

Bud Judy

The Loop-Lover Flirts with Flawless Flight



Over 70 years old and the three-time U.S. National Aerobatic Champion, and boredom drove him to it. For 41.5 years Louis “Bud” Judy was Captain Louis “Bud” Judy, a Delta Airlines pilot who upon retirement in 1994 got “the chance to feel the fun of flying again” in competitive aerobatics. So long boredom, hello adventure. Neither the thrill of danger nor the thrall of daring nor the need for speed or adrenaline fix puts Judy, who lives in Granbury, Texas, into the cockpit of his self-built monoplane, the *Judy Monosport*. What then? “It’s about challenging myself, being the best I can be. What I do is more like gymnastics or springboard diving. Airshow pilots, hell, they’re the real flirts with the thrills of danger,” he says.

For the former Air National Guard fighter pilot, it is not about the win, though Judy does plenty of it. “Just to know you had a nice, clean flight...,” well, give him that over trophies or accolades or the quest for broken records. The aerobatic contests in which the rolling-looping-spinning maneuvers Judy pulls off in a 1,000 meter cube of airspace weaken the knees of pilots half his age but leave competitor Judy exhilarated – and challenged. Lately the champ has put himself up against aerobatic flyers in the Advanced divi-

sion – much to his ability to laugh. “I got *trounced* by those kids,” he chuckles of one recent contest. “You’d think they’d have some sympathy!” Will he compete against them again? Yes. He adds: “I like to do things off the cuff, which you might consider adventurous. But really, what might seem thrilling or dangerous to some, doesn’t seem so to me. It’s all about flying that one, flawless flight.”

Follow Judy’s U.S. Aerobatic Competition performance at usnationalaerobatics.org 

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