



# Bulletin 1

## 2026 U.S. National Aerobatic Championships

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# 1. General

Greetings members of the IAC. Spring is finally upon us and with it comes the start of the 2026 contest season. I, like many of you, am looking forward to getting back into the contest box and spending time amongst dear friends, many of which we only have the pleasure of seeing at IAC events.

Planning for the 2026 U.S. National Aerobatic Championships (Nationals) began before the conclusion of the 2025 contest. We have assembled a great team of volunteers, many of whom are returning from previous years and are instrumental to the success of the previous contests. That team is hard at work organizing and finalizing the various elements of the contest. Keep an eye on future issues of Sport Aerobatics, In the Loop, IAC social media channels, and the Nationals section of the IAC website for additional information in the months to come.

I am once again honored and humbled by the confidence entrusted to me by the IAC BOD and the members of this community. I'm looking forward to serving as the CD once again and building on the success of the 2023, 2024, and 2025 contests. There are few things I value in life more than my free time. I will be the first to acknowledge that a week away from the various personal and professional commitments we all juggle to attend the IAC Nationals can be a difficult task to navigate. I hope many of you will choose to attend and we look forward to welcoming you to Salina in September.

## 1.1 Place & Date

The 2026 U.S. National Aerobatic Championships will be held in Salina, KS at Salina Regional Airport (KSLN) from September 20<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>.

## 1.2 Practice Dates

Unofficial practice begins at sunrise on September 16<sup>th</sup> and continues until sunset on September 17<sup>th</sup>. Official practice begins at sunrise on September 18<sup>th</sup> and continues until sunset on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

As always, registration and payment are required to reserve a practice slot on the official practice days (Sept 18<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup>) via the IAC website. Practice on unofficial practice days (Sept 16<sup>th</sup>- 17<sup>th</sup>) will be coordinated onsite or via email with Gary DeBaun and Jeff Granger, who do an exceptional job keeping us safe and on-schedule each year.

## 1.3 Schedule

The official contest schedule will be released no later than 30 days prior to the contest. Competitors can plan for the opening briefing at 10 AM on September 20<sup>th</sup>. The first official contest flights will tentatively begin at 1200 on September 20<sup>th</sup> and will be the Advanced category.

## 1.4 Events

We received lots of positive feedback on the events and overall atmosphere from previous years. We plan to build on that energy by hosting some new events in 2026. We're also planning to give a few more free evenings for folks to prepare for their contest flights and to enjoy smaller gatherings amongst new and old friends alike. The event schedule for the 2026 Nationals is as follows:

Saturday, Sept 19<sup>th</sup> – Key Volunteer Group Dinner, Location is TBD

Sunday, Sept 20<sup>th</sup> – Pancake Breakfast in Hangar 509

Sunday, Sept 20<sup>th</sup> – Welcome Social – Big Nose Kate's

Tuesday, Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> – Bowling & Medals Dinner – The Alley Salina

Thursday, Sept 24<sup>th</sup> – Pasta w/ the Board, Medals Dinner, Auction – Hangar 509

Friday, Sept 25<sup>th</sup> – Contest Banquet – Hilton Garden Inn

## 2. Categories, Competitors, and Aircraft

### 2.1 Categories

The following championship titles will be awarded:

U.S. Primary Aerobatic Champion

U.S. Sportsman Aerobatic Champion

U.S. Intermediate Aerobatic Champion

U.S. Advanced Aerobatic Champion

U.S. National Aerobatic Champion (Unlimited category)

U.S. Primary Glider Aerobatic Champion

U.S. Sportsman Glider Aerobatic Champion

U.S. Intermediate Glider Aerobatic Champion

The Four Minute Freestyle is a separate trophy event and not counted toward National Champion titles and will be conducted as a separate trophy event, as outlined in the IAC Official Contest Rules.

The 2026 U.S. Advanced & Unlimited Glider Aerobatic Championships were held earlier in the year at Arizona Soaring in Maricopa, Arizona. However, a separate regional contest (Salina Glider Classic) will be held in conjunction with the broader U.S. National Aerobatic Championships and pilots of those two categories are encouraged to attend.

### 2.2 Competitors

Entry is open to all IAC members or members of other National Airsports Controls (NAC's). However, U.S. National titles, trophies, and special awards will only be awarded to pilots of U.S. citizenship. Individual Flight Medals are not restricted by citizenship.

## 2.2 Aircraft

All participating pilots and aircraft will be required to abide by the current technical inspection guidelines and comply with the Aircraft and Equipment Inspection section of the IAC rulebook prior to first flight in the Aerobatic Box. See section 5.3 of the IAC rulebook for more detail on these requirements.

## 3. Registration

Contest registration is open on the IAC contest calendar.

## 4. Entry Fees

The registration fees for the 2026 Nationals are as follows:

Collegiate - \$350

Active-Duty Military - \$350

Primary - \$350

Sprt-Unl - \$475.00

4-Minute Free - \$200

Hangar - \$200

### 4.1 Refund Policy

We understand that plans change and your previous ability to attend the contest may be overcome by various personal and professional commitments we all juggle. Rest assured, your contest registration fees are refundable, less any applicable fees.

## 5. Sequence Submissions

**Pilots are requested to submit all Free Known (UNL) and Free programs (SPRT & INT) via email no later than September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

We will be preparing our scoring system in advance. This saves time on site if we can get the Free Known and Free programs loaded before the start of Nationals. Please email your Free Known and Free programs to the following email address: [nationals.freestyles@gmail.com](mailto:nationals.freestyles@gmail.com).

Please submit your freestyle in Adobe PDF format, including individual A, B, & C forms as well as a consolidated PDF of those forms using the following naming convention:

LastName\_FirstName\_IACNumber\_Category\_Freestyle.pdf

LastName\_FirstName\_IACNumber\_Category\_Freestyle\_FormA.pdf

LastName\_FirstName\_IACNumber\_Category\_Freestyle\_FormB.pdf

LastName\_FirstName\_IACNumber\_Category\_Freestyle\_FormC.pdf

Example 1:

Pilot\_Joe\_12345\_Intermediate\_Freestyle.pdf

Pilot\_Joe\_12345\_Intermediate\_Freestyle\_FormA.pdf

Pilot\_Joe\_12345\_Intermediate\_Freestyle\_FormB.pdf

Pilot\_Joe\_12345\_Intermediate\_Freestyle\_FormC.pdf

Example 2:

Pilot\_Joe\_12345\_Unlimited\_FreeKnown.pdf

Pilot\_Joe\_12345\_Unlimited\_FreeKnown\_FormA.pdf

Pilot\_Joe\_12345\_Unlimited\_FreeKnown\_FormB.pdf

Pilot\_Joe\_12345\_Unlimited\_FreeKnown\_FormC.pdf

A confirmation email will be provided acknowledging receipt of your program files. Please contact “Bwana” Bob Buckley at BwanaBawb@comcast.net with any questions or concerns regarding your sequence submissions.

## 6. Rules & Deviations

The 2026 U.S. Aerobic Nationals will be conducted in accordance with the 2026 IAC Rulebook, P&P’s 501-506, and the FAI Sporting Code.

There are no rule deviations at the 2026 U.S. Nationals. However, P&P 503, which governs the U.S. Nationals, gives the contest director the discretion to schedule either a Known or a Free Known program in addition to a Free Unknown I and Free Unknown II program for the Advanced and Unlimited Categories. Furthermore, the P&P allows the Contest Director to schedule a traditional IAC Unknown in place of Free Unknown I. See below for applicable program format for the Advanced and Unlimited categories.

### **ADVANCED**

IAC Known

IAC Unknown

Free Unknown II

### **UNLIMITED**

Free Known

Free Unknown I

Free Unknown II

This program format was reviewed and approved by the IAC Board of Directors. The Free Known program, as outlined by P&P 503, must be composed according to the FAI Sporting Code (see resources). All Free Unknown programs will be conducted and composed as outlined in P&P 503.

## 7. Accommodations & Rental Cars

### 7.1 Accommodations

Discounted hotel rates have been negotiated with the Hilton Garden Inn, Courtyard by Marriott, and the Hampton Inn. See below for rates, booking codes, and deadlines:

#### Hilton

Rate: \$116/night

Booking Code: 26IAC

Booking Deadline: Aug 14th

### Courtyard

Rate: \$119/night

Booking Code: IAC2026

Booking Deadline: Sept 2nd

### Hampton Inn

Rate: \$112/night

Booking Code: IAC 2026

Booking Deadline: Aug 17<sup>th</sup>

We recommend making reservations early. These discounted rates are only available by phone. Please mention that you are with the International Aerobatic Club when making the reservation. Contact information for each hotel is below:

Hilton Garden Inn: (785) 309-0440

Courtyard by Marriott: (785) 309-1300

Hampton Inn: (785) 823 9800

## 7.2 Rental Cars

The national's planning team has elected not to negotiate discounted rental car rates with a particular vendor for the 2026 contest. There are several items that led to this decision, and we apologize for any inconvenience this may create for you. We have notified the rental car companies onsite at KSLN of the contest and recommended additional inventory be available to support participants and volunteers.

## 8. Judges & Volunteers

During my short time with the IAC, I have noted our reliance on the same group of core judges and volunteers. It is my hope to continue building a more robust cadre of judges and volunteers in the coming years to allow those who have served so devotedly to take some time away or to enjoy the sport and contest in other capacities if they so choose. Let me use this opportunity to challenge each of you to get involved in your regional contest or at the upcoming nationals. Begin building your knowledge base as a judge, scorer, registrar, volunteer coordinator, contest direct, etc. We will need your knowledge, participation enthusiasm and support in the future if we hope to continue the legacy of the IAC and the nationals in years to come.

To those of you who have volunteered and supported the U.S. Nationals so devotedly in the past, THANK YOU! I hope you will consider doing so again this year, if you have the time and interest. I enjoyed working with many of you in 2025 and look forward to working with everyone again in 2026.

### 8.1 Judges Refresher Training

Nationals Judges – the mandatory judges refresher training for those planning to judge at nationals has been scheduled for Saturday, September 19th from 8-11 AM CDT at the Hilton Garden Inn. I've had positive feedback from last years onsite refresher and requests to continue this training as an onsite/in-person event. Breakfast will be provided during the training as a small gesture of appreciation. If you are unable to make the in-person training, National judges are requested to

watch the online refresher held earlier this year in support of the Glider Nationals in AZ. Please contact the IAC Judges Chair, Doug Jenkins, with any questions or concerns.

## 9. Fundraising

Fundraising for the contest continues. To those companies and individuals who have graciously supported the IAC and the national contest in the past, thank you! We hope you'll consider continuing your support once again this year. If you would like to donate this year, please reach out to the nationals treasurer, Robin Simmons, at [acronatstreasurer@outlook.com](mailto:acronatstreasurer@outlook.com). The IAC is a 501(c)(3) and donations are tax deductible. The U.S. Nationals provides a unique advertisement opportunity to companies. Sponsors will be featured in the contest program, on the contest website and in Sport Aerobatics magazine.

## 10. Contact

Please feel free to contact the Contest Director with any questions or concerns.

Shad Coulson

Cell: (719) 650-6686

E-mail: [nationalsdirector@iac.org](mailto:nationalsdirector@iac.org)

## 11. Resources

[2026 U.S. Nationals Registration](#)

[IAC Rulebook](#)

[IAC Policies & Procedures](#)

[CIVA Free Known Power & Glider Figures – 2026](#)

[CIVA Section 6: Part 1 – Powered Aircraft 2026 v1](#)

[CIVA Free Known Program Guidance – Powered Aircraft 2026](#)

## Appendix 1 – Contest Officials

Contest Director	Shad Coulson
Assistant CD	N/A
Registrar	Mary Beth Rudd
Assistant Registrar	<i>TBD by Registrar</i>
Volunteer Coordinator	Alice Johnson
Communications Director	Monique Hartman
Fundraising & Resource Development Coordinator	Monique Hartman
IAC Safety Director	Keith Doyne
Starter	Dale Byrkit
Assistant Starter	Doug Vayda
Airboss	John Smutny
Assistant Airboss	Jeff Baker
Box Monitor - Practice days	Gary Debaun
Assistant Box Monitor - Practice Days	Jeff Granger
Chief Tech Inspector and Committee	Chris Rudd
Scoring Director	Teri Branstitre
JaSPer	Bob "Bwana" Buckley
Videographer	Forrest Fox
Hospitality & Events	Sara Arnold
Nationals Digital Program	TBD
Logistics Coordinator	Jim Branstitre
Transportation Coordinator	Larry Pankratz
Medical Director	Peter 'Kjell' Ballard
Nationals Treasurer	Robin Simmons
USAF Glider Operations	Mark "Matti" Matticola
Glider Tow Pilot	Bob Lynn
Glider Tow Pilot	Ryan Stewart

Judge Coordinator	Doug Jenkins
Chief Judge – Primary & Sportsman	Mark Matticola
Chief Judge- Intermediate	TBD
Chief Judge - Advanced	Peggy Riedinger
Chief Judge - Unlimited	DJ Molny
Chief Judge - 4 Minute	DJ Molny

