

2011 Florida Jets

Story and photos by David Hart

With an Israeli Air Force paint scheme, this 1/4 scale Global Jet F-15 is a full composite construction and has a 55-inch span.



Brian O'Meara's Skymaster F-86 with the German Erich Hartmann paint scheme. Brian contracted metal-finish expert Joe Grice for that fabulous metal job.

For the weekend of March 3-6, 2011, Florida Jets, an event for RC jet aircraft of all types and sizes, was held at "Paradise Field" located at the Lakeland Airport in Lakeland, Florida. The field features an 800 x 70 foot runway of Bermuda Sod that is fairly well manicured.

I arrived on Thursday morning with cameras in hand, ready for a fantastic weekend of weather and flying. The first day is always one of the most exciting for me because I know there will be some new models that I haven't seen yet.

The different types of model aircraft flying were anything from electric ducted fans to turbine powered sport, civilian and warbird jets. A total of 250 aircraft and 141 pilots were registered to fly, and the weather was just about picture perfect with blue skies, occasional clouds and 70-degree temperatures. The winds were a little high on Thursday and Friday, but straight down the runway.



Richard Curry's Skymaster Hawk 100 puts out some heat on this low pass.

Sam Wright, show announcer (left), and Frank Tiano (right) address the pilots from the announcer's stand.



This very scale pilot flies in Chuck Storie's A-10. Chuck's A-10 was one of two at Florida Jets, and featured a very realistic pilot and cockpit.



Jack Diaz owns this beautiful F-86 Sabrejet, which was built in 2005 from a BVM kit. It is 1/4 scale with an 80-inch span and is powered by a Jet Cat P-160 turbine. The model is built with operational speed brakes, landing and navigation lights, Fowler flaps, sliding canopy and droppable external fuel tanks. Since its completion in 2005, it has won several awards at Top Gun and many Best Craftsmanship awards at various events.



This Skymaster 1/4 scale BAE Hawk was expertly flown by BVM factory pilot, Dustin Buescher—a smooth pilot with a smooth flying airplane!

Rob Lynch, never rattled, always cool, performs a low inverted fly-by with his BVM Ultra Bandit.



Brian O'Meara's F-84G is from a "Phantasy in Blue" kit out of Holland. It is powered by a Jet Cat 200 turbine and equipped with a smoke system. It won MAN's Best Military Award.



Pablo Fernandez puts the second ever flight on this CARF Models MiG-29 powered by (2) Jet Central Cheetah's. After this event, it went in the paint shop in preparation for Top Gun 2011. Composite ARF, as we once knew it, is now called CARF Models.

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Joe Saitto's Me 262 is scratch-built, powered by a JetCat P-120 and weighs 36 pounds.



Mike Gill's Skymaster F-22 Raptor has a 55-inch wingspan.

During the half-time show on Saturday, the pilots lined up their models on the runway, which allowed for the spectators to get up close for photos and to ask questions.



David Shulman put on a show with his hot looking Pirrotti Tuono. This new design created a lot of interest.

Saturday was beautiful with lighter winds. Sunday the weather went downhill with clouds and strong crosswinds. With this being a non-competitive event, the open flying started at 8:30 and didn't end until 5:30.

One of the most impressive electric aircraft there was Bob Fiorenze's Yellow Aircraft F-14 with the "Black Bunny" paint scheme. It weighs 36 pounds and has a 100-inch wingspan. One of the unique things about this model is the wings actually sweep forward and back. It won an award for "Engineering Excellence." Another very impressive electric model was Tommy Wood's BVM F-4. It weighs 30 pounds, has a 57-inch wingspan and it won an award for "Best Electric Jet Performance."

The biggest presence at the event was the turbine-powered aircraft. These varied in size from



Boli Muentes 110-inch Comp ARF Tucano—powered by Jet Central and equipped with a smoke system—was a real head turner. Not a jet, but jet-powered, so allowed to fly!

the E-flite Habu 32 to Craig Gottschang's 120-inch Mibojets A-10. One of my personal favorites is Boli Muentes's Comp-ARF Red Tucano. It was one of only two turbo-prop aircraft there. It spans 110 inches and weighs 50 pounds. The prop was powered by a Jet Central engine. It also had a smoke system to add to its uniqueness, which looked really cool coming out of both side of the cowl's exhaust pipes.

The two Tomahawk Designs' Futuras flown by Andy Kane had some unique paint schemes with Buzz Lightyear piloting one, with green and purple colors and Buzz's famous quote "To infinity and beyond," and the other one piloted by Woody with blue and orange colors and his famous quote "Reach for the sky." The kids, and adult kids at heart, really liked these planes.

Ryan Haldenwanger's 1/43 scale Me 262 is another warbird jet you don't see very often. It has a wingspan of 103 inches and weighs 43 pounds. It was powered by a single Jet Central Rhino engine. The full-scale aircraft had an engine on each wing, but Ryan had this model modified with a single engine in the fuselage and dummy engines on the wings. It flew very scale-like and won an award for best military jet.

If you're a Blue Angels fan, you would have liked seeing Pablo Fernandez's A-4 painted up with the Blue Angels number 5 scheme. This model made by Skymaster Jets has a 61-inch wingspan, weighs 35



Pablo Fernandez's Skymaster A-4, with the Blue Angels' number 5 scheme, is powered by a Jet Central Rhino. Pablo won the Critic's Choice Runner-up award sponsored by Jet Central.



Ali Machinchy tore up the sky with his Hotliner Glider powered by a Lambert Kolibri turbine that was mounted on the top of the wing—absolutely amazing performances.

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Some of the most impressive flying I saw there was Ali Machinchy and his Hotliner Glider with a turbine engine mounted on top of the wing. Ali would fly this glider around and turn it on a dime. He was literally flying it in a 50-foot square box at well over 100 mph. It was almost hard to even follow this model, as he put it through all kinds of different gyrations.

FLORIDA JETS 2011 SPONSOR AWARDS

| Award | Sponsor | Pilot | Airplane |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Best Military Jet #2 | Spektrum Radio | Ryan Haldenwanger | Me 262 |
| Best Military Jet | Model Airplane News | Brian O'Meara | F-84G |
| Best Sport Jet #2 | Jet Central | Andy Kane | Tomahawk Futura |
| Best Sport Jet | Boomerang Jets | Raul Lozano | BVM Ultra Bandit |
| Best Civilian Jet | Global Jet Club | Greg Foushi | Sky Master Viper |
| Best Electric Jet | JR Radio | Rob Lynch | Electra |
| Best Sport Jet Performance | RC/J Magazine | David Shulman | Tuono |
| Best Scale Jet Performance | Futaba | Frankie Mirandes | BVM F-86 |
| Best Foamy Jet Performance | Zap Glue | Fahim Ahmed | Wow Planes A-10 |
| Best Electric Jet Performance | Model Airplane News | Tommy Wood | BVM F-4 |
| Best Multi Jet Performance | JetCat USA | Craig Gottschang | Mibojets A-10 |
| Best Craftsmanship | Bob Violett Models | Craig Gottschang | Mibojets A-10 |
| Engineering Excellence | Jet Central | Bob Fiorenze | F-14 |
| Most Outstanding Jet Flight | Zap Glue | Ali Machinchy | BAe Hawk |
| Special Recognition | BVM | Boli Muentes | Tucano |
| Special Recognition | JR Radio | Jack Diaz | BVM F-100D |
| Special Recognition | Horizon Hobby | Pablo Fernandez | E Bandit |
| Special Recognition | Futaba | Mike Saleeby | Boomerang |
| Special Recognition | FTE | Larry Kramer | Bob-Cat |
| Special Recognition | Global Jet Club | Ali Machinchy | Hotliner Glider |
| Special Recognition | RC/J Magazine | Joe Saitto | Me 163 |
| Special Recognition | Wow Planes.COM | Jason Shulman | Turbinator |
| Critics Choice Runner-up | Jet Central | Pablo Fernandez | A-4 |
| Critics Choice | ZAP Glue and MAN | Craig Gottschang | Mibojets A-10 |

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This award winning 120-inch wingspan MIBO A-10—owned and flown by Craig Gottschang (a former A-10 pilot)—does a beautiful photo pass. Craig has won several awards at previous events, but this year he won three: Jet Cat's "Best Multi," BVM's "Best Craftsmanship" and ZAP Glue's "Critics Choice!" WOW!



Left: Jack Diaz is at the controls of his BVM F-100D with copilot Frankie Mirandes (left) spotting for him. Jack has won many awards over the years with this popular aircraft (above), which has the 48th Tactical Fighter Wing with special TFW Weapons Team markings. What an incredible performer!

Friday night, the entire "field," meaning pilots and crew, were treated to a fabulous cocktail party at the site. ZAP Glue and FTE provided a fully stocked "open bar" while Jet Central and Bob Violett Models bought dinner for the entire group. Their menu featured Wing House wings, burgers, fries and chicken tenders with all the curly fries you could eat!

THE HALF-TIME AIR SHOW

Each year, one of the highlights of Florida Jets is the half-time air show, which this

time took place on Saturday at noon. The show began with Jack Diaz's beautiful F-100D. Jack put his plane through its paces for the crowd. The next performance was done by Buzz Lightyear with Andy Kane behind the transmitter. Buzz gave the crowd a show with a



A BVM Ultra Bandit powered by an EVO 160 takes off with Rob Lynch at the sticks. Rob is well known as one of the world's finest jet pilots.



Ryan Haldenwanger's 1/4.3 scale, 103-inch Me 262, is built from a Grummania kit, uses only one turbine for power and weighs 43 lb. It won the Runner-up Best Military Jet award compliments of Spektrum Radio.

smoke system coming out of his Futura space ship. Then it was time for Raul Lozano to show off his flying skills with his BVM Ultra Bandit. Raul put on a really impressive performance with high-speed rolling passes just a few feet above the runway.

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This 1/6 scale Skymaster F-16—powered by a Jet Central Rhino and piloted by Rafael Herrera, one of the several pilots who came up from Mexico—sets up for landing.

Some other half-time show highlights were the demonstrations of the different models by the vendors of BVM (Bob Voilett Models) and Shulman Aviation. David Shulman flew his new Pirrotti Tuono and showcased its flying capabilities and mock afterburner with LED lights in the exhaust pipe for a more scale appearance. After Boli Muentes's performance with his Tucano, it was time to get a gaggle of aircraft up at one time. This included nine aircraft from sport jets to warbirds. The pilot's spotters were having a good time keeping track of all these planes.

The last performance of the show that everyone was waiting to see was Craig Gottschang's beautiful A-10. The very scale appearance of this model and Craig's matching scale flying abilities were a real crowd pleaser. Craig was an actual A-10 pilot, so you can imagine how real this plane looks in the air. On completion of the show's flying portion, host Frank Tiano had the pilots' line up their models out on the middle of the runway. This is a great opportunity for the spectators to come out to get close to the models for photos and speak to the pilots. If you got hungry during all this action, there were food vendors open all day waiting to serve you. There were also vendors selling merchandise that ranged from accessories to models.

CONCLUSION

Paradise Field appeared to be very flat, but not perfect, and I imagine it can only get better with future care. At event time, it was six



30 FLY RC MAGAZINE

David Payne (right) waits to fly this Skymaster BAe Hawk at one of the starting boxes. David is a Horizon Hobby project manager and is partially responsible for the Hahu 32 that everyone loved (but couldn't get yet).



Powered by a P-100, this intriguing 48-inch span A-4 was fielded by Tam Jets, out of California. Hmmm, perhaps it's a good model for electric conversion?



Harold Little's F-86 is painted in the Skyblazer's scheme. This is an electric-powered ARF from BVM, and that paint scheme comes right out of the box.

months old and should be in perfect shape by Florida Jets 2012. I did overhear two opposing viewpoints: one is that the grass is not flat enough for older, more rigid type, landing

gears. The bouncing during takeoff caused a few landing gear struts or mounting plates to fracture. Two, it was a "life saver" to many. There were several flights where the gear would not come down

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If you enjoy jet aircraft of any type, this is one event you don't want to miss. The organizers of Florida Jets would like to thank the many sponsors who helped to make the event possible and urges you to support them whenever and wherever possible.

More information can be found at Frank's website, www.Franktiano.com.

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Pilot Woody "Reaches for the sky" with the help of Andy Kane in this Tomahawk Futura powered by a Mammoth Jet Central. Andy won the Best Sport Jet Runner-up.