

2025 US NATIONALS CHIEF JUDGE'S REPORT

Unlimited Category

Venue: US Nationals Aerobatic Contest, 2025.

Salina Regional Airport, Salina, Ks

September 28- October3, 2025

Chief Judge: Hector Ramirez

Chief Judge Assistants: Laurie Ramirez & Don Hartmann

Competition Flights: Unlimited Power Free Known, Unlimited Free Unknown 1, Free Unknown 2, 4-Minute Free

Overview: Another expertly run US Nationals Aerobatic Contest to the credit of Shad Coulson, Contest Director. His organizational skills and professional execution culminated in a very successful 2025 event. Shad is an exceptional asset to the IAC, I look forward to his continued interest and participation.

The volunteer cadre, nearly all returning members, also deserve kudos and great credit for the organization and results of their efforts. Similar to last year's event, the key volunteer

group performed flawlessly and with great enthusiasm for the national event.

Weather: Very good with no ceiling, precip or significant wind issues for the Unlimited Category. Temperatures and humidity were comfortable.

Hospitality and Events: Very nice social events for pilots and volunteers. One limitation was the lack of finger food at the Sunday social at Big Nose Kate's after a long day on the ramp. Many left early for other eateries instead. For the KVG group Martinelli's proved to be a very nice meal and evening.

Registration: As usual, paperwork was complete, correct, very well organized and immediately available for all Unlimited flights. MaryBeth Rudd's attention to detail is second to none!

Volunteer Coordinator: Alice Johnson continues to excel in filling the volunteer roles on the line and assuring their availability for each flight. Thank you Alice.

Communications: The What's Up App, driven by Monique Hartmann, provided great situational awareness for the contest staff and competitors. This has become a required communications tool for the efficient conduct of the contest.

Logistics: Jim Branstitre did a tremendous job making sure that the judge's line tables, chairs and required equipment were set up and complete prior to each flight. Transportation to and from the judging line was always dependable and on time.

Starter: Dale Byrkit and Doug Vayda kept the flight line moving efficiently and on time. Typically, the only communication required was to get the flight started as soon as the judges' line was set. Excellent job!

Scoring: The use of a dedicated volunteer and cell phone for transmitting scores on the Chief Judges' line proved seamless and efficient with the scorer posting scores in near real time.

I found no issues with scoring thanks to the diligence of Teri Branstitre and Bob Buckley.

Communications: John Smutny and Jeff Baker again proved invaluable on the line, managing communications with the tower, aerobatic holds and chief judge. Having a discrete "hold" frequency is essential for a safe, successful contest at KSLN.

Videographer: Forrest Fox continues to provide professional videography for the contest, supplemented by a live contest feed to the internet. The live streaming is a wonderful tool to share the enthusiasm and dynamics of the sport, generating quite a bit of public interest.

Video review is a great tool to help resolve judging discrepancies on the line and typically provides a fair judging analysis of the figures in question.

Judges' Station: Well equipped and organized. Although dry this year, it would be nice to have a dry, smooth surface at the East judges' station in the future. No real complaints.

Flights: Were executed with a high level of proficiency and professionalism. Observing and overseeing the Unlimited category was enjoyable and stress free with no dangerous or low flying observed.

Boundary judges were waived this year by the CD and IAC Board. As a long time competitor and judge, I believe that having boundary judges enhances the conduct and discipline of the sport, especially at the National level and for the lower categories. Foregoing the use of boundary judges appears to be the future direction for IAC contests, similar to international competition at the higher CIVA categories. The advantage is, of course, less contest administration but I believe that boundary judges offer a unique advantage and dimension to the contest - not to mention that line judges are limited in their evaluation of pilot excursions outside the aerobatic box. Maybe in the future an acceptable mechanism can be adopted to ensure compliance with contest box boundary rules.

Protests: None in the Unlimited Category.

Conclusion: The 2025 US National Aerobatic Contest was again a resounding success! The contest was expertly run and an exciting experience for pilots and volunteers. Other than reimplementing the use of boundary judges, I have no suggestions for improvement. The US Nationals Aerobatic Contest hit the bullseye as the premier aerobatic event of the IAC and in international aerobatic competition in 2025!