

Millennium Cup Round - 4. Cowra - 7/8 September, 2002.

In just a couple of years the Millennium Cup series of two metre events, has grown from four rounds to seven, and from being held predominantly in and around Sydney, to covering a large part of New South Wales.

This was the first time a round has been held in Cowra.

With most of the entrants expected to come from Sydney, a good four hours or more drive away, the organisers came up with the innovative idea of starting the event on Saturday afternoon, and finishing at lunch time on Sunday, instead of the usual all day Sunday. Those coming from a long way away would need to stay in Cowra on Saturday night either way, but this way they could get home on Sunday at a reasonable hour.

Twelve pilots competed, coming from Sydney, the Blue Mountains, the Illawarra, and Canberra, with just one local. A few more members of the local club came along to help and observe. Although the entry was small, compared with the usual of around 25, it was encouraging for a new venue a long way from the most active soaring regions.

There were thunderstorms on Friday evening, and some rain on Saturday night, but both days were

fine, with blue skies and just a few cumulus clouds to help mark the thermals. The wind was a little stronger than would be considered ideal, but it was not a serious problem, and certainly made hand towing easy.

The first couple of rounds were uneventful, with mostly short flights, little lift being in evidence.

Laurie Bestel made the best flight of round one, only to damage his model on landing.

From round three onwards there was more lift, some of it strong, and many pilots achieved the six minute target. Laurie had managed to repair his glider in time for round five, but it was not to be his day. I think I may have jinxed him. I was watching his flight, and thinking that the model was flying better than before it was damaged, when it suddenly spiraled in, probably as a result of a failure somewhere in the control system.

Six rounds were completed comfortably on Saturday and, at the end of the first day Guy Brand was in the lead, with Ian Roach and Matt Greenfield close behind.

Visitors and local members gathered at the Cowra Bowling Club on Saturday evening for a meal. When I arrived I was shocked to learn that Barry Murphy, founder of the Millennium Cup series, had suffered a heart attack during the drive back to town from the flying field. He had been taken to Cowra hospital and would be transferred to Orange later that night. The latest report I have, at the time of writing, is that he is doing well, and should be home in a few days.

Conditions on Sunday were similar to the previous day. Matt Greenfield and Basil Healy proceeded to make a series of excellent flights and, within two rounds, were in first and second places. By the final round, there were still at least five competitors with a chance of winning.

The final scores, based on the best ten of twelve rounds, were:

1st Guy Brand 2966

2nd Basil Healy 2926

3rd Matthew Brand 2921

Just 60 points in nearly 3000 separated the top five.

Our thanks go to John Quigley, who did an excellent job as CD, and to the Cowra Club members, who provided lunch on both days, and gave up their weekend's flying to allow the event to be run.

Hopefully we will be back again next year.

Ian Roach.

