

Millennium Cup-Round 1.
Werrington Park - 13 January 2002.

Since the Millennium Cup was introduced in 2000 there certainly seems to have been an increase in support for two metre competition in NSW. Yet it is not the quest for the Cup itself that accounts for this, as only a few compete in enough of the events in the series to have a chance of winning it. Perhaps it is just that the introduction of the Millennium Cup series has bought two metre flying to the attention of more people, and they have discovered that two metre competition is simple, cheap, and fun, and yet it provides a challenge to both the beginner and the expert.

This year twenty five pilots competed in the first round at Werrington Park. They included several newcomers, three juniors and one female pilot. We could do with a few more in each of these categories, but at least the trend is in the right direction.



Pilots briefing at the 1st round of the Millenium Cup for 2002. Robbe flying wing at bottom right of the picture, belongs to our only female competitor, Carolyn Michael.

Werrington turned on good weather, as usual, though, mercifully, it was not as hot as it sometimes can be. The wind performed its usual Werrington trick of blowing, at some time during the day, from every point of the compass and, no matter which way you set up the launch line, half the launches were down wind.

There were some incredible thermals at times, and yet it was not always easy to make the six minute target time. In fact high scores were rare, and the field was much more spread out than is usual.

I watched Matthew Brand launch downwind, with insufficient line tension, and barely avoid sinking to the ground while still on the line. After release he lost most of the very little height he had before entering a thermal at very low altitude, and climbing out to eye straining height in a couple of minutes.



A selection of the models competing. Most are rudder/elevator control.

In one round I pulled out of a thermal only 90 seconds into the flight, and had to work hard to get down in time. Yet on two other occasions I would have been down in not much more than 60 seconds if I had not found some scratchy lift down low, and hung on for an extra minute or so.

Jack Murphy reported having done five turns in a thermal, then spinning down for the next 90 seconds.

So, while the weather was good, it was not easy, and those who made good scores earned them.

The greatest problem experienced by many competitors was low pop-offs. In some cases this was due to new models that were not yet completely sorted out, but often it was just lack of practice in down and cross wind launching. You don't have to practice in down and cross winds if you don't find it fun but, if you do master the technique, the effort will pay off handsomely in contest flying.

For the first time in the Millennium Cup one of the models competing was a flying wing or, to be more precise, a tailless glider. It had a reasonable gliding performance, and was certainly capable of soaring, but it was not able to launch high enough to be competitive. When it comes to launch height, two metre competition is no different from the more advanced classes. You may get away with the odd low launch but, to score well consistently, you must launch high consistently.

Over the years there have been many reports in the modelling press of tailless gliders that launch well, so we may yet see a competitive tailless glider, in two metre events.



Always a popular venue, is the bar-b-que area.

Progress was slower than usual. The large number of pop-offs, and the extra time need, because of the cross winds, to retrieve the parachute, did not help. At the end of round four, everyone said Klaus's score couldn't be beaten. With the strong gusty winds, he had two pop offs, and had to fly out his second launch at about 20 feet height. Not only did his score get beaten, but his placing dropped two spots as well. Several models had been damaged on landing and launching, due to the strong wind gusts, so it was decided to end the contest after five rounds instead of the usual six.

The results were:

1st	Matthew Brand	1600
2nd	Tom Prosser	1539
3rd	Klaus Weiss	1476

Matthew was also the best junior. It was his second win in a row, as he won the last round of the Millennium Cup in 2001.

The difficult conditions resulted in a wide spread of scores, so the top three have a good start in this years Cup. Only the top five scored more than 80% of the winners score, so the rest of us have a lot of catching up to do.