

September 18, 2010 -- Bloomington, Illinois

Quickie 500 class 424

The Q500-424 race at the SIRS field featured 10 of the region's Quickie pilots plus two long distance participants, one each from California and New York. The day started off calm with the first 2 rounds in ideal overcast/no-wind conditions. Malcolm Reynolds & Jim Nikodem had the most spectacular midair of the year on Lap 1 coming around pylon 2. Malcolm's plane was reduced to a beautiful array of blue & chrome glitters, while Jim's racer transformed into 4 large chunks, all going in different directions.

By round 3 the winds kicked up and the rain came down, but fortunately it was time for lunch so the break worked out perfectly. Post-lunch brought a slight tailwind and some of the best racing of the day. One heat featured Jay Cappis on the bottom, Jim Nikodem in the middle, and Jim Padelt on the high side for most of the heat. Jay came out in front on lap 10, but none of the pilots led 2 concurrent laps.

At the end of the day we had a couple fly-offs for positions. The third place battle saw Mick Warning cut out to pressure applied by Bernie Vanderleest. A skirmish was set for the win between the current WIPRO champ Darwin Larson, and the "Chicago Cubs" of 424, Mark (Fred) Warning. All bets were of course on Darwin...should be a stroll in the park. Incredibly at the end of 10 laps, Darwin could do no better than follow Mark's tail for all 10 laps.

This reporter got a chance at the end of the day to talk to several of the contestants during the trophy presentations, and the responses I heard were pretty consistent. Third place Bernie Vanderleest quipped, "I can fly off with Mick, and place behind Darwin, but to finish behind Mark is the most humiliating thing to happen to me in years...just slightly worse than when my hospital gown opened in front of my in-laws."

75 year old Ernie Nikodem, who competed in the race along with son Jim and grandson Steven, commented that having the entire Nikodem family place behind Mark Warning was "such a stain on the family name that they were going to play with anagrams on the way home in hopes of changing their name to something else."

After Contest Director Jay Cappis awarded the 1<sup>st</sup> place trophy to Mark, he mentioned that 'far-away look' in Mark's eyes. "That boy ain't right" commented Jay. "I think his medication needs to be adjusted." Mike Wilson was so crushed he didn't return to compete on Sunday—"Now I've seen it all" said Mike. "When something like that wins the contest, it's time to find something else to waste my time on."

Jim Padelt mentioned he'd come across people like Mark before, but only in remote backwoods sections of his native California. Darwin was also in a state of bewilderment. "I can lose to Jim, Bernie, Jay, even George Reynolds, but to lose to Mark is a slam I don't think I can handle. If the Colts lose again tonight I just may off myself." As for George Reynolds, he begrudgingly congratulated Mark on the fluke victory, and then

immediately gave Mark the job of cutting potatoes with a butter knife for the evening's meal.

Mark's brother Mick had the only positive comment on the events of the day. "It's good to let the mentally challenged win one now and then. I'm sure his Mom as well as all the other patients back home will be very proud of him."

Mark was seen later that evening with his trophy in one hand and a Miller in the other repeating "MarkMark in a happy place now....."