

PTAR 2008

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The last weekend of May 2008 saw my navigator and I try our hand at the annual President's Trophy Air Race. This was a first for me and although I have done some Rally Flying, this was a very different affair.

The race was held over two days and hosted by the Witbank Aero club. We covered a track in excess of 330 NM on both days. Day 1 saw the aircraft depart in reverse handicap order, i.e. the fastest aircraft first. This leads to nice spread-out field and determines the start position for day two. Day two starts in the updated handicap order which implies the slowest aircraft get airborne first. This leads to a very exciting day of flying as the field gets more and more crowded towards the end of the race.

Theory has it that if all aircraft flew straight, maintained their assigned handicap and don't get lost, should cross the finish line at the same time...

For this race just shy of 100 aircraft were home in less than 25 minutes. Needless to say this leads to an interesting finish and VERY busy pattern coming in to land.

We placed 51st overall. In a field of 92 completing aircraft I don't feel too bad and have learnt a great deal. This is most certainly an annual event I will not miss!



Official logo for 2008



Home after first day's hard work



Cross-over day 2



Let the race begin



Some aircraft lined up ready for the big day