



ACES Aircombat Ground Support Manual

Basic

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About the ACES Ground Support manuals

The ACES Ground Support Manual series of documents is written to make it easier for model-aviators to start with Aircombat, as a part of the contact-network ACES.

The Ground Support Manual series consist of three manuals:

- Introduction
- Basic
- Advanced

The Introduction manual is supposed to introduce you into the world of Aircombat and ACES, and the general ideas behind it all.

The Basic manual (this one) is supposed to learn you how to arrange a smaller contest, for the first time.

The Advanced manual is supposed to learn you how to arrange a somewhat bigger contest, and how to put the contests into a cup, and some other a little bit more "advanced" doings.

"Certainly there were some 'mad' fighter pilots."

Flight-Lieutenant Douglas "Duke" Warren

Introduction

This paper will explain how to arrange your own Aircombat-contest, in an explanatory and simple way. It is not hard to arrange an Aircombat-contest. With a few preparations, it is actually quite simple.

Contests

The most exciting thing about aircombat is participating in contests. Most people fear the word: CONTEST! It's nothing to fear, really. At an aircombat-contest, fighter-pilots meet, talk, fly and have fun. That's it.

If you know how to control your fighter, I think you should participate in a contest. If you are lucky, there is a contest nearby that you can attend to. Then you can just go there with your fighter(s), ask the "veterans" what you are supposed to do, and then fly. It's easy really.

If there are no contests nearby, I think you should arrange your own. Of course, this means that you must be at least two fighter-pilots that can participate. Also, you need at least two people to take time, while you fly. But that's all!

"I just couldn't forget the way the man had flown, dreaming up tactics as he went along, playing it by ear, only to have his luck run out a little too soon."

1st Lieutenant Henry C. Woodrum

Preparations

There are a few things you should/must do before a contest. I will list most of the things you should prepare below. Please note that you don't have to prepare all the things I list, you can skip the ones marked with [optional].

Pilots

To arrange a contest, there must be at least two pilots ready to participate in the contest. If this is the first contest you arrange, I advise you to have at least one other pilot that you know will participate in your contest. With this I mean that this pilot REALLY will participate (it could be a friend of yours, or something)!

Be prepared that there will be pilots who will say they will come to the contest, that will not show up. This is common practice - don't know why - but be prepared anyhow.

The field

The airstrip you intend to use as "contest-site", should be rather flat, not having too much trees or other stuff around. At the airstrip, you should have some means to mark up the safetyline, behind which it is forbidden to fly. This is very important, as it is a safety-matter! We usually try to have the wind coming in at 45 degrees of angle to the safetyline, in either direction. In this way, you can take off heading against the wind, and you can also land almost against the wind.

If you instead choose to have the wind coming in along the safetyline, you have to take off in parallel with the safetyline, to take off against the wind. Then it is easy to get behind the line by mistake. Also, it is easy to have your streamer blown by the wind into an opponents propeller with this wind-direction. By having the wind coming in 90 degrees of angle to the safetyline, you can take off straight out from the safetyline, but at the same time you must land in cross-winds. Never ever try to have the wind coming in from behind the safetyline! Trying to take off with the wind at your back is not a good idea...

Equipment

To arrange a contest, some equipment is needed. At least you need the following:

- Paper to note the different pilots/frequencies on. This paper is used to divide into fights (if more than 6 pilots), and to avoid frequency collisions. This paper is used by you, when preparing for the contest.
- Paper and pen to note the different pilot's scores, during the fights. Depending on how many pilots attend the contest, 2-6 paper and pens are needed. These are used by the pilot-judges.
- Stopwatches to measure the flight-time of the different pilots. Depending on how many pilots attend the contest, 2-6 stopwatches are needed. These are used by the pilot-judges.
- Streamer, to attach to the fighters. The number of needed streamers depend on how many pilots attend the contest. As a rule of thumb, you should have 2-3 times the number of attending pilots of streamers ready. So, to find out how many streamers you need, simply multiply the expected number of contestants with 3.
- Some means to markup a 12 meter line, to measure the streamers before (and after) fights.
- Some means to markup the safetyline. You could simply put two things as safetyline-markers (for instance two stones, etc).

To make it a little more professional, you need the following:

- Use a ready-made scoreboard to note every pilot's score. You find an example scoreboard in the appendix of this manual.
- Use a ready made paper to fill in what fight a pilot is flying, what frequency he should use and what judge he should have. You find an example flight-list in the appendix of this manual.
- Use a ready made list to write the final score down. You find an example result-list in the appendix of this manual.
- Black-pen, paint, or whatever equipment to mark the last part of the streamer-end. This is used to easily see if a streamer has been cut during the fight.
- A long string (plastic) to mark up the safetyline.
- A whistle or other audio equipment, to signal the fights.
- Road-signs telling the way to the contest.

Judges

At a contest, you will need judges. The number of judges needed depends on how many pilots attend to your contest.

First of all you need a main judge. The main judge is the one who keep record of what part of the fight is going on. He is to signal the start of the preparation time, and all other parts of the fight/contest, according to rules. The main judge should sit or stand some 5-20 meters behind the safetyline and the pilots.

To make a contest safe, the main judge is the one who should give permission for a pilot to run out into the field to fetch his landed model, during fight (this is because of safety-precautions - the main judge probably has a better overview than the competing pilot, to see another model landing from somewhere, etc).

For every flying pilot, there should be one pilot-judge, to measure flight-time, note cuts/collisions, etc. At a small contest, with seven pilots or less, you need extra judges to do this work. If there are eight or more participating pilots, you have to divide the rounds into two or more fights each, and then you can have the not presently flying pilots, to judge the others. In this way you save people needed as judges, as you can use the competing pilots. Also, if not having enough judges, the main judge could also act as a pilots judge of one of the pilots. Using the pilots as pilot-judges is actually a good practice. The competing pilots knows the rules, probably better than most pilot-judges you will find.

The pilot-judge should stand close to the pilot he is judging, to hear and see everything that happens during the fight. Also, the pilot-judge should not stand too far away from the safetyline, to be able to clearly see if the model he is judging is crossing the safetyline.

A pilot judge should fetch his pilot's scoreboard before the flight begins, and return it after the flight ends.

Rules

As the contest-arranger, you must know about the rules. You don't have to know them by heart, but you should have read through the rules a few times. Be sure to know the basics of the rules, as you may expect to get questions on the rules at the contest!

You should also decide what rules to use at the contest. Rules might include a lot of stuff, that you think is unnecessary at this your first contest. This might be model measurement -rules, or other stuff that you don't want to use at your contest. Remember: Keep it as simple as possible! Don't waste several hours on checking in models and pilots. This might scare off pilots, and without pilots - no contest.

Remember, the main thing is to let everyone have a good time - both the competing pilots and the audience!

The audience

If you think that there will be audience at your contest, you should provide with appropriate safety-precautions. It is of great importance that no-one in the audience gets hurt at your event! To achieve this you could simply make sure the audience is kept at a safe distance behind the safetyline. You could have a string or rope to mark where the audience should be standing, or even better, you could have a safetynet.

Public Relations (PR)

If you want your contest to be more known, you should contact media and tell them of the event. This is of course optional.

Media is divided into two sorts when it comes to an Aircombat-event:

- Hobby-media
- Local media

Hobby-media should be notified a few months in advance of the event. Just contact them in some way (phone, letter, email) and explain that you will arrange an Aircombat-contest on the set date. Possibly you will also have to explain what Aircombat is all about.

Local media can be notified in the same way, or you could use a standard pressrelease to do the job. You find an example pressrelease in the appendix of this manual.

Please remember that if you promote the contest in local media, you should also be prepared of the following two things:

- You might get a lot of audience at the contest-site.
- You should be prepared to talk to the local newspaper/media on the contest-site, during the contest.

Please remember that the best way to promote Aircombat, is to always have full media-coverage of the contests!

"Natural born flyers... birds only!"

Captain William O'Brien

The contest-day

At the contest, take it easy, and make sure that everyone (pilots, helpers, judges and audience) is having a good time. At this point it helps a lot if you are well prepared, with enough streamers, readymade scoring-tables, already chosen judges, etc.

Early preparations

Before the contest can start, there are a few things you should do:

- Put up road-signs to show the way to the air-strip. This can be done late the night before the contest, so that the competing pilots - who might come early - also finds their way to the field.
- Mark up the safety-line. This should be done as soon as possible, for safety-reasons.
- Set up the 12m streamer-measure line. Put the streamers there, for the pilots to fetch.
- Set up the audience-rope, or whatever is used to keep the audience at a safe distance.

+ all other optional things you might have to do.

Briefings

Try to inform the pilots on everything they need to know to fly this kind of contest. The rules, the site, anything you think may matter (this is called pilot-briefing...!).

Also, inform the judges on what they have to do.

To make the audience feel more as a part of the game, you could have a short audience-briefing as well, just before the the contest start, or in the middle of the contest, to tell the audience what Aircombat is all about.

Running the contest

Then let the game begin! Probably you will only have one fight per round (meaning 7 or less pilots) at your first contest. This means that you won't have any problems making fights up - everyone flies against everyone in all the fights!

The main judge is the one who starts/stops fights. Just give him a "go", and then let him run the show.

Try to have a few minutes break between the fights, in addition to the preparation-time. At a first contest, a beginner-fighterpilot may need it to fix his plane, calm down nerves, etc. If anyone needs time to fix his model - give it to him. It's more fun, the more fighters you get into the air at the same time!

After the contest

When the last fight has been flown you should count the results of the day. Announce the winner. Have a prize-ceremony, of some sort. At least, every participant should know how many points he gathered.

A prize-ceremony is usually held this way:

- Read out the results aloud. If you have prizes to the pilots, then start with the winner, then number two, and so on.
- Then thank all the participating pilots, and the judges. Don't forget to thank any other helpers, like the local club, etc.
- And then the contest is over - not so difficult, right?

Then send in the results to the National Contact of ACES, if there is one in your country. Always remember to save all contest-papers for at least a year or two - you might need them later on, when pilots want to know what happened at the contest, or if adding the results to a cup.

Finally - go home and plan for the next contest - because this is fun, right??!!!!

Version

| | | | |
|-----|------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 0.1 | 1999-10-02 | Martin Elmberg | Initial version |
| 0.2 | 2000-01-20 | Martin Elmberg | Added templates |
| 1.0 | 2000-05-02 | Martin Elmberg | First release version |

Appendix

Press-release

Model aviation contest!

- Radiocontrolled aircombat at *<Place>*

Aircombat is a game of model aviation where radiocontrolled fighters combat each other. The game has a historical connection as the fighters are models of World War II fighter-planes.

We promise lots of action!!

Date: *<contestdate>*

Contest starts at: *<startingtime>*

Place: *<contest-site, short road-description>*

Contact on site: *<NC/GC name, or name of PR-responsible>*

Arranging party: ACES/*<nation>*

We welcome the press!

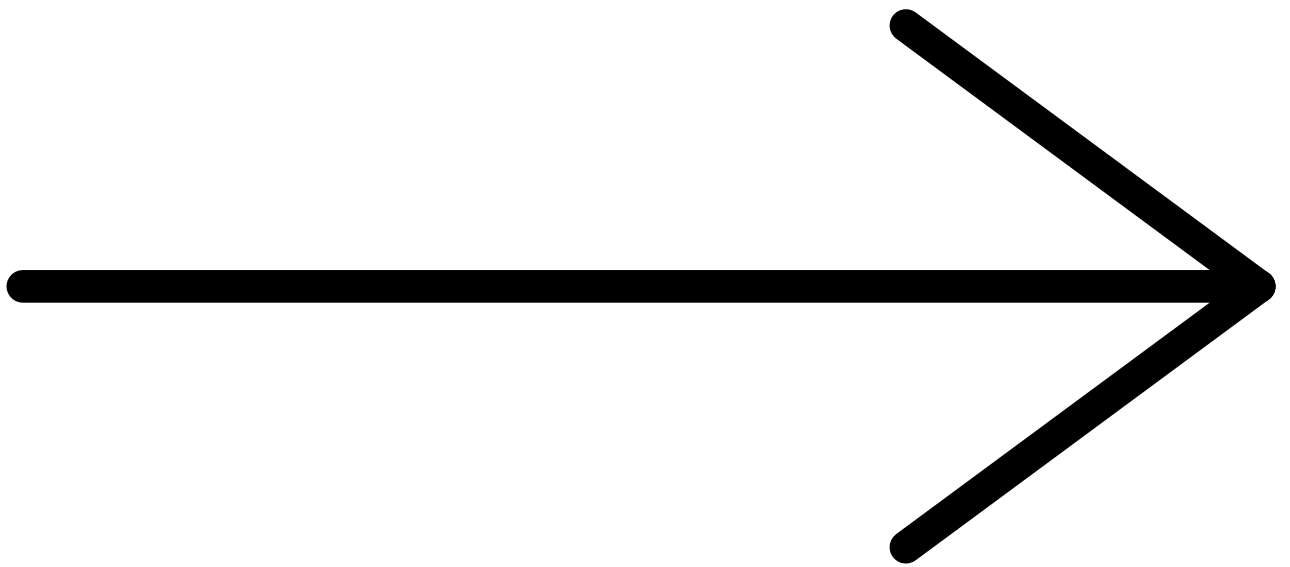
<name of PR-officer, or NC/ GC>

<name and adress to the NC of ACES/<nation>

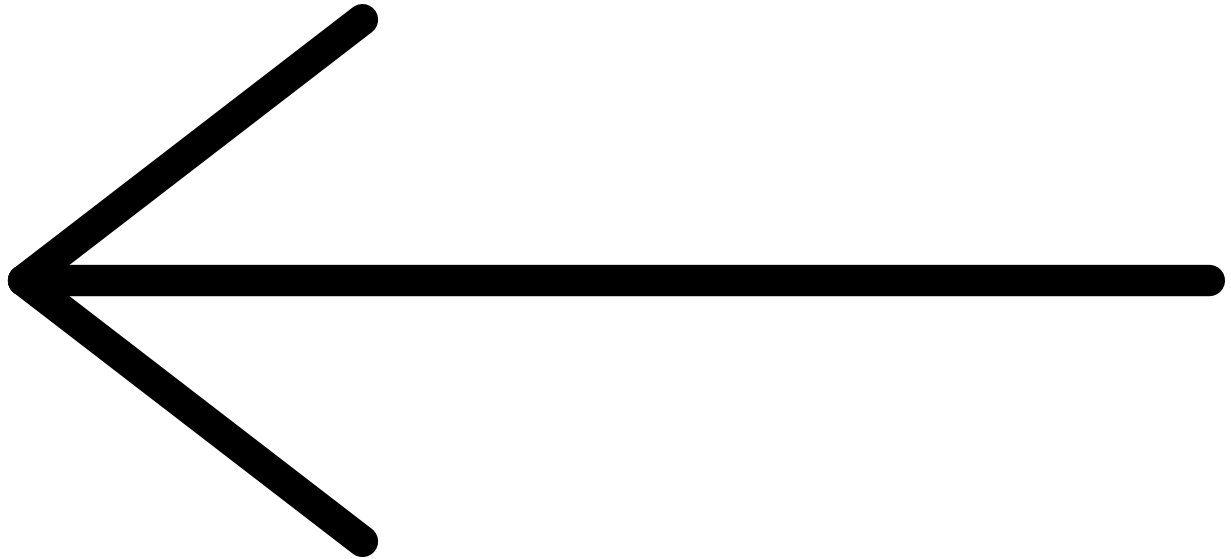
Radiocontrolled aircombat by now wide-spread over the world. The contest association ACES has national sections all across Europe, and has a sister-association in the RC Combat Ass. in the US of A.

Road-sign

Aircombat



Aircombat



Flight-list

| Round nbr: | Flight nbr: | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Pilot nbr/name | Pilot frequency to use | Pilot judge nbr/name | |
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| Round nbr: | Flight nbr: | | |
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| Pilot nbr/name | Pilot frequency to use | Pilot judge nbr/name | |
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| Round nbr: | Flight nbr: | | |
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| Pilot nbr/name | Pilot frequency to use | Pilot judge nbr/name | |
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Result-list

[illegible]