

A Smarty Finish

by Paul Grabski

The PFFT model of the year for 2004 is the early 1/2A nostalgia "Smarty." My Smarty is setup with a Cox .020 TD running on 35% nitro. One of the problems of using high nitro motion lotion is fuel eating through the finish, especially on the front of the fuselage near the engine. On past gas projects I brushed on two or three coats of nitrate dope then sprayed K&B red Super Poxxy on the fuselage. My results have not been too good with this method — after a few flying excursions bare spots begin to show through the red epoxy. This is the beginning of a oil soaked mess. After approximately 40 flights on the Smarty I've had no problem with damage to the epoxy finish. On the Smarty fuselage I used a new product Minwax Polycrylic gloss out of the spray can as the undercoat/sealer. The second coat of Polycrylic dries hard almost like cyanoacrylate. Be careful not to get any bad runs on the second coat because like Cy A they will be very hard and darned hard to sand out. Polycrylic is a water based acrylic with few solvents to float up to the ozone layer, so that when the tree huggers have taken my nitrate dope from my Ambroid encrusted fingers I'll still be able to paint model airplanes. I applied two coats, sanding between applications, followed by the epoxy top coat (still working on my last can of K&B red). I think the Polycrylic is doing a good job of preventing damage to the balsa under the top coat of epoxy by allowing it to stick to the balsa more firmly. I've also used Polycrylic as my sealer for the nose blocks of my rubber jobs with equally good results. Polycrylic might be a useful item to add to your tool box.