

2025 U.S. F2B TEAM TRIALS – REPORT

Folsom Lake Recreation Park
October 13, 2025 at Granite Bay, California



*The 2026 US Team – They will be headed to Perth, Australia in May 2026
From left to right - David Fitzgerald, Gabriel Alimov (Jr.) Paul Walker & Orestes Hernandez
Photo by Jim Hoffman*

For the **45th Annual 2025 Golden State Stunt Championships (GSSC)**, we experienced some decent weather. Sometimes it was a little breezy with the wind shifting from time to time. However, the weather on Monday October 13, for the **2025 FAI F2B U.S. Team Trials** would fully test even the most seasoned veteran. Before sunrise, the wind was around 8-12 mph with gust around 15-18 mph and increasing. A storm front was moving in. We were aware of the incoming storm with high winds and rain in the forecast. On Sunday after GSSC contest, we had a brief meeting with all the pilots who were present and discussed what we would do. We had Tuesday scheduled as a make-up day in the event of severe weather. But the weather forecast for Tuesday was even worst. The weather forecast for Monday was winds around 14 mph with rain starting around 1:00 pm.

We chose to have the two calibration or warm-up flights for the three judges done after the GSSC. This would save us some time and get Round 1 started as soon as possible come Monday morning. This also gave the judges, Brett Buck (Head Judge), Joan Cox and Chris Cox the opportunity to become familiar with FAI scoring. Everything else would take place on Monday as scheduled.

There was not much we could do about the conditions. According to the *FAI Sporting Code, Section 4 CIAM General Rules, C.17.2 Interruption*, the contest could be interrupted when, “...the wind is continuously stronger than 12 m/s measured at two (2) metres above the ground at the starting line (flight line), for at least one minute.”

A 12 m/s wind is 26.8 mph! We may have had some wind gust rise to that level, but it never lasted for at least one minute. So, though uncomfortable and unnerving as it was, we needed to continue.

The only other situation that could stop this event was lightening in the area. In the event of a deluge, the Head Judge could interrupt the Round. But once it let up the event would continue on. Rain by itself does not cancel the event. As far as the forecast of rain, there was no imminent threat of lightening, so we needed to proceed.

There is a section in the *FAI Sporting Code, Section 4, Annex 4B – Class F2B Judge’s Guide, 4.B.10 Considering External Factors*, that pretty much sums up this situation. Though the “Judge’s guide” is not a rule, it makes a very valid point. It states:

“Other than excessive wind and electrical storms, the F2B rules make it plain that an F2B contest is an all-weather event, so uncomfortable though it may be for all concerned, the intention is that the contest should proceed as normal.”

So the show was to go on.

This year’s Team Trials started with 11 competitors, 2 of which were Junior entries. Before the brief pilot’s meeting, 4 competitors withdrew, mainly due to the adverse weather conditions. The pilot’s came from various locations, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Florida, Washington and California.

Just prior to the start of the pilot’s meeting, a big gust of wind tried to take the 4 popup canopies that were lashed together for a ride. Everyone pitched in and were able to take them down quickly before they were damaged. But this left the administration/tabulation area exposed to the elements. With a very brief pilot’s meeting we were off and running.

Then, during the first flight, large raindrops came pouring down. I had to grab all the administration/tabulation stuff that laid on the tables, including my laptop and cram it into my car to keep it from getting wet. We weren’t expecting rain until 1:00 pm. Guest what? *They lied!* It rained for about 30 minutes and then stopped. But guess what happened to the wind? It decided to get stronger, around 20 mph with gust even higher! Brutal conditions.

The weather also was a valid reason for spectators to stay away. We were operating on a “skeleton” crew with Jim Hoffman taking on the pit boss duties, which included pull testing, calling the pilot to the circle and timing. He did a marvelous job! I on the other hand lost my tabulator due to work and so I was stuck with tabulating all the scores with Jim Aron checking my work. We had to scramble for score sheet runners. Thanks to the Eberenz’s family for stepping up to the plate and helping out with this.

The next thing you know, score sheets start coming end. My car, in particular, the driver seat, turned into the tabulation area. My planes from the GSSC are in the back seat, my carryon suitcase is on the floorboard on the passenger side, with boxes of stuff stacked on the passenger seat. My trunk is full of equipment for my planes and some of the GSSC equipment.

Now, I'm trying to balance my laptop on one knee and on the center console. I'm trying to operate my mouse on a box in the front seat. I'm trying to keep everything in order as I receive the score sheet. Then, I couldn't find my stapler because of putting it somewhere in my car due to the rain. I ended up finding an old stapler in the plastic bin of stuff that we store at the Woodland storage shed. Then this stapler decided to jam up and stop working. So I had to stop a look for my stapler, which seemed like eternity, but I eventually found it about 10 minutes later. This put me further behind tabulating the scores. Very frustrating to say the least.

The next thing I know, Round 1 is done. Everyone decided to keep going with no breaks and start Round 2. I had a score board in which to post the scores as I finished tabulating Round 1, I asked Jim Aron to read back to me the written scores to make sure everything was inputted correct. The first round was posted and I ended up getting out of my car and holding up the score board for everyone to see. Then it was back into my very cramped "office" to tabulate Round 2 scores.

I'm now knee deep in score sheets. Round 2 score sheets are coming in fast and furious. Jose Modesto decided to pass on his remaining two flights. Once checked, the scores were posted for Round 2.

Round 2 is done and we're off to Round 3. For Round 3, David Fitzgerald and Orestes Hernandez chose to pass. This left only 4 of the 7 pilots remaining for Round 3. Surprisingly, Gabriel and Angstrom, our Juniors, flew all three rounds! These two Juniors battled it out to the very end. They are very good flyers and **are**, not will be, a force to contend with — Well done young men!

Finally it was done. While I was still tabulating the final scores, we had to do a site teardown. James Dean who was just released from the hospital, directed what needed to be gathered up and where things needed to go. Everyone pitched in. Thank you so much to everyone who helped!

The next thing you know all the scores are tabulated and posted. Those making the 2026 US Team that will represent the USA at the World Championships in Perth, Australia will be:

Paul Walker

David Fitzgerald

Orestes Hernandez

Gabriel Alimov (Junior)

Joe Daly (1st Alternate - Senior)

Angstrom Eberenz (1st Alternate - Junior)

Contestant	Flight 1		Flight 2		Flight 3		Total Score	Place
	Flight Order	Score	Flight Order	Score	Flight Order	Score		
Almov, Gabriel *	2	953.43	1	1023.53	1	1015.61	2939.20	1*
Daly, Joe	1	1079.37	2	1090.53	4	1077.03	2169.83	4
Eberenz, Angstrom *	1	957.1	2	987.13	2	1011.23	1998.36	2*
Fitzgerald, David	1	1137.98	5	1138.03	7	—	2275.49	2
Hernandez, Orestes	4	1121.33	7	1144.03	6	—	2265.36	3
Modesto, Jose	3	875.4	3	—	3	—	875.4	5
Walker, Paul	7	1140.03	4	1131.73	5	1146.57	2286.4	1
	4		1		2			
	9		10		11			
	14		6		6			

Final Scoreboard – Photo by Joan Cox

What an experience!

Congratulations to all! And again, “THANK YOU” to all who remained to help make it through a very difficult and stressful situation.

I guess we can say we had a successful Team Trials. It’s too bad that the weather decided not to cooperate.

I believe we started Round 1 at around 7:45 am. We finished Round 3, along with the site tear down with everyone leaving the flying site by 11:30 am. We even had a very quick medal ceremony!

BTW, I didn’t get a chance to see a single flight during the Team Trials. I was knee deep trying to fend off the alligators — Oh well!

Dennis S. Nunes – Contest Director