What is mini-Goodyear?

Mini Goodyear is a control line racing class, derived from the F2C “Team Race” Class.

- Engines are limited to “any commercially available 1.5cc compression ignition engine” (diesels)
- Aairframes are profile 1/12 scale replicas of Goodyear racers – midget pylon racers from the late 1940s, that evolved into modern Formula 1 Air Races
- Fuel tanks, fuel cut offs, control arrangement are left to the builder.

These are essentially very simple models – easily buildable from a single sheet of 6mm balsa, a scrap of 3mm balsa for the tail, some hardwood engine bearers and a small sheet of thin ply/veneer. The teams consist of a Pilot and Pitman, with separate designations for “first timers” and “juniors” (requiring at least one team member to qualify as either).

However, this simplicity does not make the racing “easy”.

Races consist of “one up” heats (a single team, flying against the clock), with a total distance of 100 laps, including two pitstops. Followed by a “two up” final (two teams, racing in the same circle, at the same time), of the same distance and stopping requirements, for the two fastest teams.

Flying on the required 13.5m lines, the aircraft will cover a distance of just over five miles, with an average flying speed (not including stops) anywhere between 50 and 70mph.

Running a 1.5cc diesel at peak rpm, for 5 miles, with two restarts is notoriously difficult for the pitman, coupled with maximum speed requiring consistent flying, minimal control inputs and accurate use of the fuel cut-off (if fitted) for the pilot. Race times can vary from sub 5 minutes, to over 9 minutes, even with such a basic format!

This was our third attempt at Mini Goodyear Racing, a sport that we got invested in purely by accident.

2024

In 2024 we had our second family camping trip to BMFA Buckminster (an excellent facility, that I highly recommend for anyone needing a holiday on a budget) which just so happened to coincide with Control Line Nats.

The dizzy people are the most enthusiastically inclusive group of aeromodellers I have ever met, and wouldn’t take “no” for an answer, until they’d got the whole family flying. Unfortunately, due to the nature of running diesels, and the inexperience of even our best pilot, we didn’t manage to complete a full race distance.

After lots of fun, many crashes, gallons of diesel fuel wasted learning to start the engines, we returned home with some fantastic memories, technical advice, and airframe plans on order!

2025

In 2025 we returned to our camping holiday, this time specifically timed to cover CL Nats.

We showed up with all our own kit, two airframes, and second hand engines that we'd flown with sufficient regularity to be confident of achieving something.

Unfortunately, the weather was against us, with a significant blustery wind fighting against our less-than-optimal engines. Having established the least bad of the two, and the most capable airframe, all with significant input and assistance of the organisers and other competitors, after 7 hours in the field, we finally managed to fly a full tank of fuel in a single run. It was only 55 laps, and no pitstops, so not a full race, but it was the best effort of all the competitors on the day, and enough for a "gold".

2026

Summer of 2026 and we were back.

Significantly more technical knowledge, much more experience, and some minor modifications to our equipment, made us confident of finally completing a full race distance.

The weather was far too windy for practice on the Friday, so the Pilot went back to his rest, whilst the Pitman spent the day tuning engines and perfecting "hot starts".

On the Saturday morning, the sun was out, the wind had finally taken a day off, and conditions were near perfect.

After some short practice runs, with much needed pitstop drills, we were feeling VERY confident. Unfortunately, as soon as we were stood with a timekeeper, we broke two props in quick succession and abandoned the attempt.

The gentlemen from Peterborough MFC were straight in their toolboxes and offering us an upgrade to a classic "Tornado" vinyl propellor, to ensure we didn't lose out because of low quality APC plastic props. Having replaced the prop and retuned the engine (the new prop being significantly lighter), a cursory line check picked up a "kink" had turned in to a "fray", and our hearts sank. Once again, Peterborough MFC came to the rescue and gave me a field lesson in making new lines (I had a spare set of longer stunt lines in the box available to shorten and re-end), and we were back out with a timekeeper!

The engine sang, the lines were perfect, the wind dropped further, the Pilot managed to get the landings reasonably close to the pits, so his old dad didn't have too much running to do! Two almost perfect restarts from the Pitman, and we scored a first heat time of 7:13.

Unfortunately, because we haven't fitted a cut off yet, the engine had to run past the 100 laps and audibly started to overheat at around 110-115 laps before finally cutting. The subsequent retune for our second heat had the engine running marginally rich with a visible plume of exhaust (great for glow engines, far too rich for a diesel), and a mid race adjustment at the first stop caused a lean cut, and an extra restart costing us valuable time, so our second heat only managed a time of 9:36, but we were over the moon to complete two full distance races on the day, and our best time was only 14 seconds away from making the final.

The ultimate winners posted a heat time of 5:05, with those in second attaining 7 minutes dead. Our times of 7:13 and 9:36 were the only other full race distances, with two other teams failing to complete a full race.

We came away with Bronze overall, and Junior Champions.