

The South African Model Aircraft Association JOB DESCRIPTION – F3A R/C AEROBATICS TEAM MANAGER

The duties of the F3A R/C Aerobatics team manager are numerous, and start long before the team's departure.

The T/M must be an interested, active, and experienced participant in the aerobatic discipline, but not necessarily a competitor. He/she must be prepared to show long-term commitment. A necessity would be leadership qualities, coaching/training skills, as well as organisational and administrative skills, sportsmanship, and diplomacy. The T/M should possess good strategic planning skills, have some technical knowledge about F3A model aircraft, and have a thorough working knowledge of the Sporting Code.

The T/M must preferably be a South African citizen, a good ambassador, and a SAMAA member in good standing, with a valid FAI Sporting Licence. The T/M must be able to obtain at least 14 days leave, and have the required funds to travel to sustain a 14-day trip abroad.

The team manager must afford the same attention to each team member, with no preferential treatment. Above all, the T/M manager must be a "people" person, a good character judge, and possess plenty of patience.

The T/M is usually nominated by the team members (if the team selection process has been completed), or by the prospective team members and alternates, if the nomination is made prior to the last team selection event. This nomination is ratified by the SAMAA committee.

Here follows a list, by no means exhaustive, of the duties of the T/M:

- Prepare realistic timing schedule/action plan. Adhere to plan as much as possible.
- Obtain written commitment/declaration from each member, regarding availability, model aircraft readiness, funds, leave, etc.
- Prepare entry forms, and identity photographs.
- Arrange for telegraphic transfer of entry fees, accommodation fees, car hire fees, etc.
- Request financial allocation from SAMAA committee (currently R12 000 per team).
- Apply for Protea colours through SA Aero Club, at least 12 weeks in advance of team's departure. Only SA Passport holders eligible for Protea Colours.

- Make hotel bookings, but also seek alternative, cheaper accommodation than what the organisers recommend in the official bulletins.
- Actively seek sponsorships, donations, and any funds that may relieve the financial burden of the team members. This may include arranging for airshows, demonstrations, raffles, etc. Establish team fund, and ensure equal/fair distribution to all members. Financial considerations are huge, and team members should receive priority. Any supporters/helpers travel and attend at their own expense, unless a cost-saving is generated through shared expenses or group discounts.
- Arrange for some intensive practice/training sessions at a location that is not unlike the world championships venue, in altitude, conditions, box markings, etc. Concentrate on schedule P-03, with some attention to F-03 as well. Arrange for suitable transportation to attend practice sessions. Preferably seek assistance from knowledgeable judges who may be able to help with preparation and training. Make sure all model aircraft comply with current FAI sound ruling (94 over concrete/tar, 92 over grass). Encourage further experimentation to reduce sound levels.
- Organise/arrange for the donation or procurement of team uniforms.
- Organise travel documentation, passports, visa's, international drivers' licences, etc. Medical insurance very important.
- Seek cheapest airfares, with least inconvenience, and arrange for bookings and payment.
- Arrange for land transportation. Seek cheapest, most convenient car/van hire options. Bear in mind that roof racks may have to be hired to carry boxes. Arrange for internal carrying method to protect model aircraft during championships.
- Prepare/arrange team's documentation: Sporting Licences, FAI specification certificates, FAI stickers, model identification codes, and ICAO numbers. Make duplicate copies of passports, visas, medical insurance, drivers licences, Sporting Licences, and other important documentation and keep in safe place.
- Arrange for promotional items – stickers, badges, pins, if deemed necessary.
- Arrange fuel order/special fuel requirements.
- Arrange for national flag and anthem.
- Organise radio frequencies, Tx modules, receivers. Imperative that all three are close together, or on the same spot, to avoid splitting on two flight lines.
- Liaise with airline carrier for the safe transportation of model boxes, there and back, at minimal, if any, cost. Get all correspondence and agreements in writing, confirm, and reconfirm! Get mobile telephone numbers of ground staff. Get details of all airline personnel involved in box handling. Keep constant touch. Establish policy with regard to excess baggage.

- Help team members with box construction and crating (preferably polystyrene – lightweight, strong, waterproof, cheap). Model aircraft must have 2-piece removable stabilisers to ensure smallest possible box. Preferably no extra weight-bearing equipment in box.
- For travel purposes, ensure most valuable equipment taken on board as hand luggage.
- Ensure members have adequate foreign exchange or credit cards.
- Declare valuables before leaving SA, to prevent customs hassles upon return.
- Co-ordinate equipment/tools necessary for championship (non-duplication of tools, starter batteries, etc). Ensure charging equipment is compatible. Make provision for lightweight, transparent (acetate, or polycarbonate/Lexan) transmitter shields, to shield from rain.
- Arrange publicity for team prior to departure.
- Attend to flight and arrival arrangements to team's satisfaction. Establish that all equipment has arrived safely, with no damage.
- Attend to accommodation upon arrival. Establish policy with regard to extra costs (room meals, telephone calls, pay-TV, bar fridge, laundry, extras).
- Establish transportation policy. Who may drive vehicles, petrol costs, accidents.
- Establish communication policy/method of contact between all members. Preferably with mobile telephones. Team members to seek permission, and to advise team manager of movements at all times, especially on competition days.
- Have emergency medical kit at hand (plasters, antiseptic ointment, eye-drops, painkillers, Immodium, antacid, etc.).
- Attend to registration at competition. Also model aircraft processing (5kg dry weight maximum, 2m max. fuselage length, 2m max. wing span, ONE only national identity number (25mm high – RSA 9999), model identification code 10mm high (A-model, or B-model) on each removable main structural part of the model aircraft. Supervise transmitter checking by organisers. Maintain high SA presence.
- Arrange for best, most convenient practice site/s. Negotiate with other participants for equal share of facility. Make absolutely sure of frequency allocation at (usually) unregulated practice fields. Preferably have clearly identified frequency markers/boards next to each model aircraft. Shoot-downs are costly, unnecessary, and frustrating.
- Supervise official practice – each team member to have only 10-minutes. Insist that measuring apparatus be present (wind speed indicator, sound check, time piece, etc.). Ensure clear box and ground markings, as well as runway markings (100m x 10 wide). If not, insist.
- Attend team manager's meetings. Take full details of all arrangements. Ask pertinent questions. Insist on clear answers. Ensure conformity to Sporting Code in all respects, unless deviation sanctioned by FAI Jury. Negotiate for best possible, reasonable treatment of own team members. Flight draw: frequency not to follow frequency, nor team member follow team member. On different flight lines, separation must be by two competitors.

- Seek from SA judge (if on W/C panel), details of discussion of judge training session. If no SA judge, obtain info from Jury member responsible for judge training session.
- Handle PR functions during championships. Ensure high SA visibility.
- Arrange for timely arrival at flying site for each team member's flight.
- Arrange for adequate daily meals for team members.
- Arrange for adequate shelter/shade for team and equipment, with enough refreshments. Days can be long and tiring!
- Arrange impound of transmitters each day, **ON TIME**.
- It is good practice for each member to have an extra transmitter on the same frequency as both competition models. This will allow practice, where otherwise the transmitter may be impounded for the entire day.
- Ensure transmitter is collected from impound when frequency has been cleared by contest officials (usually 2 flights/20 minutes ahead). Ensure team member is comfortably dressed, contestant number affixed, protective eyewear if necessary, shaded. Help with mental preparation.
- Ensure two model aircraft for each member are ALWAYS prepared before flight, and ready in starting box, with all necessary equipment (starter, glow driver, etc.). Ensure that no zero-score flights are recorded as a result of faulty equipment, or no-starts, etc.
- Co-ordinate calling duties for/between team members.
- Two helpers (three persons) during start-up, one to place model aircraft for take-off, and to retrieve after flight without obstructing or delaying other competitors or officials. Transmitter to be handed back without delay by T/M.
- Provide constructive feedback and praise immediately after flights. Confine criticism to constructive, positive comments. Identify errors and determine remedies.
- Collect printed score sheets and discuss with team members. Identify strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities to improve.
- Determine strategy for next flight with team member, if change is necessary.
- If any irregularity/complaint, bring to the attention of the appropriate official (timekeeper, noise steward, line director, frequency official). If no satisfactory answer, then to contest director. Ask for clear ruling or decision. T/M entitled to lodge complaint with CD, before protest procedure.
- All protests in writing to CD, accompanied by stipulated protest fee. Quote facts, not emotions, and Sporting Code paragraph. Ask for restitution. Wait on outcome of protest, without interfering with CD duties. Report outcome to team members. Accept outcome of protest, unconditionally. Do not involve other teams or spread rumours surrounding details of protest.
- Display on-field identification device for team (flag, banner, board, pennant) to enhance SA presence.

- Arrange for daily collection of transmitters from impound, after day's flying.
- Arrange for regular feedback on team/individual positions to SAMAA committee (possibly via e-mail, or mobile phone SMS).
- Attend probable F3A sub-committee meeting, if scheduled during W/Ch.
- Endeavour to write at least one topical article for daily news bulletin, to enhance SA presence.
- Arrange for daily inspections of model aircraft to check serviceability.
- Ensure general well-being of team, and harmony between members. Encourage social get-togethers, but limit alcohol intake. Ensure enough sleep for team members.
- Promote good relations between SA team and other teams. Exchange ideas, addresses, telephone numbers, etc.
- It may be likely that one or more of the team members could progress to the semi-finals (top 30 fliers). Arrange for practice of semi-finals schedule (currently F-03) on rain day.
- Re-confirm airline flights at least 72 hours prior to departure home.
- Obtain full set of results from organisers before departure.
- Ensure flag and anthem, and Sporting Licences are returned by organisers.
- Return all unused fuel to organisers.
- Leave good impression with contest officials and key organisers.
- Ensure adequate packing of model aircraft and other equipment.
- Arrange for living quarters and transportation to be returned in good condition.
- Ensure all travel arrangements/box transportation in hand, considering that team members may not all return on same flight. Establish policy with regard to excess baggage on return flight. Often team members (and T/M) will acquire kits, radio's, engines, etc. which adds to volume and weight of transportation crates/boxes. Establish policy with regard to excess baggage of supporters/helpers who travel with team.
- Ensure all equipment arrives home in good condition.
- Provide SAMAA and newsletter editor with contest report and results soon after return.
- Arrange for disbursement of incentive bonus (percentage of R12 000 for team position relative to top half of teams participating).
- Arrange for de-briefing of team, and post-contest analysis.
- Report to SAMAA aerobatic sub-committee on possible areas of improvement.