard-bearer for the sport's next generation of talent.

#7 Aaron Delue (Australia) – Breakthrough performer from 2025, bringing youth and aggression to the championship fight.

Two additional debut pilot announcements scheduled for March 2026. These final entries are expected to reshape competitive dynamics and introduce fresh challengers to the established order.



About AIR RACE X: Where Technology Meets Extreme Performance
AIR RACE X operates on a unique hybrid competitive platform combining remote racing and live events under unified competition standards. This revolutionary format enables pilots to compete from their home bases while maintaining absolute competitive parity through advanced digital systems.

Remote Racing Technology:

- **Real-World Competition:** The world's top race pilots experiencing the full physical demands of racing through the course at their specific airport location
- **Racetrack Global Positioning:** Identical three-dimensional course configurations deployed globally, ensuring standardized competitive conditions regardless of location. Advanced technology tracks and measures the pilots' movements in flight with precise measurements
- **Performance Equalization:** Proprietary algorithms automatically compensate for altitude, temperature, and air density variations, eliminating environmental advantages

Aircraft Specifications:

The championship utilizes the Zivko Edge 540, the world's premier unlimited aerobatic aircraft. With a 530kg airframe powered by a Lycoming high-performance aircraft engine, the Edge 540 achieves:

- Maximum velocity: 426 km/h (265 mph)
- Rotational rate: 420 degrees per second
- Maximum load factor: 12G
- Power-to-weight ratio exceeding high-performance supercars

Statement from AIR RACE X CEO Desmond Barry

The 2026 season represents a transformative milestone in AIR RACE X's evolution. Our remote racing platform has eliminated geographical barriers while preserving the pure essence of competitive flying—skill, precision, and judgement.

This season's blend of proven champions and emerging talent creates the conditions for truly exceptional competition. We've assembled a field where championship outcomes will be decided by fractions of seconds and singular moments of brilliance.

AIR RACE X continues to pioneer the future of aerial motorsport, and we invite audiences worldwide to witness history being written in the sky."

AIR RACE X Main Website <https://www.airracex.com/>

Kind regards,
Des Barry
CEO, AIR RACE X

2026 PILOT LINEUP



Aaron Delue

Australia

Aaron Delue Racing



Martin Šonka

Czech Republic

Red Bull Team Šonka #8



Juan Velarde

Spain

Team Velarde



Yoshihide Muroya

Japan

LEXUS PATHFINDER AIR RACING



Patrick Davidson

South Africa

Team 77



Emma McDonald

Australia

Beyond Gravity



COMING SOON

Watch the announcement on YouTube



COMING SOON

Watch the announcement on YouTube



AIR RACE X



2026/2027 AVIATION EVENTS CALENDAR

2026	
July	20-25 Eaa Air Adventure sat Oshkosh 22-27 British Open Aerobatics Championships
August	23 – 3 Sep World Unlimited Aerobatic Championship, Mason City, USA
September	12-20 World Advanced and Intermediate Aerobatic Championship – Hungary 20-25 IAC -USA National Competition – Salina KSLN
October	29-31 Flying NZ Lakes Region Competitions – MidCantebury Aero Club - Ashburton
November	5-7 South Island Akro Fest – Ashburton Aerodrome TBC North Island Akro Fest – Mercer 19-21 Flying NZ Alpine Region Competitions - Omaka
2027	
January	TBC Tauranga Airshow
February	Flying NZ National Championships - Tauranga
March	4-7 New Zealand National Aerobatic Competition – Hood Aerodrome, Masterton 15 Warbirds over Ardmore 20 Rangiora Airfield Open Day 26-28 Classic Fighters Airshow- Omaka

NEED TO KNOW MORE?

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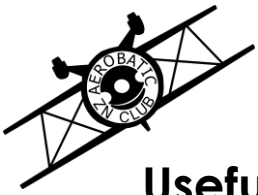
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Useful Websites:

New Zealand Aerobatic Club website: aerobatics.nz

Facebook group: New Zealand Aerobatic Club

Federation Aviation International: civanews.com This has the Free Knowns manoeuvre catalogue essential for competition flight and international event news.

International Aerobatic Club: www.iac.org There are lots of sequences and information for members of the IAC, it is an offshoot of the EAA.

Civil Aviation Authority: www.aviation.govt.nz includes vast amounts of information useful to pilots and aircraft owners.

The www.BiplaneForum.com where the experts hang out to share a lot of knowledge on all aspects of aerobatic aircraft and maintenance and tips. Search here first for your technical questions.

