

“Loser Fly-Off”

- or how to make F2D competitions more interesting

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With a small change on how way combat competitions are flown, it will be possible to make the events more interesting for juniors, beginners and spectators.

The traditional knockout competition with two lives, tends to favour the good pilots by giving them more rounds, more practice and more fun. Beginners and average pilots do often only get two flights at competitions. To make combat competitions more interesting for beginners it would be nice to let them have more flights at the event.

Some competitions are flown with three lives (triple elimination). This gives all the pilots more flying time but the good pilots will still have much more flights than the not so good pilots. Competitions can also be flown as “all against all” but the number of bouts will explode as soon as the number of pilots grows to more than a handful.

By organizing a Fly-Off among the pilots who are out of the ordinary competition after the first two rounds all pilots will be ensured to fly at least three times in the event. For many juniors or beginners this will give 50% more flying time at the competition.

This “Loser Fly-Off” will not be an official part of the ordinary competitions and the results of this single extra round will not count as an official result in the ordinary competition.

Pilots who lose the first two rounds in the ordinary competition are invited to participate in the “Loser Fly-Off”. If the number of pilots is not even the organizer may invite more pilots to participate in this extra round. The pilots invited could be juniors, pilots who have travelled a long distance, pilots who lost their second live in the third round or whoever the organizer else finds appropriate. Pilots who qualify for, or are invited to fly in the “Loser Fly-Off” are free to choose not to fly in this fly-off.

The draw for the “Loser Fly-Off” are done as if it was a normal round in the ordinary competition, i.e. if it is possible, pilots from the same nation or pilots who have already met in the ordinary competition are not flying each other.

The pilots in the “Loser Fly-Off” will be ranked as winners or losers. The result of the “Loser Fly-Off” can be added to the score board of the ordinary competition as (W) or (L) after the pilots official score (same way as the result of a fly-off for second or third place are often indicated on the score board).

The “Loser Fly-Off” is not an official event and does not have to fulfil all the requirements for a World Cup event. This will give the organizers the possibility to use the “Loser Fly-Off” to let new officials try to run a competition. In this way new circle marshals, judges, scores and timekeepers can have their first experience with judging and scoring at big competitions, without the pressure of running an official event.

The “Loser Fly-Off” can also be used to test new equipment or new rules, like a new streamer design. The experience of a test like this would give a better fundament for changes of the official rules.

It can be very difficult to predict how a new rule, like getting a bonus for putting on a new streamer during a bout will change the way combat is flown. By testing a rule like this with pilots of the Loser Fly-Off at a big competition it will be possible to see what effect the rule will have.

The bouts in the “Loser Fly-Off” can be blended in with the rest of the ordinary competitions. At the end of a competition pilots will often need time to prepare for the next rounds. Today judges, score counters and spectators can only wait for the pilots to be ready. If this waiting time is used to fly the “Loser Fly-Off” there will be more activity right to the end of the competition.

The number of pilots with two loses after the first two rounds can be between none and half of all the pilots. A quick calculation on the result from 55 competitions with 1316 pilots shows that 28% of the pilots would have qualified for a “Loser Fly-Off”. The highest “scoring” competition with more than 40 pilots was Alexin 2010: 55 pilots and 18 was out after two rounds = 33%.

The number of flights at the ordinary competition is twice the number of pilots. If 30% of the pilots qualify for the “Loser Fly-Off” the number of flights will be 15% of the number of pilots. A “Loser Fly-Off” will only add 7.5% to the total number of flights at a competition. The extra flights would cause a little higher entry fee, but I think most pilots will find a 10% higher entry fee fair if they will be sure to fly at least three bouts in the competition.

A “Loser Fly-Off” will not require any changes of the rules. We will not have to take it to the CIAM meetings or persuade delegates to vote for a proposal.

If pilots and organizers can agree on this extra round, then just go and do it!

/Henning Forbech