

Happenings in this world and beyond...



MARCH / APRIL 2026

COMPETITION | STELLARCAMPS | SPONSOR NEWS | STEM RESOURCES | SPACE NEWS | JUST FOR FUN

NATIONAL SPACE DESIGN COMPETITION

Teams rock STLX12 Semifinal Round; top ten headed to National Finals.


It's that time of the year! After a very challenging Semifinals, the top ten teams have punched their tickets to the upcoming National Finals Competition. Here they are:



NATIONAL FINALIST STLX12 2025-2026

COLORADO SPRINGS CADET SQUADRON CAP
WOLFPACK / COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

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NATIONAL FINALIST STLX12 2025-2026

CAPT. "BUD" JACKSON COMPOSITE SQUADRON CAP
CHALLENGER / EDISON, NJ

First-time qualifier!


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NATIONAL FINALIST STLX12 2025-2026

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF MATHEMATICS & SCIENCE
STELLAR FELLARS / CARSON, CA

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NATIONAL FINALIST STLX12 2025-2026

EAST VIEW HIGH SCHOOL NAVY JROTC
HYPERION / GEORGETOWN, TX

First-time qualifier!

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NATIONAL FINALIST STLX12 2025-2026

FULLERTON UNION HIGH SCHOOL
EMPEROR ZURG'S HENCHMEN / FULLERTON, CA

First-time qualifier!

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NATIONAL FINALIST STLX12 2025-2026

GREAT MILLS HIGH SCHOOL
BUZZ BACK / GREAT MILLS, MD

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NATIONAL FINALIST STLX12 2025-2026

**JAMES BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL
AIR FORCE JROTC**
SPACE DAWG BRAVO / AUSTIN, TX

First-time qualifier!



NATIONAL FINALIST STLX12 2025-2026

**PALOS VERDES PENINSULA
HIGH SCHOOL**
B-2 SPIRIT / ROLLING HILLS ESTATE, CA



NATIONAL FINALIST STLX12 2025-2026

**POPE JOHN PAUL II
HIGH SCHOOL**
LITTLE EINSTEINS / LACEY, WA

First-time qualifier!



NATIONAL FINALIST STLX12 2025-2026

WOODWARD HIGH SCHOOL
STELLARBOOMERS / WOODWARD, OK

First-time qualifier!

Out of 388 teams that entered the competition, these standout groups battled through the four intense online rounds to secure their place at the finals in Denver, CO, where they'll tackle the season's ultimate challenge. Representing eight high schools and two Civil Air Patrol squadrons across seven states, each team brings its own unique journey. Despite their different paths, they all share one common objective: earning the title of National Champion.

"The announcement of our National Finalists is always an exciting milestone for the program. Every team has dedicated countless hours of hard work throughout the season, which makes it especially rewarding to recognize the ten teams advancing to the final stage of competition," said StellarXplorers Director Rebecca Dalton. "This year is particularly exciting, as six of the teams will be representing their schools or organizations at the event for the very first time."

The 10 finalist teams will face the ultimate task of finding an optimal solution for a mission that puts their orbit planning, satellite design, and launch vehicle operation skills to the test. Teams will

present their solutions to a panel of industry experts, which will factor into their total score. They will also have to complete an academic quiz. The event will culminate at the StellarXplorers Awards Banquet on the evening of April 24, where the winners will be crowned. Members of the top three teams are awarded a cash prize to pursue their future STEM education and career goals.

STELLARCAMPS

The StellarCamps curriculum is available yearround for purchase (one-time purchase for \$99). Whether you're looking to spark interest in aerospace or build foundational skills for competition success, StellarCamps provide the perfect launchpad. Depending on your needs, the StellarCamp curriculum can be used in a group setting or as a self-paced course for individuals.

Learn more or get started today at www.stellarxplorers.org/stellarcamps.



Photo provided by the Basic Research Innovation Collaboration Center (BRICC)

SPONSOR NEWS

L3Harris Powers First Crewed Mission Around the Moon in 50 Years

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, Fla., April 1, 2026 — L3Harris Technologies has successfully powered the historic launch of the Artemis II mission, providing propulsion and avionics for the first crewed journey toward the moon in more than 50 years.

L3Harris is supporting the Artemis II mission with more than 100 separate elements, including RS-25 engines for the Space Launch System core stage, the RL10 engine for the Interim Cryogenic Propulsion Stage and the Orion Main engine for the translunar injection burn. L3Harris also supplied in-space thrusters for course corrections, 40 advanced avionics systems for precision control and monitoring of the launch vehicle and the Orion audio system for continuous astronaut communications.

Source: <https://www.l3harris.com/newsroom/press-release>

United Launch Alliance's Upper Stage Delivered Orion and Astronauts on Mission to Orbit the Moon for Historic NASA Artemis II Mission



The United Launch Alliance (ULA) upper stage called the Interim Cryogenic Propulsion Stage (ICPS), built in collaboration with Boeing, made history by propelling the NASA Artemis II astronauts into high-Earth orbit enabling their trajectory towards the Moon.

“We are honored to be entrusted with the lives of our noble astronauts and play a critical role in enabling the next phase of human space exploration,” said John Elbon, ULA’s interim CEO. “Along with positioning the astronauts in orbit to head towards the Moon, our Ascent

team in Denver supported key NASA decision makers monitoring the health and performance of ICPS during the Space Launch System’s (SLS) climb to space.”

Shortly after liftoff and first stage separation, the ICPS upper stage propelled Orion and the crew for two Earth orbit maneuvers and then separated from Orion into a high-Earth orbit sending the spacecraft to traverse to lunar orbit. After successful separation from Orion, ICPS entered another phase of support, becoming a target for proximity operations by the astronauts. These operations provided performance data and operational experience for the astronauts as they prepare for future rendezvous and docking operations beginning on Artemis III.

Source: <https://newsroom.ulalaunch.com/releases/artemis-ii>

UC Colorado Springs partners with Nova Space to support new MBA Space Cyber Enterprise Management Emphasis

Nova Space has announced its support of the UCCS Master of Business Administration (MBA) Space Cyber Enterprise Management Emphasis program. Through this collaboration, students in the program will utilize Nova Space’s industry-recognized Space Professional Program as part of their academic experience.



In addition, students will have the opportunity to earn the Space Professional Fundamentals certificate, awarded by the Space Workforce Institute (SWI). This credential validates foundational knowledge of the global space industry and provides learners with a competitive edge in both government and commercial space workforce environments.

The UCCS Space Cyber Enterprise Management Emphasis, part of the AACSB-accredited MBA program at the College of Business, addresses the growing need for professionals who can navigate the unique challenges of the space sector. Combining business education with specialized coursework in space and

cyber enterprise management, the program is uniquely positioned to serve students seeking careers in defense, government, and commercial space organizations.

Source: <https://news.uccs.edu>

STEM RESOURCES



Join the StellarXplorers Alumni Network

This is a private group for past and present StellarXplorers participants. You must be at least 16 years of age to join, according to LinkedIn account regulations. All requests to join will be reviewed by StellarXplorers staff to verify participation in the program.

To join, visit: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12721859/>

SPACE NEWS



Curious About What's Happening Overhead?

Check out the Space.com [Space Calendar](#) to stay up to date with upcoming planned rocket launches and skywatching-worthy dates. And in case you missed it...

07 APR 2026 | [Artemis 2 astronauts fly around the moon in record-breaking lunar loop by NASA](#)

06 APR 2026 | [Rubin Observatory found 11,000 new asteroids and measured 'tens of thousands more'](#)

05 APR 2026 | [NASA releases clearest ever images of Jupiter](#)

01 APR 2026 | [What do scientists hope to learn from NASA's historic Artemis 2 moon flyby?](#)

31 MAR 2026 | [Here's what the Artemis 2 astronauts will be doing on each day of historic moon mission](#)

29 MAR 2026 | [SpaceX launches 119 payloads to orbit on a single Falcon 9 rocket \(video\)](#)

26 MAR 2026 | [Incredible new NASA images reveal Saturn in a new light](#)

Space Photos:



*Photo of Earth, snapped by its moonbound Artemis 2 crew April 3, 2026.
(Image credit: NASA/Reid Wiseman)*



*A stunning image of the star forming region W51 created by the JWST (Image credit: NASA, ESA, CSA, Yoo & Ginsburg (UF).
Image processing: A Pagan (STScI))*

JUST FOR FUN

Meet the Artemis II Crew



Click each photo to learn more about the Artemis II Mission crew.



Reid Wiseman
Commander



Victor Glover
Pilot



Christina Koch
Mission Specialist



Jeremy Hansen
Mission Specialist

Image credit: NASA and CSA

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