



December 2021 Issue

Hi and welcome to the F5J USA Tour newsletter. For details and scores from past Tour events you can always find links from the [Tour Calendar](#) page. Good flying to you!

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2022 Tour events in the queue

[Tour Calendar](#)

Reminder that the F5J USA Tour season runs from Dec 1 through Nov 30.



Southwest Classic F5J, Feb 19-20, Maricopa AZ (Western region 2-day event). This contest normally is hosted by the home club Southwest Soaring Society (SWSS) but because Tour rules only allow a club to host 2 contests in a season, and because SWSS will be hosting their second contest (Team Selects) in late October this season, NorCal Electric Soaring ([NES](#)) stepped up to organize this one. So we have organizer **Chris Bajorek** from NES with co-CDs **Tim Johnson** and Chris Bajorek. Details coming in early January. This will be another great Classic. Clear your calendars for this one and make your reservation now.

The 2021 Top 10 Awards

The 2021 season was our biggest ever with more contests and more participating pilots than ever before (more on this in the following article). This means more top-flite competition than we have ever seen and a steeper climb to make the Top 10. We held our 5th annual Top 10 awards ceremony at the 2022 season opener at [Southwest Soaring Society's Silent Wings Ranch](#) in Maricopa AZ on Dec 4. Congrats to the Top 10:

Rank	Name	Percent	Total (best 4)
1	McCARTHY, Jim	100.00	4124.70
2	KHANI, Ali	99.83	4117.50
3	ARMSTRONG, John	99.70	4112.20
4	KEER, Lenny	99.55	4106.00
5	MILLER, Skip	99.49	4103.60
6	BARRIE, Darwin	99.39	4099.70
7	WEST, Randy	98.78	4074.20
8	BAGGS, Brady	98.59	4066.50
9	WILLCOX, Steve Jr	98.48	4061.80
10	WILLCOX, Steve	98.43	4059.90



2021 Awards ceremony at F5J in the Desert, Maricopa AZ, Dec 4 2021 – Top L to R: #1 Jim McCarthy, #2 Ali Khani, #3 John Armstrong, #4 Lenny Keer, #5 Skip Miller – Bottom L to R: #6 Darwin Barrie, #7 Randy West, #8 Brady Baggs, #9 Steve Willcox Jr, #10 Steve Willcox – Photo credits: Randy West

2021 Top 10 Awards Video (click to view):



Celebrating 5 years of the F5J USA Tour



First, a mini history of USA F5J. Pre-FAI F5J contests in Europe started in 2008-2009 while early ALES began in the US around 2010. Back when the F5J USA Tour was started in late 2016 only a few clubs had been running F5J contests in the US. Early "F5J" (actually LMR electric) events were run by the Albuquerque Soaring Association in NM, then **Lee Wolfe** and the East Valley Electric Flyers in AZ did their first F5J in Oct 2014, followed by a few years of small F5J contests in Northern California starting in 2015.

While ALES still was popular in the US back in 2016 anyone who was watching European soaring was aware that F5J had big potential that could eventually take root in the US. It needed a kick-start. Enter the F5J USA Tour and its Advisory Group members who rolled up their shirt sleeves and laid out a national contest framework and promotional campaign. So how much has the Tour grown since our humble beginnings 5 years ago? So glad you asked! 😊

The number of contests has steadily grown over the last 5 years (except for 2020 covid effects) to the point where the contest schedule is getting full in the west with the east

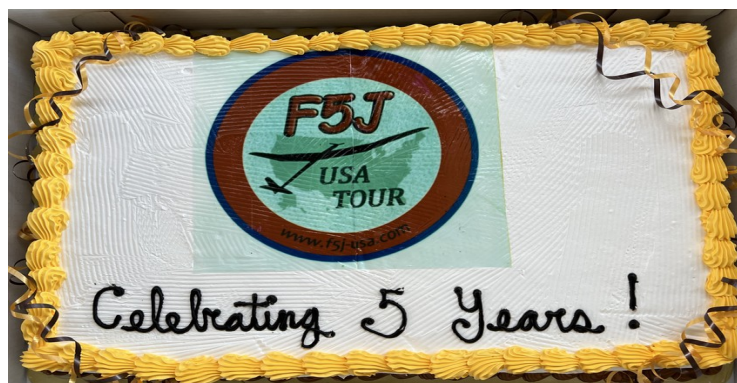
rapidly catching up.

Season	No. of Tour contests
2017	13
2018	15
2019	16
2020	13 (covid year)
2021	19
2022	21 (as of Dec 14 2021)

Now on to how pilot growth has fared. If you tally up the pilot list numbers across all the contests each season here is what you will see:

Season	No. of Contest-Pilots
2017	183
2018	306
2019	337
2020	292 (covid year)
2021	510

Looking at the pilot increase from 2019 to 2021 even with the hit we took in 2020 the annual effective increase works out to 25% a year. Yes the Tour is still growing.



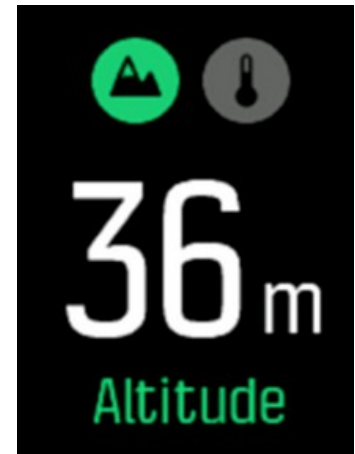
5 year anniversary cake at the 2021 Top 10 Awards ceremony in Maricopa AZ, Dec 4 2021

It's hard to not be impressed with how much excitement F5J continues to generate in the US. New clubs and pilots are jumping in, new plane innovations continue to roll out, contests get easier to run with now mature equipment and contest automation

software (thank you [GliderScore](#)), and most importantly the USA F5J community continues to be the absolute best group of people you could ever wish to fly and associate with. Let's keep it going!

Reminder: Tour rule deviation on Altimeter Hardware

At the recent 2022 season opener in Arizona a question came up about an interpretation of the rule governing the use of altimeters in F5J USA Tour events. The Tour allows altimeter hardware in planes because it is invaluable in practice sessions but reporting of altimeter data during a Tour event is prohibited. The Tour's [Contest Rules page](#) under section 1A. FAI Rules Deviations rule (b) says:



*(b) **Altimeter hardware is allowed** – Installation of altimeter hardware that enables reporting of a plane’s altitude is allowed but active reporting of altitude data must be disabled during Tour events.*

To clarify: “active reporting” means visual, audible, haptic (vibrating), or any other method of reporting of altitude. So in a Tour event no method of altitude reporting is allowed.

If it were not for the Tour rule deviation the FAI rule 5.5.11.1.3 d) would explicitly prohibit altimeter devices (hardware) with rule 5.5.2.2. a) further dictating that any plane found using altimeter devices will receive a zero flight for each flight where it was used and, if the CD determines the use was intentional, may disqualify the competitor. In a Tour event the CD has these same enforcement options regarding any use of active reporting of altitude.

F5J USA TOUR 

2022 Calendar Update



As of the publishing of this issue the [Tour calendar](#) has grown to 9 WEST events, 2 CENTRAL, and 10 EAST events. That's a total of 21 so far, the most we have ever had. While the Tour event application period remains open through August 15 we consider the calendar already packed with enough events to keep us all very busy.

2022 event highlights

2022 NATS F5J in Muncie IN – The date is not firmed up yet but this 2-day event will be sometime during the 3rd week in July. Last year this was our biggest contest with 65 pilots. This season we expect even more to attend given the Tour's season scoring that puts a bonus points premium on bigger contests. We also expect that because this is a Team Select year more will be seeking “big contest” experience before the TS event.

F5J Team Selects at Silent Wings Ranch in Maricopa AZ, Oct 28-30 – Barring any further scheduling “interruptions” this 3-day Tour event will ultimately decide who goes to the F5J World Championships in Bulgaria in 2023. The TS event may still seem like a long way off but we have a feeling this season is going to zip by fast with all the events keeping us super busy.

2021 Tour Financial Information

Following the end of each season we publish a financial statement (our ledger) that shows the Tour's sources and uses of funds. You can find our 2021 season ledger at the bottom of our [Financial Declaration page](#).



A brief summary: the Tour started the 2021 season with a balance of \$1042 and ended the season with \$1971 so we continue to be in good shape. The only expenses we had were the Top 10 award plaques, shipping for 2 of them, and a \$105 donation to GliderScore.

The Tour's Advisory Group has agreed that starting with the 2022 season we will be raising the Tour event pilot fee from \$3 to \$4 per pilot and we will make an annual donation to the USA F5J World Championship Team fund. This will result in a smaller Tour funds balance at the end of each season from now on.

Clubs, please donate to GliderScore

For most of you who used [GliderScore](#) in your Tour events in 2021 it's time again to think about making a donation to **Gerry Carter** in Australia, the developer of GliderScore. Gerry works very hard to maintain and add features to GliderScore. Features like smartphone scoring continue to have a major positive impact by reducing the labor required to CD and score our events.



There is no charge to [download](#) and use GliderScore. The cost of maintaining the program is 100% dependent on donations so please send a donation soon.

Thanks Gerry for all your work and time spent, and thanks to those clubs that take a moment to recognize his efforts with a donation.

Building tip: Anchoring wires to the inside of the fuselage



The cleaner your plane wiring is the better chance for avoiding “rats nest”-induced wire-bending stress failures. If every time you slide in your lipo pack you have to move bundles of wires around that is definitely not good for long term reliability of wiring continuity and connections.

Minimizing wire bundles is taking the time to cut your fuselage wires to a length that leaves just enough “service loop” to be able to pull the modules out of the fuselage or servo wells for servicing. Some guys who have been building F5J planes for years are masters at clean installs. **Lenny Keer** is one such wiring master to take cues from. There are others.

Once you have shortened your wiring runs the finishing touch is to anchor your longer wire runs to the inside of the fuselage walls to avoid, for example, having to constantly rub your lipo pack against servo and power wires. This is where a cool idea from **Jim Monaco** comes in:

“Here is a little building tip. Use **Aqua-Seal waterproof tape** to hold servo wires against the fuse. I have used many different kinds of tape but the Nashua Aquaseal tape is by far the best. It has a very good adhesive – almost like a goop – but is also easily removable. The tape itself is like an electrical tape. Just use a tiny piece to tack wires where you want them and they stay put. One roll is more than a lifetime supply. It can be found at Home Depot ([link](#)) and Amazon ([link](#)).”



Thanks Jim! I just ordered a roll.

--Chris

2021 Season: Looking Back

The 2021 season started strong and continued to build all season, ending with a record number of contests and participating pilots. The season-closing East Coast Fall Festival in NC got a weather curveball thrown their way and had to reschedule but they still held the event. All in all a great season. Thanks to all the pilots and especially to the clubs who participated in our 2021 season. Here are picture and video highlights from some of the events.

F5J in the Desert in AZ - Dec 2020





Southwest Classic in AZ - Feb 2021



F5J in Visalia CA #1 - March



"It's all about the food!"

East Coast Spring Festival in NC- April





California versus AZ + Friends - Perris CA - April





BRASS F5J in VA - May



RISC Red Rooster F5J in RI - May



F5J in Visalia CA #2 - June





House Mountain F5J in TN - June





F5J in the Rockies in Denver - July



LISF F5J in NY - July



Buzz Averill Memorial F5J in NM - August





NATS F5J in Muncie IN - August





North/South F5J Challenge in Visalia - Sept



North team wins!

F5J at the Ranch in AZ - Oct



East Coast Fall F5J Festival in NC - November





Thanks again to all for a great season!

Have suggestions for the Tour?

Periodically we get feedback on ways to improve the Tour. When we do most of the time the Tour's Advisory Group discusses them and often decides to implement pilot-requested changes. In this way we consider every pilot on the Tour as an informal member of our team. In other words, changes we implement often come directly from you the pilots who fly in Tour events.

So if you have thoughts and ideas by all means pass them our way. Thanks.

About the Tour's Advisory Group

This group is responsible for managing the Tour and includes the following key supporters and pioneers of USA-based F5J: Lee Wolfe, Steve Neu, Lenny Keer, Larry Jolly, Jim Monaco, David Beach, and Chris Bajorek. Each advisor brings significant experience and energy to this group. If you have suggestions or feedback feel free to contact any of us directly, or you can send an email to Chris Bajorek [here](#).

