



THE PITCHBROTHER SMACKDOWN



AT 3D MASTERS 2008 I WAS INVITED TO ATTEND DENMARK'S PREMIER EVENT, THE PITCHBROTHER SMACKDOWN. TO BE HELD AT SONDERBORG MODEL FLYING CLUB IN SOUTHERN DENMARK THE SMACKDOWN WAS SET TO ATTRACT MANY OF THE WORLD'S FINEST PILOTS FOR WHAT WOULD PROVE TO BE ONE OF THE BEST WEEKEND'S 3D FLYING AND FELLOWSHIP THAT HAS EVER BEEN SEEN. THE 3D CALENDAR NOW HAS A NEW ENTRY COMING IN AT THE TOP

WORDS: DAVID NOLAN PHOTOS: WWW.THEPITCHBROTHERS.COM & DAVID NOLAN



It has long been a tradition at the 3D Masters to have supporters from many nations turn

out in force to cheer on their fellow countrymen and support the many top pilots who have stepped up to enter the competition. Over the years we have seen, the Norwegians, the Swiss, the Irish and many others all make some noise for their chosen favourites, but none with so much energy and enthusiasm as the crew from Denmark, the now legendary... Pitchbrothers!

INITIAL PLANS

It was at the 3D Masters 2008 practice field that I first got to hear about the initial plans for the first Pitchbrothers Smackdown to be held in Denmark in 2009. Myself, Bobby Watts and Jamie Cole appeared at the field to have a flight or two to round off the day only to be greeted by a few very familiar faces namely,

Knud Pedersen (ChopperKnud), Andreas van Engelenburg (aka the Young Student), Rasmus Jensen (Rallie) and Krunder Rasmussen, with a couple of beers each, which were quickly thrust into our hands with a welcoming cheer. Not wishing to offend (perish the thought!) the drinks were gladly accepted and the guys began to tell us of their plans for the first 'Smackdown'. With Bobby having such a busy year ahead, early to middle May was going to be the only time to suit him to attend the event so the guys said: "no problem, May it is then", being only too happy to oblige. It sounded like it would be a lot of fun and if it was to go ahead we all said we would love to attend. And so the night went on.

It wasn't until I received a mail from Knud a few weeks later that I realised that these guys were totally for real and were planning the event of the century for May 2009. That was it, I wasn't missing this one and I just had to be there, as it was already shaping up to be one hell of a party.



The Pitchbrothers on tour

THE SMACKDOWN ARRIVES

It is 10 months, several helicopters, a few aeroplane tickets later and it's off to Denmark. Unfortunately due to unavoidable circumstances Bobby couldn't make the event but passed on his apologies. We however flew into Billund

(Denmark's second largest Airport) which is approximately 130km north of Sonderborg, home of the Pitchbrother Smackdown, where we immediately ran into 3D Masters 2008 winner Lukas Riva and his dad who had just arrived themselves on a flight from Milan. So with me, my



My Fury Extreme



A Furion 450 'Pitchbrother style'



Andy Hornyak night flying



My dead Fury Extreme



Matthew Poofs night flying



The Pitchbrother night fly

dad, my friend Matthew Poofs, John O'Rourke (who travelled on our flight from Ireland), Lukas and the GPS set, we had a three car convoy so off we went.

Denmark is a fantastically attractive country with lots of flat fields suitable for model flying to be found around every corner. Although the sight of the huge number of wind turbine generators we saw on the way to the field made me think this was going to be a windy weekend! Thankfully no such wind was to be found at the Sonderborg flying site when we arrived some 90 minutes later, just a gentle breeze and plenty of sunshine.

That very familiar sound of helicopters in pain could be heard as we drove onto the site so we knew we were at the right place, we parked up, unloaded the cars and went over to the clubhouse to say hello. Our hosts (Sonderborg Model Flying Club, Knud Pedersen, Krunder Rasmussen and Rasmus Jensen) had been organising this event for months and now it was finally here they were going to make sure it went smoothly from the outset so they were right there to greet us. First order of business was the issuing of the passes for all visitors who had just arrived, so armed with our VIP passes (not what you think it stands for, it is actually Very Insane Pitchbrother!) we were good to go.

THE FLYING SITE

Already on site were Chris Walton

and Andy Hornyak from Fast Lad performance who had driven over with all their gear the day before and Petr Novotny and Daniel Jetschin who had also arrived on the Thursday, along with a host of other talented pilots from all over.

The on-site facilities and the flying site itself have to be seen to be believed. Like most other modellers in the UK and Ireland I have been used to flying from half baked fields with little or no facilities available on site, where a small club hut or modified container seems like luxury. This site has it's own club house (and I mean house) with full charging facilities available for all, on site WiFi, clean male and female toilets, clubhouse bar complete with kitchen including a fridge, dishwasher and microwave and a decked area outside for seating just in case the pressure of flying gets too much and you just need to chill in the sun shine! Working from the back of my Jeep didn't seem just so inviting after all that.

SMACKING UNDERWAY

So with everything unpacked and assembled we got the flying, smacking and crashing under way. With me I had my Miniature Aircraft Furion 450 (with lots of crash spares on standby, and I needed quite a few as the weekend progressed) and my trusty Fury Extreme. The standard helicopter of the day seemed to be, as ever, the T-Rex. Lukas was the first to give his 700 a gentle breaking-in flight after

re-assembly and spent his first flight doing big loops, slow rolls and stall turns... nah, I don't think so do you?! He started laying down the smack from the word go with ultra fast hard 3D stops and direction changes making it look like he was trying to kill his helicopter but at no point did it ever seem he would. This kid just gets better and better the more you see of him, and it was clear to see why he is a 3DM winner. Not to be out done, Andy Hornyak took to the field with his 700 for a bit of a demo which certainly got the crowd going. It was during this flight that the chant "CHOP CHOP" could be heard building from the crowd and Andy duly obliged by making his blades a little greener than I think even he had planned to but survived to fly again. Daniel Jetschin "der elektrische Meister" has a particular technical style that is hard to rival and an absolute pleasure to watch. His Mikado helicopter seemed to be on rails as he performed a host of tail reversal manoeuvres on the deck, flight after flight, leaving the crowd in awe.

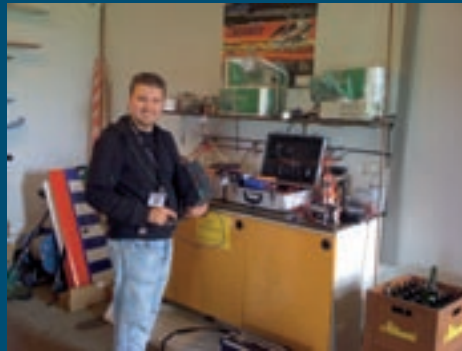
The day progressed largely without incident, but at around 6pm the weather started to close in and the rain began to fall. Oh shame we have to retire to the club house, what will we do?! The night celebrations began early due to the weather and many of the pilots found themselves incapable of flying not long after, for obvious reasons, but the mood was good and no one

mind the rain, after all it had been a great day.

The festivities continued into the night until about 1am when the inevitable happened... the words: "I'm going for a flight!" drifted across the room. Those famous words that can only lead to one thing, carnage. Chris had managed to badger Andy into thinking he had to fly to defend his honour and assured him that it would be easy to fly his 450 in the dark with only two halogen lamps lighting the way. The demo was great right up until Andy planted the 450 into the deck in spectacular fashion. No one cared as it had all been good fun. Once again it is the old situation, not content to see one poor soul lose his helicopter in the pursuit of a laugh, attention turned to me as they knew my Furion 450 was still alive, at least at that point anyway. So with much ribbing and jeering I succumbed to the pressure and lifted my Furion to the line. For some reason Andy seemed to want me to crash, I don't know why, perhaps it was the honour thing getting him again, but he was to be disappointed. In the dark I managed to lay down some early morning smack that lasted the full of the battery pack, only having to stop when the smack got a little too low and I lost my vertical fin, but sustained no other damage. Content with my evening and happy to be able to fly again in the morning with only minor repairs I decided to put Friday to bed.



Autographing the T-shirts



Daniel Jetschin



One of the event organisers, Krunder Rasmussen



In the pits



The Pitchbrother team four bus



The Fastlad Performance team

SATURDAY

Saturday dawned over the Smackdown and it was clear we were in for another hot day. The forecast showed that the rain was gone for the rest of the weekend and all we had to worry about was topping up our tan. From about 7am the sound of helicopters could be heard coming from the field like an early morning wakeup call and so it was time to get this day underway.

After my first Furion crash early on Saturday morning I set into fixing and watching the demos for the day. Then something strange happened. At about midday a strange mist and an unearthly silence surrounded the field and we knew something was happening. The only sound to be heard was the low drone of the in-line flat six engine of the Nissan Skyline that had just appeared on the flightline. The mist parted and the driver got out and we were met with... the Stig.

Some say he fears the colour orange and eats carbon blades for breakfast, but all we know is that he flies like a demon. The Stig put on a demo like no other, stopping only millimetres above the deck every time and choosing so low even his tail blades were green. The crowd were going wild during the demo which was one of the best ever witnessed, and just at that with one big auto, and a quick pack up he was gone. Who was that 3D-ing stranger... I suppose we will never know.

Saturday continued with lots more flying including some fantastic flights from Denmark's own rising star 15 year old Sebastian Duus who was showing us all just what a Mikado Logo 600 is capable of. Also putting on some superb demos with his T-Rex 600 and 700 was Ireland's own John O'Rourke. The previous night's rest had obviously paid off for John who was punching his helicopters pretty hard and getting away with it each time with every successive flight lower than the previous, some awesome flying smackdown style! Tom-Erik Rolfson from Norway (the guy famous for flying his Raptor 90 off a ship) was flying hard and fast with his Raptor 90 and was impressing the crowd with his helicopters 'super' pirouette rate. After a number of flights doing this the helicopter finally cried enough and ploughed in pretty hard, a real shame but a spectacular crash.

Saturday night once again proved to be large with even more people staying around for the late night flying under spot light, which was becoming very well supported. In fact people were turning up with 450 helicopters and foamy aeroplanes specifically for the night flying event. The official Pitchbrother air taxi pilot Martin Hjermitslev decided to work on one of his foamies indoors which somehow became confused with him wanting to fly it indoors which of course happened. Matthew Poots from N.Ireland, who travelled over with me, is the current UK IMAC

freestyle champion and decided to try his hand flying Martin's plane in the club house at about 2am, with limited success, who put that light there! Thankfully it worked better outside under the spotlights at least. Chris Walton didn't have the same luck with the spotlight as just when he went to fly his brand new T Rex 450 someone turned the light out leaving him nowhere to go but down. I wonder who turned the light out? Let's just say Lukas was looking a bit sheepish after it all happened, and Chris did laugh about it... the next day anyway!

SUNDAY

Sunday was always going to be the day to really watch out for. It was the last day of the event and people didn't really care if they crashed. Once again I started the day with a Furion crash (early morning thumbs are not good) but managed to fix it quite quickly and got back in the air, no sweat. The same could not be said for my Fury Extreme however. I had been plagued with engine difficulties all weekend and was just beginning to get a handle on them, in what proved to be my last flight. The engine was coming on well throughout the flight and the in-flight speed was building, as was my confidence in the engine. Pulling up for a big finale I decided, "yeah a big fast rolling tail slide!" sounds good. My governor was switched off for engine tuning earlier in the flight and as the helicopter fell in the rolling

tail slide, which was spot on, even if I do say so myself, the speed built up to the point that when I pulled out



Rasmus Jensen hard at work as the event's webmaster



Rasmus Jensen in a more relaxed pose at the Smackdown



A view of the club site



The Irish squad consisting of me (David Nolan) and John O'Rourke



The reasonably sized crowd of spectators

at the bottom, the machine boom struck, crashing before it hit the ground. Not my best ever finish but it was pretty cool as crashes go. Thanks Lukas for the tombstone.

The 'end of the weekend' feeling continued with further crashes from Lukas Riva, Andy Hornyak, John O'Rourke and lots of others. In fact Sunday flying finished quite early as people ran out of things to fly! Lukas seemed to be doing a bit of fishing, as he managed to catch a 700 in the netting, with a nice 'crunch' as the tail gears disappeared. One pilot who did impress on the Sunday and who didn't crash or look like he ever would was Denmark's own top pilot Kim Jensen flying his new Hirobo 50. Kim had just returned from a family holiday and hadn't been around all weekend but made up for it on the Sunday. Kim's style is very technical, smooth and controlled but yet still aggressive. Kim is becoming a force to be reckoned with in the 3D community. Watch this space.

Throughout the weekend we had also been treated to a running commentary from Zack Hayes of Curtis Youngblood Enterprises who certainly seemed more comfortable behind the microphone than behind the transmitter of Chris Walton's T Rex

700. Zack did fly and there is footage to prove it but that will be held back for now and will reappear at some later date, unless you pay the ransom big Z.

TIME TO GO HOME

As the sun started to go down on the Sunday, the field was packed up and we headed into Sonderborg town for a bite to eat and to reflect on the success of the weekend. Everyone was really tired but had enjoyed the weekend hugely.

For my part I would like to sincerely thank Sonderborg Model Flying Club for letting us invade their fantastic facilities and the organisers, Knud Pedersen, Krunder Rasmussen and Rasmus Jensen (www.thepitchbrothers.com) for inviting me to the Smackdown 2009, where the hospitality, food, drink and flying was immense all weekend. All the organisation paid off and served to raise the bar by which all future events will be measured. It was great to meet up with and make so many new friends at the event, but be warned Pitchbrother, the attendance at Smackdown 2010 is going to blow you away so get organising now.



The new Henseleit Rigid on display



The Stig arrived in a Nissan Skyline and put on a flying demo like no other