

Jeff Troy

ElectriFly SPAD XIII ARF

Here's the fourth exciting entry in Great Planes' sport scale World War I series.



Specifications

- Wingspan: 34 inches
- Length: 27 inches
- Weight: 25.2 ounces
- Power: Brushless 28-30-950
- RC: 4-channel with four servos and 25A brushless ESC

ARF Features

- Factory-built airframe parts
- Factory covered in rugged film
- Factory-painted cowl
- Cabane and interplane struts
- Complete hardware packages
- Control horns and pushrods
- 24-page instruction manual

Recommended RC accessories are four Futaba S3114 sub-micro servos, one Y-harness, receiver and transmitter. Jeff Troy chose the 2.4GHz Futaba R617F receiver and 10C computer.

A lot of hobby kits in every category light my fires, but nothing does it in the same way as a World War I aeroplane. Dave Johnson has beaten a truly different drum in his five EP designs for the Great Planes design team, and each model has proved to be an easy-building, great-flying tribute to the flying machines of WWI and the “Knights of the Air” who flew them.

Opening the series, the classic British S.E. 5a attracted early aviation modelers by the scores. The Scout's long nose arm and generous wing area make for a fine flying model, and the S.E. proved the point. Next came a pair of German fighters — the “Red Baron's” Fokker Dr.1 triplane and a Fokker D.VII biplane, both in Blazing red with appropriate markings. The D.VII has always been a solid modeling subject, and Johnson is such a competent designer that even his Fokker triplane — a particularly difficult choice for RC — assembled and flew exceptionally well.

The fourth model in the series is my current review model, the SPAD XIII. A British Sopwith Camel, so named for the peculiar hump behind its twin cowl-mounted Vickers machine guns, was released shortly after the debut of the new SPAD.

The SPAD was a French aeroplane (*Societe Por l'Aviation et ses Devives*), and the Great Planes choice for their ElectriFly model was the American Captain Edward (“Cap'n Eddie”) Rickenbacker's 94th Aero Squadron #1 “Hat in the Ring” SPAD XIII, easily the most readily recognized of all SPAD variants.

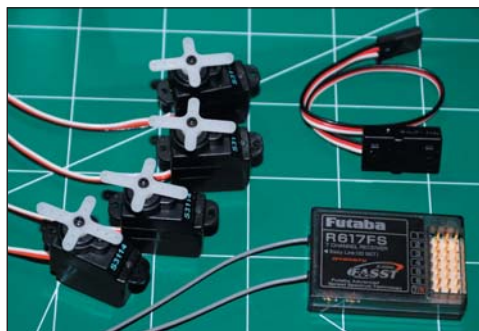
The model's 24-page instruction manual leaves no question unanswered. Recommendations for Great Planes ElectriFly power supplies (28-30-950 brushless outrunner motor, 3S 1250mAh LiPo pack and Silver Series 25A ESC) are

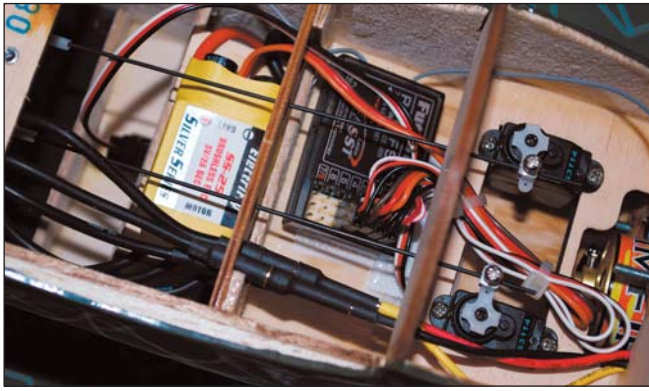
given, as are Futaba S3114 servos, and Y-harness and receiver choices.

The SPAD XIII is a beautifully engineered ARF. The airframe components are crafted from select, laser-cut woods, and covered with rugged, polyester film in Rickenbacker's multicolor scheme. Aileron and elevator panels come factory hinged, and access hatches secure with magnetic catches.



Recommended ElectriFly power accessories include the 28-30-950 brushless outrunner motor, 3S 1250mAh LiPo pack and Silver Series 25A ESC. 3mm-to-5mm adapter and bullet connector adapters are also required.





RC compartment appears crowded but is not. Gear is easily accessible through hatches and lower wing.

The SPAD is a quick build, as assemblies that would otherwise be tedious are self-aligning. These include the horizontal stabilizer/vertical fin mounting, and attaching the upper wing. The stabilizer-fin assembly slides into factory-cut slots in the rear of the fuselage, and the upper wing is fastened to the fuselage-mounted cabane struts. Securing the interplane struts between the upper and lower wings completes the process with no measuring.

I had my SPAD XIII ready for the flightline — including the radio programming and a full battery charge — in less than five hours, and that included taking photographs for the article. Correct downthrust is ensured during the motor installation, and side thrust is built into the firewall. The model balances correctly, and using the recommended surface deflections results in solid handling.



Scarf trailing, "Cap'n Eddie" peeks out of his cockpit over the barrels of his two dummy machine guns.

Brandon Wright took the SPAD's maiden flight while I took the photographs. The model handles the ROG task on tightly mowed grass, and is also an easy aeroplane to hand-launch. The SPAD has power to spare, climbing smoothly and steadily from either launch technique.

This is an exceptionally realistic-appearing model in flight, especially for an aircraft with only a 34-inch wing. Of course, it's easy to forget that the ElectriFly SPAD is not a giant-scale model, as it sports a fine combination of stability in straight flight, and all the maneuverability you want when you want it. It's an awesome WWI RC fighter.

Dave Johnson and ElectriFly score again — big! **HM**



Rickenbacker's SPAD XIII is a beautiful sight, faithfully capturing the "Knights of the Air" spirit of the aeroplane.