

Nationals Soaring Report 2026

With a great forecast for the week ahead. Many guys started making their way down to Waipukurau, our new Nats location, before the New Year as the first day for F3J was on the 4th of January 2026! We had a nice field sorted for the week in fact a choice of six with various advantages.

It was a huge welcome to Andrew and Ellsie Meyer from Australia who have enjoyed coming to our NZ Nats before because of the huge number of events we manage to jam into a week.

F3J (Winch launch thermal competition)

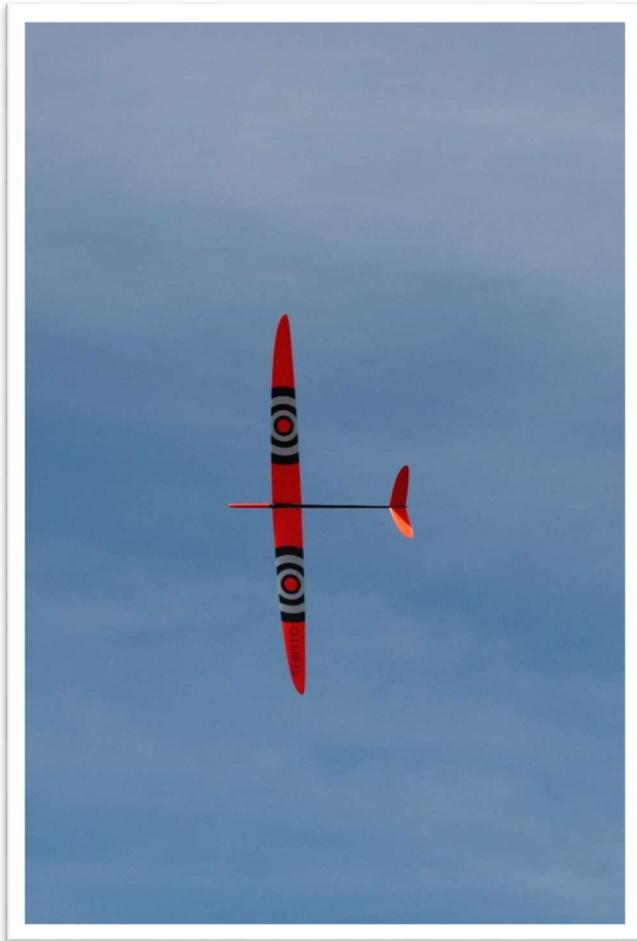
We had 7 entries with awesome weather but not easy thermaling most of the day. Early on thermals were topped out, you hit a ceiling, couldn't climb any higher and required continual relocating for the lift zones. Most pilots made their 10-minute flights during the day and precision landings were in order. The final results were: 1st Kevin Botherway 2nd Joe Wurts 3rd Peter Glassey



F3B (3 task winch competition)

It was awesome to set up for the premium competition of soaring. Joe laid out the course and we decided to run a three up in distance draw for the day which meant we needed extra people to help run the course. This was cool because we had a few spectators to help, many thanks to Barry Kerr Jane Hiscock and our newbie Peter Robinson. We had 6 entries and

great weather. These planes being a little heavier and designed for all three tasks certainly are a different animal for thermal flying and landing. They felt like we were flying bricks which approached at speed for spot landings. The best thermal flight was Andrew Meyer 10:00 minutes and 100 landing, best speed run was Joe Wurts 15.91, and most laps during distance was Kevin Botherway with 24 laps! It was certainly busy with three up in the distance. We got 2 full rounds completed and the winners were: 1st Joe Wurts 2nd Andrew Meyer 3rd Peter Glassey



F5J (electric launch thermal/precision soaring)

This was the start of a split competition to ensure we got a result in this class. We scheduled over two days in case we had a weather event. Half the competition was on Wednesday and the 2nd half on Thursday. With 17 entries we had 3 groups of pilots drawn at random off Glider score. Many guys made their 10:00 minute flights but there were a few who managed to land early. Scores were close near the top so height and landing decided the leader. The thermals were strong enabling some planes to get high. It was fortunate we had a notam in place (big thanks to David Griffin). The split scheduling of this comp was visionary and worked well as usual. Wednesday's three rounds completed the competition with: 1st Joe Wurts 2nd Andrew Meyer 3rd Andrew Hiscock

F5K (electric hand launch 1.5m NZ rules)

We changed to this event after lunch. Some thought had gone into this one, running it on it's own for a change (usually we have mixed with F3K which made it very busy). The 11 registered pilots were split into two groups. It was super fun with high speed, 6 odd second launches and then thermaling out to achieve the task. An altis (altitude meter) in the model recorded your launch height and timers had the stopwatch on for each of the flights during the task. It was very enjoyable to have the dedicated time to fly just this class on its own with some great thermal action and some long flights achieved, although for this one the wind was building with the need for ballast. We did a total of 3 rounds. A little longer competition time would have been even better as everyone really enjoyed this one, particularly: 1st Kevin Botherway 2nd Joe Wurts 3rd Allan Knox

ALES Radian (radian event to NZ rules)

As usual, our highest registrations for an event with 19 in the mix and 14 turning up to fly. We ran three rounds in unreal air. Most pilots achieved at least one 7.00-minute flight and a few did three in the three rounds. The lift did shut down at various times, meaning it was down to precision landing (or arrival) and exact times. Lots of fun and good results. Our other worthy mentions were: 1st Robert Morgan 2nd Joe Wurts 3rd Peter Williams

RES (new class built up models 2M – rudder, elevator, spoiler)

This is a new event to New Zealand and the SIG has produced rules after collating all the various ones from around the world. The basics are a 5-minute flight with a maximum 100m launch height and precision landing. This event is flown at soar champs and introduced into NDC. We had 17 competitors with a total of 19 registered who managed 6 full rounds. The morning started quite calm with some reasonable wind in the forecast which meant ballast was utilized, for those that had it, towards the end of the comp. Finding a nice corridor was the order of the day and the occasional thermal gave some reasonable height. Care was required to not take it too far back, as returning to the landing spot from downwind quite often instigated a landing. It was very enjoyable and the 5-minute flight meant we got through a few rounds with placings: 1st Joe Wurts 2nd Andrew Meyer 3rd Kevin Botherway



F3K (hand launch glider)

Another great day in paradise and we relocated to the well mown Vintage field. It was the usual Nationals thing where everyone was a bit washed out after 5 odd days of soaring and sun. We had 10 competitors and planned to go until 2.00pm. We managed 6 rounds and had various tasks scheduled. There was quite a bit of thermal action, some great heights achieved, with lots of downwind flying. Selecting the right option here was hard as the wind ranged from light to variable during the event. The top pilots were: 1st Joe Wurts 2nd Peter Williams 3rd Andrew Meyer



Overall results for soaring Champion 2024 – 1st Joe Wurts, 2nd Andrew Meyer, 3rd Kevin Botherway

The soaring guys also competed in other disciplines during the week especially indoor Peter Glassey did so well to gain 1st Place in Aggy! Peter Williams overall champ of Champs!



Thanks to all who attended Nationals, for helping with all the setup on the field, and especially the soaring team that helped prepare for our Banquet prize-giving. A special thanks to the soaring team who helped with the main prizegiving setup and Andrew and Jane Hiscock for the sausage rolls! We flew and recorded scores for every event, the weather was great! A successful 78th Nats for soaring!

Soaring rocks!!!!!!!!!!

Rowdy