

I have just finished my latest building project. It is a Gambler AG discus launch glider. The project was actually started a year ago and was held up by the prospect of glassing the pod. After all the excuses were brushed aside, I glassed my first pod. Sure wish I didn't wait that long. It wasn't bad at all. I continued along with the plans to the point where the wing was built up and joined, the pod was built, glassed and covered with mono-coat, and the tail boom glued in place.

Those of you who have already built a gambler may already know what happened when I researched building tips at that point. Two major issues came up. One was the trailing edge. Several tips on the discussion boards recommended the taper the TE before installation, "Very good idea." I was able to thin and taper the trailing edge on the wing nicely but it would have been a LOT easier and faster to do it in a jig before installation. Second, It wasn't referred to in the text but I saw pictures of the tail feathers mounted on the tail boom before it was glued to the pod. Unfortunately, I followed the plans by orienting the slot in the boom vertically with a piece of balsa and gluing it in the pod. When the plans got to putting the tail section together, the vertical stab didn't glue in vertical as I assumed it would. Notice I said 'assumed'. You know what that means. I ended up hacking into the pod and busting up the carbon fiber boom to get it turned to properly line up the tail with the wing. The boom was broken and split. I soaked it with thin CA. The boom felt pretty stiff after the CA repair. I know it is going to fail prematurely but I am committed to it for now unless and until I get a pod kit or build another complete kit.

I covered the wing and tail with light weight translucent covering. I used clear for the top outer wing panels. The clear that came with the kit was much different to work with than the translucent stuff. It took more heat to seal and stretch. I am impressed with the results. I wouldn't have any concerns of more of it. It looks good and it is very strong. It's kind of nice to be able to see the structure inside to watch for future damage.

I took a 110Ma/hr pack out of my old hand launch glider and used that. The servos were too big from that plane so I used a couple of GWS pico servos from an old Lite Stick. I installed the AR6200 DSM2 Spektrum receiver in it. The main receiver (right picture) went inside the front hatch.



The second receiver (left picture) I installed under the wing above the tail control rods on a balsa shelf. The main receiver antennas parallel to the wings curled up and the second receiver antennas are parallel with the pod. Not too bad on weight, 10 grams published closer to 11 actual. It's a full range radio with two receivers for when the Gambler is specked out. The pod is so small that the radio just fits in. It balanced out well with a home made 110 ma pack with no additional weight needed. It's fun going from 120 glow planes with big parts to tiny parts you can hardly see on planes that weigh as much as a banana all up ready to fly.

I took it out the BAM field on a calm afternoon last week and gave it a couple of forward hand tosses. It didn't need any trimming so I tried the tip launch. It's much easier that I thought it would be. I could get 40 to 50 ft with gentle swing, no spin. I have to improve my form on the spinning launches. Half the time it angles left probably because I am not keeping the wings level at the release. I can wait to fly it in good air. It's going to be fun. The snow was rough on the leading edge of the lower half of the vertical stab. More hand catches are in order until the soft grass appears in the spring.

If you haven't tried discus launch because you think you can't do it. Think again. Try it.

Nelson Frost

