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Introduction to the Model Aircraft World
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International classes for free flight scale model flying competitions around the world

The FAI F4 class links the community of scale aeromodellers in indoor and outdoor classes.
Stan Mauger, New Zealand

Free flight scale – a Builder class

To some modellers accustomed to using the advancing technology associated with radio controlled flight, the idea of operating a model without these controls may seem puzzling. Even the established free flight classes for which FAI rules have been developed, have become increasing technical in the design of airframes and in the materials used. These classes now seem a long step away from the early free flight classes, in which part of the challenge was in the designing and building of models for local and international competition, as in Wakefield rubber endurance class for example.

Free flight scale still maintains many of these early aeromodelling values. In free flight scale contests, models must be built by the entrant and many of the traditional materials like silk, tissue and of course balsa, are still widely used. Creating realism and accuracy in reproducing the outlines, surfaces and appearance of full size subjects presents an additional challenge in building free flight scale models. Unlike other free flight competition models, changes to model proportions to allow them to be easier to fly, compromise their accuracy and competitiveness.

Mike Hadland's well detailed Stampe SV.4 in the indoor F4D Open Rubber Scale class at Interscale, Nijmegen, Netherlands

Portable rules for international contests

The rules formulated and developed in a number of countries have done much to encourage free flight scale classes nationally. The F4A rules for both outdoor and indoor scale provide 'portable' rules for international contests anywhere

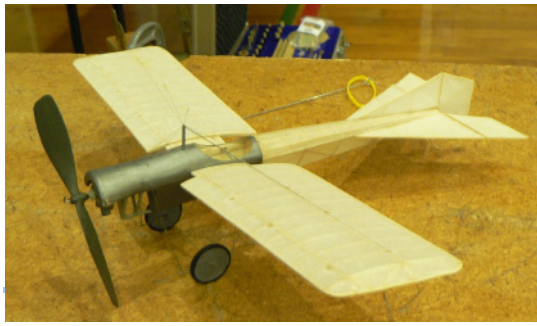
in the world using them. There is a common set of static judging rules running through all F4 classes, except F4F Peanut Scale that has a slightly different lineage from all other F4 rules. Because F4 scale free flight and radio control classes share similar static rules, judges with knowledge of judging in one scale event can easily judge another. For contestants whose national aeromodelling organisations have adopted F4 rules, developing models with the same local rules as in an overseas contest is an advantage.

↑ Antony Koerbin has placed first in both the Trans Tasman F4A Free Flight Power Scale Challenge at Richmond NSW, Australia and also the New Zealand Nationals F4A event with this finely detailed BE2e.

Ricky Bould seen at Ferry Meadows, Peterborough, England, flying his CO2 powered Comper Swift built for F4E class.

Proven rules for free flight scale classes

F4D, F4E and F4F classes have been flown as indoor events for many years in Europe, Australasia and elsewhere in the world. F4A was introduced in 2003 and these rules have proved to be just as good as those of other F4 free flight scale classes. New Zealand and Australian free flight power scale contests have used these rules since they became available. F4D indoor rules have also been used for Outdoor Rubber Scale in Trans Tasman and national championships in both of these countries. The use of FAI rules as national rules is also an advantage for contestants and organisers alike as any amendments are made at one international source. This can be accessed by going to the FAI web site. They may be found at: http://www.fai.org/fai-documents, then go to Sporting Code Section 4 - Aeromodelling, then Sporting Code Section 4 - F4 Scale (3.54 MB)



↑ Bernard Scott's F4F Peanut Scale Blackburn Monoplane, winner of this event at Morrinsville, New Zealand, 2015.

Mike Mulholland won Outdoor Rubber Scale, flown to F4D rules at the NSW Champs, Australia with this superb DH Tiger Moth.

F4 rules for international free flight scale indoor and outdoor classes

F4A Free Flight Power Scale
F4D Free Flight Rubber Scale
F4E Free Flight CO2 Scale
F4F Peanut Scale

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Editor: E. Giezendanner
editor@modellflugsport.ch