

Pattern is a Radio Control activity using aircraft primarily designed for precision aerobatic manoeuvring - and often likened to the Formula 1 category of the hobby.

What types of manoeuvres are involved in Pattern?

Generally, manoeuvres follow prescribed "schedules" of "classes" which are voted on and incorporated in the APA and FAI handbooks with their rules cycles. Many of the manoeuvres emulate full-scale aerobatic competition, and some are specific to the event.

***What are the "classes" in Pattern?**

At the present time, there are 4 classes, designed with increasing complexity and difficulty of manoeuvres:

- Sportsman - where we all start;
- Advanced;
- Expert; and
- FAI-F3A -the class used in the international World Aerobatic Championships.

***How are Pattern airplanes different?**

Generally, pattern designs are extremely "stable", meaning that they are built with inherent ability to "stay where put", meaning that these airplanes are INHERENTLY designed to have little or no self-induced corrections of attitude.

***How are Pattern Competition events run?**

Usually, all four classes will be flown, many times on two flight lines in front of two sets of judges. Scores are given by each judge for each manoeuvre, based on a 10 – 0 scale, with difficulty weights built into the scoring system. All manoeuvres are performed within an aerobatic box, defined as 60 degrees left and right of the pilot's position, and 60 degrees elevation. Flight line average distance is recommended to be 150 - 175 metres out.

***How is the winner of an event determined?**

Each class usually awards plaques or prizes for each of the first three places, depending on turnout, funds, etc. The winner of each place is determined by scores within each round, with the "best" or highest scoring pilot within a class being the "winner" of that round. All other pilots within the same class have their scores comparatively ranked against this "best" pilot of the round using a system called "normalizing".

***Are there specialised equipment needs for Pattern?**

Each increasing degree of difficulty class places greater competitive demands on pilot skills, equipment reliability, and capability of designs. Generally, practically ANY kind of reasonably-capable aerobatic design will work well in Sportsman, while in the FAI and Expert classes, designs must be pretty specialized and refined to be capable of the complex figures.

What organization "governs" Pattern?

What is pattern?

Last Updated Sunday, 05 October 2008 19:49

In Australia, the Australian Pattern Association - APA defines competitive requirements, judging criteria, and contest administration for events. Other countries have similar governing bodies, but the international class, FAI, is governed by the participating countries who are members of the CIAM or Federation Aeronautique Internationale. At a state level, the Victorian Pattern Association is in charge of the local scene and of promoting local contests and events.

***Is there a "Special Interest Group - SIG" for pattern?**

The APA is the designated and recognised SIG for Australia. The MAAA has delegated responsibility for the coordination of national events, rules changes, and contest organizing/planning to this SIG.

***How do I get started in Pattern?**

In Victoria you are very lucky to be part of one of the most active Associations in Pattern. The VPA has the highest percentage of aerobatic flyers in Australia. To get started, get in touch with any of the pattern flyers that you see at your local field on any given Sunday and get some direction from them. They will be more than happy to point you in the right direction and give you sound advice. Determine what class you are in (normally in Australia, everybody has to start in Sportsman). Learn your schedule and practice the manoeuvres and pay attention to all the judging criteria to try and fly the perfect "10" on every manoeuvre in your sequence. Then practice. and practice. And continue practicing. Then go to a contest that is listed on this site or in the MAAA, VMAA, or APA newsletter/website. Make contact with the club pattern pilots and tag along with the great bunch of highly skilled radio control pilots.... and enjoy the competitive camaraderie that results.

Don't be dazzled by the aircraft that you see at competitions. There are many highly suitable and very reasonably priced aeroplanes that can take you right through to the top categories. Before making a decision, get advice from someone that is already actively participating in the sport. As mentioned above, they will give you very good advice and direction.

Come along and enjoy the fun!

Adapted by Fernando Monge from an article by Bob Pastorello