

John Oldenkamp Memorial P-30 Contest - Perris, CA - June 13, 2021 - note for Don DeLoach

By Mike Jester

On Sunday, June 13, 2021 I flew my red and yellow tissue-covered Three Nite P-30 in the John Oldenkamp Memorial P-30 contest held at Taibi Field in Perris, California. The picture below shows me launching this model on one of my official flights in the contest. I built this P-30 from the Volare Products short kit. This is the first time I have flown my new P-30 design in a contest.



Mike Jester's Three Nite P-30 Launch at Perris, California on June 13, 2021

Thirteen experienced P-30 fliers flew in this contest including Stan Buddenbohm and Clint Brooks. I chose to enter my Three Nite P-30 to see how it would stack up against very stiff competition and, frankly, just to fly a different looking P-30 design.

Flying conditions were near perfect with 2-3 mph winds and lots of lift. After the initial round of official flights, five of the thirteen fliers had achieved three 120-second maxes, including me. A fly off ensued with increasing max times of 150, 180, and 210 seconds.

Two fliers made it to the third round of the fly off, including myself. I won the third round of the fly off and ended up being the winner of the John Oldenkamp Memorial P-30 contest.

I was flying my Three Nite P-30 on 10 x 1/16 - 9.8-gram TSS rubber motors. Depending on the batch of TSS rubber they can be safely wound to 1450-1700 turns and 6 - 6.5 inch-ounces of torque. The motor run can be around 70 seconds. This size rubber motor is a nice compromise between the slow climb/long motor run of the 6 x 3/32 - inch "thin" P-30 rubber motor and the fast climb/short motor run of the conventional 6 x 1/8 - inch "thick" P-30 rubber motor. Several times my P-30 was able to power through downers until it reached some lift where it still had enough motor run left over to climb to a good altitude. It's longest actual flight time Sunday was just short of five minutes, although on that flight my timer lost sight of my P-30 at 195 seconds so that was my official time on that flight.

On all of my official flights my red and yellow Three Nite P-30 was carrying one of my Walston RF transmitters with batteries. That was a weight penalty of around 5 grams. At its AUW of 45.5 grams (excluding rubber), I would not have been able to fly my model competitively on 4 x 1/8-inch or 6 x 3/32 P-30 rubber motors. A P-30 needs to weigh no more than 41 grams to do that. It also cannot fight through turbulence with relatively low torque so very calm conditions are required to get good flights with a P-30 using thin rubber motors. As is often the case, it turned out that the onboard RF transmitter was not needed to facilitate any of the long recoveries. Had my model not been carrying an RF transmitter it would have flown even better, but the odds of losing it would have gone up dramatically.

This is not to say that the design of my Three Nite P-30 is better than any other existing P-30 design. In truth, by way of example, Stan Buddenbohm's Air Shark, Clint Brooks' Boomer MK III, and Don DeLoach's Polecat MK X are probably superior P-30 designs in terms of performance. However, even a beginner's P-30 design, like my Three Nite P-30, can be very competitive. Of course, in any flying contest, you need a bit of good luck on your side in order to prevail. On another day, a different one of the thirteen fliers may have won the contest.

It can readily be surmised from looking at the Volare Products plan that my Three Nite P-30 is the easiest and quickest P-30 to build. Now there is actual proof that it is a competitive design, despite its lack of wing dihedral, wing tip wash-out, right inner wing panel wash-in, thin under cambered wing, etc.