

NATSNEWS



Photo by Jenni Alderman.

ALES AND F5J

Today's photos are from the 2017 Nats taken by Jenni Alderman.

Altitude Limited Electric Soaring, or ALES, is an electric launch, thermal duration soaring event where all competitors are given 30 seconds to reach a predetermined altitude to begin the round. These models are equipped with altitude-limiter switches that enable the motor to shut down when the designated altitude is reached or when 30 seconds have passed.

The ALES task consists of a targeted time decided upon by the event's contest director. The time is typically 10 minutes but may range anywhere from 6 to 12 minutes. The pilot is required to fly for the allotted timeframe and then land his or her model in a landing circle or on a graduated runway before the round time ends. Scoring is determined by the pilot's ability to reach the specified altitude, how closely he or she adheres to the target time, and where the aircraft lands within the landing zone.

F5J is another electric-launch event using an altimeter and motor run time. This event rewards finding thermals and making the required flying time from the lowest possible motor shutoff altitude. The higher the altitude a pilot shuts off at, the greater the point penalty. As with ALES, F5J competitors are asked to complete their tasks within an allotted timeframe.

The 2018 ALES and F5J Nats events begin today and run through Sunday. 🚁

—Ashley Rauen







HAND LAUNCH SOARING

Today's photos are from the 2017 Nats taken by Jenni Alderman.

Today is the first day of F3K Hand Launch Thermal Glider competition at the 2018 Soaring Nats.

This competition uses disc launch gliders (DLGs), which are RC sailplanes that are sent airborne with a disc launch. This means that a pilot must hold the aircraft by a wingtip then spin himself or herself and release the glider. This launching method is also commonly called hand launch and with it, average pilots can achieve launch heights of more than 140 feet. The best pilots can have launches of more than 200 feet!

The aircraft used for this competition commonly range in price from \$100 to \$900, and most flown today are made from composite materials such as Kevlar, carbon fiber, and glass fiber. The fuselages are commonly molded in Kevlar or carbon fiber with epoxy, and the wings can be hollow composite shells or vacuum bagged over a wire-cut foam core. Most weigh 9 to 10 ounces.

Many of these gliders are controlled with ailerons, rudder, and elevator. The ailerons can be used as air brakes to help the aircraft land. F3K models have a wingspan limit of 1.5 meters.

The hand launch glider competition will also take place Sunday. 🛩️

—*Rachelle Haughn*









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