

2024 US NATIONALS CHIEF JUDGES' REPORT

Sportsman Category

Venue: US Nationals Aerobatic Contest, 2025.

Salina Regional Airport, Salina, KS

26 Sep-4 Oct 25

Chief Judge: Mark Matticola

Competition Flights: Primary Power (Known 1, 2, 3) &
Sportsman Power/Glider (Known, Free, Free 2)

Overview: Shad did a great job as CD as usual! Time to train the next generation of CDs. 😊

Weather: No issues.

Registration: Outstanding job by Mary Beth.

Volunteer Coordinator: Alice also did an unthankful job and did it seamlessly.

Communications: WhatsApp was invaluable to contest communications. Thanks to Monique! I know we talked about it, but I'd recommend one thread vs. multiple. It was easy to find everything.

Logistics: Jim did an outstanding job with setup and Transpo.

Starter: Dale and Doug did a great job keeping the powered holds filled, especially with tail swaps. The Gliders did a great job filling both of their holds once cleared to launch through running out of pilots.

Scoring: Having a dedicated score scanner was awesome.

Communications: John and Jeff did the hardest job in the contest...keeping an efficient flow and keeping the pilots safe.

Videographer: Forrest did a great time with real-time videos. Everyone loved streaming!!! Being able to go back and see what the pilot did was outstanding.

Judges' Station: Well-equipped and organized.

Flights: Uneventful, safe and efficient. No trends with Low calls.

- Over the 4-hour category (43 glider/powered competitors), we averaged 13 flights in the 1st hour, then 11.3/hr over the last 3. This was totally due to the starters and Overlords!!
- The pace is always high when I have a glider to fill in between powered lulls. When it's only powered, the pace slows down.
- Last hour being slow is due to waiting that long and not being ready.
- 1st day, one of the judges had to use the restroom withing the 1st 45 min. Then 2 more judges breaks made us 20 min behind.
- The best way to do a big category like that is to tell them 1st break is at the 1st hour. Ideally, if they can wait until the 2-hour point, that works great!!!
- **Best technique** is to not take a category break because it takes 15 min to get back started. Let one judge's station go in between each pilot. No waiting for porta potties. 5 judge stands and a chief station will be done in 5 competitors. Real easy!

Recommendations:

- Please schedule the gliders practice slots with a quicker turn and plan on a gas break. A 14-hour glider day hurts, especially with an 82-yr old tow pilot. ALS also has issues

over 12 hours for the maintainers.

- Recommend making a cleanup schedule for Sat with bodies paired to slots and duties. We got away from leaning on all 3 colleges a few years ago by getting rid of boundary judges. THANK YOU for that BTW!!! I think a schedule that forces folks to sign up BEFORE they're allowed to compete might motivate folks. And the volunteers should be spread over all of the competition categories, not just the younger kids. Someone thought of an incentive that if you donate \$X, you get out of it. Folks who dropped \$4300 at the auction should be exempt. Just a thought.

Conclusion: I honestly don't think we need any changes to successfully execute next year's Nationals. Thanks for all of the volunteer help!!!