

# F2A World Cup in St Louis USA

In 2024 GBR did not send an F2A team to Muncie for the World Championships. In the previous 2 decades the GBR F2A team won successive gold team medals at both FAI European and World Championships. Our team record is 19 gold's in succession, and I personally have been in 10 of those gold medal winning teams. This has been interspersed and added to by individual podium positions from first to third. Our last team success was a silver team medal at the 2023 European Championships held in Poland. Like many countries we now struggle to find pilots who are physically capable of flying an F2A model in the pylon at a speed in excess of 300 kph. We are all getting older and unfortunately rigor mortis is taking over. At the beginning of 2024 the 3 regular F2A pilots in the UK who scored silver at the 2023 Euros discussed whether we were all willing to travel to Muncie for the 2024 World Championships. We recognised that the entry would be low in numbers due primarily to the cost of getting there and staying for 10 days plus.

Two of us had been to the US during the year and found it to be extremely expensive, so cost was a consideration despite being promised some help from our National aero club. Two of us had already done Muncie in 2004 so we didn't need to obtain that badge again. One of us had some health concerns and needed to be close to the UK health system. A last factor was the quality of the flyers that were going. I had taken a straw poll in Poland to ascertain who was not likely to go. This included the European team champions Hungary and the European Individual Champion. If we had travelled to Muncie we would have had a good chance of a team medal but I expressed concern that the value of the competition would be diminished. If many of the favourite title contenders are not attending then doesn't that lessen the quality of the whole competition?

The 3 pilots of the GBR F2A team therefore decided in March 2024 not to travel to Muncie in August.

What was left for us to partake of in 2024? The second level of FAI competition is the World Cup League which I had previously won in 2016. To score in the World Cup and have a chance of winning an FAI medal one needs 3 results from 3 different countries. But as each country also may host a World Cup on behalf of another country it might be that you only have to visit 2 countries to get your 3 scores.. I love the competitions that are held in Landres each July. First the Dutch GP followed by the French GP. This is great because it gives you two results for travelling to one venue. The site facilities are excellent. It's easy to find quality accommodation and French food is great. During the first competition (Dutch GP) my speeds in the first and



**Line up of airplanes at the circles at Buder Park St Louis.**

second round improved and in the 3rd round I scored 302.1 kph sufficient to win the Dutch GP. At this point I thought that engine should rest before the French GP when I expected it to perform well again. I flew another motor in the 4th round which made 297 kph. In the first round of the French GP I flew the same set that managed 302.1 kph but despite a good setting the motor had no rpm and only made 295.8 kph. This is the nature of F2A seemingly great motors just suddenly do not perform any more and need rebuilding (usually a new piston). My second string set up again did 297.5 kph best in the 3rd round which was fast enough to win.

To be in the running for World Cup League medals you need 3 flights over 300 kph. I now only had a single league flight over 300 kph and since I was not going to Muncie I had no chance of securing a 3rd flight to qualify in the league. Not going to Muncie was probably a blessing in disguise as the weather there is extremely difficult to navigate and it's quite an altitude making the RAD (Relative Air Density) quite low and not conducive to fast flights on straight fuel.



**Dave Rigotti's F2A trainer available as a kit from Matthieu Perret at CMBL.**



**Winners of the US F2A World Cup - Alex Valishev 1st, Bill Hughes 2nd and Paul Eisner 3rd. Also pictured 2 time World Champion Carl Dodge celebrating his 85th birthday.**

Peter Halman supplied a new piston for the motor that won the Dutch GP and I test flew this motor at Buckminster before the UK Nationals where it did 298.9 kph in atrocious windy conditions. At the UK national Championships in Manchester I manage 301.3 kph and 299.8 kph where the weather was a bit windy and the RAD average for Barton. This can be a very fast site when the tide turns and the RAD can reach over 100 as its only 22 m above sea level.