

2022 USPA COLLEGIATE NATIONAL SKYDIVING CHAMPIONSHIPS



Skydive Arizona is located in Eloy, an hour driving southeast of Phoenix. It's firmly ensconced in desert terrain, but boasts an immense plot of cultivated green grass, isolated for the use of a parachute landing area.

Over New Year's holiday last, it was dedicated to hosting the USPA Collegiate National Skydiving Championships. Adjacent to this greenery is a smaller landing area, utilized for new skydivers. The LZs share the dazzling blue desert sky.

Each location was busy with Midshipmen during this holiday period; the Collegiates with 21 who had entered the competition, while the training staff of the DZ was focused on 10 plebes participating in the Accelerated Freefall Program.

Follow the Money

Facebook postings and articles posted on this website elicited the assistance of supporters to finance the midshipman skydivers in their quest for competition representation at the Collegiates. Bill Boniface, CAPT, USN Ret., had established an ongoing GoFundMe link for the purpose of accumulating a goal of \$13,000 for financial subsidy to send the 21 Mids to the competition. On the date of 15NOV22, the balance was \$11,345. Well, if you were to reference that link today, 27FEB23, the balance is \$16,005. Much appreciation is proffered to those wonderful folks who have accomplished this. If you follow the money, you'll be pleasantly informed of a truly magnificent event involving the USNAPT; i.e., the fund objective: their performance at the Competition. In closing out that link, CAPT B has graciously acknowledged supporter participation.

The next TEAM effort will be for sending a contingent of 2/C members of the USNAPT to the upcoming ISAM (Inter-Service Academy Meet), a competition between USAFA, USMA, and USNA. As CAPT B will attest, the fundraising task is 'perpetually unfinished'. The TEAM administration continually needs funds to maintain the desirable atmosphere and conditions for training and future events. We hope the supportive endeavor will expand even further.

This article is intended to punctuate two coincidental occurrences. One, the celebration of the wonderful response from the USNAPT family of supporters; two, the celebration of the efficacy of that response; to wit, the TEAM's commendable fulfillment as the representatives of the USNA, and the U.S. Navy & Marine Corps, not only in athletic performance, but as the face of the services.



A luminescent sky hovers over USNAPT packers.



Eloy entrance sign



The USNAPT medal winners.

**DIRECTIONS FOR GIVING TO THE TWO
USNA FOUNDATION PARACHUTE TEAM FUNDS**

Team Regular/Program Fund:
(Donations for everything other than the Coach)
www.usna.com/give/parachute-team

Team Coach Fund:
www.usna.com/give/parachute-coach

**Both of these links get you right to the Alumni
Assn/Foundation website donation page**

As everyone knows, the Midshipmen receive no direct subsidy from anyone; they pay their own way. However, we try to subsidize their expenses when they perform as an athletic adjunct to the USNA. This was done magnificently by the achievement of the GoFundMe goal, allowing for their triumphant exploit at the competition. Many, many thanks! Now, please follow the money on to the next event, or by adding to the Coach Fund, which is moving forward.

OK!! It's time to illuminate the source of the buzzing TEAM pride.



COLLEGIATES CONTINGENT -- Standing, l to r: Matt Davidson, Event Coach; LT Matt Cecala, USN; 2/C Eric Lim, Gavin Kim, Aron Sobers; 3/C Tom Snead, JP Anhalt, Caleb Sheyda, Brett Dumais, Manolis Tsavaris; 1/C Matt Newton; 3/C Chris Kehr, 4/C Conner Mollberg, Henry Borthwick, Myles Hall, Ethan Clark, Chris Paris, Brody Boggs. Kneeling, l to r: 2/C Ambria Pipho, Nate Basford, Nick Froude; 1/C Ryan Grafman, Vince Tenebro, Jason Weiss, Brian Flaherty (Team Capt.), Megan Welsh; 3/C Mary Root, Jordyn Urrea; 4/C Grace Parker, Reagan Mar, Julian Saldana, Kobby Boateng; Bill Boniface, CAPT, USN Ret., USNAPT Alumni Rep.-- Missing: MSGT Nick Mitchell, USMC, E'Rep.

No less than 35 personnel traveled to Eloy, including the plebes who were to observe the competition when not in AFF class. Plus CAPT B, the TEAM Alumni O'Rep; MSGT Nick Mitchell, the TEAM E'Rep; Matt Davidson, Event Coach, 8-way Formation Skydiving World Champion, formerly of the U.S. Army Golden Knights and son of Mike Davidson, MAJ, USA Ret., who has served as the current USNAPT volunteer Head Coach since 2008; and LT Matt Cecala, '15, SEAL, former OIC of the U.S. Navy's Leap Frogs. There were other visiting supporters: past USNAPT Capt. Ken Levens, '18, now CAPT, USMC, and his wife, Meghan, '18, formerly of the TEAM, now CAPT, USMC. LT Jake Mendelson, '19, the first & last USPA AFFI member of the TEAM, also XO; LTJG Tyler Hayes, '20, past TEAM Capt.; and Simeon Brewster, '18, former TEAM XO, as well as Kirk Michael, '72, a member of the fundraising Advisory Committee. Certain family members made appearances as well.

Attesting to the value of quality coaching, two stellar events resulting from competition performances stand out. The first is the capture of the Novice event Gold Medal in canopy accuracy by 2/C Gavin Kim, followed by the 2-way FS team 'Updog', members 3/C JP Anhalt and Brett Dumais. Updog received notice from Amanda Smalley, newly installed USPA Director of Competition, they had set a USPA record for number of points scored while winning the Gold Medal in the Open category of their event. This set the pace for a total of 13 USNAPT Medal Winners, establishing expectations for the future and validating the expertise of Matt Davidson as the USNAPT Collegiates Meet Coach.

The TEAM posted entrants in 5 events at the meet; fielding 5 in the Team Accuracy, 19 in Individual Accuracy, 2 teams in the 6-way Speed Star, 3 teams in the 4-way Formation Skydiving (FS), and 4 teams in the 2-way FS. The 13 total medals won is a USNA record in the Collegiates, not coincidentally due to the coaching and due to the largest competition contingent ever. The excursion was the imprimatur of the arrival of a significant presence by the USNA.



*2/C Gavin Kim
& winning smile.*

Few people are familiar with the qualities necessary to leave an aircraft at 4,500 ft. altitude and successfully make first contact with the ground on a 1 ft.sq. target. Using a gliding canopy, in competition, this is called a 'dead center' score of 0.00 meters. This was accomplished by 5 TEAM members, with one member, 3/C Tom Snead, doing it twice. The others were 1/C Brian Flaherty, and Vince Tenebro, & 2/C Eric Lim and Ambria Pipho. All the more amazing because Ambria had not been jumping. She had recently rejoined the TEAM after a semester as an exchange student in Latvia. ... It's interesting to note that Ambria is the first female midshipman to accomplish this feat at the Collegiates.



*Updog: 3/C Brett Dumais
& JP Anhalt.*



2/C Ambria Pipho revels in return to TEAM



2/C Nate Basford alights



3/C Tom Snead leaves no doubt.

As usual, WX problems teased the effort at the higher altitude events. Five of six planned 4-way FS rounds were completed, but that was enough to establish deserving medal winners. And, while all 3 planned rounds of 2-way FS were completed, only 1 of 3 planned rounds in the 6-way speed star event were able to be completed.

The improvement in accuracy by the TEAM in general is clearly a reflection of the increase in opportunity by members to participate in the continuing demo practice on the Yard, overseen by current Head Coach and pilot, Mike Davidson. B license holders are allowed to jump on Hospital Point and the C license, and future D holders, are not only practicing on Worden, but are now performing for brigade parade events there. Plans are being laid for practicing in the NMCM stadium. Credit for this greater volume of Yard practice is due to the excellent intervention of O'Rep Donnie Kennedy, CAPT, USN Ret.

Last March, the USNAPT sent a contingent to Sawtooth, AZ for spring break. Plebes made their introductory AFF dives with the assistance of USAFA and USMA personnel, while Matt Davidson worked with the upper class on their formation skydiving. Last fall, Matt again provided his unique skills as a Coach when a group of upper class Mids traveled to Raeford, NC to utilize his instruction in the Paraclete wind tunnel. The risen skill level exhibited this year in Eloy is more than adequate proof of these ventures, and a confidence builder in the ongoing effort to establish a permanent team Coach by Bill Boniface; who works and travels tirelessly in that pursuit.

Updog garnered the Gold Medal in the 2-way FS Open Category, as indicated, setting a USPA Collegiates record; with USNA's Incognito Mode winning the Silver Medal.

The Naval Academy Boomers were awarded the Bronze Medal in the Team Accuracy event, finishing 3rd in a field of 23 teams, with the Tugboats in 6th place. As the skies allowed, the Navy Tugboats captured the Bronze Medal in the 4-way FS Advanced Category event while the Boomers held their own in the Open Category, which reveals the chasm between the institutional support of the West Point and Air Force teams, compared with the personal subsidy necessary for the economically struggling Mids. If you follow the money, one realizes how much it influences eventual performance.

USNA's Saplings & Tulips finished 7th & 8th respectively, in the 2-Way FS Advanced Category, behind West Point, which dominated the event, and Air Force. However, the writing is on the wall, predicting great future advancement considering the improvement from last year and the rising enthusiasm as the USNAPT gains experience and support.

Performances by each of the event teams can be viewed by the links provided below. The best performance round video from each team for each event was selected along with a photo & identify of members. ([Click link beneath](#))

Incognito Mode:



3/C Caleb Sheyda & Chris Kehr

[2-Way FS Best Round](#)

Saplings:



3/C Tom Snead & Manolis Tsavaris

[2-Way FS Best Round](#)

Tulips:



3/C Mary Root & Jordyn Urrea

[2-Way FS Best Round](#)

Updog:



3/C Brett Dumais & JP Anhalt

[2-Way FS Best Round](#)

Fo fo fo:



2/C Aron Sobers, 1/C Matt Newton

1/C Meg Welch, 2/C Gavin Kim

[4-Way FS Best Round](#)

Boomers:



1/C Vince Tenebro, Jason Weiss

1/C Ryan Grafman, Brian Flaherty

[4-Way FS Best Round](#)

Tugboats:



2/C Nick Froude, Eric Lim

2/C Jackee Gwynn, Nate Basford

[4-Way FS Best Round](#)

Phantoms:



1/C Jason Weiss, Brian Flaherty, Matt Newton
Megan Welch, Vince Tenebro, Ryan Grafman

6-Way Speed Star

Bee Keeping:



2/C Eric Lim, Aron sobers, Gavin Kim
Nate Basford, Nick Froude, Jackee Gwynn

6-Way Speed Star



Coach Matt Davidson critiques 2/C
Jackee Gwynn on accuracy approach



TEAM morning briefing



USNAPT Alumni: Simeon Brewster,
Ken Levens, Matt Cecala, Tyler Hayes



Meet Coach Matt Davidson (center) mentors 4-Way
FS team Boomers on exit technique



Matt Cecala & Matt Davidson

The visiting USNAPT alumni had an opportunity to play a role in the competition, coming to the aid of the Meet Director, Randy Connell; ... who incidentally is a former Marine. With the time and weather curtain closing in on the ability to complete some of the higher freefall rounds, the expertise of Matt Cecala, Ken Levens, and Simeon Brewster was called upon. These gentlemen possess freefall video skills, which value became urgent. They were enlisted to video

several teams in their competition freefall performances before time ran out. All performed to the satisfaction of the judging staff, ensuring complete rounds, which sealed the Meet. Go Navy !!



John McCarthy, '76, Treasurer of Southern Arizona USNA Alumni Chapter with CAPT B



Tulips' smiles reflect desert sun



3/C Brett Dumais w/supportive parents

While the competition was taking place, the plebe contingent was engrossed at the other end of the DZ in learning how to skydive. Although they had been previously actively involved in ground training at their Yard loft, the final touches of familiarity with the LZ topography, the particular aircraft they would jump, the AFF technique utilized by Skydive Arizona staff, and their actual Jumpmasters were required to get into the air. By the end of the competition, 9 of them had completed 3 jumps each.



4/C Ethan Clark practices student exit for Skydive Arizona AFF Instructor



*Plebes on break from ground school: Standing: Henry Borthwick
Seated: l to r; Myles Hall, Conner Mollberg, Kobby Boateng, Reagan Mar, Chris Paris*



MSGT Nick Mitchell ("Top") not only traveled to the Meet to provide supervision for the TEAM, but managed to make progress in his own skydiving program