



PILOT PROFILE

Benjamin Harvey

Q. How did you get started in aerobatics?

A. I was working as an engineer for Scaled Composites in Mojave, CA. Like a lot of engineers who are pilots, I had aspirations of becoming a test pilot.

In 2007, I went to CP Aviation in Santa Paula, CA to take their Emergency Maneuvers Training (EMT) based on a curriculum developed by Rich Stowell. My reason for attending was to learn how to better assess and recover from emergencies in flight. I didn't have a particular interest in aerobatics, which at the time seemed like just playing around in airplanes and not particularly productive. My instructor, Patrick Dugan, was an active competitive aerobatic pilot. Under his instruction, I learned about flight control failures and unusual attitudes that I had planned to do. Plus, I gained an appreciation for the serious effort and precision associated with aerobatics when flown well.



Q. What practice time have you been able to put in leading up to this contest?

A. When I decided to fly in contests, I thought it would be best to develop an understanding of the foundation of them. In 2017, I took a two day judging class. I volunteered at contests the following four years along the West Coast to develop my understanding of how those rules are applied. This experience, along with additional study and course work, resulted in becoming a Regional Judge and two years later a National Judge.

My practice for this competition has been limited to power airplanes due access to an appropriate glider in my area. I've been renting a Great Lakes from Advantage Aviation in Palo Alto, CA and more recently a 7KCAB from Aerodynamic Aviation in San Jose, CA. Two weeks before the contest I began training in gliders. I am receiving instruction at Williams Soaring and Arizona Soaring.

Q. Do you have a coach or coaches (formal or informal)?

A. Patrick Dugan was my first aerobatic instructor. In New Zealand, I flew with Kylie and Ivan Krippner to earn my CAANZ aerobatic rating.

While living in the San Francisco Bay Area, I have received instruction from Dave Watson of IAC-38 to earn my Power Primary Smooth Achievement Award.

Ben Mayes of the Williams Soaring Center helped me earn my Glider Primary and Sportsman Smooth Achievement Awards.

Yuichi Takagi at Tutima Academy provided advanced instruction on spins and recovers to prepare for the 2021 contest year.

And Zinnia Kilkenny, who has generously provided her guidance as I learned about judging over the past four years and general encouragement to compete.

Q. Do you own or rent an airplane?

A. I will be renting an MDM-1 Fox glider from Arizona Soaring for the Estrella Competition.

Q. What "big picture" goals do you have in aerobatics?

A. To be the best all attitudes pilot I can in both powered and unpowered aircraft. One day soon I would like to compete in the Sportsman Category at the U.S. National Aerobatic Championships. As this is my first contest, I will be pleased if I get thought at least one sequence without a zero. It will be an excellent contest if I can earn the Sportsman Star Award.

Q. What is your favorite maneuver?

A. Right now, it's the Half Cuban because it is a figure composed of several difficult elements ($\frac{5}{8}$ loop + inverted 45 down line for powered or 30 down line for gliders + $\frac{1}{2}$ roll) making it a good challenge. Just setting the down line from inverted to centering the half roll to upright is more difficult than it seemed initially.

Q. Do you plan on attending any other contests this year?

A. I will try to attend as many as my work schedule and finances can support. The other contests I am considering are the Hammerhead Roundup, Duel in the Desert, Coalinga G Fest, Corvallis Corkscrew, Apple Turnover and Acrofest 2021.

Q. Are you planning on going to the Nationals this year?

A. I would like to volunteer at the Nationals.



Ben Harvey (right) with coach and mentor, Ben Mayes at Williams Glider Center.