

State of the Hobby

WHAT'S HAPPENING
IN MY WORLD?



REVERBERATIONS?
BEST SELLING FRAME
& PDB ON MARKET



LONG RANGE?
WILL YOU MISS YOUR
QUAD WHEN ITS GONE?



X CLASS FREEDOM
IS IT GOING
ANYWHERE SOON?

FGA PATREON NEWS



What's Doing?

I have not been doing much since I returned home from USA almost 3 months ago. I tried a couple of live video feeds but my “broadband” speed has continued to give me headaches. I live in a beautiful semi rural area which is great for testing and flying quads but my place is in a communications “worm hole” (read “shit hole”). The national broadband network will not be available in my area until mid 2019. The lag in any video cast I do is therefore quite noticeable/annoying. I am determined to find a better solution - somewhere with decent bandwidth. So, apologies guys, for not putting out as many Shooting the Shit broadcasts as I would have liked. I recently landed in USA again for a few weeks so hopefully can get better speeds here to do a broadcast or two. By the time I return home mid August I hopefully will have a better solution that works for us both.

Stop Breaking Stuff Advice.

Props:

Nothing you can do there. It's just an item you will always break so long as you crash.

ESC's:

Prop strikes and and damage in a crash is either down to bad placement or not enough protection.

Camera Lens:

You are using a frame design that has poor camera protection.

VTX pigtails:

You are allowing a weak cable to take impacts for which it is not designed. Hardmount the antenna to give the pigtail some strain relief. Soft mounting the VTX also can help.

VTX antennas:

The antenna is mounted in a way that it cannot get out of way in a crash. A solid object and a fast moving hunk of carbon is not the best place to be in between.

Radio antennas:

These are fragile things but they need to be in the open away from the carbon. Doing that puts them in the line of the props. Find a way to protect them even if they do enter the spinning blades of death.

Electronics in general:

Decent soldering and good placement is the key.

Frames/motors/general breakages:

Are you just flying in a location that far exceeds the strengths of the quad? High speed flying in bandos is a perfect example. In those locations you will break shit regardless. Maybe you could reduce that by using more bulletproof designs but know that the weight will increase and performance will drop. It's all a balance.

When I started the 4 month long process of designing and then testing the Reverb in 2017 I deliberately confronted all the little issues that pilots encounter when flying a quad. Designing a frame is always a compromise between weight, material strength and areas of natural weakness. No quad frame is ever going to be 100% crushproof despite what some people claim.

They say if you're not crashing, you're not learning. Lol. Stop acting recklessly and your problems will quickly be solved. Crashing into concrete means trouble.





Does Size Really Matter?

I often get asked for my opinion about X class - the large 1m (Freedom) quads you see being bandied about as a possible next “big thing” by the people flying them.

Here are the issues that X Class faces.

FPV racing as we know it will always be a niche hobby, unless you also think Robot Wars or Battlebots is going to go big like Baseball. The small quads although interesting at first just don't keep people's attention for long or confuses them to the point they give up. They can't associate flying a drone like they can throwing a baseball. To fix that you need more wow factor. Bigger quads that are easier to see, smash into a thousand pieces when they crash and sound mean. X Class has a lot of that so why is it not taking off?

Well, first off, the only reason we got so much exposure was because of the word “Drone”. It was a buzz word because of what it meant and not because of us. Drones meant privacy and safety issues. The media loves scary stuff and the viewers lapped it up. That brought in the money. The problem is that over time Drone racing did not deliver on the expectations of the media and general public. Instead of working together our community and racing leagues all fought each other. What the media was left with was pathetic. Terrible races that no one understood, short races with long downtime periods in between each race and when the race did happen most pilots didn't even manage to finish. I'll say it again. We fought each other instead of working together to try and deliver what the audience expected of us.

So what did that mean? The media got sick of us. When they got sick of us, the general public stopped seeing us so lost interest as well. When that happened the

dream of making money died as well and the businesses walked.

X Class needs money backing but that won't happen until it stops being a niche hobby within another niche hobby that the media got sick of. That then means that those who are in it need to back it and build it but then we come back to the main issue with our community. Cost. The biggest complaints in FPV is people bitching about price. ESC xxxx costs \$5 so it's a ripoff. With that kind of mentality you will never succeed with a bigger, more expensive, more likely to break version of racing. On top of that you won't get companies deciding to put in lots of R&D dollars or sponsorship offers when they are already pulling back spending to tackle the “cheaper is better” mentality this community seems to be so ingrained in.

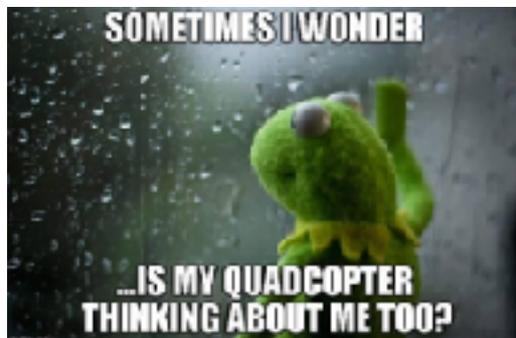
What's the fix? Stop fighting each other and accept that for our small industry it actually costs more to make stuff. After we achieve that then it's up to us to prop up the scene ourselves with hard work and our own money. We had our chance in the spotlight and screwed it up.

As for the racing leagues on TV they are no different to battlebots. Unless you are one of the niche group of nerds like us you don't go out of your way to watch it. Just like battlebots if you happen to be scrolling through the channels and find it you may stay and watch. That's called a niche industry.



Long Range FPV?

I get asked many times to chat about building a “long range” quad. There is not a lot to say except that people need to work out what they want to achieve flying “long range.” Filming long slow clips over long distances can get a little boring compared to freestyle or racing. The adrenaline rush is different. Many pilots have given long range a try only to realise this form of FPV flight creates its own issues. The longer time in the air means a bigger battery with all its unknowns and the extra weight handling required dictates building a quad with bigger arms and bigger motors.



The cinematographic possibilities that long range opens up are exciting but the reality is that the dreaded failsafe possibility creates an extra level of stress for pilots. When you are flying many kilometres away and the quad goes down you soon realise that “trekking or forgetting” may be the only options, depending upon the difficulty of the terrain. Flying over water adds yet another layer of stress. I cover some of the technical issues in my most recent Shooting the Shit videocast: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVwZNQx5PNg>

The Reverb and the new Wolf PDB

Most of you would be aware by now of the release of the Wolf PDB - developed especially for the Reverb but can also be used in other frames (some with slight modifications). Go

take a look - I did a review of the PDB (and a Reverb build) on the Rotor Riot YT Channel.



The Wolf PDB is a great product that simplifies everything and sets a new standard with auto-configuration capabilities, GPS support, no more driver issues, camera and VTX control, soon to be provided multilingual support, dual cascading switching and linear regulators with additional power filters (full 6S compatibility) and quality microphone & advanced amplifier with auto-gain control. What more do you need?

State of the Hobby?

I've been saying for quite some time now that the FPV quad market appears to have plateaued. The lack of exponential growth over the last 18mths is causing lots of hand wringing by the commercial sections of the community. The actual reality is that the only people affected by this are the entrepreneurs. With so many new “commercial” players entering the marketplace (each one wanting a piece of the pie) its only natural that the sharks in the pond are nipping at one another. I suggest we all go out and fly and leave the bullshit to the those who have a need to protect their business interests. I do recommend though that you keep questioning the motives behind every word you read.

If you wish to contact me please use the finalglideaus.com or the Patron website or you can message me via FB.