

Balloon Federation of America Hot Air Competition Division



Competition Regulations, Policies and Procedures 2023

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2023 Policy Changes - **Strikethroughs denote removal Highlights denote addition.

SECTION I – COMPETITION POLICIES, RULES AND REGULATIONS

The HACD performs a similar review of the US Rules at its annual Summit face-to-face Board meeting each December. Using the International AXMER’s as a guide, US rules are reviewed and updated and tailored to the norms and practices supported in the US. The rules are developed to ensure a level playing field for all competitors at all events across the US. For this reason, scores submitted to the NEL must be earned using our rules (standard or simplified versions).

SECTION III TYPES OF COMPETITIVE EVENTS AND REQUIREMENTS -- OTHER THAN US NATIONALS

b) ~~The scoring of State Championships, to determine the pilot that will automatically qualify for the U.S. National Championships, will use the proportional scoring formula (Rule 14.5).~~

SECTION VIII – INTERNATIONAL ELIGIBILITY LIST (IEL)

Temporary Note 2: The 2026 World Championship participants shall be selected from the highest finishers at the 2024 2025 and 2025 2026 US National Championships as recommended by IEL Ad-Hoc Committee and approved by HACD Board

SECTION IX - U.S. NATIONAL EVENT ELIGIBILITY RULES AND RANKING ORDER

- b) Second through fifth Other top 5 finishers, in order of finish, from the previous year’s US Nationals.
- e) ~~Top finisher from each BFA/HACD recognized State Championship.~~

Competitors for the U.S. Women’s National Hot Air Balloon Championships will be selected according to the following eligibility list with banner numbers assigned accordingly

- a) Current U.S. Women’s National Champion.
- b) Second and Third finishers, in order of finish, from the previous US Women’s Nationals, if a previous US Women’s Nationals was held within the last three years.
- c) Current Women’s World Champion, if from the United States, not qualifying under (a) or (b) above who meets all requirements of the Hot Air Competition Division sanction rules. d) Not Used
- e) Top ranked pilot, using the National Eligibility List, in each BFA Region not holding a regional championship. f) Remaining pilots selected by the National Eligibility List.
- g) The HACD reserves the right to add additional competitors for sponsorship considerations, provided they hold a BFA/HACD task card and have flown at least five sanctioned tasks during the prior year.
- h) Late applications will be accepted in the order they’re received to develop a suitable waiting list.

Competitors for the U.S. Junior National Hot Air Balloon Championships will be selected according to the following eligibility list with banner numbers assigned accordingly

- a) Current U.S. Junior National Champion.
- b) Second and Third finishers, in order of finish, from the previous US Junior Nationals, if a previous US Junior Nationals was held within the last three years.
- c) Current Junior World Champion, if from the United States, not qualifying under (a) or (b) above who meets all requirements of the Hot Air Competition Division sanction rules. d) Not Used
- e) Top ranked pilot, using the National Eligibility List, in each BFA Region not holding a regional championship. f) Remaining pilots selected by the National Eligibility List.
- g) The HACD reserves the right to add additional competitors for sponsorship considerations, provided they hold a BFA/HACD task card and have flown at least five sanctioned tasks during the prior year.
- h) Late applications will be accepted in the order they’re received to develop a suitable waiting list.

~~Note 2: In an effort to expand the sport and promote competition, the US Women's and Junior's national Championship will be treated as an "open" championship. There is no minimum number of competitive tasks flown as a requirement of eligibility.~~

Note 2 3: In sections (d), (e), and (f) above, the available positions go to the pilots finishing in the positions indicated unless won by competitor(s) already qualifying under (a), (b) or (c) above. In such case, the positions awarded filter down to the next highest finishing pilots.

Note 4 - For 2023, the guidelines for selection of the US Nationals, Women's Nationals, and Junior Nationals follow the criteria in the Competition Regulations, Policy and Procedures 2021 and will use the 2022 NEL rankings where applicable

HACD REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This document contains policies and procedures developed over decades to provide guidance and establish standards regarding the following:

- Section I: Competition Policies, Rules and Regulations
- Section II: Scoring and the National Eligibility List (NEL)
- Section III: Types of Competitive Events and Requirements – Other Than US Nationals
- Section IV: Event Application and Approval Process
- Section V: Eligibility for Participation in NEL Qualifying Tasks
- Section VI: Event Official Requirements for State, Regional and US National Tasks and Events
- Section VII: National Eligibility List and National Competitions
- Section VIII: International Eligibility List (IEL)
- Section IX: U.S. National Eligibility Rules and Ranking Order

SECTION I – COMPETITION POLICIES, RULES AND REGULATIONS

The following **Policies, Rules and Regulations** govern the HACD competition process, rules development, Nationals Eligibility List and standards for the governance of State, Regional and US National Championship Competition.

The purpose of the HACD is to organize, promote and foster local, state, regional, national and world or continental hot air balloon competition. Our **Policies, Rules and Regulations** are developed to support this mission and provide for the accumulation of individual competitor scores from events throughout the United States. The scores are maintained in a National Eligibility List (NEL). The NEL compares individual results and ranks competitors using a method and scoring system that places all pilots and events on a level playing field.

Rules Development

Competition rules used by the HACD are compiled starting with rules developed by the FAI Ballooning Commission (CIA). Referred to as the AXMER's: AX (Ballooning) MER (Model Event Rules). The Ballooning Commission is comprised of representatives of about 60 countries including the United States. The Rules Working Group of the CIA is charged with the annual review of rules and making recommendations for changes. Once approved, these become the standard for all Cat I events for the upcoming competition year. The HACD currently has two members serving on the Rules Working Group.

The HACD performs a similar review of the US Rules at its annual Summit Board meeting. Using the International AXMER's as a guide, US rules are reviewed and updated and tailored to the norms and practices supported in the US. The rules are developed to ensure a level playing field for all competitors at all events across the US. For this reason, scores submitted to the NEL must be earned using our rules (standard or simplified versions).

Event

Events desiring to submit scores for inclusion in the NEL must notify an HACD Board member, National Event Manager or National Eligibility List Manager of their intention. It is the responsibility of the National Event Manager to work with the event organizer and event's Chief Scorer to ensure that all HACD Rules, Regulations, Policies and Procedures are followed. These include using the HACD published rules and scoring program or an approved alternative. Results of HACD cardholders using the prescribed Positional Scoring format (see Rule 14.6) must be submitted to the National Eligibility List Manager within three weeks after completion of the event.

Section III describes the types of events recognized by the BFA/HACD for submission of scores to the NEL: State and Regional Championships and Scores-Only Events. **Event officials must ensure that all competitors for which scores are submitted were HACD cardholders before the event's first flight.** HACD cardholders are not permitted to 'opt out' except for the specific reasons noted below. The BFA maintains a list of HACD cardholders on its web site and this list is updated weekly.

Competitors must apply for and maintain membership in the BFA/HACD. Application for membership can be accomplished using: [BFA and HACD Membership Application](#). The competitor is ultimately responsible to ensure that his membership is current before participating in an event in which his scores can be submitted to the NEL. A competitor on probation or suspended under provisions of Article 8 of the HACD Bylaws is not eligible to have scores submitted to the NEL.

Keep in mind the HACD competitor year is a calendar year while the BFA membership year is a fiscal year based on your month of initial joining (anniversary date). Dues for a new HACD member joining July 1 or after will be prorated to the nearest full month provided the member also pays for the following year dues at the same time. There is no other provision for prorated dues. Your BFA membership must also be current at the time of a competitive event in order for your HACD membership to be active.

If a competitor attends an event and, due to commercial or other contractual responsibilities is unable to compete (receives no markers) in one or more flights, those flights will not be included in the National Eligibility List and will be either treated as "Not Competing" if the conflict is for the entire duration of the event or "Did Not Fly" if the conflict only involves a limited number of flights. Such a request for exclusion must be made to the Event Chief Scorer a minimum of one week in advance. It is critically important for the Chief Scorer to consider carefully the difference between "Did Not Fly" and "Not Competing" especially in small events where the number of eligible competitors may fall below the required minimums of Section II (e).

Examples of reasons to mark an HACD cardholder pilot as “Not Competing” might include the following: has commercial sponsor ride/tether obligations all weekend or is serving as the hare balloon throughout the weekend.

Examples of reasons to mark an HACD cardholder as “Did Not Fly” might include (after answering roll call): found weather or flight conditions above their skill set, became sick for a given flight or damaged their balloon making it unairworthy.

SECTION II – SCORING AND THE NATIONAL ELIGIBILITY LIST (NEL)

- a) Competitors will be ranked in order of performance according to the rules for each task as defined in Rule 14.6 (**Positional Scoring**) of the Sanctioned Competition Rules.
- b) When entered in the BFA/HACD National Eligibility List, computer scores of competing pilots entered in each Sanctioned Task shall be computed by the following formula (Positional Scoring):

$$\text{SCORE} = \frac{(P - N + 0.5) \times 1000}{P}$$

P = number of competitors entered in the competition (**Competitive Field**).

N = numerical position of competitor among the **Competitive Field** when competitors are numbered in sequence according to their standing in the task results. Scores will be rounded to nearest whole number. In the event of a tie in a task, tied competitors shall each be awarded the average score of the tied places.

Competitive Field

There must be six (6) or more HACD cardholders registered and participating. Fifty percent (50%) of the cardholders as well as 50% of the total field must fly with a minimum number of pilots flying of 6 ($P \geq 6$). Scores are calculated using all pilots competing in a common group and entered in the event (HACD cardholders and non-cardholders). If an event hosts two separate groups, e.g., competitors and fiestas, “P” shall be determined for each group separately. Cardholders flying in the fiesta (or group B) group will not earn points to be entered into the NEL unless the ‘Fiesta Division’ is flying separate tasks.

Competitive Field, Setting the size of "P" for the Event

The event Chief Scorer shall establish "P" for the scoring program based on the number of pilots answering roll call at the General Briefing or subsequently added prior to the first competitive flight. See guidance above under ‘**Competitor**’ for exceptions to this rule.

Non-structured gatherings of pilots for the purpose of a competitive flight shall establish "P" based on the number of pilots present and intending to compete.

- c) The BFA/HACD National Eligibility List computes and maintains a numerical ranking of all qualified competitors. The NEL shall be compiled as follows:
 1. Compute an average score for each pilot who has competed in at least five sanctioned tasks in the current year by averaging the scores for the first five tasks. After a pilot has flown five tasks his average cannot be reduced in that competitive year even though individual task scores may be lower than the average. After five tasks have been flown, the average is determined as follows. Consider the subsequent tasks in the order they were flown. Determine the number of tasks to count by finding C, which is half the number of tasks, rounded up, plus 2. Thus $C = \text{INT}((N+1)/2) + 2$ where N is the number of tasks flown and $\text{INT}((N+1) / 2)$ is the integer part of $((N+1)/2)$. C gives the number of tasks to be averaged. Determine a new average based on the best C scores. If this new average is more than the previous average, the new average becomes the pilot’s average score for the NEL. If the new average is not more than the old average, then the old average remains as the pilot’s average score. This process is repeated after each additional task is flown.
 2. List the pilots in order of decreasing average scores, then number in sequence. This number establishes the priority for US National eligibility.

3. A Competitive Year runs from January 1 through December 31.
 4. Each pilot's National Eligibility List scores are erased at the end of each competitive year.
- d) To be eligible for any award for top competitor from the National Eligibility List a pilot must have completed five (5) tasks in the year for which the award is given.
 - e) Task results will be accepted from competitive events qualifying under Section III. Task scores for HACD cardholders will be based upon their ranking within the Competitive Field for events approved by the National Event Manager. Only events approved by the National Event Manager and listed on the BFA web site are eligible to submit results for inclusion in the National Eligibility List. Events qualifying for submission to the NEL are noted on the BFA web site of approved events.
In order for task scores to qualify for submission for inclusion in the NEL, all of **the following conditions must be met:**
 1. A minimum of six (6) HACD cardholders must be registered, present and 50% flying the task
 2. 50% or more of the total pilots registered (competitive field) must launch 3. A minimum of six (6) of the registered pilots must fly
 - f) In a given task where no pilot achieves a result, that task will not be used in the National Eligibility List
 - g) Pilots who achieve zero points because of a "did not fly" will not have those tasks added into the National Eligibility List.
 - h) Where deterioration of weather requires that pilots be recalled and the task canceled, the announcement will be made by a race official on AM, FM, aircraft radio, or by other means determined by the Event Director and noted in HACD Competition Rules, Section II details. The frequencies to be monitored will be announced at the pilot briefing. All pilots will be deemed to have the proper notice from the announcement.

SECTION III – TYPES OF COMPETITIVE EVENTS AND REQUIREMENTS -- OTHER THAN US NATIONALS

All tasks/events shall use the BFA Competition Rules and comply with this Section and Section V below. All scores shall be submitted to the National Eligibility List Manager within twenty-one (21) calendar days of completion of the event. Event officials are strongly encouraged to use the BFA Scoring Software and related published Rules when submitting scores to the NEL. The software can be downloaded here:

<https://www.bfa.net/index.php/tools-for-event-organizers/bfa-scoring-program>

Scores submitted must be run as a 'sub-event' in the case of an event scored where HACD cardholders are ranked against a field smaller than the entire event field. It is the Chief Scorer's responsibility to ensure that the event setup includes the HACD card number for all cardholders. The scores submission include the cardholder numbers and task by task details for the event. The BFA/HACD maintains a current list of all HACD cardholders on its web site. Events are encouraged to verify the status of all their pilots well before the first official flight.

Domicile for purposes of establishing State or Regional qualification will be established based on address of Pilot Certificate at the date of the event or as updated on FAA website at <https://amsrvs.registry.faa.gov/airmeninquiry/>.

The three types of recognized events are described below:

- a) **Scores-Only** – Scores for approved events may be entered into the National Eligibility List in accordance with Section II (e) above. There must be a minimum of six (6) BFA/HACD cardholders entered and 50% flying in the event (also see Section II (e) above). The BFA/HACD maintains a list of approved events on the BFA web site.
 1. If an event wishes to have scores submitted to the NEL officials should contact the NEL Manager or the HACD Regional Director for approval. There are no HACD sanction fees associated with ScoresOnly events.

2. Scores-Only events may use the Simplified Weekend-Only Event Rules rather than the AXMERcompliant version required for all State, Regional and National competitions.
3. Other events that promote fair and challenging competition will be considered on a case by case basis for their inclusion in the NEL by the NEL Manager. These events may be subject to **competitive field (P)** scoring restrictions, e.g., HACD task card holders only.

- b) **State Championships** – one State Championship may be granted annually in each state. Once a State Championship license is awarded, preference will generally be given to that organization if the sponsoring organization requests it be renewed and the organization has performed in accordance with policies and procedures of the BFA/HACD. In the event that a State Championship is canceled or weathered out, application for a replacement Championship will be considered. There shall be a minimum of six (6) competitors entered in the event who shall hold a current BFA/HACD task card and reside within that state. There shall be a minimum of three (3) tasks completed with at least one result from each for the championship to be valid. Currently there is no sanction fee required for State Championships.

In the case of a limited field, priority will be given to any current HACD pilot that physically resides in the respective state during the current year's competition season. Applications received by the deadline will be accepted based on the prior year's National Eligibility List. Pilots are eligible to compete for automatic US National Championship qualification positions in only one State Championship during the competition season.

Regardless of the scoring method used for the State Championship, the scoring for determining each competitor's standing in the National Eligibility List shall be the scoring formula contained in Section II (b) above (Positional Scoring).

- c) **Regional Championships** – one Regional Championship may be granted annually in each BFA Region. Once a Regional license is awarded, preference will generally be given to that organization if the sponsoring organization requests it be renewed and the organization has performed in accordance with policies and procedures of the BFA/HACD. In the event that a Regional Championship is canceled or weathered out, application for a replacement Championship will be considered. There shall be a minimum of ten (10) competitors entered in the event who shall hold a current HACD task card and reside within that region. In regions with fewer than twenty (20) HACD pilot members, the minimum number of HACD competitors required is reduced to six (6). There shall be a minimum of three (3) tasks completed with at least one result from each for the championship to be valid. Currently there is no sanction fee required for Regional Championships.

In the case of a limited field, acceptance priority will be given to any current HACD pilot that physically resides in the respective region during the current year's competition season. Applications received by the deadline will be accepted first based on the prior year's National Eligibility List. Pilots are eligible to compete for automatic US National Championships qualification positions in only one Regional Championship during the competition season.

The scoring of Regional Championships, to determine the pilots that will automatically qualify for the U.S. National Championships, will use the proportional scoring formula (Rule 14.5)

Regardless of the scoring method used for the Regional Championship, the scoring for determining each competitor's standing in the National Eligibility List shall be the scoring formula contained in Section II (b) above (Positional Scoring).

SECTION IV – EVENT APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

- a) **Scores-Only Event** – Scores for approved events may be entered into the National Eligibility List in accordance with Section II (e) above. There must be a minimum of six (6) BFA/HACD cardholders entered in the event and 50% of the HACD competitors flying. The BFA/HACD maintains a list of approved events on the BFA web site.

1. If an event wishes to have scores submitted to the NEL, officials should contact the NEL Manager or their HACD Regional Director for approval. There are no HACD sanction fees associated with Scores-Only events.
 2. Scores-Only Events may use the Simplified Weekend-Only Event Rules rather than the AXMERcompliant version required for all State, Regional and National competitions. Any other specialized or modified rules will be considered for approval before use at any events wishing to submit scores into the National Eligibility List. These rules must be submitted to the National Event Manager for approval at least thirty (30) days in advance of the event.
 3. The applicant, a BFA/HACD Board member or approved representative, shall notify the National Eligibility List Manager of the intention to submit task results prior to the event.
 4. The NEL List Manager / National Event Manager reviews details of the event and determines if scores will be accepted.
 5. National Event Manager notifies National Eligibility List Manager, BFA Office, BFA/HACD web master of approval.
 6. Event scores along with HACD cardholder numbers should be submitted within twenty-one days to the National Eligibility List Manager. Upon completion of the review and within fourteen days of receiving the scores, if they are correct, the NEL Manager shall post scores for review on the results page of the BFA website. Scores are then entered in the NEL.
 7. BFA/HACD task cardholders shall have thirty (30) days from the date of posting the scores to report omissions or discrepancies in their scores.
- b) **Regional or State Championship** – Applications for Regional or State Championships must be submitted to the National Event Manager by April 30 of the year of the proposed championship. If no applications are submitted by the deadline, applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The following is a stepby-step guide to the sanction application process:
1. Event applicant submits on-line application to National Event Manager: [Event Sanction Application Form](#)
 2. Application denied if incomplete or inappropriate.
 3. Applicant notified of application deficiency by National Event Manager.
 4. BFA Office notified of action taken by National Event Manager.
 5. Application, if complete and appropriate, shall be reviewed and evaluated by the National Event Manager and BFA/HACD regional board member for the region submitting the application. If the regional representative would have a conflict of interest, another representative would be selected by the BFA/HACD chairperson to replace the regional board member. This National Event Manager shall have the authority, on behalf of the BFA/HACD, to approve or deny the application. In the event there is more than one application, this subcommittee shall have the authority on behalf of the BFA/HACD to select the event that is deemed to be most appropriate.
 - a. National Event Manager notifies BFA Office, BFA/HACD web master and BFA editor of tentative approval.
 - b. BFA Office notifies applicant of approval.
 6. The National Event Manager notifies the event applicant that the process has been completed and advises applicant that the scores for the BFA/HACD task card holders are to be submitted to the National Eligibility List Manager for each task flown within twenty-one (21) days of the completion of the event.
 7. Event scores, along with HACD cardholder numbers, are submitted to the National Eligibility List Manager for review. Upon completion of the review and within fourteen (14) days of receiving the scores, if they are correct, they shall be submitted to the BFA webmaster for inclusion in the National Eligibility List System. If the scores, as submitted, are not correct, the event's Chief Scorer will be notified of the deficiency and shall be asked to make the necessary corrections and resubmit the scores within seven (7) days.
 8. Pilot credential and aircraft documentation review will be submitted showing compliance with currency, licensing, insurance, airworthiness, registration, annual and flight review
 9. BFA/HACD task cardholders shall have thirty (30) days from the date of posting the scores to report omissions or discrepancies in their scores.

SECTION V – ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL ELIGIBILITY LIST(NEL) QUALIFYING TASKS

BFA members holding a valid HACD task card are eligible for participation in the National Eligibility List. Specific requirements for having task results included in the system are as follows:

- a) The competitor must meet the invitational criteria of the organizer for event participation.
- b) The pilot must be a member in good standing of the BFA/HACD and hold a valid BFA/HACD task card for the current year and hold at least a private pilot certificate for Lighter-than-Air Free Balloon, or equivalent.
- c) All BFA pilots are eligible to enter the BFA/HACD National Eligibility List but only pilots who are US Citizens or Resident Aliens, or who have been permanent residents in the US for not less than three years, are eligible to compete in the US Nationals or represent the US in an FAI Sanctioned Event.
- d) BFA pilots who are US Citizens and have represented another FAI member country within the past three years are not eligible to compete in the US Nationals or represent the US in an FAI Sanctioned Event.
- e) Any pilot who flies in a BFA/HACD task who does not meet the eligibility requirements outlined in (d) above shall not be included in the BFA/HACD results and cannot be included in the count of pilots who are competing.

SECTION VI – EVENT OFFICIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE, REGIONAL AND US NATIONALS TASKS AND EVENTS

The membership requirements for sanctioned events are as follows:

- a) **State & Regional Championships** – The Event Director and either the Safety Officer or the Chief Scorer shall be members of the BFA/HACD.
- b) **National Championship** – The Event Director, Safety Officer, Chief Scorer and the Jury President shall be members of the BFA/HACD.

SECTION VII – NATIONALS ELIGIBILITY LIST AND US NATIONAL COMPETITIONS

- a) The Division's NEL Manager shall produce annually a final ranked National Eligibility List after determining that all event scores have been entered and posted allowing adequate time for pilot inquiry regarding potential errors. The final NEL list shall be published no later than February 28 annually.
- b) The pilot must be a member in good standing of the BFA/HACD and hold a valid BFA/HACD task card for the current year and hold at least a private pilot certificate for Lighter-than-Air Free Balloon, or equivalent.
- c) The highest finishers on the Nationals Eligibility List shall be allowed to enter the National Championship Events. The HACD reserves the right to add additional competitors for sponsorship considerations provided they hold a BFA/HACD task card and have flown at least five sanctioned tasks during the prior year. Should any additional places be available, competitors with five (5) tasks in the past competitive year shall be allowed to enter, taken in order of their average score, highest first. Should any additional places be available, competitors with four, three, two, then one task in the past competitive year shall be allowed to enter, taken in order of their average score, highest first. If there are still places available, competitors who hold a valid BFA/HACD task card but were unable to fly a task in the past competitive year shall be allowed to enter, taken in order of the receipt of their application.
- d) Due to the limited number of eligible participants, the US Women's Nationals and US Junior Nationals shall be considered an "open" championship with preference given to those highest finishers on the prior year National Eligibility List. However, participants need not qualify through the NEL.
- e) The determination of the US National Hot Air Balloon Champions (US Nationals, Women's Nationals and Junior Nationals), and all runner-up positions, shall be determined by the results of tasks held during the respective National Championship, except when fewer than two (2) flights or fewer than three (3) tasks are held during the National Championship. If fewer than two (2) flights are flown or fewer than three (3) tasks are

completed, no National Champion shall be declared. Both attributes (flights and tasks) must be satisfied for a valid championship.

- f) The scoring system used in the BFA/HACD National Eligibility List (Positional) is not the scoring system which shall be used in the US Hot Air Balloon Championships (Proportional).
- g) The US National Championship Juries shall be composed of a Jury President, nominated by the Championship Director and approved by the BFA/HACD Board, and two others. The two other Jury Members shall consist of: (i) an independent non-staff member approved by the BFA/HACD and one non-rookie competitor; or (ii) two non-rookie competitor jurors. The competitor member(s) shall be selected from a pool of five potential jurors chosen by all the competitors at the general briefing. The Jury President reserves the right to eliminate competitors from the ballot at their request. The size of the Jury Pool may be increased if there is a tie for the fifth person in the election. In the event of a protest, the Jury President shall select one or two competitor(s) as needed from this pool who has (have) no conflict of interest, as determined by the Jury President, with the protest to be heard. In the event of a subsequent protest(s) the Jury President shall make a new selection for the competitor jury member(s). If all members of the pool should have a conflict with the current protest, the Safety Officer and/or another staff member shall complete the jury.

SECTION VIII – INTERNATIONAL ELIGIBILITY LIST (IEL)

The following policies govern the HACD event sanction process as well as the International Eligibility List (IEL).

- a) The United States representatives to the World Hot Air, North American Championships, Pacific Championships, World Air Games and to all FAI Sanctioned hot air competitions for which the Balloon Federation of America is invited to select participants shall be selected from the highest finishers at the last U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championship completed before the invitation date of the World Hot Air Balloon Championship, and the highest finishers at the previous US National Hot Air Balloon Championships, taken in equal numbers. If the numbers must be unequal, the more recent high finishers will be favored but in all cases the selection process will give priority to pilots eligible as a result of a valid US National Championship and qualifiers as a result of the National Eligibility List (see below) shall be selected secondarily. If one competitor is invited more than once or if competitors cannot attend, additional representatives will be chosen as if more US entrants were allowed.

To illustrate, the 2022 US World Team will be as follows:

1. 2019 US Nationals #1
2. 2018 US Nationals #1
3. 2019 US Nationals #2
4. 2018 US Nationals #2
5. 2019 US Nationals #3
6. 2018 US Nationals #3
7. 2019 US Nationals #4
8. 2018 US Nationals #4
9. 2019 US Nationals #5
10. 2018 US Nationals #5

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Temporary Note 1: The 2024 World Championship participants shall be selected from the highest finishers at the 2023 and 2022 and 2021 US National Championships as recommended by IEL Ad-Hoc Committee and approved by HACD Board.

Temporary Note 2: The 2026 World Championship participants shall be selected from the highest finishers at the 2024 and 2025 US National Championships as recommended by IEL Ad-Hoc Committee and approved by HACD Board.

- b) The most recently serving US Nationals Championship Director who has been Director of at least two National Championships or consecutively served as Deputy Director and Director, of which at least one was the qualifying championship for competitors, shall be allowed to represent the United States as a competitor at the World Hot Air Balloon Championship, the North American Championship, the Pacific Championship, the WAG

Championship and to all FAI Sanctioned hot air balloon competitions for which the Balloon Federation of America is invited to select participants representing the United States, provided the following conditions are met:

1. There are five or more competitors invited from the United States.
2. The Director has finished in the top five in a previous US Nationals.
3. The Director has participated in one of the three immediately past World Hot Air Balloon Championships (including Women's and Juniors) prior to serving as Director of the US Nationals
4. The Director position will only be made available after satisfying the top three finishers at the most recent two US National Championships.
5. Only one qualifying Director position will be available for each World Championship
6. Final review and approval of a Director wishing to participate in a World Championship under this exemption must petition the HACD Board, submit his competitive resume and receive formal approval.

If the Director does not meet the above qualifications, he will then receive two years of eligibility for the US Nationals immediately after being Director, as long as he has flown at least five tasks during the year of qualification for that Nationals.

- c) The following two sections provide guidance in selecting competitors to represent the United States in International events if, for any reason, a US National Champion is not declared in any year. These conditions apply equally to the US , Women's and Junior National Championships.

1. **US Nationals Held but Did Not Meet Minimum Task Requirements:** If a US National Champion is not declared in accordance with Section VII (e), International representatives will be selected from applicable completed National Championship finishes.

The use of the NEL would be secondary and only after all applicable completed National Championship finishes are exhausted (even if one National Championship).

2. **No US Nationals Held:** If there is no US Nationals due to the lack of a venue or a Nationals canceled prior to the General Briefing due to extreme weather or other circumstance, representatives will be selected from applicable National Championship finishes.

The use of the NEL would be secondary and only after all applicable National Championship finishes are exhausted (even if one National Championship)

- The United States representatives to the Women's World Hot Air Balloon Championships shall be selected from the highest finishers at the last U.S. Women's National Hot Air Balloon Championship (if held) completed before the invitation date of the Women's World Hot Air Balloon Championship, the highest female finishers at the last U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championship, the highest finishers at the previous U.S. Women's National Hot Air Balloon Championship (if held) and the previous U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championship, taken in equal numbers. If the numbers must be unequal, the more recent high finishers will be favored and within any given year, the selection process will give priority to pilots eligible as a result of a valid US Women's National Championship.

To illustrate, the 2023 Women's World team qualifications will be as follows:

1. 2022 Women's Nationals #1
2. 2022 US Nationals #1
3. 2021 Women's Nationals #1
4. 2021 US Nationals #1
5. 2022 Women's Nationals #2
6. 2022 US Nationals #2
7. 2021 Women's Nationals #2
8. 2021 US Nationals #2
9. 2022 Women's Nationals #3
10. 2022 US Nationals #3 . . .

Qualifiers as a result of the National Eligibility List if needed, see (c) 1 and 2 above, shall be selected only if in the event no representatives are available from the US Women's or US National Championship.

If one competitor is invited more than once or if competitors cannot attend, additional representatives will be chosen as if more US entrants were allowed.

- The United States representatives to the Junior World Hot Air Balloon Championships shall be selected from the highest finishers at the last U.S. Junior National Hot Air Balloon Championship (if held) completed before the invitation date of the Junior World Hot Air Balloon Championship, the highest junior finishers at the last U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championship, the highest finishers at the previous U.S. Junior National Hot Air Balloon Championship (if held) and the previous U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championship, taken in equal numbers. If the numbers must be unequal, the more recent high finishers will be favored and within any given year, the selection process will give priority to pilots eligible as a result of a valid US Junior National Championship.

Qualifiers as a result of the National Eligibility List if needed, see (c) 1 and 2 above, shall be selected only if in the event no representatives are available from the US Junior or US National Championship.

If one competitor is invited more than once or if competitors cannot attend, additional representatives will be chosen as if more US entrants were allowed.

- Each year prior to an FAI Invitational event, the Hot Air Competition Division Chairman, with the assistance of the International Manager, shall publish an International Eligibility List of the expected number of eligible pilots (times two to allow for alternates). The list shall be available on the BFA website after completion of the qualification process. Additionally, the list may be emailed to the pilots. The list will include an estimate of the number of U.S. entries, standby pilots and potential alternates.

Immediately after receipt of the initial invitation of the event, the Chairman and/or International Manager shall notify all eligible pilot(s) and they will have fifteen (15) days to respond. A positive response shall be received no later than thirty (30) days prior to the NAC acceptance of invitation as published by the organizer. The entry fee will be submitted by the BFA for all participants along with the official competitor nomination list, including standby pilots. Each competitor is responsible for the reimbursement of their respective entry fee and any fees that may be associated with the transaction (i.e. foreign currency conversion, credit card or wire transferring fees, etc.). Standby pilots will be required to pay a 50% deposit of entry fee.

If a pilot responds negatively, fails to respond within the deadline or doesn't meet the entry fee reimbursement deadline, then that pilot shall become ineligible and the next eligible pilot will be notified. That pilot shall respond within the same time limits as described above.

Immediately after receipt of subsequent rounds of invitations, or if an entry should become available for any reason, the Chairman and/or International Manager shall follow the same procedure described above until all entries are filled. Once the invitation process has finished, the Chairman shall publish a list of entered pilots on the BFA website.

- The BFA Hot Air Competition Division shall organize World Hot Air Balloon Championships held in the US. The Hot Air Competition Division will review potential sites and approve the most appropriate site.
- When World Championship Hot Air Balloon Events are held in the United States, the number of entrants allowed from each country shall be governed by the applicable rules published by the FAI in the Sporting Code or other applicable publications.

Temporary Note 3: An IEL Committee will conduct a Women's and Junior IEL survey and make sure necessary recommendations prior to the July 2021 HACD video conference call. This will assure the HACD Board adopted IEL recommendations are public prior to any 2021-2022 National Championships take place that would be included in the next qualifying period for 2023 Women's and Junior World Championships. These adopted changes would then appear in the 2022 Competition Regulations, Policies, and Procedures.

SECTION IX - U.S. NATIONAL EVENT ELIGIBILITY RULES AND RANKING ORDER

Competitors for the U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championships will be selected according to the following eligibility list with banner numbers assigned accordingly.

- a) Current U.S. National Champion.

- b) Second through fifth finishers, in order of finish, from the previous year's US Nationals.
- c) Current World, Women's World and Junior World Champions, if from the United States, not qualifying under (a) or (b) above who meets all requirements of the Hot Air Competition Division sanction rules.
- d) Top finisher(s) from each BFA/HACD recognized Regional Championship:
 - a. Top 1 – for 10 to 19 competitors; (or 6 to 19 for the special case as defined in Section III (c) . b.
 - Top 2 – for 20 to 29 competitors;
 - c. Top 3 – for 30 or more competitors.
- e) Top ranked pilot, using the National Eligibility List, in each BFA Region not holding a regional championship.
- f) Remaining pilots selected by the National Eligibility List.
- g) The HACD reserves the right to add additional competitors for sponsorship considerations, provided they hold a BFA/HACD task card and have flown at least five sanctioned tasks during the prior year.
- h) Late applications will be accepted in the order they're received to develop a suitable waiting list.

Competitors for the U.S. Women's National Hot Air Balloon Championships will be selected according to the following eligibility list with banner numbers assigned accordingly.

- i) Current U.S. Women's National Champion.
- j) Second and Third finishers, in order of finish, from the previous US Women's Nationals, if a previous US Women's Nationals was held within the last three years.
- k) Current Women's World Champion, if from the United States, not qualifying under (a) or (b) above who meets all requirements of the Hot Air Competition Division sanction rules. l)
- Not Used
- m) Top ranked pilot, using the National Eligibility List, in each BFA Region not holding a regional championship.
- n) Remaining pilots selected by the National Eligibility List.
- o) The HACD reserves the right to add additional competitors for sponsorship considerations, provided they hold a BFA/HACD task card and have flown at least five sanctioned tasks during the prior year.
- p) Late applications will be accepted in the order they're received to develop a suitable waiting list.

Competitors for the U.S. Junior National Hot Air Balloon Championships will be selected according to the following eligibility list with banner numbers assigned accordingly.

- i) Current U.S. Junior National Champion.
- j) Second and Third finishers, in order of finish, from the previous US Junior Nationals, if a previous US Junior Nationals was held within the last three years.
- k) Current Junior World Champion, if from the United States, not qualifying under (a) or (b) above who meets all requirements of the Hot Air Competition Division sanction rules. l)
- Not Used
- m) Top ranked pilot, using the National Eligibility List, in each BFA Region not holding a regional championship.
- n) Remaining pilots selected by the National Eligibility List.
- o) The HACD reserves the right to add additional competitors for sponsorship considerations, provided they hold a BFA/HACD task card and have flown at least five sanctioned tasks during the prior year.
- p) Late applications will be accepted in the order they're received to develop a suitable waiting list.

Note 1: All US National Hot Air Balloon Championship competitors must have flown a minimum of five (5) competitive tasks unless there are not enough pilots to fill the available positions. In such cases, SECTION VII of the Competition Regulations, Policies and Procedures shall be followed.

Note 2: In sections (d), (e), and (f) above, the available positions go to the pilots finishing in the positions indicated unless won by competitor(s) already qualifying under (a), (b) or (c) above. In such cases, the positions awarded filter down to the next highest finishing pilots.

Note 3: In sections (g) and (h), the eligible competitors will be ranked by National Eligibility List Average on the Nationals Eligibility List.

Note 4 - For 2023, the guidelines for selection of the US Nationals, Women's Nationals, and Junior Nationals follow the criteria in the Competition Regulations, Policy and Procedures 2021 and will use the 2022 NEL rankings where applicable.