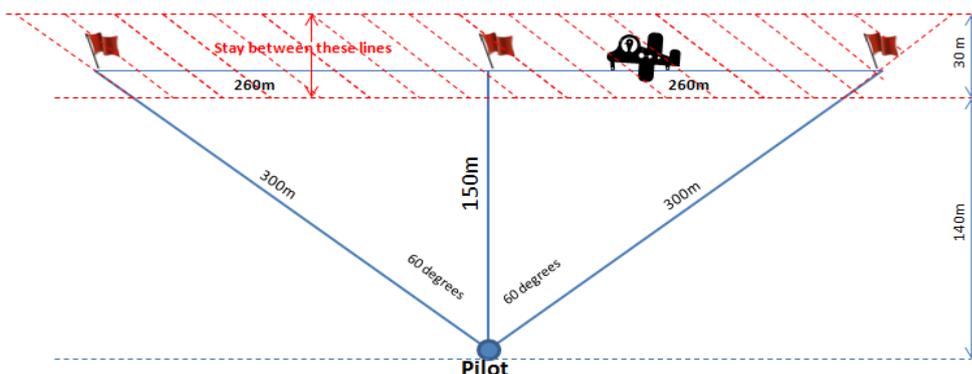


I SEE A PATTERN!

HAVE YOU BEEN FLYING RC FOR A WHILE?

DO YOU GO TO YOUR CLUB REGULARLY?

IF YOU DO THEN YOU MAY RECOGNIZE THIS PATTERN OF EVENTS, EITHER IN YOUR OWN BEHAVIOR OR MAYBE EVEN IN THE BEHAVIOR OF YOUR FELLOW CLUB MEMBERS.



An RC Pilot arrives at the club, unpacks and assembles his plane (planes). A cup of tea or coffee and a chat follows and then maybe another cuppa and some more chatting. No problem there, but after all, the pilot did come to do SOME flying!!.

Now for some stick time! The pilot takes off and flies a couple of circuits. Becoming adventurous the pilot decides to throw in a couple of acrobatics. (Acrobatics, on the other hand, are planned maneuvers executed with precision) Maybe egged on by his fellow members the aircraft gets thrown into every possible (and impossible) position until the “impossible” happens and the aircraft goes down in style.

The pilot is devastated and starts blaming everything, and everyone, that he can think of. Interference, wind, weather and receiver failure are normally good starting points!

This is what I would like to call a “saturated” pilot. This is a pilot that needs to reach new heights, that needs a challenge. This is what Pattern Aerobatics, or more precisely, Precision Model Aerobatics is about.

Do you want to get something MORE out of your hobby? Well, maybe Precision Aerobatics is what you have been looking for.

I have been flying Precision Aerobatics for about two years now and over the next few months we will try to cover some of the aspects of Precision Aerobatics. I will focus on the “newbies” and try to explain and share the enjoyment and satisfaction that I have experienced flying Pattern.

Precision Model Aerobatics, or Pattern, is regulated by MAASA (Model Aerobatics Association of South Africa). MAASA is a SIG

(Special Interest Group) of SAMAA (South African Model Aircraft Association) and as such, being a member of SAMAA is a prerequisite. Membership forms for MAASA, year planner, flight schedules and the MAASA sporting code are available for download from www.maasa.co.za. The sporting code is a key document that provides guidelines for pattern flying in South Africa for the various non-international classes. These are Novice, Sportsman, Advanced and Masters classes. The international F3A class, from where our National Team is chosen, is governed by the international (FAI) sporting code.

If you choose to embrace Precision Aerobatics as a challenge, then you need to realize that you are starting a process, a learning and growing process. Once hooked it will have you coming back for more, week after week. A never ending journey with each step along the way a milestone in improving your flying.

All precision aerobatics is flown in an “aerobatic box”. This is an imaginary rectangle in the sky that is centred 150m in front of you. It stretches 260m to your left and 260m to your right and is 260m high. Perhaps you have noticed Pattern pilots standing next to a runway staring blankly in front of themselves with a set of white lines painted on the ground in front of them. They are probably staring at the aerobatic box!!

Each of the classes mentioned above fly an aerobatic schedule. Each schedule is broken up into various maneuvers and each maneuver is given a difficulty (K) factor. Each class is also designed to teach you a new aspect of Aerobatics. In Novice class you perform maneuvers in the centre (in front of you) and you learn to fly “on the line” The “line”



referred to is the one 150m away from you in the picture above. This is not as easy as it may at first appear as you have to counter effects of wind and also perform the maneuvers with wings level so that the aircraft doesn't corkscrew offline.

After takeoff you need to fly your schedule of maneuvers while trying to:

- Always fly perpendicular (at right angles) to yourself as indicated in the drawing above. This line you must keep as precise as possible.
- Stay between the two 60 degree lines. These end points are indicated by a flag marker at a competition or you can put up your own markers at your club.
- Stay within a corridor not less than 140m and not more than 170m in front of yourself. This corridor indicated by the red dotted lines/area above.

Once you have mastered Novice you then move on to other classes

to perform end-box maneuvers, precision snaps and spins, integrated maneuvers, cross-box maneuvers, mid-box maneuvers. In fact, most of the maneuvers that you wished you could fly but don't have the courage to try.

So what is required to start the journey?

You can start by downloading and printing the Novice Schedule www.gautengaerobatics.co.za/downloads.html.

You really do not need an expensive purpose built pattern plane to get going. A stick, trainer or any other basic plane is more than adequate. The plane does not matter that much, rather it is important to select a line in the box, maintain the line while you do the maneuvers, and to remember the sequence. Try to find others at your club that are knowledgeable on the subject, or you can email us at gautengaerobatica@gmail.com and we will try to assist or put you in contact with somebody that can help.

There are various forums and groups that you can join, here are some references not mentioned earlier:

Regional rep and MAASA

www.maasa.co.za

Gauteng Aerobatics Association

www.gautengaerobatics.co.za/index.html

F3A 2013 World Championship

www.f3a2013.co.za

Pattern group on Avcom

www.avcom.co.za/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=73520

GAA on Face Book

[search GAA](#)

SAAMA

www.samaa.org.za

In the months to come, we will cover the MAASA Sporting Code, aresti drawings, plane and hardware selection and general information, all hoping to and get you up to speed and competing in this fantastic sport of precision aerobatics.

