# Newsletter

## May 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!

### In this issue

Here's a listing of articles in this issue:



## 2021 Tour events in the queue

**Tour Calendar**

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

**RISC Red Rooster F5J, May 22-23, Richmond RI** (Eastern region 2-day event). Info here, pilots list here with CDs **Maarten Broess** and **David Beach**. This is the third Tour event for RISC. Their pilots list sits at 18 with guys coming from as far away as Arizona (**John Armstrong** and **Darwin Barrie** making the long trip). Should be a great event. Only question is: who will walk away with those coveted RISC award mugs? ☺


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**SKSS F5J, June 5-6, Newark DE** (Eastern region 2-day event). Info here, pilots list here. CD is **Anthony Guide** and this is the first Tour event for SKSS. They are well prepared and ready to go! 2 days of F5J with no fly-offs so everyone flies every round. Make this one if you can!

*The SKSS Field- Stunning green grass!*

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**F5J at CVRC, June 5-6, Visalia CA** (Western region 2-day event). Info and pilots list is here, main organizer and master CD is **Tim Johnson** at CVRC's very popular field in central California. They have 19 pilots on the list right now but it's guaranteed they will get many more. Those who have been flying F5J at CVRC since the Tour's beginning have come to expect top competition, good times with friends, and great food. It's always worth attending.

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Other Tour events coming include:

- **House Mountain F5J in Corryton TN on June 26-27** (info here)
- **F5J in the Rockies in Colorado on July 24-25**
- **LISF F5J at Syosset NY on July 31-Aug 1** (see the "Contest Preview: LISF F5J" article later in this issue)

## F5J Happenings - Things going on around the U.S.

*This is the first installment of a new column where we will be highlighting bits of F5J news and things going on around the US. If you have items you would like to contribute pass them my way! --Chris*

### New club: Southwest Soaring Society (SWSS) in Arizona

*Submitted by Lee Wolfe*

The Phoenix AZ group has closed down the East Valley Electric Flyers (EVEF) club and migrated the infrastructure and members to SWSS. SWSS still supports the 115 and 116 flying basins in Mesa, but now the club has a dedicated soaring field out near Maricopa where SWSS will be supporting large multi-state F5J events.

This shade structure was completed last week:

The NM guys were down here last weekend for our hybrid F3K/F5K combined event.

Here's the SWSS club home page: https://swsoaring.net/

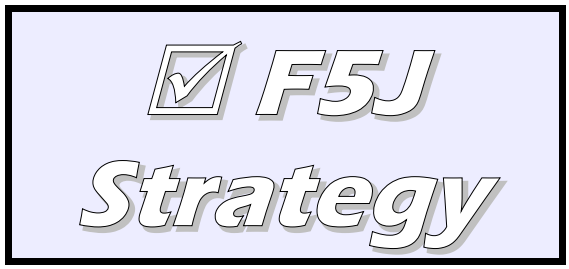
-Take care, Lee

## A Guide to F5J Contest Strategy

Participation in USA F5J is noticeably up this year. To all the new pilots flying at Tour events there is much to learn. I like to break down the F5J "must have's" into three broad categories:

1. E-glider equipment,
2. Thermaling skills, and
3. F5J strategy.

To be competitive in F5J you want to have (1) one or more e-gliders that are rock solid reliable, (2) decent air reading and thermaling skills, and (3) a clear understanding of F5J strategy.




This article is on the strategy part. Compared to other contest formats like string-launch Thermal Duration or electric ALES, F5J is a strategy-heavy format. Strategy is the key difference that makes F5J both exciting and challenging. If you understand F5J strategy you will be able to better capitalize on point-making opportunities in each round and in the full contest. F5J strategies are not hard to understand but the decisions you have to make are not always obvious.

So in this article we will discuss a range of F5J strategies as presented by top USA F5J pilots. These guys really know their stuff! Thanks guys for contributing to this article.

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### 1. Set your initial goals

Just make the fly-offs or maximize your qualifying round points?

***Jim McCarthy*** **- "**Your goals should be realistic depending on your skill set. Top 5, top 10, or maybe first page. Maybe no zero rounds. My goal is to be consistent and make 10's on every flight. I know if I max every flight and average 47.5 on landings I will be in the top 5."

***Randy West*** - "Maximize qualifying round points until forced to change strategy to survival for qualifying rounds. My goal is rarely to win the qualifying rounds in the case where competition is fierce, as this typically requires risk that can result in neither a

strong score in qualifying rounds nor making fly-offs."

**Lenny Keer** - "Personally, I don't generally fly to make the fly-offs. I strive for the best score in every round. One possible exception though is the last preliminary round. I will sometimes fly that round a bit more conservatively or more aggressively than usual if I'm trying to preserve a high standing or trying to move up to a fly-off slot."

## 2. Adjust your strategy

e.g. If weather looks like it might cut the contest short...

***Jim McCarthy*** **- "**Your strategy should be round by round. Never concern yourself with things you can't control. The only thing you can control is your individual flying. Looking at who is in your group and adjusting your strategy is not a winning formula.**"**

***Randy West*** - "Same strategy as mentioned in #1…cannot predict 100% not having fly-offs or when contest may be halted. The key is to change risk management strategy according to the changing weather conditions. The "big challenge" is to make the change in strategy at the time of change in weather conditions rather than after a big failure. Success from previous rounds can make a pilot over-confident and push risk level up just as weather changes."

## 3. No matter what, you gotta make your time!

***Jim McCarthy*** **-** "Nothing more needs to be said. Don't get caught up in launch heights. Over a 10-15 round contest making times is way more important than launch height. At a recent event in NC a top notch pilot had 7 1000 point rounds and finished 9 out of 12 and didn't make the fly-offs. That's because he kept pushing and took 2 zero scores."

***Randy West*** - "True, for all but the dropped score. I am still trying to master using the drop as a means of opportunity to take risk when the other pilots are in a conservative flying mode due to not making time earlier in the contest. Often, I end up with higher score before the drop than many of those who beat me in qualifying rounds…in that case, I might have had more room to take risks."

**Lenny Keer** - "Getting your time is really job #1 in an F5J flight. No matter how low you launched or how good your landing was, it doesn't matter if you landed 3 minutes early. It's easy to get caught up in the game of low launches, and they are certainly a lot of fun when successful, but getting your time should be the primary goal."

## 4. General launching strategies

Look up and down the flight line: who are you flying against?, what is the size of the flight group, which direction to go? upwind, downwind? Should you "cover" another good pilot?

***Jim McCarthy*** **-** "Remember you can only control you. Read the air and launch to an altitude you are comfortable with to make 10 mins. Aggressive pilots in this area will eventually get burned."

***Randy West*** - "Situational awareness at the line can be tough, especially when the competition spreads out at launch rather than going to the same thermal read. I typically take the biggest score hit when I and my timer did not see a pilot go low into a good read behind us.

Having awareness of the current situation for each pilot in a round is critical. At the line, I'm hopefully evaluating the following for the risk I'm going to take in terms of launch height and the location/direction relative to my competitors.

1. Highly competitive pilots (high propensity to cause damage to score)
    a. Lot to lose (high score, low drop score)
    b. Nothing to lose (moderate score, at edge of making fly-offs, or totally out of it)
2. Moderately competitive pilots (moderate propensity to cause damage to my score)
    a. Lot to lose
    b. Nothing to lose
3. Weather conditions
    a. Appears predictable
    b. Appears unpredictable
    c. Conditions have sign of changing
4. Current confidence of air read before launch
    a. Ultra-high (obvious indicator(s) that I believe nobody else is recognizing)
    b. High (obvious indicators)
    c. Medium (mild indicators)
    d. Low (no definitive indicators)
5. Last-second read during launch
    a. High (feeling plane clearly confirm read while launching)
    b. Medium (feeling plane mildly confirm the initial read while launching… might be confirmation bias)
    c. Low (not feeling plane react according to the read)"

## 5. Launching: Should I be aggressive or conservative?

**Lenny Keer** - “Yes!  There are times for both in most contests and the challenge is to make the right choice. When the air is active and thermals are popping you can often be successful with an aggressive low launch if you have a “read.”  Maybe you saw a hawk circling low in a thermal or noticed a swarm of small birds chasing bugs nearby just before launch. That may be enough incentive to warrant an aggressive low launch in that area. Often a day with good thermal activity will eventually go dead later in the afternoon. The thermals are suddenly much weaker, if you can find them at all. The air will seem to be nothing but sink. The change can be subtle and difficult to recognize until it's too late. A conservative high launch at this time can be the difference between making your time or landing early.”

## 6. Early AM launches

How high? Major temptation is to launch too low.

***Jim McCarthy*** **-** “General rule here is 150M. Know your model and know its performance. Lots of folks practice going low but you also need to practice what 150M, 160M and 200M looks like.”

***Randy West*** - “The problem with launching low in the morning…if you are too low for the conditions, there may be nothing to save you. You often can’t go steal a thermal from another pilot and your likelihood of hitting positive/holding air can be relatively low.

The biggest regret I typically have had in a contest is launching too low in morning and giving away my drop so I must fly more conservatively the rest of the contest. Ironically, changing my strategy to always launching higher to prevent this, has resulted in a couple contests where my lowest scores in the qualifying rounds are my morning launches. However, those low scores can be in 900’s (normalized score) rather than much worse for short flight.”

**Lenny Keer** - “The early morning rounds in an F5J contest often offer a different challenge than the later rounds. At this time the air can be very flat with no significant thermal activity to be found. The key here is to launch high enough to make your time only from the gliding performance of your model. A prepared pilot will know approximately how high he needs to launch in order to make 10 minutes. He will also have a repeatable way of launching to a specific altitude – usually counted in seconds. Spending some time in practice to figure this out can reap big rewards when you're called up to fly in that first group of round 1!”

## 7. Working time window and when to launch--right away or wait ?

***Jim McCarthy*** **-** "Understand that someone in your group is going to make full time. My advice is launch on the horn or, if you are nervous, practice throwing 1 second late."

***Randy West*** - "Launch immediately…waiting just automatically degrades score. Of course, watch carefully the pilots around you to ensure they are not launching their plane towards yours. I typically launch at full throttle to have maximum maneuverability to avoid pilots that go rogue at launch. I've had to go on wingtip quickly a few times when planes launched directly at my plane. This typically happens when a pilot becomes overly focused on a read they have and the corresponding direction they want to go."

## 8. Landings: How important are they in F5J?

***Jim McCarthy*** **-** "The task itself is fairly easy. You should always use a tape every time you fly. Never practice without one. If you aren't getting 45-50 consistently you are giving up easy points. Consistency is the key here. Develop a pattern that you repeat over and over again. The best pilots in this area do it the same. Every time!"

***Randy West*** - "50 point landing = 50 seconds of flight time = 100 meters of launch altitude. Getting the 50-point landing is more important than seeking out a couple seconds on landing. If you can do both, great!"

**Lenny Keer** - "By design, the landing points are die-emphasized in F5J as compared to TD or F3J for instance. Though the top fliers will consistently hit 45 and 50 point landings, this is not usually where the contest is won or lost. Of course, if you're not getting at least 45 landing points most of the time you've got some practicing to do."

## 9. Landing direction considerations

***Randy West*** - "The last time I had a plane severely damaged was by someone who apparently had not planned out their landing because their plane was on the far side of the flight line from where they were landing, traveling at high speed, passing through my "lane" with about 15 seconds to go. I was focused on bringing my plane straight in off the end of the tape and had no chance whatsoever to avoid the high-speed approach of the other plane. **Please practice predictable, consistent landing patterns!** It is also good to practice making last minute adjustments on awkward approaches in terms of angles, shifting wind direction and/or speed, and high speed versus low speed

approach.

I give some leeway for someone who is desperately trying to save their flight close the flight line, but they need to be clear at 20 seconds before end of window in my opinion, and they need to try to move predictably."

## 10. F5J in the wind

***Jim McCarthy*** **-** "Decisions need to happen a little faster when flying in the wind. Again practice. Too many folks want to fly only when it's the perfect day. You need to pick a day to fly and fly that day no matter the conditions."

***Randy West*** - "Practice flying in the wind or your performance will be predictably poor when the wind hits in a contest. You need to know what plane to fly, when to add ballast, what CG to fly at, and strategies for a particular field based on wind direction and wind strength. Look at a forecast for wind as an opportunity to practice rather than an opportunity to break your planes like many do. It is much better to practice wind when not under pressure of a contest.

Tie your planes down early--not just for wind, but for active air where a thermal can come through and lift all the planes off the ground in the pits. The last time I failed to do this, I was told that my light plane tried to fly itself out of the pits, ending in a broken tail boom." *Editor: Ouch!* ☹

## 11. "Burying" pilots in a flight group- Why do it?

i.e. what if you are the last plane left in the air in your flight group? Keep flying or okay to land early?

***Jim McCarthy*** **-** "KEEP FLYING!! This one's a no-brainer. In this game payback happens. When you have your opponents down don't let up. The only adjustment to make is possibly landing 3-4 seconds early to avoid an over-fly."

***Randy West*** - "It is a competition…keep flying for maximum score without taking a risk that could result in landing out or falling short of the tape. However, if it is a team competition with a teammate in the group with you, further evaluation would be required. Hopefully you are not in the dark as to what current scores are for the pilots in the flight and whether they are in the running to score for each team."

## 12. Launch heights: How high is too high?

F5J Fun Fact: Guess what launch height will completely zero out your 10 minute time score of 600 unnormalized points? Launch to 367mtr and you get a start height penalty of (200*0.5) + (167*3) = 601 pts ☺.

***Randy West*** - "It is going to be rare that you can successfully predict it is worth going over 200 meters given the penalty is so high, especially if your competitors may be going high but just under 200 meters.

Just evaluate the sink rate of your plane in neutral air, though the air isn't likely neutral if you are considering flying over 200 meters (let's say sink rate is 1/3 meter per second). 1 meter over 200 meters is an automatic penalty of 3 points. That one meter would buy you 3 seconds of flight time in neutral air…it is a wash but you take the penalty up front by your decision to launch higher than 200 meters.

I would stay away from going over 200 meters. It is going to be extremely rare that it pays off, especially when other pilots launch up to but not beyond 200 meters. I would rather take some of the time it would take to go over 200 meters and convert it to distance to reach a potential read nobody else will be able to reach."

## 13. The Throwout and how to "use" it

F5J gives you one throw-out round after 5 rounds.
You just blew a flight. Now what?
You just blew a second flight. Now what?

***Jim McCarthy*** **-** "At the end of preliminary rounds you can definitely be aggressive if you have "one to give"

***Randy West*** - "My current theory is to try not to give it away early…save it for an opportunity when I can afford to go aggressive when other will need to fly conservatively.

If I blew a flight I need to evaluate the impact if I were to blow another, given current field conditions as well as where I stand in the competition.

Blowing a second flight doesn't mean it is over…it isn't over until it is over, especially if field conditions are becoming unpredictable. Your conservative stance at that point may pay off because others are still pushing the limits and may fail miserably."

## 14. What approach should I use if I only have a standard weight plane?

i.e. what if I don't have a super-light or windy plane?

***Jim McCarthy*** **-** "Don't get caught up in chasing plane weights. The lightest plane has never won a contest. Know your model and what it can do in all conditions and use that knowledge to maximize your flight time. You may have to launch 10M higher than someone else to get 10:00 but all models climb in thermals."

***Randy West*** - "I flew a few years with only one viable, standard weight plane and was able to win a couple competitions. How?

1. I was flying one standard but very efficient plane that I knew extremely well and had fine-tuned for maximum performance in various conditions.

2. I flew well enough to qualify for the fly-offs. You typically don't need to get a 1000 every round or even any round. You just need to be relatively close to the 1000 and stay consistent, typically.

3. The fly-offs (as is quite common) had very active air in terms of both lift and sink and the thermals were far apart. Such conditions are suitable to standard planes that are going to cover ground really well compared to the light planes and are less easily fooled by turbulence. I used this to my advantage as well as launching to a conservative altitude to make all my times.

There are very good pilots that do not have a super-light/light plane that are consistently doing well in contests and in the Tour. However, they know their planes very well and fly them expertly, not hoping for the lightness of the plane to save them. Light planes can have the drawback of providing over-confidence or over-reliance on the part of the pilot in my opinion.

Also, some of the super-light planes are flying with airfoils that are not designed for that light of a wing loading. This results in a very narrow flight envelope, requiring great attention to tuning and identifying conditions in which the plane will perform well. So, if you are picking up a very light plane, plan to give it lots of attention in terms of tuning and practice in various conditions."

**Lenny Keer** - "Remember that nearly every pilot started with only one F5J model. The important thing is to use whatever model you have available to start getting some contest experience. I think a standard layup is perfect if you're going to have just one model. It will generally be pretty competitive in most contest conditions. Sure, a super-

light model may hang slightly better in the dead early morning air and a windy layup with plenty of ballast may be able to cover ground better when the wind comes up. For most contest rounds though, a single standard layup F5J model will do just fine. Much more important are the decisions made by the pilot about how high to launch, where to fly, and climbing in lift once it's found."

### *15. Timer/Caller Interactions*

***Jim McCarthy*** **-** "Get outside your comfort zone here and work with some different folks. Sooner or later you will be flying against your best buddy. Look around and grab the best pilot you can find. Tell them what things you need help with and use it as a teaching moment. If you are an experienced pilot then you want someone you know and can trust. Sometimes a caller needs to kick the pilot in the a** to make them move, sometimes then need to be more quite and let the pilot concentrate. If I'm asked to call for someone I give them more info then they may want or need but that's what I like when I'm flying. They can always ask you to stay quiet."

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*Video credits: Ali Khani of FlightComp.*

If you have the time here's a video of the recent well-attended Tour event in Perris CA (southern California). This field lacked the deep green grass that many eastern region fields have but it did have plenty of excitement and high levels of competition.

# RMSA F5J FM Sound System Upgrade

by Jim Monaco, Rocky Mountain Soaring Association (RMSA)

RMSA has been using an FM wireless sound system for many years. The system consists of 6 RIDGID X4 work radios, a couple of transmitters, and an old cell phone to play our sound files as a music player. This allows for use with up to 12 lanes.

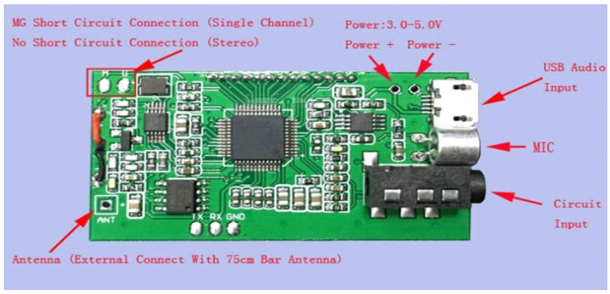
It continues to serve us admirably, however I am the only one that can set it up. It has many interconnecting wires and power cords that need to be connected properly in order to function.

Recently Chris Bajorek, our supreme F5J Tour leader, turned me on to a tiny transmitter on a circuit board that is very inexpensive. Looking at it gave me an idea. With such a small transmitter, perhaps I could set the whole thing up in our toolbox and leave it connected to everything but the battery. If It works out – all that is needed to run the system is plug antenna in, connect the battery that is in the box and, turn on the phone for the music player!  It was cheap enough, so I decided to give it a try.

In this article I will detail the experiment as well as providing all the info one might need to construct a similar setup for your club F5J sound system.

**The FM Transmitter board**

When the transmitter unit arrived it was tiny so I was skeptical it would have the range I wanted for at least 6 lanes (3 radios). Another plus was it came with a built in Mic! First order of business – test it on the bench.


*The low power FM Transmitter board, available for $12.50 at Amazon (link)*

The wiring was very simple, cut a USB cord and solder the power wires to the board +/- connectors on the board. I soldered a simple wire onto the antenna connection (27 inches as I recall). The input was a normal audio cable connected to my phone for sound. I plugged it into a normal USB power jack and it  fired right up. I used the

buttons to turn the volume full and the channel to 87.5FM and turned on one of our radios. I got a beautiful strong signal! Audio works – now how does the Mic work? As it turns out, you can have one or the other, but not both. I could unplug the audio in, and it switched to the Mic mode and the little condenser Mic worked great. I tried a number of things to see if I could get the mic to work with the audio jack in, but no luck. Note there is almost no documentation on this thing. Chris did find some info later that was helpful to my final solution.


Failing to get the onboard Mic to work, I was determined to find a way to add a Mic. Now I am not an electrical guy – I know just enough to be dangerous, but it appeared that to add a Mic I would need to find a Mic that output line level signal. That was more difficult than I thought it should have been. After much searching I found a little Mic board that is used in Arduino projects. They are tiny little things that come several to a pack. I ordered a pack thinking I would have plenty to share with others. It was a good thing I got extras.

<---*The tiny mic board, available at Amazon (link)*

The wiring was simple enough, but each time I would wire one up, it would die immediately or within a few seconds. I got better and better at diagnosing the deaths… Finally I gave up when I ran out of Mics and called Chris for ideas – he is my electronics goto guy. After some searching and reading he came to the conclusion I "probably" needed to add a capacitor to the output side of the Mic connection. Don't ask me to explain why, I have no understanding of the Gobbledy Gook that came out of his mouth – but I did trust it. So, with a new approach in mind I ordered some new Mics and Chris sent me some 47uf caps.

When they arrived I decided to do a simple wiring test to be sure the approach worked before I packaged it nicely. I soldered the cap on then connected all the other wires, plugged it into the audio jack and it worked, and magically stayed working. Woo Hoo!

**Making a portable sound system "toolbox"**

Now – back to the main point of the project – putting all of this into the top of the toolbox and wiring it all up. In order to connect the audio and the Mic at the same time I bought a 2-1 switch that allowed me to connect both devices and use a push button to switch between audio and Mic mode. I also bought a panel mount car USB adapter

that runs from 12v. I decided to power the transmitter, the Mic AND the phone from this adapter. I tried both 3 and 4 cell Lipos to power the USB adapter and they both worked fine. For the final design I chose the 3 cell battery – 2200 mah. I soldered a deans T-connector to the end of the USB adapter to allow me to use any 3 or 4 cell flight pack with a deans connector if I ran out of battery in use.

I mounted the USB adapter through the side walls of one of the lid compartments, the battery and accessory storage is on the other side (see the pictures). I purchased some short audio connectors to hook all the other components up on the left side of the lid. I did not like the loose wire antenna, so Chris advised I could attach the wire to a carbon or fiber rod and use a banana plug to connect it to be removable. As it happened I had a collapsible antenna from some other project laying around, so I soldered a male banana connector to it and mounted a female connector in the left lid compartment and wired that to the single pin connector that then connected to the transmitter board.

The transmitter board does not have any provision for mounting, so that complicated putting it in the box. It also has components that stick out so it does not lay flat. Ultimately I chose to use a small piece of foam and used my soldering iron to burn out little recesses so the board would lay flat on the foam. I used a little E6000 in the corners to secure it. I set the device switch next to the transmitter and used a little E6000 to secure it in place.

The Mic has a gain adjustment on the back, and I used that to adjust the Mic Volume to match the audio volume when the Volume knob was full on. Packaging the Mic circuit board to be able to handle it without breaking any wires was the next challenge. I unsoldered the audio cable from the Mic and slid some small diameter but thick Heat shrink to reinforce the connection and make kind of a handle. Then I slid some wider heat shrink over the whole board and partially over the shrink that was over the wires. I shrunk that all down and then used my Xacto to open up the top of the Mic and around the gain adjuster on the back. This made a nice compact, and robust Mic connection.

*The Compartment Layout on top with Ridgid radios underneath. Pretty slick!*

The container is a Lowe's Kobalt toolbox with a lid compartment. From the "Inside layout" picture in the Parts List PDF you can see I modified the interior slightly by screwing 2 braces to the side and attaching a coroplast divider. This is to keep the box more organized. You can see I have the powerful transmitters and cords and batteries on the left side and the radios organized back to back on the right.

The Rigid radios can be found on ebay without batteries for around $30-40. The factory batteries are stupid expensive, so I have modified the radios slightly to accept a 5S lipo that I Velcro to the battery compartment. The batteries have XT60 connectors so I made adapters that that have spade plugs on one end and male XT60 on the other. The spade connectors plug into the battery terminals on the radios and stay there. The batteries are unplugged at the XT60 for charging and storage. I added a small spruce block to make the space connectors tighter and less prone to disconnection. See the pictures in the Parts List PDF.

I finished the wiring and took it out in the street in front of my house, turned it on to my repeating practice countdown sound and grabbed a radio and started walking to see how far I could get. I was very pleased to get to 100 paces and still have good sound! So far success – but the real test was at a contest.

## Testing it out

Last weekend (April 24) we had a club F5J event and we set out 6 lanes (3 radios). The lanes started about 75 feet from the transmitter setup location. We had excellent

sound and the Mic switch worked perfectly. We ran the sound continuous from 8:00AM to 2:00PM. When I checked the battery at the end it was at 80% of the 2200mah. This thing will run for days on a single battery. I did not check the max range (next event), but this should easily do 8 lanes and maybe more depending on how crowded your frequencies are.

While this was intended to be a standalone system, one can connect it to the GliderScore timing system by simply using an audio cable to plug your laptop into the switch instead of the phone connector.

I think it met all the goals – simple setup, adequate range, and completely self contained. We still have the big transmitters in the box as backup and for large contests – you should always have a backup. These chips are cheap enough to order 2 and wire one up with the same connectors so you can drop it right in if this fails. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

– ***Jim Monaco**, 303-906-6965, jim@monacocasa.com*

## Complete Parts List

You can view a full Parts List PDF with pictures at this link. You can probably do better than the prices below with some careful shopping. This does not include minor parts used like old USB charging cables. If you need a Mic board contact me – I have plenty of extras…☺

| | |
|---|---|
| Box | $ 50.00 |
| Ridgid Radios 3@$40 | $ 120.00 |
| Radio Batteries 3@25 | $ 75.00 |
| Transmitter Boards 2@13 | $ 26.00 |
| USB Adapter | $ 14.00 |
| Mic Boards | $ 16.00 |
| Transmitter Battery | $ 25.00 |
| Audio Switcher | $ 15.00 |
| Banana Jack Female mountable | $ 13.00 |
| **TOTALS** | **$ 354.00** |

## *2021 Team Selects - A quick update*

As a result of “virus rescheduling” and the most recent FAI report from **Steve Neu** on RC Groups (link), the next FAI F5J World Championships (WC) has been rescheduled in Bulgaria to 2023. The next US Team Select event has also been officially delayed to 2022 (link).

As of this newsletter the F5J USA Tour calendar still shows a 3-day TS event starting on Oct 28 2021 and hosted by **Southwest Soaring Society** (SWSC) in Maricopa AZ. The organizer is currently discussing how they want to handle that contest now that it will not be the Team Selects. Expect at least a 2-day Tour event. Details coming.

To help you stay current with additional TS news and info we will be adding timely updates to the *TS & WC Info* web page:

**Team Selects & WC News**

*From the East Coast Spring F5J Festival in April*

# Brady's Take on F5J Strategy

by Brady Baggs

*Editor's note: When I sent out a request to top Tour pilots for F5J strategy inputs I got a nice response back from Brady that didn't quite fit the article template. So I decided to run his piece here as a stand-alone article. Thanks Brady!*

I would like to talk about F5J contest and competitive flying. As you know F5J has a lot to offer, is very challenging, and is oriented towards thermal skills and “air reading.” F5J is also about how good you can become and it rewards hard work and dedication. No teams involved, it's all dependent on you.

## Risk management

There are numerous strategies when it comes to competitive contest flying. For instance, you can be conservative and let everyone else make mistakes. That's the way I played it last year. But everyone is getting much better now and I often see the top five pilots all within 150 points any one of which could take first place in the last round!

So today the name of the game for me has changed and I find myself taking higher risks in order to get the thousand in each flight group. I am not as conservative as before. I am pushing my limits, at least until I get that zero round. I used to take higher risks

depending on who was in my group but now there always seems to be someone in the group that can start lower than me and take the “k” away.

## The mental game

The mental side gets more important when you start winning or getting closer to the top. Some pilots get very intimated depending on who they are competing against, nervous even. Often this is one of the biggest hurdles to cross and the fly-off rounds can be even more intimidating.

Often I try not to think about anything but that one flight and not where I am in the standings. I just give it my best efforts and whatever the outcome is, I won't be disappointed. But I often find myself making the mistake of point-watching and trying to risk a little more dependent upon someone that's a few points ahead of me in my group.

My most important of all rules, and your top rule too, should be to have some fun! That's why we are all there anyway. If it was all about winning and nothing more then I would not enjoy the hobby and be very disappointed in most contests. It just so happens my best effort sometimes places me at the top ☺.

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## Strategy

Often I have a mindset that it's not about how low you can start but how high you need to start to achieve the 10-minute task. Also, if I don't know where to go then I don't launch low. If I don't know where the lift is sometimes I know where the sink is and will avoid that area. I seldom follow anyone so I try to play my own game. On the other hand, if I have to go low and have no idea where the lift is. I may cover other pilots in my group.

There are some basic strategies I like to stick to like early morning flights it's a really bad idea to start low. Although, on the other hand, the first flight of the day can win the contest for you.

It's a good bet that on a good day during the noon balloon when thermals are active you can just go low and take a chance even if you don't have a good read. Get out there and make it work so to say. When the conditions are terribly windy or with “no-lift”

conditions it then becomes all about survival and forget about low starts. Landings then become much more important in this type of environment.

## The plane

There have been many discussions on which brand of model is better. There is not really a lot of difference between them anymore, it's more about the plane you are most comfortable with and have the most stick time on. Over time, you learn the subtleties of that plane's response to lift, turbulence, and just how far downwind you can go and still make it back.

When it gets windy you have to get a second plane that is built stronger and can be ballasted to heavier flying weights. And the same can be said for very calm conditions and the performance of a lite version plane. You always want to build your planes with easy-to-change servos and parts that are interchangeable. Assume that something will fail, go wrong, and get damaged. To change a servo in minutes is a big plus for staying in the game.


I believe very soon with new technology/ materials a person could have a light version and a windy version to cover all needs versus now where I believe three planes are best: light, medium, and windy. But a good pilot with that most familiar medium plane can still, with proper planning, perform very well. I'm not so certain that the simplicity of only having one plane doesn't help in reducing the complexity and confusion of having several versions. Maybe some day soon we will have a super lite that performs like a windy. Then you could keep three of the same plane ☺.

I'm a slow learner with a lifetime of learning. I continue to improve and learn about flying model gliders and add to my bag of tricks. I believe this has been the key element for me:  sticking with the hobby for all these years.

"There was this one flight last contest OMG! " Let me tell you about it, Amazing it was! The F5J USA Tour is very competitive; through this Tour will rise great pilots!

## *Contest preview:* LISF F5J in NY coming in late July

The Tour welcomes new clubs to the F5J fold and lately we have seen some good ones jump on board (with both feet!). Each new club faces challenges getting things up to Tour-ready status so one of the things we like to do is help shorten their spin-up time. We do that with things like conference calls and online GliderScore tutorials.

We have a new NY club that is in the middle of mapping out their first F5J USA Tour event in late July. **David Immanuel** is the main organizer and CD for this event. Info on RC Groups is available here. David sent along some beautiful pics of their flying field. Here's one:

He passes along the following comment:

"This field and our club, Long Island Silent Flyers, is an RC glider-only club. I read Brady's suggestions about more time needed to promote an F5J US Tour contest. … As the president of the club, I am trying to introduce and promote F5J to my club. My club is familiar with TD and ALES, but I want to introduce them to the fun and challenges of F5J, especially since we are no longer holding winch contests this year."

In the coming weeks we will be helping David spin up for his first Tour event. Be on the lookout for more RC Groups posts from him as their July date gets closer.

## 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.