



BAM *Racing Update*

CLUB 40 Pylon Racing

June 29, 2010

Volume 1, Issue 2

Second Contest Draws First “Blood”— Yet Racing Concludes Successfully

With great anticipation, BAM completed its second contest race last Saturday. This time, several improvements have been incorporated after learning from the first contest.

The weather was amazing and we couldn't have asked for more: sunny, blue sky and no clouds, no unusual wind activity.

Improvements included moving the start-finish-line further back (about 20 feet) to provide more distance for safer takeoffs and the initial turn around the first pylon. Likewise, we attached a small stick with ribbons to the top of each pylon to improve visibility against the background.

In addition, the refined racing matrix ensured that pilots didn't have to fly two heats in a row while still maintaining balanced heats, giving each pilot a chance to fly against different contestants whenever possible.

Another refinement was to conduct 3-pilot heats for events with eight or fewer pilots. With eight pilots competing in this second contest, the 3-pilot heat allowed better “balancing” of heats while improving race safety.

Nonetheless, this contest experienced its first incidence during the third heat, when Tony Bass encountered throttle issues and couldn't accelerate quickly enough to avoid Rick Burgess' airplane that was approaching from behind. The two airplanes collided on the ground during the start.



Left to right: Darrell Loveland, Tom Schramm, Ron Grigsby, Wayne Wahrmond, Rick Burgess, Bruce Burgess, Waldemar Frank, Tony Bass, and Marty Wittman.



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The outcome was a chopped left wing, disabling Tony Bass' airplane while choking Rick Burgess' engine. Both pilots had to sit out the third heat and missed their chance to score valuable season points. Bruce Burgess was able to secure the win and score three easy points (although I am sure that Bruce would have given both pilots their run for their money).



Tony's airplane after the collision. Rick's prop chewed up the left wing—the damage could have been worse.

It was a bummer for Tony who mentioned that morning that he had pulled an all-nighter just to get his second airplane ready for the race. He lost his first airplane a couple weeks earlier when tuning his throws and test flying the airplane (it was a total loss).



The two contenders posing after their incident.

Despite the incident at the start of the third heat, fairness and mutual appreciation among pilots prevailed. Wayne Wahrmund was kind enough to offer Tony the wing of his backup airplane, allowing Tony to complete his final heat.

Eight pilots competed in this contest. Wayne Wahrmund, who also attended the first race, and Marty Wittman from the Eugene club came. Ron Grigsby, from the La Pine club, was also able to join us again.

It was great to see Marty who couldn't make it to the first event. Marty is a fierce competitor and added to the overall competitiveness. He told us that he had a mid-air collision just a few days earlier after a practice run at the Eugene club. We were pleased that he was able to get a new airplane ready just in time for our contest.

Darrel Loveland struggled with his engine in his first heat and couldn't get it started in the allotted time, robbing him from scoring points. Despite not being able to finish his first heat, Darrell did very well in the next two heats.

Ron Grigsby experienced airplane damage during his second heat and had to land prematurely. The structural damage could not be repaired onsite, which also prevented him from completing his remaining heat.

Overall, it was nice to see very competitive races and the progression of flying skills. This positive trend should make the remaining heats even more dramatic—but there will also be greater chances of close encounters as pilots even out their flying skills. Tighter races will make events more exciting for spectators and pilots alike.



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A 3-pilot heat prepares to race.

All pilots showed great effort in racing against other contenders. It was interesting to observe how critical clean (leveled) laps and close turns are for earning top spots. Speed, at this point, doesn't always seem to be the key factor for success. Slower pilots who fly clean races have a very good change of scoring high. Still, speed should eventually become a determining factor once piloting skills equalize.

Preparations for the event were similar to the first contest. However, this time we completed a thorough technical inspection of all airplanes, with one small (safety) issue noted for one of the entered airplanes because of the use of EZ connectors. The affected pilot will resolve the safety concern prior to the next race.

Pilot registration and test flying was between 9:00 am -10:00 am, followed by a brief safety and race orientation. As mentioned earlier, we decided to conduct 3-pilot heats because of the better heat setup for events with eight and fewer pilots. We also scheduled a break from 11:30 am - 12:00 pm to allow pilots to recoup (calm their shaky knees), have a quick bite, replenish their body fluids (or get rid of some), and tweak their airplanes if applicable.

As a precaution, we came prepared to mark airplanes with colored paper and tape to improve identification of similarly colored airplanes.

Fortunately, affected pilots proactively marked their airplanes or didn't have to compete against each other, which avoided the need for additional markings of airplanes. Nevertheless, it was good to be prepared and have the supplies available to avoid identification issues.

Tom Schramm and Steve Younger have become dedicated racing volunteers and once again demonstrated a keen (eagle) eye as our cut judges. We had fewer cuts this time (I was the only pilot with a cut), which hopefully supports the notion that pilots are getting better at assessing their airplane's position during racing.



Taking a break: pilots enjoy some down time before the next heat.

This second contest also emphasized Bruce Burgess' competitiveness and claim for the top spot. He remains the pilot to beat, but several pilots are not too far off to challenge his current overall ranking. Bruce should see tougher competition in the remaining contests and future racing seasons.



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Marty Wittman came in second place with seven points, just one point behind Bruce who scored a total of eight points. Because of the 3-pilot heat setup, each pilot flew three heats with a top scoring opportunity of three points per heat. All in all, a pilot could score up to nine points for the event.

Again, we had several ties based on final scores, including ties for 3./4. And 5./6. place. Wayne Wahrmund and Rick Burgess shared the 3./4. spots with 6 points each. Darrell Loveland and I were tied for 5./6. place with 5 points each. We ended up applying tie-breaker rules based on direct comparisons of individual heat results to determine the below, final results.

Pos.	Pilot	Club	Score
1.	Bruce Burgess	BAM	8
2.	Marty Wittman	Eugene R/C Aeronauts	7
3.	Rick Burgess	BAM	6*
4.	Wayne Wahrmund	Eugene R/C Aeronauts	6*
5.	Darrell Loveland	BAM	5*
6.	Waldemar Frank	BAM	5*
7.	Tony Bass	BAM	2
8.	Ron Grigsby	La Pine R/C Flyers	1

* After tie-breaker ruling

This summary also includes an overview of the current season standings (for BAM-facilitated races). Please see the last page for detailed results and standings. Also, please note that the mentioned *Productivity* (P) refers to the total points achieved over the total points attempted for all heats participated in.



The top three (four) scorers from left to right; Marty Wittman (2nd place), Bruce Burgess (1st place), Rick Burgess and Wayne Wahrmund (3rd/4th place).

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

Again, we had a blast and it was fascinating to watch each heat. Some of the improvements should make a greater impact on safety and race execution as we continue with the remaining races for 2010. But we also have seen more opportunities for refinements.

For example, it is critical that communication (announcement of the start sequence) as well as signaling during the start of a heat is consistent and understood to allow smooth and clean starts.

Technology may be helpful and could be deployed down the road as we continue improving Club 40 pylon racing at BAM. Ideas and experiences from other clubs might be a good source of inspiration.

Likewise, the engine start problems that Tony Bass and Darrell Loveland experienced brought up some additional thoughts. To avoid crashes during takeoff, pilots should always apply full throttle to clear their lane as quickly as possible.



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Following pilots (second row pilots in lane 2 and 4) should try and stay in their lanes as they accelerate down the runway, even though it is not always easy to maintain a straight line with the crosswind we frequently have at Popp's Field while performing a semi "catapult" launch at full throttle.



After the races: pilots and volunteers pose for the camera.

Darrell Loveland's engine problems (glow plug failure) raised the question of whether we should give pilots more time to get off the ground.

For example, pilots could continue starting their engine until the first airplane completes its initial lap and crosses the start-finish-line. The pylon racing committee will discuss this option and make appropriate recommendations in time for the next race.

Another important lesson learned is how vital the support of activities and events across neighboring clubs can be. This is particularly true during the initial phase of new activities. Typically, new activities still rely on dedicated volunteers and club members before sufficient interest and commitment exists to establish such activities as a recognized club event.

Without the support of neighboring clubs and their members such as our peers from the Eugene and La Pine clubs, we would have had a harder time establishing pylon racing at BAM. Collaboration and mutual support also provide opportunities for sharing resources and learning together so we don't have to reinvent the wheel.

A BIG THANK YOU goes out to all the folks who have made Club 40 Racing possible at BAM. I would also like to encourage everybody to come out and watch, participate, and volunteer whenever you can.

On a related note, please take the opportunity to visit our neighboring clubs¹ to support their events, activities, and efforts to make our hobby more interesting and accessible to a diverse community of R/C hobbyists. Propose your ideas for better Club 40 racing and other interests you may have. It will be a win-win, for you personally and for your club.

Our next contest race will be on August, 21st. We will skip July because of the annual Firecracker Fun-Fly (July 23rd-25th). However, we will give a short pylon racing demo during the Firecracker event (on Saturday, July 24th). We hope to see you at the next contest race and of course at the Firecracker.

BAM's Pylon Racing Committee Members	
Contact	Email
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¹ The Eugene R/C Aeronauts will hold their first Club 40 contest race on July 17th. If you can make it, they would really appreciate it. For more information, please contact Marty Wittman at wittmanm@msn.com.



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Detailed Racing Results (2nd Contest at BAM)

Pos.	Pilot	Heats	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	DQ*	Cuts	Final Score
1.	Bruce Burgess	3	2	1	-	n/a	-	-	8
2.	Marty Wittman	3	2	-	1	n/a	-	-	7
3.	Rick Burgess	2	2	-	-	n/a	-	-	6*
4.	Wayne Wahrmond	3	-	3	-	n/a	-	-	6*
5.	Darrell Loveland	2	1	1	-	n/a	-	-	5*
6.	Waldemar Frank	3	1	2	-	n/a	-	1	5*
7.	Tony Bass	2	-	-	2	n/a	-	-	2
8.	Ron Grigsby	1	-	-	1	n/a	-	-	1

* After tie-breaker ruling

Current Season Standings (2010)

Pos.	Pilot	HA	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	DQ	CM	PM	PA	P
1.	Bruce Burgess	7	5	1	1	0	0	0	22	25	0.880
2.	Rick Burgess	6	4	1	1	0	0	0	19	25	0.760
3.	Darrell Loveland	6	3	3	0	0	1	3	15	25	0.600
4.	Marc Winz	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	13	16	0.813
5.	Waldemar Frank	7	1	3	1	2	0	2	11	25	0.440
6.	Wayne Wahrmond	7	1	3	1	2	0	2	11	25	0.440
7.	Don Clark	4	1	2	1	0	0	1	10	16	0.625
8.	Bernie Brader	4	0	2	2	0	1	2	7	16	0.438
9.	Marty Wittman	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	7	9	0.778
10.	Tony Bass	5	0	0	3	2	1	2	5	25	0.200
11.	Ron Grigsby	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	4	25	0.160

Legend

Acronym	Description
HA	heats attempted
1st-4th	finish position
DQ	disqualified
CM	cuts made
PM	points made
PA	points attempted
P	productivity (PM over PA)