

Aeromodelling Passion and Aspirations

Since I was a child, my parents always took me to the airport. I quickly found out that it would be my future passion, but I never imagined that it would lead to any achievements. For many years I did not take it seriously. It was just *great fun for young boy enjoying aeroplanes*. Thanks to my Dad's experience in F1G and F1B classes, I started flying in contests.

My professional career started in June of 2009, when I participated in F1G Polish Championship for Juniors. I did not realise that my future participation would be connected with a completely different class of models: F1E hand-launched gliders with automatic steering. In spite of lack of an experience, I became the F1E Polish Champion in juniors. It was a crucial moment in my aeromodelling career. After victory, my chance to be a member of the Polish National Team strongly improved. In 2010, I had finally qualified for our National Team, for the F1E Junior World Championship 2011. This was due to winning for the second time the Polish Championship, the Polish Cup and reaching third place in the Juniors World Cup.

My most important undertaking started in 2011, in Serbia. I achieved fifth place individually, and second in the team classification, which meant that I won a silver medal. The European Championship, organized one year later in Romania, were a great lesson in humility. I was really close to having individually second place, but I ended up gaining sixth place, as well as a bronze medal in the team classification.

With the cooperation with the Ukrainian Federation, one month later, we organized in Poland for the first time, The Friendship Cup of Ukraine. It was a great example of collaboration between two countries. I won the competition, but my friend Zorin Valeanu from Romania beat me in the following Junior World Cup causing me to finish the season in second place.

From 2009 to 2012, I won the Polish Championship four times in a row, but I still did not have an individual medal from an International Championship. In 2013, my dream came true. After an unforgettable fly-off, I became the World Champion in Martin, Slovakia. I will never forget it. Hearing the national anthem from podium was an indescribable feeling, especially as I am a patriot.

All of my achievements were largely due to my Father because he introduced me to flying and encouraged me. My junior career finished this year. I became the Polish Champion for the fifth time, and reached second place in the Juniors World Cup. Only my friend Christian Winker from Germany did better. Working together with his family showed how important international cooperation is. I became World Champion, Florian Winker European Champion and Christian Winker won the World Cup twice. Nothing is impossible, especially when you work with a great group of people, who I met thanks to our common passion. It is really important to make friends following the true spirit of sport. A huge plus is that everything is organized in a friendly atmosphere, with fair play. It also allows creative thinking, the exchange of ideas and experiences gained during life.

An aeromodelling is not only connected with flying. It also requires from us being in good physical shape. When I started flying, I was a small, plump boy. Over the years, I have become an athlete. It should be classified as an extreme sport. In 2013, in Italy, I had to escape from a bull which tried to attack me. I have also had to climb trees, swim in a river and jump over dangerous holes. Sometimes it was like a race against time. It also taught me patience and great organisation. I had to plan in which exact conditions I should start. I spent a lot of time training, especially the moment of launch which is crucial for every flight.

Thanks to my Dad's and my trainer's experience, I learned a lot about thermal conditions. I reckon that it is the hardest part of aeromodelling. Another really hard thing is finding the balance between being a good constructor and competitor. These two roles vary considerably. They require from us constant development of

abstract thinking. Sometimes we have to create something completely new, which is really unique. The variety of technical solutions is infinite. It means that we can solve difficulties during competitions in a more tactical way. It also taught me how to face stress which was always annoying and frustrating.

An aeromodelling also gave me a chance to develop my video making skills. I run a channel (DarconTM) on YouTube which is strictly connected with Free Flight Models. I publish videos from World and European Championships in F1E class. I have uploaded one film directly from my aircraft. I strongly believe that the amount of viewers will greatly increase.

A participation in the international contests is also important because of cultural reasons. We can practise the languages we know, by talking with other competitors. Thanks to taking part in the World Cup competitions I have visited countries about which I knew very little.

The biggest advantage of aeromodelling, is that you can cut away from all the problems you have and pay attention to things you really love to do. That is why I want to connect my future job with my passion. Next year, together with my Father, I will start in the 2015 FAI Senior World Championship in F1E class. It was always our target and dream to be in the National Team together. This competition will be crucial for my senior career. Despite the huge amount of material to learn (in my final year at high school), I want to continue my adventure with F1E. I would hope to remain competitive, as I was in the juniors. Thanks to my gained experience, I would also try to help my friends from Junior National Team as the older one.

I plan to study law at Uniwersytet Śląski, located in Katowice. In the future I want to concentrate on sports law. I do not exclude flying gliders as my Grandfather did in the past or participating in other classes of models. I try to be a really versatile man, promoting an aeromodelling everywhere. I hope that my efforts will be noticed and properly awarded.

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