

In Memoriam - Fred Weaver

USA F5J has lost a great friend and pilot **Fred Weaver**. Fred passed away Saturday night (Jan 9) after battling a long illness. He has many many friends in the U.S. who are mourning his passing. Fred lived in rural northern California east of Sacramento and absolutely loved competing in F5J. I have many fond memories of F5J practice sessions and contests with Fred as part of our "NorCal F5J" group. Among his many admirable traits Fred had a great sense of humor that sometimes involved politics. He would often send hilarious emails that would brighten my day.



Fred was heavy into soaring competition back in the heyday of thermal duration (TD) contesting. He had especially fond memories of the "North/South" TD competition that pitted Northern Calif against Southern Calif. In 2019 Fred shared this pic that he said was from around 1982 at the "North/South Bowl."



Fred Weaver - middle guy in front row

So it was Fred's idea to try and rekindle the camaraderie and feeling of that, but this time with F5J. Thus was born Fred's *North/South F5J Challenge*. All through the summer of 2019 Fred mapped out what he wanted with his new team-oriented event. And Fred was really excited to hear that CVRC would let us host it in Visalia. Game on!

N/S #1 signups were good and the teams were even: 10 North and 10 South. As the contest progressed it was clear South was going to be tough to beat. After 8 rounds they were up by 300 pts, after 12 rounds they were up by 408 points. Then it was time for the last (13th) round. Here's **Bob McGowan** describing what happened:

[RCG post](#) by Bob McGowan

The Weav saved us!

What happened in that last round was the North's Fred Weaver flew out the full 10 minute slot while everyone else in the group landed at around 2 minutes. Wind was next to nothing and conditions had been excellent for the prior group. Everyone in the group launched low thinking they had a good read. Fred cut off at 30 meters, Ali at 33, and others just slightly above. When it wasn't working, Fred pushed out further and eventually hooked up but it was too late for anyone else to follow. This one dramatic flight group win by Fred catapulted the North forward by hundreds of points because Ali and Brad, key South front runners in this group, already had bad throw-outs. We, the North, were impossibly behind and it was only Fred's final round save that put us on top so it was decided that Fred would be the first holder of perpetual North/South Cup.

So Fred's gutsy miracle gave the first N/S F5J Challenge cup to the North, surprising everyone there. Here is a video starting as Fred conducts the team awards part. You can tell he was having fun.



Video: (click to play)

To say Fred was proud of his winning flight is an understatement--he was beaming all through the awards and picture-taking ceremony. And everyone could tell he was having a blast. That day will forever stick with me whenever I think of Fred.



Bob McGowan, Fred Weaver (center), John Armstrong

After that day Fred was only able to fly in one other F5J event: the June 2020 F5J at Visalia. After that our NorCal group didn't see much of Fred as his health continued to decline.

Fred, you will be missed but you will definitely not be forgotten. Thanks for being such a good friend to so many.

--Chris