F3P World Ch
Greece hosts the indoor aerobatics competition

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Crete, the largest of the Greek Islands, was home to the 2019 FAI (Fédération Internationale Aéronautique) F3P World Championships for Indoor Model Aircraft. The event was held in the Heraklion Sports Arena, in the city of Heraklion.

The arena was built to Olympic basketball specifications and offered a generous flight area that is 164 feet long, 118 feet wide, and 59 feet high. The Hellenic Aeronautical and Airsports Federation hosted the event, which ran smoothly under the direction of the event director, Antonis Papadopoulos.
The competition schedule did not leave much spare time, but most teams were able to do a little sight-seeing. Team USA visited the Acropolis for the Old Temple of Athena, the Parthenon, and the Sounion region to see the Temple of Poseidon (pictured).

Austrian Junior Andrea Wildauer was one of many pilots who used LED lights, confetti releases, streamers, and TVVP in the AFM category. Andrea earned the bronze medal with an aggressive flying style.

Donatas Pauzuolis’ Arrow V6 is caught in a classic inverted hover. This is only possible with a variable-pitch propeller using negative pitch. Donatas used LED lights, streamers, and confetti releases on his way to the AFM Championship.

Austrian Gernot Bruckmann won his fourth consecutive F3P World Championship title flying the newest version of his Trivia design.

The F3P Precision Indoor Aerobatics class, first flown in 2013, includes categories for individual and team championships. Team championships are determined by the sum of the placements of three pilots from a single country. The lowest score wins. Before 2019, the F3P Aerobatic Flights to Music (AFM) class was only flown as a provisional event. In 2019, AFM was flown for individual competition. There was no team championship.

Forty pilots from 14 countries, along with 10 judges, began arriving during the week of March 11. Registration and official practice for F3P started on Saturday, March 16, and concluded with opening ceremonies on Sunday evening.

A brass band played the national anthem for each team as they paraded through the center of Heraklion. Vassilis Labrinos, the mayor of Heraklion, gave a welcoming speech, and a fireworks display concluded the opening ceremonies.

In the F3P class, all pilots fly the same predefined schedule of 11 maneuvers. Manuevers are judged based on geometric accuracy, smoothness, gracefulness, and positioning. The preferred style is a slow, constant speed with defined, but smooth, radii and rolls. Pilots are allowed 5 minutes to complete the maneuver schedule.

F3P rules specify a maximum aircraft weight of 300 grams and maximum length/width of 2 meters (78.75 inches). The average aircraft in 2019 was 43 inches long with a 35-inch wingspan. Tall fuselages—on the order of 10 to 13 inches—were the norm to facilitate effortless maneuvering in knife-edge flight. All used highly specialized, electric motor coaxial power systems driving pairs of counter-rotating foam-composite propellers.

The dominant construction method for F3P airplanes is a carbon-fiber skeleton covered with Mylar film, as pioneered by Alexey Lantsov of Russia. An
A pioneer of carbon-fiber and Mylar airframes, coaxial power systems, and removable wings, the talents of Alexey Lantsov are amazing. Alexey’s 2019 Victory model had a two-piece fuselage and removable wings, elevator, and rudder, allowing it to neatly fit inside a standard-size suitcase. It was one of the lightest models at a mere 41 grams.

Teams gathered in the City Hall pavilion for speeches from officials, including the mayor of Heraklion, Vassilis Labrinos, as translated by Event Director Antonis Papadopoulos. All 10 Junior competitors also posed for a picture.

Martin Brandmüller is assisted by Gernot Bruckmann during an F3P flight. Martin was the second-highest-placing Austrian pilot (eighth) and key to the team’s silver-medal finish for Austria. Martin also competed in the AFM class and finished fourth.

Swiss pilot, Sylvain Pasini, placed seventh in AFM with routines using TVVP, LED lighting synchronized to music, confetti releases, and streamers.
09. AC Glenn was the unofficial “photo bomber” champion, but Team France proved to be up to the challenge.

10. Large video displays at each end of the arena rotated through several information screens, including the flight order, updated contest results after each flight, live scoring of the flight in progress, and biography information of each pilot.

mAh for TVVP; 2S 326 mAh for fixed pitch)
• 20 to 35 grams: servos, receiver, wiring

F3P Competition
Sandro Veronelli of Switzerland made the first official F3P flight of the competition at 7:30 a.m. on Monday. Before flying began, large video screens at each end of the arena displayed pilot pictures and biographies. During the flights, the displays showed judges’ scores for each maneuver as they were input and included a summary of average scores per maneuver. Between flights, the displays showed current standings for completed flights.

Flightline director Elias Sopeoglou kept things running smoothly. During the day, judging breaks occurred every 10 flights, and a 1-hour break was taken for lunch. On Monday, the final pilot, Zilvinas Lapacinskas of Lithuania, completed his flight at 5:30 p.m. Three-time defending World Champion Gernot Bruckmann of Austria flew well, winning both rounds.

Donatas Pauzuolis of Lithuania, the bronze medalist in 2015 and 2017, was close behind in second place. Julien Hecht (France) was in third place, leading a strong French team. Joseph Szczur (USA) was in fourth place, markedly improved from his 15th-place finish in 2017.

France had four pilots in the top 10 and looked very strong for the Team competition (15 points). Team Austria was in second place with 24 points. Team USA was in third place with 29 points, and Team Lithuania in fourth place sitting on 39 points.

Tuesday saw the completion of rounds 3 and 4, finishing the preliminary F3P rounds. Little movement occurred among the top group of pilots, although Markus Zolitsch of Germany was able to improve his position to the 12th spot, making him the last man into the 12-pilot finals.

With four pilots in the top seven, Team France (14 points) seemed to have a veritable lock on the Team Championship. Team Austria and Team USA both had two pilots in the finals and were mathematically locked to finish no lower than third for the Team classification. Lithuania finished fourth with 41 points.

Maxime Schmitt of France was the only Junior pilot (18 years old or younger) to make the finals, so he earned the gold medal as top F3P Junior. Andrea Cervi of Italy finished in 13th place, earning him the silver
F3P Junior medal. Andreas Wildauer from Austria finished in 14th place, earning the bronze F3P Junior medal.

Andrea, Andreas, and I (USA, 15th place) completed training and warm-up flights for the judges before the three-round, 12-flier finals.

The F3P finalists completed practice rounds on Thursday afternoon, and then the three-round finals on Friday morning. Positions of the top four pilots and teams remained unchanged. Gernot continued his dominance, winning all three rounds in the finals. Donatas comfortably finished second in all three rounds. Places five through nine were separated by less than 12 points out of 3,000.

AFM Competition

The 20 pilots in the AFM competition began practice on Wednesday morning, and continued with two preliminary rounds on Wednesday afternoon. Gernot again led the way, with Donatas closely behind in second. The French pilots were again strong with Jeffrey Durochat in third, Maxime in sixth, and Julien in eighth.

The Austrian pilots were strong as well, with Martin Brandmüller in fifth place and Andreas in seventh. The top 10 also included Sylvain Pasini of Switzerland in fourth, Markus in ninth, and Filippo Materazzi of Italy in 10th. Julien, Markus, and Filippo were the only pilots in the top 10 not using TVVP.

The AFM preliminary rounds finished on Thursday morning, with only minor shuffling among fifth through 10th places. Markus again was last man into the finals, and Joseph was first man out in 11th place. A finals practice session occurred Friday afternoon, and a few pilots, notably Donatas, revealed some new tricks and amped up routines for the final rounds.

The four-round AFM finals was flown on Saturday morning. Pilots were required to fly two different routines in the finals. The sum of the best score from each routine would determine the final placings.

Round 1 saw some very aggressive flying. Donatas was second up and set the mark high with a strong flight. Gernot uncharacteristically crossed the safety line and earned a zero for his flight. Andreas narrowly edged out Martin for second place.

In rounds 2 and 3, Gernot recovered with strong flights and moved into second place comfortably behind Donatas, who continued to set the mark. Martin crossed the zero line in round 3 but held onto third place. Andreas crashed both rounds and dropped to last place.

In the final round, Donatas completed his clean sweep of the AFM finals. Gernot locked down second place. Andreas again flew aggressively and edged into third place ahead of Martin by only 6 points (out of 2,000). The rest of the finalists included Jeffrey in fifth, Julien in sixth, Sylvain in seventh, Maxime in eighth, Markus in ninth, and Filippo in 10th.

Visit the official website for the 2019 F3P World Championships to see results and archived live streaming of the F3P, AFM, and closing ceremonies.

SOURCES:

*2019 F3P World Championships*
http://2019f3pwch.elao.gr

11. The F3P Team gold went to France, with Austria taking the silver, and USA taking the bronze. AFM Champion Donatas Pauzuolis and AFM Junior Bronze medalist Andrea Cervi joined the celebration on the podium.

12. Preliminary rounds used two panels of five judges each. In the finals, the full complement of 10 judges were used for every round. The three-member FAI Jury was available, but fortunately no protests were filed. Elias Sopeoglou kept the flightline moving smoothly.