

F5J Report: David Leitch.

Armidale F5J is over for another year. Despite expectations for more wind conditions were basically unchanged from yesterday and the promised thunder storm didn't develop beyond a black cloud. We flew 6 rounds today for 12 in total

Jim Houdalakis won from Chris Graham and Col Woodward.
Lowest successful launch was David Vels who accidentally switched off at 17 metres and then flew beautifully to follow a thermal back. Ross Ginder managed a 35 metre start height with confidence.

This was a contest where mistakes killed you.
Jim didn't start under 100 metres as far as I recall on any flight and made time on all but one occasion. Several other pilots eg Alan Mayhew, Ross Ginder, Marcus Stent, David Pratley even Chris Graham to an extent on day 2 would have a series of successful low launches earning 1000 but would occasionally not get away and end with a zero or very low score."

The place getters:

1. Jim Houdalakis
2. Chris Graham
3. Colin Woodward

The Armidale F5J event was the last of 4 rounds in the Australian F5J team selection for the FAI F5J World Championships in Slovakia in August.



Australian Open Thermal Report: Jim Houdalakis

Armidale open thermal, with combined winch and electric launch motor gliders.

The hot, sunny and light conditions continued after the f5j, for this event.

Most of the f5j fliers stayed on, but for some, the heat after 2 days was enough and went home early.

Out of the 25 that flew, there were only about 8 flyers that decided to winch, a far cry from the previous years 28 when it was winch only.

First day and there was a prevailing light breeze from the west, with basically big lift and occasionally big sink.

Setup into wind, I decided to winch for the open, and flew my 1850g Perfection so I could get good launch height.

The motor gliders had motor cut outs at 200m, but could fly quite a bit lighter than me. I was out launching most of the electrics, but some were making the most of the fact you could zoom past 200m (I was told of one motor glider log of 236m) so I was probably matching them with the winch. I don't think a lot of the other winch launchers were launching as well as me or the motor gliders, so they suffered somewhat.

We managed 6 rounds in quite hot conditions making for an exhausting first day.

Day 2 and conditions started even lighter, and with hesitation on which way to point the winches, took a while to get started. Looking at the forecast and at the request of the CD, we turned the flight line around which seemed correct initially, with a light breeze into wind at the time.

Of course once we set up the wind swung around, and was downwind for the rest of the day. I heard a comment that I was being handicapped, since I was leading from the previous day. I took this as a challenge. The rest of the guys winching weren't happy launching downwind against motor gliders which would easily do 200 metres plus.

Two competitors switched to motor gliders, and the rest had had enough, packed up, and went home. This left me as the sole pilot winching, and launching downwind, in a sea of motor gliders, at least I wouldn't have any line crosses.

I flew my super light Perfection at 1700g, but even trying to swing around, somewhat into wind on launch, it was a struggle to get anywhere near the motor gliders on launch height. However the conditions were so light and thermally, finding lift wasn't very hard, I would've struggled, I think, if it was hang time conditions.

Some said I had an advantage with being able to nose into the landing spot, (ie no motor to damage) which was maybe true, however I was the only pilot to achieve all my flight times, so at the end of the day, it was still a thermal competition.

Anyway we managed to get through 3 rounds, before lunch, presentations, and a long trip home. I heard from the motor glider flyers, a lot of whom hadn't flown open thermal rules before, that they found it much less stressful rule-wise, especially since the launches and landings we staggered with the 12 minute working time, and you could go over your flight time without penalty as opposed to f5j, and of course, launching to 200 metres, which is normally a last resort in f5j.

A big thanks to Hutton Oddy, for cd-ing, and Kevin Smeaton for score-keeping and everyone else who helped organise, feed and generally help out at another great Armidale Sailplane Expo."

The place getters:

1. Jim Houdalakis
2. Alan Mayhew
3. David Pratley

This was also round 2 in the National Open Thermal AusTour list of events.

