

Central Valley Rocket News
Tripoli Central California
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K2045 drag race. Photo by Jim Norton

Written by Jim Norton. Photos by Jim Norton, Michael Garret, Aaron Hagadorn, Martin Hall, Steve Jurvetson (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/jurvetson>) and Rob Swenson.

Dairy Aire 2011 turned out to be a fantastic launch. The weather was great, except for a little rain in the middle of the night and a sudden gust of wind that turned one of the club's shade canopies into a tumbleweed that almost took out the low power pads. Gary Rosenfield and Karl Bowman from Aerotech were on hand and brought along some demo motors to show off. Kellerini's BBQ was also there providing awesome food. And as always there were great people and great flights, including an intense drag race.

Friday

Friday started out slow because we had to wait while the field was disked to prevent fires. But the pads got busy once the launch started with a total of 67 flights. A number of those flights were dedicated to James Marino, who was home recovering from surgery. We missed you James, and look forward to seeing you back on the range. Michael Levi flew his 6 feet tall Predator on a Cesaroni L990 blue streak motor, while David Raimondi of San Jose flew his Wed Wocket on a JPS. K900. Gene Engelgau demonstrated a toridal parachute, which is shaped like a doughnut cut in half.



And the PerfectFlite altimeter still worked.





Saturday

As usual Saturday was the busiest day, with over 250 flights including a fantastic drag race and a Level 3 certification flight. Plus there were some of the most interesting recoveries I have ever seen. The most anticipated event was a drag race of 4" Nike Smokes powered by Cesaroni K2045s. These are intense motors, and it was expected that that some of the rockets would lose body parts. The participants were Jack Garibaldi, Rob Diehl, James Dougherty, Terry Erb, Steven Sawyer (who used an Areotech K1045 demo motor), Charlie and Karl Baumheckel, Rob Swenson, Michael Levi and Robert Zylstra. Remarkably all of the rockets held together, which is a great testament to the building skill of the people in our club. And all of the rockets were recovered successfully, except for Rob's that went down in a canal.

Also greatly anticipated was Aaron H's Level 3 Certification flight. Aaron chose a 7.5 inch V2 from Polecat and an Aerotech M1297. The V2 is notorious for not flying straight, but the flight of the 38 pound camo painted rocket was picture perfect. Congratulations Aaron.

Matt Brown from Palo Alto flew his unpainted Madcow Rocketry Super DX3 multiple times, on a Cesaroni L990 blue motor, on a K600 and a K550. Brian Weese flew some of his very imaginative rockets. His white Deep Space Transport went up on a K550, and he chose the same motor for his grey Klingon Battle Cruiser. Michael Levi of Oakland flew his 6 foot tall Extreme Wildman on a L1420 redline motor. Tom Fetter of Santa Rosa launched his red and yellow Speedmotion with a Cesaroni L851. Erik Charlton estimated that his yellow and black Yellow Jacket would reach 4400 feet with a K1100 and two J340s. Jim Norton of Fresno flew his 7 foot tall Not Ready for the Apocalypse on a K1275. The big red flame sent the rocket to 3366 feet. David Robb flew his black Darkstar on a K460 blue thunder and also flew a blue LOC Magnum on a J350 with airstarts of two G76s. Chris Schlievert flew his 13 pound 5.5 inch diameter Nike Smoke with a K695 redline motor providing the propulsion. Richard King launched his camo 5 foot tall V2 on a K540 metalstorm motor. Mike Pettipiece of Tracy flew his gold custom built Scratch using a K513 fast blackjack. Randy Tan launched his 2 stage 2 Tickets to Ketchikan on skidmark motors. Gen Tanabe of Belmont also used skidmark motors in his 2 stage Nike Hawk. The father and son team of Jimmy and Chris Franco tried to launch their nearly identical Dominator 4s just before dusk. Chris' rocket flew well on a K510, but something went terribly wrong with Jimmy's rocket that was equipped with a K1045 demo motor. Parts of the rocket went upward, while flaming bits fell onto the ground. The day's activities ended with free beer and a night launch.

This was the first launch I have been to where spectators arrived by helicopter, but there were even more surprises in store. After Gene Engelgau had his Push the Button land on an island he asked the owners if they could recover the rocket, and they were happy to help. And two rockets lost at the April launch were also recovered. After Michael Levi offered a 200 dollar reward for the retrieval of his Wildman rocket a group of young people swam out to get it. And Jeremy Garret waded out to get Rob Swenson's Nike Smoke.





NIKE SMOKE

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Aaron Hagadorn's
Level 3 Cert flight







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Sunday

Sunday saw about 85 flights. Steve Jurvetson sent his 55 pound Sledgehammer up on a spectacular flight on a L1410 skidmark motor. Ted Sobieralski from Visalia flew his 48 inch tall black Super Mosquito on a K458. And Karl Baumheckel from San Jose put up two rockets on hybrid motors. His 28.5 pound camo Darkstar went up on a Contrail L1222 Sparky motor and the red 10 pound Scorpion used a Skyripper K347 motor





Steve Jurvetson's photo of his Sledgehammer on a L1410





Aaron Hagadorn photos







Rob Swenson photos



Martin Hall photos

