

Two Seater Challenge

Question - How can you take a club 2 seat glider to a competition, have fun, make new friends and be competitive without having the highest performance glider?

Answer – take it along to the Bidford Two Seater Challenge.

Last year that is exactly what the Black Mountains Gliding Club did with their K21 in June 2009. The team was based around one instructor with a number of pilots, each flying different days and then being on site to provide ground crew on their non P2 days. A formula that worked well, and proved to be a great deal of fun for all concerned.

The glider was towed up on the Friday before the competition and rigged and prepared ready to fly. A good polish on the Saturday morning and the team made their way to the clubhouse ready to meet the other entrants, and attend the competition introduction and briefing. The rules of the completion and scoring system were outlined by Gordon Burkert, the competition director.



Due to the wide range of glider performance of the entrants, which ranged from Duo Discus, Ash 25e to a Capstan, the scoring was devilishly clever. You earned two points for each kilometre for a completed task, and one point per kilometre for an uncompleted task. Every flying day there were three tasks set: a small; medium; and long, and you selected which task you wanted to fly. In addition each glider type was given a speed index for the week, and if you exceeded that speed on the task, you gained bonus points. This meant that the higher performance gliders were not able to gain so much of an advantage over the lower performance ships, giving a much more even playing field. There were also bonus points available on some of the days.



The other nice touch was that you chose your own launch time, so there was no panic to get to the grid or find your allocated spot. This gave for a much more relaxed atmosphere than other competitions.

Unfortunately the one thing that could not be arranged was the weather and the competition did not get off to the best start with Saturday being scrubbed. Sunday proved to have a better outlook, the tasks set were 185k, 121.1k and 66.7km. A challenging day was reported by the competing pilots and on Monday morning at briefing the results showed that the day was won by a Duo Discus piloted by Derek Piggott with 369 points, closely followed by Chris Morris with 363 points with the K21 coming in with 291. The briefing ended with the plans to rebrief at 12noon – the weather was still not cooperating.

The week moved on day by day and while the weather still did not give us it's best, the competition kept going. Full results for each day are available from the Bidford web site at http://www.bidfordgliding.co.uk/Misc/Comp_stuff/2_seat_2009/2_seat_task_results.html so I will not go through each day in full..

The Black Mountains team had a great time, and the various pilots who had not been involved with a competition before, have all said it was a great way to start out. One member was most pleased to finally complete a set task. We did have some problems with illness and a lack of ground crew, which did mean for some of the tasks, discretion had to be the better part of valour and we had to select the smaller task as we would not have enough people to cope with a land out.

The last day of the competition, Sunday, proved that the scoring system did level the playing field for the gliders and to our great surprise and pleasure, we found we had won the day and moved up to third place overall.



Full results are 1st place Derek Pigot/Bob Starmer in a Dup Discus, 2nd Place Chris Morris/Rob Gilsby in another Duo, and 3rd John Clark/BMGC Team in a K21.

So well done Bidford, a great competition and very well enjoyed by all, we will be back this year.

So why not give it a try? It is a great way to get up and coming cross country pilots to stretch their legs so to speak and give them a taste of competition. Go on go for it.....

Bidford Gliding are running this competition from 31st July to 8th August 2010. See <http://www.bidfordgliding.co.uk/Two%20seater%20comp.html> for more details, and you will also find links to last year's tasks, results, and pictures.