



Get 'em in your sights and blast 'em with your laser gun

# LOCKED ON TARGET



ROTORWORLD'S GRAPHIC DESIGNER EXTRAORDINAIRE, ADAM HARRY, HAS FUN BLASTING HIS FRIENDS OUT OF THE SKY WITH HIS FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS PRESENT, A PICOO Z SKY CHALLENGER SET



The Sky Challenger set from Flying Toys is made up of a pair of specially adapted Picoo

Z sub-micro model helicopters. The popular Picoo Z is already well established as a great way into the RC helicopter hobby and the Sky Challenger set adds an interesting new twist. The helis supplied incorporate laser guns designed to be fired at each other to temporarily disable the other model. There are even light and sound effects which just add to the thrill and excitement. This isn't as dangerous as it sounds as the models are only disabled for a short time and should the worst happen they are pretty robust so should be able to withstand the odd crash.

## What's in the box?

- Two helicopters
- Two transmitters
- Replacement tail rotors
- Optional aluminium weights
- Instruction booklet

## THE DESIGN

Designed to offer a three dimensional interactive game, the idea of the Sky Challengers is to outsmart your opponent in the air using your flying skills and then shoot their model using the integral laser beam to temporarily disable it.

Measuring just 17cm long and weighing only 11g, these two tiny Sky Challenger choppers are remarkably robust and incorporate an auto stability system to make them easy to operate both indoors and also outside in calm conditions.

Supplied completely ready-to-fly with a preinstalled two-channel proportional wide beam infrared control system, each Sky Challenger has a lightweight built-in lithium polymer (LiPo) flight battery that's claimed to provide flights of up to 10 minutes between charges. This can then be recharged in less than half an hour using the charger built into the transmitter.

## FUN TIME

Well when these little beauties turned up on my desk just before Christmas, a little early and not quite gift wrapped, I thought well it's the thought that counts! It turns out it was actually in for review, and what a treat!

Now I must first say that I don't know an awful lot about the technicalities of 'professional' RC helicopters, but these little choppers are certainly great fun.

This is a fantastic idea, I've always had quite a short attention span but I do quite fancy a helicopter, but they go up, they come down, I'd probably get bored. The Sky Challengers however add a bit of competition to the mix, you get two helicopters in the box so you can invite a friend (not included). Once you've mastered a generally reliable hover and as soon as your opponent happens to be facing

you (it does take practice), you get to blast your buddy out of the sky via an infrared beam that blocks your opponent's frequency.

The helicopters themselves are based on Picoo Zs except that each model operates on a different frequency 'A' or 'B' and the transmitters now have 'Attack' buttons incorporated into the top left and right of the unit. They also have a very exciting 'shooting' sound effect built-in which all helps to get the adrenaline going when you're shouting die, die, die!

On opening the box it was all very straightforward to set up, though you do need a small screwdriver to get into the battery compartment (why do they do this?). Six batteries later (a little steep, but I guess necessary) and a brief ten minute charge of the helicopter and I was ready to go. The instructions state that a 20-30 minute charge will give



The Sky Challengers are based on the proven Silverlit Picoo Z models

## PICOO Z SKY CHALLENGER

you five to six minutes of flight time, but I only gave it ten minutes as I couldn't wait and it easily lasted five minutes. The helicopter's own built-in rechargeable battery is charged by the six AA batteries in the transmitter and a small wire that you plug into the helicopter that is incorporated into the transmitter, very neat!

### ON WITH THE FLIGHT

Well as I say, I am a novice and so it did take me a little while to master the controls and being in mid-air there's not much room for mistakes. But I persisted as there was the possibility of beating my brother

at something, and I eventually got the hang of it. My main problem was that my helicopter would spin uncontrollably but a little bit of 'trimming' (and I mean 'little', pushing the button frantically into the unit doesn't help!) and it was hovering satisfactorily and I could even steer it left or right providing that there was no one in the way.

The trick is to master the hover with no spinning, avoid hanging Christmas decorations and the excitable Border Collie before the enemy has so you can mercilessly shoot them out of the sky. Well it is surprisingly more achievable than you would think, I landed and received about five hits within a five minute period.

One thing that I was worried

**You need to find a friend (this one's not included) in order to play with the Sky Challengers properly**

about when I did get hit was about damaging them, they are incredibly light and feel very fragile. It would seem however that Flying Toys have thought of this as when you do receive a hit, you don't just drop out of the sky like a stone as you would think but a slightly more honourable gentle spin to the ground (a bit like Black Hawk Down) leaving the chopper completely intact in my experience. They are very robust considering, I guess as they carry no real weight. You might however need to re-trim your helicopter if you have any nasty collisions with walls etc.

I also asked my friends their thoughts, primarily as I had been absorbed for about an hour and it was looking a little rude!

### THE VERDICT...

All in all, I have to say I was impressed and so were my family and friends. At around £60, only a few quid more than a single Picoo Z this is good value. You get a spare tail rotor for each chopper if yours breaks, though mine hasn't as yet, touch wood, and small pieces of sticky aluminium are even included to weight your helicopter in different places perhaps for a nose down fast attack strategy (for want of the official RAF jargon). What's more, you can allegedly fly it outside on a calm day which is not always the case with this type of helicopter. ☒

*Adam Harry*



## TECH SPEC

### Picoo Z Sky Challenger

<b>PRODUCT TYPE:</b>	RTF micro helicopters with laser beams
<b>MAIN ROTOR DIA:</b>	130mm
<b>LENGTH:</b>	170mm
<b>TAIL ROTOR DIA:</b>	30mm
<b>WEIGHT INC BATTERY:</b>	11g
<b>FLIGHT BATTERY:</b>	Integral LiPo
<b>CHARGER:</b>	Integral transmitter/charger supplied with LED indicator/auto shutoff
<b>CHARGING TIME:</b>	20-30 minutes for full charge
<b>FLIGHT DURATION:</b>	5-10 minutes between charges
<b>BATTERIES REQ:</b>	6 x 1.5v AA for each transmitter/charger
<b>CONTROL SPEC:</b>	Two-channel proportional infrared
<b>SRP:</b>	£59.99
SE85697	
Picoo Z spare tail rotors pack of 3:	£2.99
SE85692 P	
Picoo Z spare main rotor pack of 1:	£4.99

<b>AVAILABLE FROM:</b>	Many model and toys shops
<b>UK DISTRIBUTOR:</b>	Flying Toys
<b>TEL:</b>	01702 295110
<b>WEB:</b>	www.flyingtoys.com

**WIN A SKY CHALLENGER SET SEE PAGE 16**



Alex and Adam are not quite sure which model they are controlling or who's winning the battle, but they're having loads of fun anyway