

Inter-Varsity Flight Competition

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On the 19th of November 2010, the University of Pretoria and the University of Witwatersrand competed in the first annual inter-varsity flight competition. The competition took place in the Meerkat Field opposite Aerosud.

Aeronautical Engineering students from both Universities built their own model aircraft and competed in four events, each with its own challenges.



One of the Short-Take-off Competitors

The competition categories were “Take-off in the Shortest Distance with a full beer can as payload”, “High Speed Race around Pylons also carrying a full beer can as payload”, High Speed Race around pylons with a flying wing”, “Glider designed for best endurance released from a bungee”.



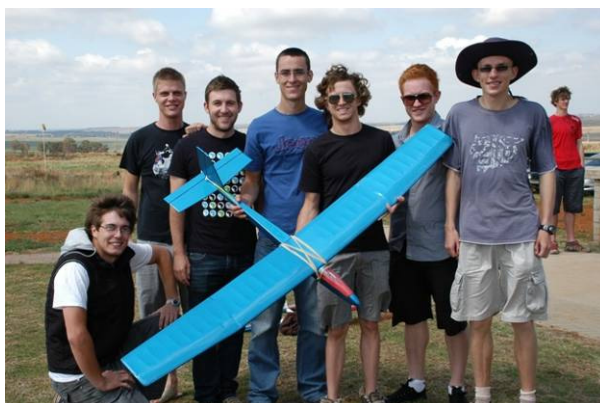
The winners of the Short take-off Race – The Scrooge Team

As one can imagine, if it involves beer, students get interested.... The payload challenges were not as simple as it sounded, as ultimately the aircraft designs that would be capable to carry this sort of mass needed to be sturdy enough and have sufficient wing size for their respective flights, and this meant overall model weights to be around 2 kg which is already becoming big in terms of model size with the complexity this brings.

Unfortunately there were no winners for the flying wing race, the UP team’s model came to earth the previous day and could not be repaired in time and the WITS entry made a valiant attempt to take-off and in the hands of an expert pilot could not avoid doing loops “in ground effect”, thus had to be abandoned (shows one the difficulty in flying wings aerodynamics.)



The winners of High Speed Race (Beer included) – The Flying Ostrich Team



The winners of the Glider Endurance Challenge – The Alpha Mike Foxtrot Team

The University of Pretoria won the other categories and also clinched the overall trophy sponsored by the Society. Many thanks to the Society for assisting in the arrangements of the flying field, also to John Monk and his CSIR team for assisting in the scoring measurements and logistics. Plans are to hold another competition in 2011, and hopefully attract more universities to compete as well.