



Screenshot from

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hxd-pOwUZMQ>

# NASA'S SPACE GRANT 2024-2025 MIDWEST HIGH-POWER ROCKETRY COMPETITION – THE “HIGH-THRUST CHALLENGE”

## MAY 2025 COMPETITION LAUNCH NEAR NORTH BRANCH, MN

### HOSTED BY THE MN SPACE GRANT CONSORTIUM AND BY THE TRIPOLI MN HIGH-POWER ROCKETRY CLUB

Informational videocon: Monday, September 9, 2024, 7 p.m. CST  
Repeated: Thursday, January 9, 2025, 7 p.m. CST

# Introductions

2

- MN Space Grant Organizer

James Flaten, U of MN Twin Cities

[flate001@umn.edu](mailto:flate001@umn.edu)

- Technical Advisor

Gary Stroick, Tripoli MN

[president@offwegorocketry.com](mailto:president@offwegorocketry.com)

- Round Robin Introductions

# Number of Teams Participating

3

- Teams competing in past years
  - 10 - 15 teams typically compete, mostly from the Space Grant Great (Lakes) Midwest Region, but the competition is open to colleges/universities across the entire nation
  - Last year only 7 teams registered and 6 made it to the fly-off with a competition rocket, including one from overseas!
  - The final team down-scaled their activities and showed up with a non-competition rocket (which flew well).
- This year we are hoping to attract more teams to attempt the “High-Thrust Challenge.”

# What you need to know

4

- Competition Handbook
- Fees & Supplied Equipment
- Schedule
- Competition Parameters
- Pre-Competition Requirements
- Five Aspects of the Competition
- Flight Safety
- Judging
- Q & A

# Competition Handbook & Website

5

**2024-2025**  
**NASA's Space Grant (in-the-)Midwest**  
**High-Power Rocketry Competition**  
**Handbook**  
**High-Thrust Challenge**  
Informational videocon: Mon. Sept. 9, 2024  
(videocon repeated on Thurs. Jan. 9, 2025)  
(Contact James Flaten <flaten001@umn.edu>, MN Space Grant, for call-in information)  
from 7 to 8 p.m. CST  
**Notice of Intent to Compete: Sept. 15, 2024**  
(Non-binding, but required from all institutions, including those starting in the winter/spring.)  
**Registration Payment Due: January 31, 2025**  
**Launch Competition in Minnesota:**  
**Sat. & Sun., May 17-18, 2025\*\***  
**(Rain date: Mon., May 19, 2025)**  
\*\* If Minnesota has a particularly wet spring, the competition dates may need to shift. This will be announced in as far in advance as is practical. See details later in this handbook.  
**Main contacts:**  
James Flaten, [flaten001@umn.edu](mailto:flaten001@umn.edu); MN Space Grant Consortium, U of MN - Twin Cities  
Gary Stroick, [president@ofivegerocketry.com](mailto:president@ofivegerocketry.com), Technical Advisor, Tripoli Minnesota  
High-Power Rocketry Club  
**Web site:**  
[http://dept.aem.umn.edu/msgc/Space\\_Grant\\_Midwest\\_Rocketry\\_Competition\\_2024\\_2025/](http://dept.aem.umn.edu/msgc/Space_Grant_Midwest_Rocketry_Competition_2024_2025/)

Website: [http://www.aem.umn.edu/msgc/Space Grant Midwest Rocketry Competition 2024 2025/](http://www.aem.umn.edu/msgc/Space_Grant_Midwest_Rocketry_Competition_2024_2025/)

# Fees & Supplied Equipment

6

- ❑ Registration Fee: \$400\* (due Jan. 31, 2025)
- ❑ The Registration Fee Covers (on Launch Day):\*\*
  - (LOANER) Competition Flight Data Recorder (A Jolly Logic AltimeterTwo data logger) to monitor altitude and other basic parameters like peak altitude, velocity, and acceleration. (Note: An AltimeterThree, if you own one, is allowed instead.) However, remember that AltimeterTwo and AltimeterThree data loggers cannot fire ejection charges, so you will still need to fly a “genuine” (commercial) altimeter for any charges other than motor eject. (Motor eject is required as a back-up, to get out at least one parachute near apogee.)
  - Two Aerotech H550 DMS Competition Motors worth \$62.99 each, purchased from Off We Go Rocketry (the Tripoli MN vendor)
    - This high-thrust “Super Thunder” motor will be used for both competition flights
  - Teams need to reserve their spot in the competition and order additional motors for test launch(es) and/or certification flights by Sept. 15, 2024, even if not planning to work on this project till later in the school year.
  - Teams may purchase additional H550 motors (to pick up at the competition) and try to fly more than twice within the launch window, but only till about 4 p.m., with priority given to rockets than have not yet flown twice.

*\*Tentative value – might possibly go up or down (a little) depending on the number of teams that sign up and our success in finding outside sponsors – changes to this fee, if any, will be announced by December 31, 2024.*

*\*\*If we garner enough outside sponsorship support, we may be able to provide more things or possibly reduce the registration fee. Additional details, if any, announced no later than December 31, 2024.*

# Space Grant “Sponsorship”

7

To help us keep tabs on participants for Space Grant Reporting, we require that every team contact their state’s Space Grant for “sponsorship.” We are not telling Space Grants what “sponsorship” should mean – this is to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. Note that it doesn’t necessarily entail full (or even partial) financial support, so most teams will need to find other sources of funding.

However, we hope that Space Grants will at least consider helping with some basic competition expenses such as:

- (a) registration fee (\$400)
- (b) travel to MN for the competition launch in May 2025 (cost varies widely)
- (c) building and instrumenting the rocket (cost will vary; about \$500 to \$1500)
- (d) building certification rocket(s) for bonus points (about \$200 to \$500)
- (e) paying for motors (beyond the two provided) and casings and closures (cost will depend on the motors selected; about \$100 to \$500)
- (f) buying motor(s) for at least one pre-competition test launch of the competition rocket and, potentially, L1 cert flight(s) before attempting L2 cert flights at the fly-off itself (\$62.99 to about \$150, depending on number of cert motors)

# 2024-2025 Competition Description

8

## ***The “High-Thrust Challenge” (summary description)***

*In this competition, college/university student teams will design and construct a single motor, single stage, high-power rocket that will fly twice during the competition. The challenges are:*

- (A) have the first flight (may be single-deploy or dual-deploy) go to exactly 1000 feet above ground level on an Aerotech H550 DMS motor and***
- (B) have the second flight (must be dual-deploy) go as high as possible on an Aerotech H550 DMS motor and***
- (C) have both flights carry a “non-commercial” (i.e. not sold for rocketry) data-logging sensor suite and use it to deduce altitude, speed, and acceleration during ascent, all as a function of time (not just maximum values), in three independent ways (barometric pressure, 3-axis acceleration, and gps) at as high a sampling frequency as possible, then analyze the pros and cons of the different approaches.***

*All competition flights will use an Aerotech H550ST-14A (high-thrust) DMS motor. Bonus points will be given to (1) teams whose member(s) increase their certification level(s) using individually-built rockets (in parallel with the (team-built) competition rocket(s)), (2) teams that also implement a 2-pressure-sensor pitot tube system as a fourth performance characterization approach, and (3) teams that do both flights using a single rocket – internal modifications (parachute, ballast, etc.) are allowed between flights, but not external modifications (to merit bonus points in this category). Additional details about the competition are included in the handbook, including due dates and report content/page limits. Note: All fabrication work on the rocket(s), except for possibly machining of plastic and/or metal parts, must be performed by students.*

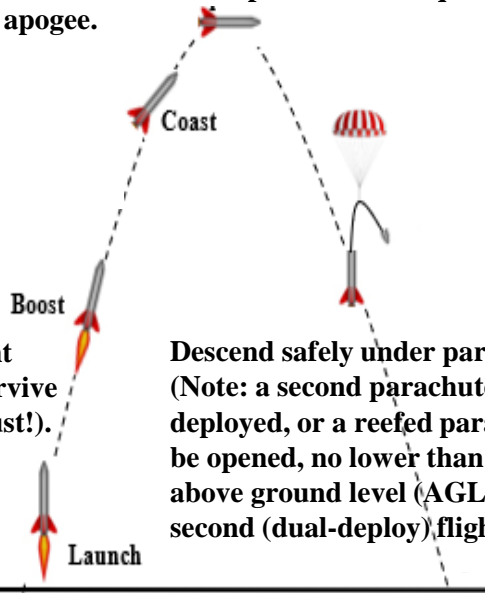


# 2024-2025 Competition Constraints

9

Continue to collect data, at least all the way to apogee.

Apogee: deploy a parachute – required



Descend safely under parachute. (Note: a second parachute must be deployed, or a reefed parachute must be opened, no lower than 500 feet above ground level (AGL) for the second (dual-deploy) flight.)

## RULES/CONSTRAINTS (see handbook for more)

- All teams are required to meet regularly with a non-student Level 2 (or higher) certified mentor, plus have a faculty adviser and Space Grant “sponsorship.”
- Student teams will be required to design and team-build one or more rockets capable carrying out the challenge goals.
- Receive feedback on a “Draft of Design(s)” before starting to build.
- First competition flight to 1000 ft AGL. Second competition flight as high as possible. Both flights on an Aerotech H550 DMS motor.
- Do at least one test flight of a team-built competition rocket on a high-power motor prior to the fly-off date. Note: L1 cert flights (in preparation for L2 cert attempts on the fly-off date) also must be done in advance.
- All rockets must have an “apogee parachute” deployed at apogee (or just after apogee). If any rocket is dual-deploy, the main parachute must fully unfurl no lower than 500 feet above ground level. Chute releases are allowed.
- All parts of recovery systems that are electronically deployed must use commercial altimeters. The motor eject must remain in place or else a second, independently-powered commercial altimeter must back-up the parachute deployment at apogee.
- One competition data logger will be provided – a Jolly Logic AltimeterTwo.
- Radio-tracking is required on all cert flights and also on all competition flights predicted to go higher than 2000 ft AGL.
- Rocket must have  $1 \leq \text{static margin} \leq 5$  at launch. Thrust-to-weight ratio at launch must be at least 3:1 (5:1 preferred). All parts must remain tied together during descent and the rocket must land traveling less than 35 ft/sec.

# Pre-Competition Requirements

10

## Draft of Design(s)

### ▣ Purpose

- To give your team's mentor and Gary Stroick an early look at your designs and specifications BEFORE YOU START TO BUILD.\*

### ▣ Due date

- Submit as early as possible – definitely before you start to build the rocket(s)\* (so this might need to be submitted well before the PDR is due)
- If planning to build “late” (i.e. possibly even after getting feedback on your designs through the PDR process), still submit this Draft of Designs no later than 5 p.m. Central Time on Friday, Feb. 10, 2025 (4 weeks before the PDR is due)

### ▣ Contents

- This document must include a list (at least) of all major functional components of the rocket (selection of parachute, recovery harness, rail buttons/guides, altimeter, etc.) plus simulation files (OpenRocket or RockSim) including basic details about the dimensions and materials to be used for the fins, airframes, and nose cones, connections, commercial altimeter(s) planned for ejections, etc. for all rockets (competition rocket; certification rockets, if any)
- Gary Stroick will provide feedback within one week regarding any concerns he may have, especially regarding potential fin flutter and/or divergence issues and/or appropriateness of altimeter(s).

### ▣ Failure to complete by Feb. 10, 2025: 20% Overall Score Reduction

\* You are allowed to build kit-rockets, but not scratch rockets, prior to getting this feedback. However, document all rockets in your Draft of Design(s).

# Pre-Competition Requirements

11

## Model Rocket Demonstration Flights

### ▣ Purpose

- Demonstrate a minimum knowledge of rocketry

### ▣ How to do it

- Purchase model rocket flight kits (**all different**) (students are allowed to double up, if team has more than 5 model rocket builders)
- Assemble rockets and fly them (hopefully successfully)
- Document each flight with before and after photos of the rocket and the builder(s) “in the field”
- E-mail photos to the MN Space Grant along with flight date and location no later than 5 p.m. Central Time on Friday, March 10, 2025 (the PDR due date)

### ▣ Potential Waivers

- If your whole team has high-power rocketry build experience, you may request a waiver by e-mail from this requirement from Gary Stroick
- If you prefer to team-build and fly a (non-competition) high-power kit rocket instead of multiple model rockets to fulfill this requirement, that is acceptable, but it must be a different rocket than the one you will use to compete

### ▣ Failure to complete by March 10, 2025: 10% Overall Score Reduction

# Pre-Competition Requirements

12

## Educational Outreach (see form at end of handbook)

- ❑ Collected/validated by each State's Space Grant Coordinator or Director (note – your team's faculty advisor can provide contact information for the Space Grant Coordinator or Director in your state)
- ❑ Form must be completed and submitted to your state's Space Grant no later than 5 p.m. Central Time on Monday, May 5, 2025 – also send a copy to the Technical Adviser, Gary Stroick
- ❑ Tell your state's Space Grant office to notify the Technical Adviser that they have received and validated the form
- ❑ **Failure to complete by May 5, 2025: 10% Overall Score Reduction**

# 5 Judged Aspects of the Competition

13

- Preliminary Design (Written) Report (30%)
- Flight Readiness (Written) Report (15%)
- Flight Readiness (Oral) Presentation (15%)
- Competition Flight Performance (20%)
- Post-Competition Flight Performance Report (20%)

*Note 1 – There are overall percentage reductions if you do not complete the Draft of Design(s), the Model Rocket Demonstration Flights, and/or the Educational Outreach component in a timely manner.*

*Note 2 – Written reports are due by e-mail (or by another mutually-agreed upon means) to the Technical Advisor by **5:00 p.m. Central Time** on the dates specified in the schedule. Scores for late reports will be reduced by 20% for each day (or portion of a day) that they are late. If you are unsure about whether or not you can get documents the size of your reports to the Technical Advisor, practice by submitting comparably-sized dummy documents in advance.*

*Note 3 – Mentors must submit report forms as well, by the same report dates specified in the schedule. Mentor reports can go directly to the Technical Advisor by e-mail – they do NOT need to be collected by teams, nor included with the team reports.*

# 5 Judged Aspects of the Competition

14

## Preliminary Design (Written) Report (30%)

- ▣ Communicate the engineering and design effort
  - Provide detailed designs and diagrams
  - Plans non-commercial sensor suite, other custom features, etc.
  - Discussion of how sensor data will be processed; expected pros/cons
  - Analysis of predicted performances
  - Analysis of non-“pre-qualified” components
  - Addresses issues raised from Draft of Design(s) submission, if any
- ▣ Estimated Budget
- ▣ 25 pages MAX
- ▣ Due by 5 p.m. Central Time on Monday, March 10, 2025
- ▣ **Note: Model rocket mini-reports (1 page per rocket, with photos – does not count against the 25 page limit for the PDR)**

# 5 Judged Aspects of the Competition

15

## Flight Readiness (Written) Report (15%)

- ❑ SHOW the construction and completed rocket(s)
  - Construction pictures, diagrams, etc.
  - Discussion of non-commercial sensor suite, etc.
- ❑ Test Flight(s) (at least 1 test flight of a team-built rocket on a high-power motor – perhaps some L1 cert flights (as L2 cert flight prep) too)
  - Flight Performance Analysis
  - Sensor Analysis Discussion
  - Improvements planned, if any, prior to competition
- ❑ Actual Budget
- ❑ 25 pages MAX (plus “Code Appendix” – no page limit)
- ❑ Due by 5 p.m. on Monday, May 5, 2025

# 5 Judged Aspects of the Competition

16

## Flight Readiness (Oral) Presentation (15%)

- ❑ Communicate the design and engineering effort
- ❑ Organization and presentation
- ❑ Rocket construction (especially av-bay(s) and custom details for this year's challenge(s))
- ❑ VISUAL AIDS
- ❑ 10 minutes for presentation, plus up to 3 minutes for Q & A
- ❑ Separate time for safety check and to show judges the inside of your av-bay(s)
- ❑ Saturday afternoon into the evening, May 17, 2025 (will be held at a venue in the Twin Cities – location TBA)



# 5 Judged Aspects of the Competition

17

## Competition Flight (20%) (see handbook for more details)

- ❑ Each successful flight requires:
  - Rocket launches, flies vertically, flies stably all the way to apogee
  - Recovery system(s) successfully deployed at appropriate altitudes
  - All parts of rocket land safely at  $< 35$  ft/sec descent speed
  - All parts of rocket are recovered in re-flyable condition
- ❑ Flight Scoring:
  - All rocket(s) have successful flights (see above)
  - Timely prep of rocket(s) (see details in handbook)
  - See handbook for scoring formulas related to various aspects of the challenge
  - Flight disqualification decisions will be announced on the spot (based on observations, not logged data). Flight(s) may be re-tried as long as the RSO agrees the rocket is safe and there is adequate time in the launch window.

# 5 Judged Aspects of the Competition

18

## Post-Flight Performance (Written) Report (20%)

- ▣ Flight Performance Comparison
  - Actual vs simulated flight performance analysis
  - Graphs, charts, links to posted videos or stills (if any), etc.
  - Performance results; discrepancy discussion; failure analysis, if needed
- ▣ 15 pages MAX (plus “Code Appendix” – only include if code has changed since FRR – no page limit)
- ▣ Due by 5 p.m. Central Time on Friday, June 2, 2025

# Bonus Opportunities

19

Bonus points are available to

- teams whose member(s) increase their certification level using individually-built rockets (in parallel with the (team-built) competition rocket).
  - Students seeking Level 1 certification need to take a written test from the competition organizers (not required by Tripoli and NAR certification processes).
  - Students seeking both Level 1 and Level 2 certification need to do their Level 1 flight before the day of the competition, not try both flights on the same date.
- teams that implement a 2-pressure-senor pitot tube system as a fourth performance-characterization approach
- teams that to both competition flight missions using the same rocket – internal changes allowed between flights, but not external modifications (to merit this type of bonus points)

# Safety Reviews

20

- Each team must go through two (remote) inspections with competition organizers (attended by their certified mentor) prior to coming to the competition
- Each team will go through a safety review with Tripoli MN the evening of their oral presentation
- On the day of the launch:
  - Each rocket must be examined for flight safety by the Range Safety Officer (RSO)
  - **The Tripoli MN RSO has the final word on flight safety! If they won't allow a rocket to fly, they will explain why (and may be able to provide suggestions on changes that could be made to try to bring the rocket up to safety-par).**

# Judging

21

- Separate from safety checks by Tripoli MN, the written and oral reports and the performance in the competition flights will be evaluated according to the rubrics in the handbook by a panel of judges from industry and/or academia.
- **Each Space Grant sponsoring more than one rocket team will be expected to provide one judge. (States fielding four or more teams may be asked to provide two judges.)**
- If you don't have someone from your state you would like to send to MN for the competition dates, contact Gary Stroick about possibly retaining a member of the Tripoli MN club to serve as "your" judge. Typically, judges' travel expenses are reimbursed (at least). Please select and confirm your judge(s) no later than Jan. 31, 2025.

# Schedule Summary

22

- ❑ Sept. 15, 2024 – Notice of Intent to Compete (non-binding, but a hard deadline) and order test flight motor(s) and certification flight motor(s)
- ❑ DUE BEFORE YOU START TO BUILD – Draft of Designs (specs & sim)
- ❑ Jan. 31, 2025 – Team registration fee is due (pay \$ for motors now too)
- ❑ Jan. 31, 2025 – All states' judges identified
- ❑ Feb. 10, 2025 – Declaration of Competition Attendance
- ❑ Feb. 10, 2025 – Last possible date to get credit for Draft of Designs (specs & sim)
- ❑ Late Feb. (approx.) – “50% inspection” (remote – with Gary, mentor, & faculty adviser)
- ❑ March 10, 2025 – Preliminary Design (Written) Report (PDR) along with Model Rocket Flights documentation
- ❑ Early Apr. (approx.) – “90% inspection” (remote – with Gary, mentor, & faculty adviser)
- ❑ Late April – Test flight(s) completed. Better still, do these in March or early April
- ❑ May 5, 2025 – Flight Readiness (Written) Report (FRR) along with Educational Outreach form
- ❑ May 17-18, 2025 – Competition (includes Oral FRR) – weather delay date: 5/19\*\*
- ❑ \*\*Competition organizers reserve the right to shift the competition dates – see handbook.
- ❑ June 2, 2025 – Post-Competition Flight Performance (Written) Report (PCFPR)
- ❑ June 16, 2025 – Competition Results Announced

$$v_x = v \cos \theta$$

$$v_y = v \sin \theta$$

$$x = v \cos \theta \cdot t$$

$$y = \left( v \sin \theta - \frac{g}{2} t \right) \cdot t$$