

Spring for POPS brings a new TopPOP

Another beautiful, sunny, March day in Lake Wales, FL as the 47th annual POPS Springfest began, there was just a little bit of wind gusting, so erring on the side of safety, the judges decided to push back the start day, however, once it got started, we were able to complete all of the events with a FUN time had by all!

Classic Accuracy started it off, the competitors even allowed a PUP (Parachutist UNDER Phorty) to participate. Ehab Mamoud was the PUP competitor and would have won the competition, but as he wasn't a POPS member, he was given a 4th Place plaque, maybe in a couple years he'll get the real first place. If there are other PUPS over 30 that would like to come to POPS events, please feel free. Cheryl Whitford was the actual 1st place winner, followed by Ron Brissey, and Al Amaral.

Sport Accuracy came next, two rounds were completed in the first day, finishing up the following day, while also adding one more Classic Accuracy competitor as well as another Sport Accuracy competitor. We don't mind late arrivals. Dick Rapacilo came in 1st Place, Ron McFarland in 2nd, and Jack LaLonde 3rd.

Four Way Scrambles was able to finish all three rounds in one day, followed by the third round of Sport Accuracy and then culminating with the Signature POPS event, the Hit N Rock, which is always the last event. Four way Scrambles was a tight race with 1st, 2nd and 3rd places determined by only 1 point differences. The winners were team "Best of POPS", with Team Captain Dick Rapacilo, and teammates Guido, Will Lesnjak, and Gary Barron.

The Hit N Rock is a combination of Accuracy, with a little bit of finesse and speed. You must land your parachute (preferably as close as possible to the target), stop all movement, get out of your harness, then move to and touch the target with your foot, hand, stomach... then move 40 feet (40 because POPS = 40) to a comfy chair. Time starts the moment your feet touch the ground, and time stops when your butt is in the chair. Fastest time wins! Guido took home the Gold for the third time in a row, with Mike Lipinski only 2.3 seconds behind him, and James Shorter coming in third.

We had several sponsors this year, some donated money, and some donated prizes. EVERYONE that attended got SOMETHING! Thanks to: Dave De Wolf of Para Loft, sponsoring Sport Accuracy; Sigma for sponsoring Hit N Rock; SSK Industries Inc. (Cypres) sponsored 4way Scrambles; Chutingstar for their certificate; North American Aerodynamics donated three x \$150 gear bags; and Aerodyne donated two x certificates. Some prizes we made into a game, and some we randomly picked names, either way, the winners got to decide which item they wanted.

Thanks most of all to Betty Hill and her staff at Florida Skydiving Center for putting on and supporting this event, the camera guys and gal: Clancy Ewald, David 'Pip' Perry, Frank Deazley, Brian Festi, and Lori Dobson, with ground photos from Tim Telford. Andy Anderson from American Legion Post 71 put on the awards banquet Saturday night, which included a DJ and some dancing afterwards.

The banquet was also the big unveiling of the new TopPOP. After volunteering to serve a second term as TopPOP #13, previously TopPOP#9, Alicia Moorehead eagerly handed the reigns over to retired Army Special Forces Engineer, James "Guido" Davis, to become TopPOP #14. In true skydiving tradition, this was a FIRST for Guido, but instead of buying just "a case of beer", he bought a round of drinks for everyone at the banquet.

If you are a current POPS member with a number less than 10,000 I most likely do NOT have your email in our database, so please write/call/email me with all your current contact info, so I can keep you informed of upcoming events, or send you a card for your birthday. You can also write ANY time just to say "HI". If you are a DZ owner or organizer, please contact me to let me know of upcoming POPS/SOS/JOS... events.

If you are not a POPS member, please contact me or go to the FB page or website for an application. There is a ONE time fee of \$20 and you are a member for LIFE! There are only 2 requirements, you are over 40 (or I can take your application and process it when you do become 40), and you have made at least ONE skydive, which could be a tandem, military, or even emergency exit. You don't have to be a USPA member, or even a US resident. You can also sign up a friend as a surprise for a 40th (or more) birthday present.

During this transition stage, we are currently working to update the FB page and website to keep everyone informed of upcoming events, so if you can't find what you are looking for, or if you ever have a question, please feel free to contact me directly.

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FB Public "Group": 'POPS – USA' (we may be creating a new "Page" in the future, stay tuned)

Website: ~~thepops.org/usa~~ (now:) POPS-USA.com

Author: James "Guido" Davis

TopPOP#14