



33rd FAI World Aerobatic Championships

Mason City, Iowa, USA

24 August – 2 September 2026

Chief Judge's Report

1. Judging Panel

Chief Judge: Quintin Hawthorne (RSA) assisted by Hanna Raiha (FIN) and Annie Boon (RSA)

Esteban Moulin (BEL) Alain Dugas (BEL)

Eladi Lozano (SPA) Gonzalo Rodriguez (SPA)

Nick Buckenham (GBR) David Taylor (USA)

Gilles Guillemard (FRA) Jean Pemoulie (FRA)

Luca Andraghetti (ITA) Luca Flaborea (ITA)

Nick Slabakov (USA) Peggy Riedinger (USA)

Vytautas Tautkevicius (LTU) Violetta Gedminaite (LTU)

Videographer: Forest Fox

2. Accommodation, Meals and Transport

The judging team was accommodated in the Hampton Inn & Suites in Mason City, located approximately 15kms from the contest site at Mason City Municipal Airport. The hotel and facilities were adequate and of a high standard. Breakfast was provided at the hotel each day, while lunch and dinner was served at the airfield. Two mini-buses were provided for the judge's sole use throughout the contest. All these facilities were of an above average standard, assisted by a willing and dedicated troupe of volunteers and highly appreciated by the entire judging team.

3. Competitors

A total of 34 competitors had registered by the commencement of the championship. Two warm-up pilots were available for most of the contest; Mike Ciliberti (USA) in an

MX2 and Maxime Orth (FRA) in an Extra 330SC. Maxime had to return to France a day before the close to meet work commitments. All competition flights were conducted in regulation conditions without any incidents. Despite two daily commercial arrivals and departures, some IFR movements, delays caused by birds in the box, inclement weather and a disruption due to a visiting aircraft landing incident that blocked one of the runways, all the flying programmes were completed in time

33 competitors completed all four programmes, while one pilot retired during his final programme due to a health concern.

The final Freestyle programme saw 12 competitors participate. The start of this programme was delayed due to inclement weather but was eventually conducted in CAVOK conditions once the proceedings commenced.

4. Performance Zone

The aerobatic box was laid out parallel to runway 36/18 with all the markers clearly visible. There is no rising ground nor any buildings below the aerobatic box. All the competitors were afforded time to practice in the box prior to start of the contest and were well acquainted with its layout.

5. Judging Positions

Three judging positions were prepared; West, South and East.



The East position was prepared in a cleared section of a cornfield alongside the runway 36/18. Sufficient shade and adequate seating was provided for all judges. The South position was erected on the concrete apron in front of a hangar, while the West position was located on a mowed grass section between the taxiway and runway 30/12. A good selection of refreshments was provided while two portable toilets were suitably placed at each of the judging positions. All positions were easily accessible along either the taxiway or runway, duly escorted by the fire truck. The Air Boss (for CTAF radio communications) was positioned alongside the CJ station allowing for seamless communication with

controlled traffic and the starter throughout the contest.

Hanna Raiha and Annie Boon managed the score sheets and prepared them for the scoring office. All scores were scanned on the judging line and transmitted to the scorer electronically.

Although there was no dedicated judges meeting room, adequate facilities were available in various locations; in the briefing hangar, the terminal building and also in a meeting room at the hotel. We were able to conduct briefings and watch video footage at all these venues.

6. Video reviews

All flights were recorded from the judging position, with the camera situated near to the CJ station. The same footage that was used for the contest was also live streamed for broadcast on YouTube, with added commentary provided by an independent panel. All the footage was expertly recorded by Forest Fox who is clearly well versed with Aresti and a regular volunteer at IAC contests and must be congratulated for his work. All the flights that were reviewed provided clear answers to any of the disputed issues, however subject to the differences in interpretation of the judging criteria and regulations.



7. Flying Standards

There was a suitably high standard of flying throughout the competition, with all flights conducted safely. Only one competitor was allocated a LOW penalty. There were a few occasions when competitors were briefly diverted to the designated holding area prior to the commencement of their sequence, due to birds in the box. On one occasion a competitor was asked to interrupt his programme when a visiting aircraft flew into the box. These together with the inclement weather disrupted the flying programme on several occasions. There was no flying possible on two of the days due to either wind, rain or low cloud. All 5 programmes were completed.

8. Judging Standards

A judges briefing was scheduled for prior to the start of the flying proceedings, where all judges and assistants completed a Judges Currency Questionnaire and participated in the ensuing discussions. Jury members and some of the team managers were also present during the briefing. For the most part, judges were in consensus with the assessment of individual figures throughout the competition and demonstrated their familiarity with the judging criteria. The daily review of the warm-up flights highlighted this. However, not all judges recognised the factual errors. Focus was also placed on the assessment of the positioning scores. The judging criteria elicited some rather emotive discussions at times. The topic of flick rolls was a contentious issue during the video reviews, with the view that the interpretation of the current version of the Section 6 part 1 regulations does not provide sufficient clarity on the downgrade of a flick roll. I would like to propose that the judging criteria for flick rolls be amended to avoid any nuances in its interpretation;

On more than one occasion it was noted by some judges that clarity was needed for circumstances where both the pitch **and** yaw was absent during the initiation of a flick roll – it was merely a straight roll. They awarded a HZ for this error, however, some judges merely downgraded the figure, asserting that the current criteria clearly indicated that a downgrade of 4 points was required when **either or both** these elements were absent. In one example, the video review confirmed that there was no intention to initiate a flick roll. The term “and/or” is used in regulation B.9.27.2. So, by definition, a straight roll without any attempt to initiate a flick roll would only be downgraded by 4 points. I believe this is contrary to the intention of this rule and I would propose that the criteria be reworded as follows, adding the wording indicated in bold letters;

B.9.27.2. “... However, if the required pitch change, **or** actual autorotation are not seen, the mark must be downgraded by four (4) points. ***If both the pitch and autorotation is not observed, a Hard Zero (HZ) is given.***”

There was cursory evidence of bias from some judges when reviewing the scoresheets during the contest, duly confirmed by the RI reports. This was discussed with the relevant judges.



My thanks to all the judges and their assistants, the CJ assistants and the video recorder for their hard work in the field. Also, the organisers deserve a special mention for the above average facilities provided.

Quintin Hawthorne

Analysis Of Judges Combined Anomalies

Sequences: Seq01 Programme 1: Free Known, Seq02 Programme 2: Free Unknown #1 (UNP), Seq03 Programme 3: Free Unknown #2 (UNP), Seq04 Programme 4: Free Unknown #3

33rd FAI WAC 2026

Mason City, Iowa

Aug. 23 - Sept. 2

	All Judges		GBR		BEL		FRA		ITA		LTU		USA		ESP	
	No	%	Nick Buckenham RI 12.19 [4]		Esteban Moulin RI 12.48 [4]		Gilles Guillemard RI 14.04 [4]		Luca Andraghetti RI 15.39 [4]		Vytautas Tautkevicius RI 16.43 [4]		Nick Slabakov RI 19.68 [4]		Eladi Lozano RI 20.11 [4]	
Use of Marks:																
HZ - Hard Zeros	237	1.8	35	0.0	31	0.0	33	0.0	37	0.0	34	0.0	31	0.0	36	0.0
Marks from 0.0 to 6.5	2284	17.4	544	29.0	473	25.2	205	10.9	276	14.7	114	6.1	387	20.7	285	15.2
Marks from 7.0 to 10.0	10575	80.6	1291	68.9	1369	73.1	1632	87.1	1560	83.2	1724	92.0	1449	77.3	1550	82.7
AV - averages	22	0.2	4	0.2	1	0.1	4	0.2	1	0.1	2	0.1	7	0.4	3	0.2
Total marks Pilots/Judge	13118		1874	134	1874	134	1874	134	1874	134	1874	134	1874	134	1874	134

Style Comparison:

Average and Style
of Judges Raw Marks
compared to normalised
all-Judges average
Style $\propto 2 \times \text{Raw SD}$

Vertical axis scale:
1 mark = 106mm

Raw Marks Factors:

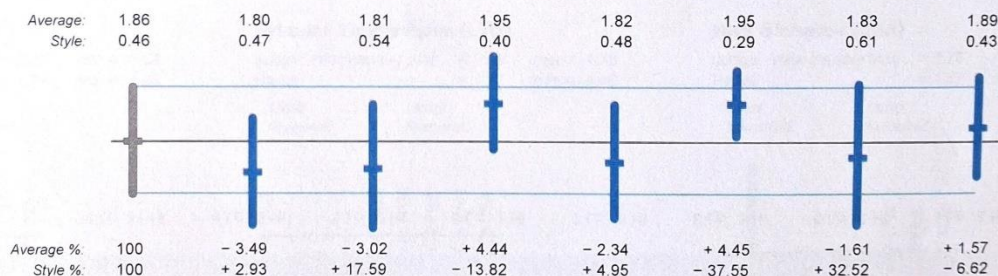


Figure anomalies

HZ to fitted value	40	0.3	5	5	5	7	7	3	8
Mark to confirmed HZ	46	0.4	5	8	7	5	8	6	7
AV to confirmed HZ	2	0.0	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
AV to fitted value	20	0.2	4	-	4	1	2	6	3
Lo to fitted value	132	1.0	17	20	31	21	6	8	29
Hi to fitted value	32	0.2	4	4	2	1	6	6	9
The 60% Rule	21	0.2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Total figure anomalies	293		38	41	52	38	32	33	59

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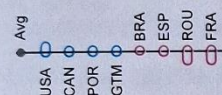
Sequences: Seq01 Programme 1: Free Known, Seq02 Programme 2: Free Unknown #1 (UNP), Seq03 Programme 3: Free Unknown #2 (UNP), Seq04 Programme 4: Free Unknown #3

Cumulative RI contributions per Team

Nick Buckenham (GBR)

Judge: max country bias = 0.57 min = -1.15
Panel: = 7.77 min = -4.40

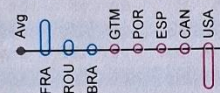
Most favoured Least favoured



Esteban Moulin (BEL)

Judge: max country bias = 2.76 min = -3.90
Panel: = 7.77 min = -4.40

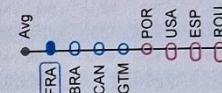
Most favoured Least favoured



Gilles Guillemard (FRA)

Judge: max country bias = 0.58 min = -1.12
Panel: = 7.77 min = -4.40

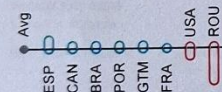
Most favoured Least favoured



Luca Andraghetti (ITA)

Judge: max country bias = 0.98 min = -3.53
Panel: = 7.77 min = -4.40

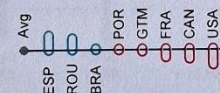
Most favoured Least favoured



Vytautas Tautkevicius (LTU)

Judge: max country bias = 1.54 min = -1.78
Panel: = 7.77 min = -4.40

Most favoured Least favoured



Nick Slabakov (USA)

Judge: max country bias = 7.77 min = -3.57
Panel: = 7.77 min = -4.40

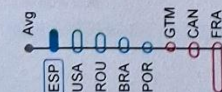
Most favoured Least favoured



Eladi Lozano (ESP)

Judge: max country bias = 1.50 min = -4.40
Panel: = 7.77 min = -4.40

Most favoured Least favoured



Calculations by: FairPlay v2 (non-scoring CJ + CHZ Summary)
Aerobic Contest Results Organiser, ACRO Version 5.2 Build: 25/08/26
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