

CONTEST DIRECTOR'S REPORT

33rd FAI World Aerobatic Championship (WAC 2026)

Location: Mason City Municipal Airport (KMCW), Iowa, USA

Dates: August 28 – September 2, 2026

Official Website: 2026wac.com

Author: Wayne Forbes, Contest Director

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1. ADMINISTRATIVE OVERVIEW &

PARTICIPATION 1.1 Organizing Authorities & Key Officials

Host Organizer: Aerobatic Championship Foundation, LLC

Contest Director: Wayne Forbes

Deputy Contest Director: Lorrie Penner

CIVA Jury President: Tamás Ábrányi

Chief Judge: Quintin Hawthorne

1.2 Participation Metrics

Total Registered Pilots: 36

Total Competing Pilots: 34 (Male: 32 / Female: 2)

Total Nations Represented: 8

Full National Teams (3+ Pilots): France, Romania, Spain, United States

Total Aircraft on Site: 23



2. INFRASTRUCTURE & LOCAL FACILITIES

2.1 Airfield Logistics (Mason City Municipal Airport)

Runway Operations: KMCW offered two excellent runways and convenient taxiways, providing efficient access to and from both runways. The layout allowed competing aircraft to use one-direction taxi procedures, reducing the possibility of ground conflicts. Surface conditions were excellent throughout the airport. Coordination with non-competing traffic was efficient and safe.

The Aerobatic Box: The aerobatic box was well marked with high-visibility markers that exceeded CIVA size requirements. Competitors were very pleased with the box location and visibility. No electronic tracking or sighting systems were used.

Hangarage & Fueling: Hangar space was abundant and of the highest quality. Each team had its own space to store equipment and belongings and to relax while not flying. Fuel was readily available throughout the competition, and refueling operations were efficient.

2.2 On-Site Infrastructure

Briefing & Scoring Facilities: Briefings and scoring were conducted in a very nice, air-conditioned hangar donated for use by one of the local airport tenants. The facility included a large projector for PowerPoint presentations, and the acoustics were excellent. Registration and scoring were conducted in the same hangar, with access restricted during the day as necessary to maintain appropriate security and working conditions for those activities.

Information Systems & Live Streaming:

- 1. Local Network:** The stability of the local network was excellent. High-speed Internet access was available throughout the contest area.
- 2. Electronic Flight Tracking:** No electronic flight tracking system was used.
- 3. Live Scoring:** Live scoring was integrated into the 2026wac.com website through a direct link on the homepage to CIVA Results.
- 4. Contest communications:** WhatsApp was used to communicate through out the contest. Three groups were identified and good communication to all: 1. WAC Pilots, 2. WAC Participant information, and 3. WAC Volunteers
- 5. Live Streaming:** Live streaming was conducted daily on the official WAC 2026 YouTube channel. •
Total viewing hours provided: 14,882
 - Average daily views: 5,705
 - Highest daily views: 8,287
 - Total YouTube views: 103,000 from August 24 through September 2, 2026
 - Associated YouTube thumbnail exposures: 448,000
 - Top ten viewing countries: United States, France, Romania, Brazil, Spain, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, Portugal, and ItalyThe live stream included a three-person panel of commentators consisting of prominent members of the U.S. airshow community and past medalists from international and national championships. A total of 14 commentators rotated through the broadcasts as their schedules permitted.
- 5. Instagram:** 557,000 total views from August 24 through September 2, 2026.
- 6. Facebook:** 1.05 million total views from August 24 through September 2, 2026.
- 7. Total Combined Views:** 1,710,000 across social media and YouTube.

Catering & Accommodations: Accommodations were provided at two separate hotel properties. Both were located close to and convenient to the airport. Catering



and food availability throughout the event were excellent and abundant, with a wide variety of food provided for competitors, officials, judges, and volunteers.

Transport Logistics: Two 15-passenger vans were rented and remained available throughout the entire contest. Transportation was provided for contest officials, judges, and competitors who did not have their own transportation. On a few occasions, personal vehicles were used to transport judges to and from Minneapolis–Saint Paul International Airport in order to avoid using a 15-passenger van to transport a single person.

3. AIRSPACE MANAGEMENT & AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

3.1 Regulatory Coordination

FAA Framework: Cooperation and assistance from the local Federal Aviation Administration personnel were excellent. Regulatory coordination associated with contest operations was handled effectively and supported the safe and efficient conduct of the championship.

ATC Efficiency: Coordination with local Air Traffic Control was clear and efficient. At no time did local air traffic present a significant problem for contest operations.

3.2 Transit & Flight Patterns

Holding Zones: A holding area was provided within approximately 1.5 miles of the aerobatic box for contingency purposes. The holding area was rarely required during the competition, although it was used during practice operations.

Recovery Patterns: Recovery patterns were efficient and safe and worked well with local air traffic. The procedures allowed aircraft to recover from the aerobatic box and return for landing without creating significant conflicts or delays. No official noise complaints were filed during the championship.

4. METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS & TIMELINE EXECUTION

4.1 Weather Summary

Overall, weather conditions were favorable for contest flying, and all competition programs were completed on schedule. There was, however, one full day and several partial days during which low cloud ceilings and winds exceeding competition limits prevented or restricted flying. Despite these interruptions, sufficient favorable weather windows were available to complete the championship as planned.

5. SAFETY, TECHNICAL ISSUES, & PROTESTS



5.1 Safety & Technical Incidents

Incursions / Box Violations: No incursions or box violations occurred during the competition.

Mechanical / Technical Discrepancies: Shared-aircraft operations were conducted efficiently by providing at least 2 flights between shared aircraft. The only mechanical or technical issue that significantly altered the flight schedule occurred during Program Five, when one of the French aircraft experienced an electronic issue. This resulted in a delay for the affected competitors and required a rotation in the order of flight.

Medical / Emergencies: One competitor experienced physical discomfort and elected to withdraw from the competition. The competitor did not provide further details regarding the condition.

5.2 Official Protests

Total Protests Lodged: 5

Protests Upheld: 1

Protests Denied: 4



6. CONTEST DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Recommendations for Future Organizers

I recommend that future organizers reach out to the local community as early as possible and involve community members, organizations, businesses, and volunteers to the greatest extent practical. One of the factors that contributed significantly to the success of WAC 2026 was the support and active participation of the local communities. Their involvement provided valuable resources, volunteer support, facilities, hospitality, and a welcoming environment for competitors and officials. Developing strong relationships within the host community can be an important component of successfully organizing an event of this scale.

6.2 Recommendations for CIVA Working Groups

Overall, the regulations, scoring software, and scheduling procedures worked very well during WAC 2026. I did not observe any significant issues concerning Section 6 regulations, scoring software, or scheduling limitations that would warrant specific recommendations for changes based on the experience of this championship.

Wayne Forbes

Contest Director, WAC 2026