

Indoor Catapult Launched Glider Competition

John Monk

This event is the 2nd indoor challenge hosted by the Society, and this time it was held at the Swartkops Airforce Base in Hangar 14 on 22nd October 2010.

It was decided that the format for this event would be a challenge involving endurance only and competitors were allowed to use bungee catapults to launch their gliders. This meant that the gliders all had to be able to withstand the launch forces and the initial high speed aerodynamics before getting to "Top of Climb" and settling into a slow spiral flight down to the ground. Obviously those designs that had the best balance in both these flight regimes ruled the day. Then of course having to avoid the roof trusses and the side walls as well. Needless to say, everybody had to do plenty of practicing to set their trims and CG position.



The Glider Competitors



Launching one of the smaller designs

There were around 20 entrants including schools teams and hobbyists, the competitors were divided into 2 groups (to reduce "air space" congestion) and had to do 10 flights each to reach a fly-off stage with the best 10 competing the fly-off. With each flight the longest flight time was measured to achieve and overall average. With a overall launch height of around 20 m, the longest endurance achieved topped out at 30 seconds, with most of the field averaging around 15 seconds.



Teams spread out to launch into clear "air space"

Overall, this competition format worked very well, and everybody enjoyed the day, attempting to fly their various designs.



Matt Hirst receives his prize

Many thanks to the SAAF museum for their kind assistance in supplying the hangar, as these sort of venues are not easy to come by. Next competition is planned to be indoor powered flight, so watch this space.