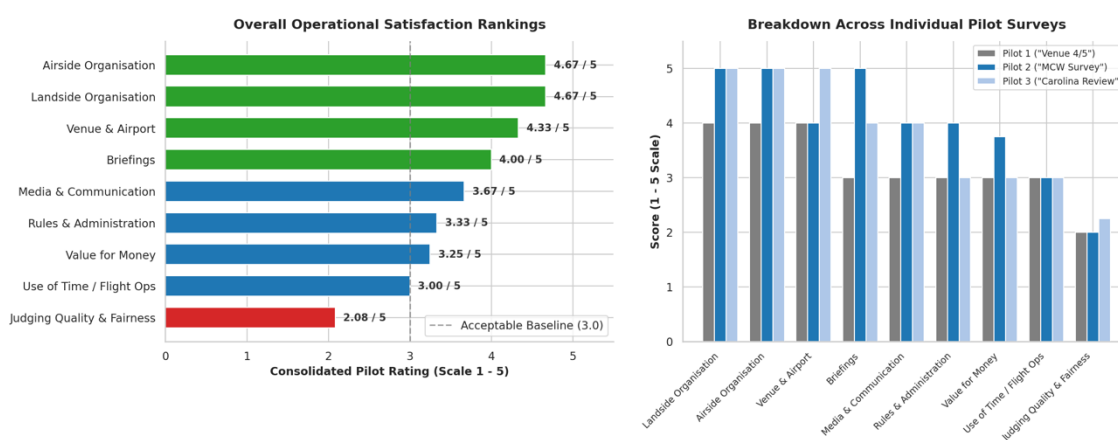




WAC 2026 Pilot Feedback & Evaluation Report

Quantitative Score Breakdown & Category Overview

WAC 2026 Pilot Evaluation: Logistics Excel While Judging & Time Management Lag Behind



Executive Summary

An analysis of the quantitative evaluations demonstrates that ground support operations performed at an exceptional level, with both **Landside Organisation** and **Airside Organisation** securing the highest category averages at **4.67 / 5.00**.

Conversely, **Judging Quality & Fairness** received the lowest rating across the event at **2.17 / 5.00**, closely followed by **Use of Time (Competition Flights)** at **3.00 / 5.00**. These figures highlight a stark operational division: ground logistics and volunteer handling functioned effectively, whereas flight line scheduling, judge panel management, and scoring consistency exhibited systemic friction.



Venue Infrastructure and Ground Operations

Strengths & Facilities

- **Hangar Infrastructure & Maintenance Services:** Universal hangar allocation provided secure storage and simplified rigging and de-rigging for all participating aircraft. Immediate, expert maintenance support led by Ben and his team was singled out for exceptional responsiveness and operational utility.
- **Airside Handling & Line Efficiency:** Volunteer aircraft towing operations and flight line coordination proceeded smoothly, supported by helpful, cooperative starters at the launching area.
- **Community Hospitality:** Competitors noted an exceptionally warm reception from the local community and volunteers, exemplifying genuine "Midwest nice" hospitality and goodwill.

Operational Friction Points

- **Commercial Air Traffic Conflicts:** Airfield co-usage with active commercial aviation served as the primary physical constraint, resulting in recurring airside holds and operational disruptions during competition flights.
- **Engine Oil Supply Logistics:** Administrative and logistical miscommunications occurred regarding the distribution and availability of engine oil required for competition flights.

Briefings, Flight Scheduling, and Time Management

Briefing Quality & Preparation

- **Presentation Vetting:** Operational quality varied significantly across sessions. While individual briefings provided clear instructions and resolved pilot queries on site, slide presentations frequently contained unverified errors that were only discovered while reading through them live. This lack of pre-screening resulted in preventable delays and pilot confusion.
- **Competitor Attendance:** Individual briefing attendance fluctuated across teams, with at least one respondent noting personal non-attendance at the majority of daily briefings.

Flight Delays and Schedule Disruptions

- **Commercial Airspace Interference:** Despite a compact fleet of only 35 competing pilots, aircraft were routinely subjected to ground delays exceeding 15 minutes or forced into aerial hold patterns to accommodate scheduled commercial departures.
- **Flying Order Mismanagement & Aborted Starts:** Competitors were repeatedly ordered to hold after strapping in—and in several instances, after engine startup—due to sudden judge breaks or flying order discrepancies. Crucially, flight order uncertainties had been flagged in advance by competitors via the designated WhatsApp group, but these warnings were ignored by organizers and judges.
- **Pacing & Warm-Up Overhead:** Training days operated at a substantially smoother, faster pace than competition days. Competitors cited an excessive number of Warm-Up (WUP) flights as an unnecessary drain on the daily schedule.

Communication Channels

- **Digital Line Protocol Breakdown:** Digital messaging (WhatsApp) functioned efficiently during training slot allocation but degraded during official competition flights.
- **Break Status Uncertainty:** Organizers regularly issued an initial notification regarding a 30-minute break but failed to transmit follow-up advisories when breaks were extended. The absence of mandatory 30-minute status updates generated pilot uncertainty, inducing operational fatigue and unnecessary engine cycles.

Judging Quality, Consistency, and Fairness

Scoring Discrepancies & Perceived Biases

Evaluation panel performance revealed severe systemic variance across judge panels, leading to widespread competitor dissatisfaction. Feedback highlighted an acute lack of scoring balance across the panel, noting that obvious, major errors committed by top-tier pilots were frequently overlooked or rewarded with high marks (7.5–8.0), whereas doubtful errors by rookie competitors were severely penalized. Furthermore, analysis of scoring trends raised strong concerns regarding perceived nationality bias among certain judges holding vested interests; however, technical auditing protocols dictate that these nationality bias claims require formal statistical confirmation before definitive conclusions can be drawn.



Technical Figures & Criteria

Manoeuvre evaluation demonstrated a marked breakdown in standardized criteria. Hard Zero (HZ) errors were frequently identified by only half of the panel, while the remaining judges awarded 7.5 to 8.0 marks for the identical manoeuvre.

Panel outputs also displayed irrational distributions, including abrupt 0.0 marks assigned alongside panel averages of 6.0 to 8.0. Non-uniform evaluation standards were particularly prevalent during snap roll figures, which emerged as a central point of technical dispute.

Leadership & Readiness

Governance oversight at the judging line was seen to be compromised, with consolidated feedback indicating that the Chief Judge was inadequately prepared to fulfil the operational demands of the role or enforce consistent evaluation standards across the panel.

Governance, Rules, and Financial Value

Rule Enforcement & Protest Policies

- **Protest Fee Forfeiture:** Competitors expressed strong dissatisfaction with regulatory frameworks that impose financial penalties via forfeited protest fees when formal protests are rejected.
- **Sequence Nomination Confusion:** Administrative confusion surrounding the P4-Unknown 3 sequence proposal—specifically regarding lettering and nomination rules—created operational disruption for competitors prior to its ultimate resolution.

Sponsorship & Public Reach

- **Regulatory Commercial Barriers:** Current CIVA governance structures and restrictive event policies impede modern sports marketing, creating substantial barriers to attracting corporate sponsors and broadening public appeal.

Value for Money Assessment

- **Return on Investment:** Economic satisfaction scores landed between 3.0 and 3.75 out of 5.0. Pilots and national teams incurred substantial financial and logistical expenses to participate. While respondents praised the USA organizing team for executing a welcoming, high-ambience event under severe time constraints, overall perceived value was severely undermined by subjective judging and inadequate airside communication regarding flight slots and breaks (despite minor communication improvements from P1 to P4).

Media Coverage, Livestreaming, and Public Outreach

Positive Developments

- **Accessible Live Commentary:** The live stream commentary feature represented a major operational advance. Speaker Robert Armstrong was specifically praised for translating complex aerobatic manoeuvre dynamics into accessible, engaging terms for non-expert viewers.
- **Local Community Engagement:** Media initiatives succeeded at the local level, generating strong regional coverage and positive community interest.

Areas for Improvement

- **Broadcast Technical Graphics & Fill Content:** The live stream lacked essential graphical overlays displaying flight programs and figure diagrams, leaving viewers unable to track maneuver sequences. Additionally, extended judging breaks featured dead air rather than scheduled pilot interviews or background features, leading to viewer disconnect and audience drop-off.
- **Target Audience Alignment:** Outside of select commentators, the broader broadcast tone leaned too heavily into technical jargon suited only for established enthusiasts, missing opportunities to cultivate a general audience.
- **Distribution & Social Media Presence:** Public outreach failed to achieve meaningful national or international reach. Social media activity remained minimal, and the broadcast provided no status updates regarding flight line delays, leaving off-site viewers uninformed.



Prioritized Actionable Recommendations for Event Organizers

High Priority (Immediate Impact / Operations & Fairness)

- **Standardize Judging Criteria & Zeroing Protocols:** Conduct mandatory pre-competition alignment sessions for all judges to establish uniform criteria for snap rolls, standardize Hard Zero (HZ) identification, and eliminate uneven scoring penalties between top-tier and rookie pilots. Ensure the Chief Judge is fully prepared to rigorously enforce panel consistency.
- **Enforce Mandatory 30-Minute Communication Protocol:** Institutionalize a strict policy requiring digital communication updates (via WhatsApp) every 30 minutes during holds and extended breaks—even if only to confirm a delay extension—to manage pilot readiness and prevent unnecessary engine starts.
- **Optimize Air Traffic Management & Launch Scheduling:** Coordinate with local ATC to secure dedicated competition windows that mitigate commercial traffic conflicts, eliminate ground holds exceeding 15 minutes, prevent aerial holding, and strictly prohibit stopping pilots once engines are running.

Medium Priority (Briefings & Logistics)

- **Pre-Screen Briefing Presentations:** Mandate an administrative review of all daily briefing slide decks prior to live presentation delivery to eliminate errors, prevent late starts, and ensure clear competitor instruction.
- **Formalize Sequence Rules & Engine Oil Distribution :** Publish clear, pre-event guidelines regarding Unknown sequence nomination procedures (e.g., P4-Unknown 3) to prevent administrative confusion, and establish an explicit, centralized protocol for competition engine oil management.

Low Priority / Enhancement (Media & Commercial Reach)

- **Upgrade Livestream Broadcast Graphics & Break Content:** Integrate live graphical overlays showing sequence figures and program details on screen and populate extended judging breaks with pre-scheduled pilot interviews and technical features to maintain viewer retention.



- **Broaden Media Strategy & Modernize CIVA Governance:** Balance broadcast commentary to engage non-expert audiences alongside technical enthusiasts, increase social media content frequency, and collaborate with CIVA leadership to modernize competition rules for improved sponsor integration and international distribution. /