

Springfield, Ohio, June 7, 2025 – The University of New Mexico claimed the title of World Champion of Collegiate Solar Boating when collegiate engineering teams gathered at Champions Park Lake at the Clark County Fairgrounds to compete in the 31st annual SOLAR SPLASH® competition in Springfield, Ohio, June 3-7. Sponsored by UPS Battery Center, SOLAR SPLASH provides a showcase for the students' innovative boat designs and gives awards for endurance, sprint, and slalom on-the-water events, plus awards for technical reports, video presentation, workmanship, and engineering design. SOLAR SPLASH is a sanctioned American Power Boat Association event.

Local and international spectators gathered to cheer for the six collegiate engineering teams competing. Eng Mohammed Al Taani, the Secretary General of the Arab Renewable Energy Commission & Chairman of the Jordanian Renewables Energy Society, and his wife, Reham, spent the week in Springfield observing the solar competition.

Each competitor is a student team that spends the previous year designing, constructing, and testing their solar boat. The boats, driven by a single skipper, vary greatly in appearance but must conform to size, power, and safety specifications. Rules require that the boats compete in slalom, sprint, and endurance events with solar panels in place on the crafts. Batteries supplement direct solar power for all events, but must be charged by solar panels only. Rules for the event, as well as results and photos from the past 30 years, can be found at www.solarsplash.com.

The team from the University of New Mexico was a returning competitor that had previously performed well, but had never taken the overall championship. This year they received the George Ettenheim Memorial World Championship Trophy scoring a total of 861.86 points. The University of Southern Indiana came in second overall with 825.04 points. Third place went to Carnegie Mellon University with 791.89 points.

Both the Sprint and the Slalom competition were won by Southern Indiana. Carnegie Mellon won the Endurance competition. The University of Dayton received the top prize for their technical report.

The awards ceremony was held on Saturday afternoon. Teams received competition awards for their boats' performances as well as design awards as judged by teams of engineering judges. The Innovation award was given to the team from the University of Southern Indiana for their design work on power trim tabs.

Cooperation and teamwork are important elements in the event so a sportsmanship award, a teamwork award, and a perseverance award are given. This year those awards were won by Dayton University, Stony Brook University, and Cal-Poly Pomona, respectively. The Most Improved Team award went to University of Southern Indiana. The Video Presentation award went to Stony Brook University. The winning video and all other submitted videos may be viewed on the SOLAR SPLASH YouTube channel.

The students, typically numbering three to a dozen or more on each team, spend the five days in the tented paddock area or near the water while their boats perform. Launching and removing the boats from the water are group efforts from each team. Pre-launch inspections include safety checks and verification of certified batteries and radios for communication from shore with the skipper. While out of the water, teams must be ready for inspections by SOLAR SPLASH inspectors and by volunteer judges who question the teams regarding engineering decisions and designs.

A morning meeting is held each day so event officials, called Redshirts, can update the students on the day's schedule and answer questions. Lunch is provided on site each day and the afternoon ice cream

PRESS RELEASE – Contact David Luneau, hq@solarsplash.com

break is a favorite with the students and faculty advisors. An opening day welcome dinner is held each year on the first day of the event.

The first SOLAR SPLASH competition was held in Milwaukee in 1994. Eleven competitors participated that first year. Since the initial competition, more than 90 American universities, 11 international universities, and five high school teams have participated. Other competition locations have included New Orleans, Louisiana; Buffalo, New York; Fayetteville, Arkansas; Cedar Falls/Waterloo, Iowa; and Dayton, Ohio.

Champions Park Lake at the Clark County Fairgrounds in Springfield, Ohio will be the site of the competition again in 2026 on June 2-6.

SOLAR SPLASH is a trademark of Solar Splash Inc., a non-profit organization formed to promote engineering education and interest in solar innovation. Solar Splash Inc. seeks to involve college and high school students in hands-on educational activity by hosting the SOLAR SPLASH competition each year in late spring or early summer.

By partnering with engineering societies, corporate sponsors, and local volunteers, Solar Splash Inc. facilitates the event by managing competition rules, arranging for the competition site, and providing meals and extracurricular events for the students participating. SOLAR SPLASH “Redshirts” are the officials who manage the five-day event each year. Dr. Jeff Morehouse, Professor Emeritus-University of South Carolina; David Luneau, Professor Emeritus-University of Arkansas at Little Rock; and Dr. Roy Hogan, formerly of Sandia National Laboratories, are the engineering officials of the event.