District I—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

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Drone racing is happening at the Wide World of Indoor Sports Complex in North Kingstown RI each Sunday. Practice is from noon to 3 p.m. with races from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m.

Art van Meeteren (L), the founder of Rhode Island Drone Racing, acquired access to this ideal facility and welcomes some of the drone pilots who attended the first Sunday open house event.

The popularity of competitive FPV drone racing and the availability of ready-to-fly race quads, has had interested AMA clubs create dedicated racecourses at their flying sites this year. AMA officially welcomed Multirotor Grand Prix (MultiGP), its newest Special Interest Group (SIG) to represent this community in November of 2015 and, in less than a year, its membership has exceeded that of any other AMA SIG.

I have had numerous calls from clubs inquiring about how to setup a safe racecourse and program at their flying sites. Members should review AMA Document #550 for general FPV operational rules, AMA's FPV racecourse safety considerations, and definitely visit MultiGP at www.multigp.com.

MultiGP is a premier FPV drone racing league that hosts competition-based tournaments, free-fly gatherings, and casual events. Consider creating or joining a MultiGP Chapter in District I. We are in the process of creating a list of all of the AMA clubs in the district that have included drone or FPV multirotor racing at their flying sites.

On April 10, 2016, Associate Vice President Steve Brehm and I were invited by Art van Meeteren, the founder of Rhode Island Drone Racing, to attended an open house and fly at the Wide World of Indoor Sports Complex. Art discovered these absolutely phenomenal indoor facilities and negotiated for the use of one of the five indoor, climate-controlled fields at the company's North Kingston, Rhode Island, complex. There is another complex in Smithfield, Rhode Island, and one in Montville, Connecticut. Although these state-of-the-art facilities were designed for sports such as soccer, lacrosse, and baseball, they are perfect for indoor drone racing.

We watched race drones impact the turf at full speed, never breaking a propeller or part. All of the walls and ceilings are protected with netting, and the overlooking observation mezzanine with seats, tables, and a food and refreshment bar, as well as the lower operation area separating the fields, are glassed off and netted.

The current format allows for open practice from noon until 3 p.m., followed by race sessions until 5 p.m. As pilot attendance increases, Art's intention is to host afternoon leagues. Racing will be broken down into qualifier heats with two pilots at a time. The top pilots will advance to the next round until two top pilots remain. The final round will be the best out of three races to determine a winner for the day.

Pilots are allowed on turf when ready to fly, and on the other side of a glass and net wall is a pit area for setup and charging.

Classes are Micro/180, Mini/250, and Open/450. I-Lap IR transponders are used for timing and scoring. Information is at http://ridroneracing.com.

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