

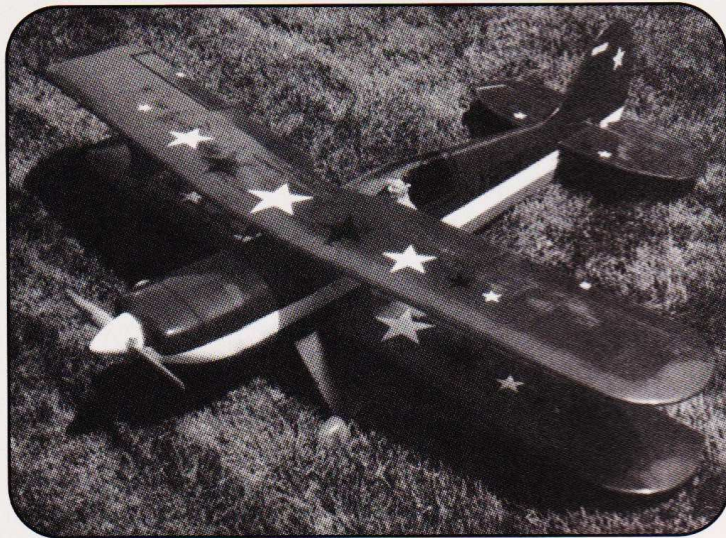


# PRODUCT REVIEW

## SUPER SKYBOLT

Great Planes Model Mfg.

By Ron Rodda



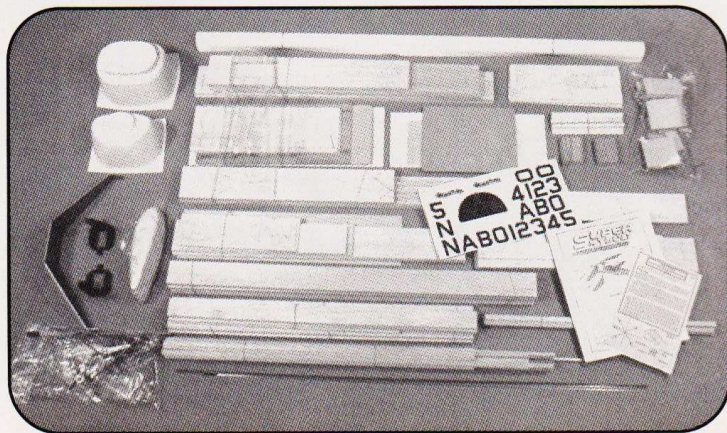
Great Planes came to the rescue of sport aerobatic fans who were tiring of Ultimates by releasing their kit of the Super Skybolt. Designed for a .60 up to a .90 2-stroke, or a .90 to 1.20 4-stroke, this kit lives up to the Great Planes' tradition of quality.

The box (5-1/2" x 11" x 48") was jammed with the expected assortment of material and accessories with packages and subpackages helping to organize all the items. With a supply of Satellite City's UFO glues handy, a pleasant building experience was anticipated.

### Construction:

Two sheets of plans, each measuring 40" x 59", were laid out, along with a state-of-the-art instruction booklet. This 72-page item is outstanding, displaying all the necessary data required to successfully handle the construction. With 295 photos displaying valuable help, the project moves along well, although it is obviously more time-consuming than a monoplane.

All tail parts are built initially with a framework then covered by 1/16" balsa sheeting. The fuselage starts with doublers being installed, followed by formers. Fire wall steps follow and Great Planes includes one of their adjustable engine mounts. Installing the fire wall requires some bending of the doubled nose area to



## SPECIFICATIONS

Name .....	SUPER SKYBOLT
Aircraft Type .....	Sport
Mfg. By .....	Great Planes Model Mfg. P.O. Box 9021 Champaign, Illinois 61826-9021
Mfg. Sug. Retail Price .....	\$249.99
Available From .....	Retail Outlets
Wingspan .....	57 Inches
Wing Chord .....	8 1/8 Inches
Total Wing Area .....	930 Sq. In.
Fuselage Length .....	49 Inches
Stabilizer Span .....	20 Inches
Total Stab Area .....	100 Sq. In.
Mfg. Rec. Engine Range .....	.61-.90, 2-Stroke .90-1.20, 4-Stroke
Rec. Fuel Tank Size .....	14 Oz.
Rec. No. of Channels .....	4
Rec. Control Functions .....	Rud., Elev., Throt., Ail.
Basic Materials Used In Construction	
Fuselage .....	Balsa & Ply
Wing .....	Balsa & Ply
Tail Surfaces .....	Balsa
Building Instructions on Plan Sheets .....	No
Instruction Manual .....	Yes (72 pages)
Construction Photos .....	Yes

## RCM PROTOTYPE

Radio Used .....	Futaba 9VAP
Engine Make & Disp. ....	O.S. .90 2-Stroke
Tank Size Used .....	12 Oz.
Weight, Ready to Fly .....	142 Oz. (8 Lbs., 14 Oz.)
Wing Loading .....	22.0 Oz./Sq. Ft.

## SUMMARY

### WE LIKED THE:

Instruction booklet, interplane strut design, field set-up, and flight performance.

### WE DIDN'T LIKE THE:

1/16" balsa sheeting.

conform to the fire wall's rounded shape. Thorough soaking with water helped with this curvature. I installed the 1/4" triangle stock behind the fire wall at this point. The fuel tank and landing gear are built into the fuselage, so care is needed since changes later are quite inconvenient.

The cabane structure is cleverly designed to be mistake-free construction with all wires accurately prebent. The wires are glued with epoxy into plywood holders which then fit into plywood formers in the fuselage. Using a propane torch, the wires are soldered once they are automatically aligned by the fuselage formers. Sheeting around the cabanes is, of course, a bit tedious, but balsa filler will come in handy later.

The rear turtledeck is a typical stringer, and sheeting exercise made more tedious by use of 1/16" sheeting. Not much left to sand, the 1/16" proved to be too thin. Fitting the rear surfaces to the fuselage is convenient with the vertical fin plugging into a notch in the top.

Building the wings is no different than most open bay structures, you just get to do the steps twice with a biplane. The interplane struts plug into a rib pair at each location while the cabanes plug into brass tubes built into the top wing. Some time needs to be taken with a fit and adjust procedure, but the fact that the cabanes were built into the fuselage with those precut parts makes alignment easy.

One servo was used in the wing, although instructions detail the use of two servos for those so inclined. The ABS cowl and wheel

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pants were assembled with UFO and strips of fiberglass cloth, and are proving to be rugged items. The assembly of the kit was greatly assisted with the use of Satellite City's UFO in both the thin and thick.

That pesky 1/16" balsa caused some problems with wing leading and trailing edge sheeting; careful handling still led to several breakages of the sheeting.

**Covering:**

Coverite's 21st Century film in red, white, and blue was used to cover the Super Skybolt. By using the highly recommended 21st Century iron, the job became steadily easier.

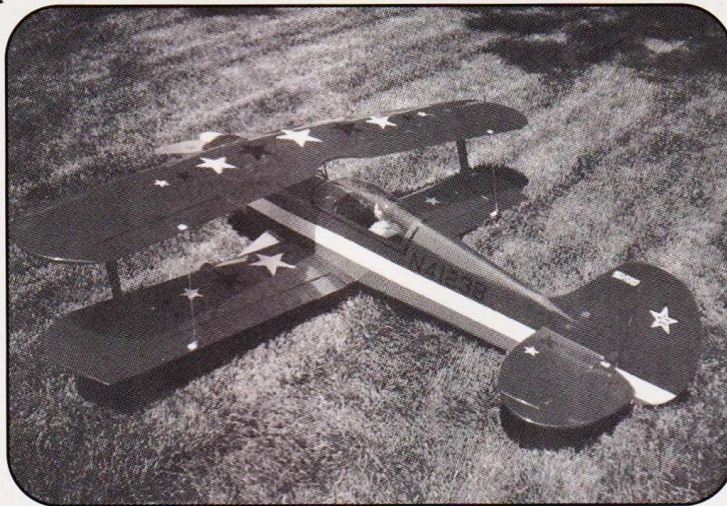
The iron, which features very accurate temperature control, took the guesswork out of the heat setting. The film is first attached with a low-heat setting, then receives another dose of heat to shrink and seal. The wings, the only open structures on the plane, came out beautifully, particularly once the instructions were followed to the word.

Coverite's companion 21st Century spray paint in matching colors was used, along with their primer. Results were excel-

lent with the color match very good and application easy. This eliminated the usually less than successful mixing of paint to try and match a covering.

**Engine:**

A well broken-in O.S. .90 2-stroke was



installed, anchored to the fire wall by a J'TEC soft mount. With a Slimline Pitts style muffler, 12-oz. tank, and a 13 x 8 propeller, the power package was completed.

**Radio:**

A Futaba 9VAP with a mix of S-131 and

S-130 servos and SR battery pack provided the electronic link. Room is not a factor in the installation. Traditional torque rods drive the lower ailerons with threaded rods linking them with the upper ailerons. Pull-pull cables were used on the rudder with steel wire inside a NyRod type housing, and pushrods used on elevator.

**Flying:**

A check with the scales showed an 8-lb. 14-oz. ready-to-fly project with the happy bonus of balancing perfectly with no further addition of weight. The controls were set to approximate the numbers offered by the instructions. The ailerons were set on exponential for smoother control.

With a purring O.S. demanding no further delay, the throttle was slowly advanced. With an almost straight take-off run, the Super Skybolt was airborne and it was showtime.

After a bit of trim time and nerve relaxation, the Skybolt was offered the opportunity to show its stuff. With a .90 pulling it through maneuvers with authority, the Skybolt has all the necessary horses to do as the pilot wishes. It shows aerobatic qualifications one would expect of such a design without all the overly sensitive controls often attributed to biplanes. Its larger size is a factor in being smooth.

Landings are easy enough, just don't come in with too much speed or, if you are too quick, prepare to count the bounces. The Skybolt will slow very appropriately for landing, you just need to ask it to do so.

Great Planes has another superior kit in its stable with this 2 winger. For the competent builder and flier, the much seen Ultimate design now has competition within the modeling field.



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