

## Introduction to Aerobatics

First of all, I want to explain some of the most important aspects of any aerobatic manoeuvre. These are:

### **Correct placement of manoeuvre**

Most people confident in fast forward flight can execute aerobatics such as stall turns, loops and rolls without too much trouble. However, many aren't so successful at executing the manoeuvre in a specified position such as right in front of them each and every time. Contest judges will deduct a large amount of marks for manoeuvres that are not correctly placed.

You should aim to practise a manoeuvre until you are confident that you can execute the manoeuvre from any direction in any position

### **Straight and level entry into manoeuvre**

Many people (and I'm more guilty than most!) make a hash of the entry into a manoeuvre. Starting the manoeuvre whilst diving, climbing and/or flying sideways (damn that heading hold!). This is just about guaranteed to screw up the rest of the manoeuvre. It can also produce some very hairy moments too! An example of this is at the first competition of this year here in New Zealand (the first competition that I'd flown the Vigor in) I entered a roll a bit low and with the nose well down. The result was a high-speed diving roll that had everyone's hearts in their mouths as the Vigor pulled out at about 10ft off the deck... That taught me a thing or two real quick!

### **Smooth and controlled execution of manoeuvre**

Another big mistake (and once again, I'm as guilty as everyone

else!) is that pilots are often in too much of a hurry to get the manoeuvre over and done with. One of the more common occurrences of this is during the stall turn where people just lay into the rudder and hold it in until the heli has come around at max pirouette speed. It looks a bit crazy in comparison to a smooth controlled pirouette, which will just about always score more.

Take your time and slow down, the quality of your stunts will thank you for it.

### **Straight and level exit from manoeuvre**

How you exit the manoeuvre is important as well. The helicopter must exit where you want it to, not where it wants to! Doing a roll is great, but if the helicopter is heading off in another direction when you exit, you won't score too highly!

These basic principles can be applied to any aerobatic manoeuvre. They are mainly concerned with FAI style flying, but many can be applied to 3D flying as well.