

YOUR FIRST CONTEST

So, Skippy, you want to go to your first contest. Well here's what you can expect.

1) First step is to go to the registration table and fill out the registration form. Enter the events you wish to fly in (probably Beginners Stunt). Make sure that you have your AMA card with you because you'll have to show it to the people at the registration table. Don't worry if you do not have one because you can apply for your AMA membership at the contest.

OK, you've registered so now what do you do? If you already have your AMA card you will probably have placed your number on the wing of your model. If you have not done so do it now. This can be done by marking the number on a piece of masking tape and sticking it on the wing. If you do not have the materials with you ask the Contest Director (CD) for some tape and a marking pen.

2) Step two is to attend the pilots' meeting. Here you will be told what is going to happen in the contest, where you will be flying, who will be judging, when your event will be starting and who your Pit Boss is. Pay attention and ask questions if anything is not completely clear to you.

3) Step three is to check at the main contest board to see when you are scheduled to fly. Some contests that are particularly well organized will have the flight schedule listed on the main contest board and in the individual pit. Once you know when you are scheduled to fly take your model to the pits. Here you will hook up your lines. The pit boss will check your lines for kinks, measure them to determine that your lines are the correct diameter for the size of the engine you are using and pull test your model for safety. The pull test is done by placing a scale on your handle and having you pull your model until the required weight is attained (25 pounds for a .35 size engine).

4) While you are waiting for your flight to be called take this time to arrange to have someone launch you and recover your model at the end of your flight. It is always a good idea to offer to help one of the other contestants if you wish to have them help you.

5) You should make sure that all of this is done at least three contestants prior to your flight and that your model is sitting in the pits ready to fly. Keep your eye on the two contestants in front of you and be ready to enter the circle. When the pit boss calls your name you have a total of 3 minutes from that time to get your model onto the circle and get your engine started so don't get too excited. Have your helper take the handle to the center of the circle while you place the model at it's launch point. If you do not know how to do the entire pattern and intend to leave out one or two maneuvers you must notify the judges. The reason you do this is that the judges will expect you to do all of the maneuvers and if you fail to advise them of any you do not intend to attempt you will lose pattern points. If you advise them of maneuvers that are not being done you only lose points for those maneuvers but still get your pattern points. The way you notify the judges is to simply walk over to them before you start your motor and tell them which maneuvers you will not be attempting.

7) Fill you fuel tank, prime the engine, place the battery on the glow plug and get your "prop bump". When you are ready to start the engine remember to signal the judges by raising your arm. Once the judge waves back to you go ahead and start your engine.

8) After your take off and level flight raise your arm prior to attempting your first maneuver to let the judges know that you are ready. Although this is not necessary according to the rule book it is considered good manners. If you are not completely satisfied with your engine run and feel that you will not be able to complete your flight safely simply waive off your flight by showing the judges a "cut off" signal (hand across the throat). Don't worry about it because you are allowed a total of three attempts to complete two official flights. All that will happen is that you will fly out the fuel, land and be told that your flight is rescheduled after the next two contestants have flown. It is better to take an attempt when you have a bad needle setting than to try to do the maneuvers and crash your model.

9) At the conclusion of your flight clear the circle as soon as possible. Have your helper pick up your model. You and he walk the model and lines to the post flight area. Unhook your lines and roll them onto your line reel. Then remove your model from the post flight area, wipe it down and your are finished your first flight.

10) For your second flight simply go back to Step # 3 and repeat each step.

11) At the conclusion of the contest day you may wish to obtain your score sheets to review what score you received for each maneuver. Check with the Contest Director to see if they will give you the sheets. Some contests require the sheets some do not so always check. Remember not to bother the people at the scoring table. They have an important job to do and really don't have the time to talk with you. A nice thing to do is to personally thank the pit boss, the judges and the CD for their work. These people work hard all day long to make your day fun and it helps to have a contestant recognize their efforts.

That's about all there is to a contest. If you win a trophy that's great but always **Remember to have fun!** That's what you're there for.