



Report for Next Level Tailwheel at KPAO

Region: Pacific

Below is a summary of scores and feedback from all the usable evaluations which were submitted for you during the 2026 Flight Training Experience Award application period. Many flight training providers receive exceptionally high scores so we also share with you the distribution of the overall aggregate scores for comparison.

1. Eligibility

To be eligible for an award, you needed to receive at least 10 unique evaluations, each at least 80% complete.

A survey response was considered 'usable' if the respondent answered at least 80% of the questions required for scoring.

A Flight School was considered 'eligible' for an award if they received at least 10 unique, usable responses.

Average scores were based on all usable responses received and have been rounded where necessary

Your percentile rank was calculated by comparing your score to scores of all other(nominated/eligible) Flight Schools

Percentile ranks were calculated at both national and regional levels and may have been rounded.

Your performance (percentile rank) compared to all other eligible Flight Schools in your region was one of many factors that informed award decisions.

You received 22 evaluations.

2. Free Responses

At the end of each evaluation, we ask the following open-ended question:

Why should or shouldn't your school win a Flight Training Experience Award?

3. Individual Overall Scores & Responses

Total Score	Student Review
88.00	<p>Next Level Tailwheel was founded to promote and offer stick-and-rudder skills, crucial for a pilot's overall competency and performance, especially in challenging conditions like unpaved Backcountry airstrips. Their training syllabus and philosophy demands a more proactive, coordinated control style, fostering better airmanship and situational awareness by requiring pilots to actively manage the airplane rather than relying on the forgiving nature of tricycle gear. They serve not only the student pilot community interested in learning-to-fly, but the builders and buyers of Kitfox Aircraft. Their Kitfox-specific "Type" training is essential for the builders safe first flight, and follow-along Phase 1 test flying. Once a Next Level Tailwheel trained pilot is Tailwheel endorsed and proficient...Next Level Tailwheel partners with another tailwheel-only Kitfox-specific flight school in Idaho - that offers advanced training with multiple-day, overnight, "Backcountry Training Tours".</p>
87.00	<p>Rachael and team have built an excellent school here. It fills a niche that no other school fills by training people to fly kitfox aircraft and helping them prepare for mountain and backcountry flying. They have cultivated a fun but safe environment! They are candid and considerate about what students should do at home (often for less cost) before traveling to the SF Bay Area for more specialized training. The kitfox factory has even recognized their excellence and recommended them to builders!</p>

88.00	<p>In my years of flying, I wouldn't be where I am today without Next level tailwheel. They do an amazing job at teaching students how to fly, and make sure it is a very enjoyable experience all the while. They have an amazing set of instructors whom all are so amazing at what they do, and help others while making it fun to learn how to fly. This is why I think that this flight school should win a Flight school training experience award.</p>
89.00	<p>Next Level Tailwheel is a one-of-a-kind flight school in the Bay Area. They're the only school teaching in a Kitfox here, and their instructors are super experienced tailwheel pilots who go the extra mile to make sure their students succeed. They provide safe and informative training, but they also make learning super fun and non-judgmental - no matter what level the students are at. The main thing I love about NLT is that they foster a great social culture where they promote building a community and support each other. They host a potluck every month for current and past students to connect and share experiences. Love it!</p>
86.00	<p>The school is run by inspirational, passionate instructors and has a variety of aircraft that fits students of all levels. Citabrias for beginners are and Kitfoxes for the 'next level'. The instructors tailor the training to fit not only the student's piloting skills but also his/her mindset and learning style.</p>
90.00	<p>Next Level Tailwheel takes the time to customize training based on their clients needs. Rachael personally took the time to ask the right questions for what I was looking for and tailored a training plan to meet my needs prior to me even showing up. She sent me a detailed training plan for the week and asked for my feedback prior to starting my training. When I showed up for training, I was greeted with the warmest of welcomes and it honestly felt like I knew Rachael and her staff for many years. Every morning we would discuss what the plan was for the day and and we conducted an After Action Review of what we did for today. They would then provide me with some homework to review every night to be ready for the next day. I am a Commercially rated CFI/CFII and have attended many different schools to complete all of my certificates. I can honestly say that Next Level Tailwheel is one of the best flight schools that I have ever attended, There was never a doubt of where I stood and what I could expect. They were in constant communication with me from the first email that I sent them until well after I finished my training. They were always asking my opinion on how training was going to see if they need to adjust the schedule. In fact they still check in with me from time to time to see if I need anything or have any additional questions. I still stay in touch with the instructors at Next Level Tailwheel. I know that if I have a question about training or any other tailwheel questions I can ask them at any time. If they are not certain of the answer, or they know someone that can answer the questions better, they will answer the questions or put me in touch with someone who can. I was lucky enough to be training at the school when they completed one of their ground schools. I was invited to meet the current students of the class along with many other students who already graduated several classes earlier and still come to the events to meet with and discuss anything aviation with the new students. I was an amazing sight to see. I truly believe that other schools should adopt a similar strategy. There were other pilots and instructors from other flight schools that also attended this social event and the newly graduated ground school students could ask any further questions they wanted. I engaged with several of the graduating students and could tell that Rachael and Next Level Tailwheel lit a fire in them and they were all ready to continue to the next steps. I have and will continue to recommended other pilots to attend Next Level Tailwheel for their aviation/tailwheel training needs.</p>
86.00	<p>Rachael has built a tailwheel school specializing in Kitfox Type training the San Francisco Bay Area - it's meeting a huge demand for people to build and practice backcountry flying style and technique, before heading into more difficult terrain, improving safety outcomes for students and instructors, and helping students build up their confidence, knowledge and understanding in an otherwise more familiar environment. If you haven't already seen it, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt8WST957Q4 is a great video that talks about what makes her approach different and shows how genuine she is about helping her students grow and navigate the backcountry and tailwheel world.</p>
88.00	<p>Dedication to being the best we can be. I've never been a part of a group that has been as welcoming to critique and recommendations as Next Level Tailwheel has been. While I am young and have less experience than most flight instructors, I feel like my voice is valued and heard by the rest of the team members.</p>
83.00	<p>Next Level Tailwheel is unique in the San Francisco Bay Area. Many flight schools offer tailwheel training as an afterthought in an old clapped-out Decathlon. Next Level ONLY teaches tailwheel, in a fun, accessible, brand new fleet of Kitfox. They make the program enjoyable, and de-mystify the process of converting from tricycle gear aircraft. The Kitfox is inherently charming and takes a lot of the stress out of instruction. Additionally the side-by-side seating is also more reassuring. The course is well conceived and has enough flexibility to be tailored to each pilot's individual needs. Next Level is doing wonderful work enhancing people's skills and spreading the joy of tailwheel proficiency.</p>

90.00	Rachael and her team are first class and provide a first class experience. Everything about my week at Next Level Tailwheel was great. The area—easy to find and very accessible airport, despite being in busy Palo Alto. The people—Rachael and Jim are great at what they do. They were personable, easy to connect with and provided a great learning environment. I looked forward to coming back after every day .You can tell they both care about their craft and are constantly improving to provide the best experience. The instruction—they taught me so much about the Kitfox and prepared me for first flight of my own airplane AND so much more. I was sent a syllabus prior to arrival that was very informative and took all of the guessing out of my time there. I left with a firm understanding of the aircraft and enough practice to feel comfortable getting in mine for its first flight. The equipment—The two Kitfoxes are in immaculate shape. They are well cared for, well equipped and really add to the experience.
86.00	They are an excellent school for tailwheel and KitFox specifically training.
72.00	I am not a tail wheel or a lite sport enthusiasts. To my suprise I throughly enjoyed and learned a great deal from Rachael. Great equipment and professional training is what you will find. I could not imagine a better enviroment to learn. .
90.00	Outstanding KitFox training, both LSA and STI. Completely prepared me for an Idaho backcountry flying experience. Unique capabilities in the US.
60.00	The school has a small but well maintained fleet of 2 aircraft. Their emphasis on tailwheel training in kitfox aircraft delivers focus and clarity on training goals and outcomes. CFI Jim is an excellent teacher and knows when to step in and when to let students learn by doing. They have high standards and strive to ensure their students are very capable before signing them off.
84.00	Next Level Tailwheel is hands down the best flight school I've trained at. Having flown with both Rachael and Jim, I honestly could not decide which instructor I liked better, because both were amazing in their own way. They prioritize hiring instructors that respect the needs of their individual students, while maintaining a safe and welcoming environment. The planes are clean, well-maintained, and every part of the process the well thought out and organized. As someone who needs to thoroughly understand every part of the process, the way Rachael plans out her lessons is perfect. The entire first lesson is dedicated to taxiing. That's it, just learning how to thoroughly preflight, slowly go through startup procedures, and taxiing around the airport. We taxied for at least 30 minutes and by the end of the lesson, I felt so confident and comfortable in the plane. An experience I've never had before. After flying with Next Level Tailwheel, my standards for flight training are forever changed. They are transforming me from a nervous and insecure pilot to one who is confident and sure-footed, the most valuable part of any flight training. I could not recommend them more and send anyone who wants to fly tailwheel their way.
90.00	The instructors at Next Level Tailwheel do exactly as the name suggests: provide instruction in tailwheel airplanes that brings the pilot to the next level. The instructors are extremely skilled and very dedicated to their clients learning how to fly a tailwheel airplane. My experience with Next Level Tailwheel included getting familiar again with the Citabria (it had been several years since I'd flown a taildragger), starting with ground handling to remind me just what it was like to taxi in the airplane (contrasting it with the planes I usually fly). We progressed through the syllabus as expected, taking the time I needed at each stage not only to be competent but to feel comfortable. I never felt rushed: we progressed at my pace, not the instructors' or the school's expected pace. When I was comfortable very quickly with something (e.g., air work, such as stalls and steep turns), we moved quickly; when I wasn't yet comfortable with something (such as consistent three-point crosswind landings), we kept work on that aspect until both the instructors and I felt good about it. As part of the magic that Next Level Tailwheel brings to flight instruction, clients can easily become part of a strong community, one that's both local and online. That community supports each other, asks each other questions, makes true confessions to each knowing knowing we will not experience judgementalism, celebrating each other's achievements, getting together socially or to fly together. Already have your tailwheel endorsement and want to hone your skills? Already flying taildraggers and want to transition to the Kitfox? This is a GREAT school for doing that.
69.00	My interaction with Next Level Tailwheel was straightforward and professional. The airplane was in great shape and scheduling was easy. My instructor, Jim Hopp, was knowledgeable and rigorous, perceptive about knowledge gaps, and with an intuitive teaching style.
86.00	This flight school was able to customize their training syllabus to fit my specific needs. Each flight was briefed before the flight and debriefed after the flight. The flight instructor was able get me to recognize my own weakness and provided feedback on how to fix the deficiency. I left a much better and safer pilot. Training material was made available to me weeks in advance.

88.00	Racheal is an excellent instructor. Before training began she recommended many links to help prepare for the training. Racheal was prompt with her response when I inquired about training, and she was a great encourager during training and I felt confident to fly my new plane home after training.
86.00	Very high quality of flight instructors, especially Rachael who has a truly unique instructional style which balances expertise with a calm presence and brilliant sense of humor. There is also a strong local community of people to share stories, have social gatherings and learn from. Aircraft are well maintained, very modern- provides a great balance of modern interface with fun flight characteristics. The location is also very suitable with many conventional towered and unpowered airports as well as more unprepared strips and backcountry like locations within reach. It is hard to imagine a location and setup more perfect for whatever tailwheel mission someone would have in mind. Rachael also has strong ties with other groups in more remote locations to further branch out with training.
89.00	Training students in tailwheel aircraft requires skill, patience, and nerve. Next Level Tailwheel is a school where a student will find all those qualities and receive expert instruction in the dark arts of taildragger control. I went to NLT to knock the rust off my long atrophied tailwheel skills. Rachael and Jim assessed my current state and tailored a plan to bring me back into proficiency. Both of them are fantastic instructors and very well suited for teaching in conventional gear aircraft. Few instructors are willing to let tailwheel ground-handling errors develop far enough to allow a student to solve the undesired aircraft state on their own. But Rachael and Jim have a preternatural calm and good sense for how far a situation can go before intervention is necessary. This seems to be a rare quality in many tailwheel instructors. Next Level Tailwheel also provides a variety of airplanes in which to learn, from the solid Citabria to the blast to fly Kitfox. The Bay Area is very fortunate to have such a premier tailwheel school.
89.00	NLT was able to get me on the schedule ASAP—within a week. With only two days to fly — a result of some last minute planning while traveling — I was able to learn the majority of the skills needed for the tailwheel endorsement, and fly an absolutely gorgeous low-time Kitfox (they also have a Citabria in the fleet that is an awesome intro to that kind of off-airport capable aircraft). It was an amazing experience flying over the Bay Area with them! Going back to wrap up the endorsement ASAP—wouldn't consider anyone else!

4. Aggregate Overall Score (Range: 0 to 100)

This is the overall score you received from your customers in the 2026 Flight Training Experience Award application period:

Your Score: **85**

4.1 Compared to All Nominees (those with at least 1 evaluation)

National Average: **86**

Your national percentile ranking: **20%**

Regional Average: **82**

Your regional percentile ranking: **28%**

4.2 Compared to All Eligible Nominees (those with at least 10 evaluations)

National Average: **86**

Your national percentile ranking: **18%**

Regional Average: **85**

Your regional percentile ranking: **30%**

5. SubScore Summary for Next Level Tailwheel at KPAO

Region: Pacific

The remaining sections summarize your individual subscores (range: 0 to 100) as they apply to each of the four areas from our Flight Training Experience Research: Educational Quality, Customer Focus, Community, and Information Sharing. You will also find national and regional averages, for benchmarking.

Subscore Summary:

Your Score	National Avg
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Educational Quality	96	97
Customer Focus	95	96
Community	95	96
Information Sharing	90	91
NetPromoter Score	86	92
Overall Total	92	94

6. Educational Quality Scale (Range: 0 to 100)

This is the score you received from your customers, derived solely from the questions related to Educational Quality; offering effective training from professional instructors who are dedicated to students' success

Your Score: 96

6.1 Compared to All Nominees (those with at least 1 evaluation)

National Average: 97

Your national percentile ranking: 17%

Regional Average: 92

Your regional percentile ranking: 17%

6.2 Compared to All Eligible Nominees (those with at least 10 evaluations)

National Average: 98

Your national percentile ranking: 14%

Regional Average: 97

Your regional percentile ranking: 10%

6.3 Responses per Question

My school consistently used a training syllabus that I could consult.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	18	81.82%
Somewhat Agree	2	9.09%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	9.09%

My school helped me find an instructor who considered my personal strengths and weaknesses when creating lesson plans.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	18	81.82%
Somewhat Agree	2	9.09%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	4.55%

Somewhat Disagree	1	4.55%
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My school promotes a culture of safety.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	22	100%

My instructor at my school regularly suggested what I should study before arriving at the airport for a lesson.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	19	86.36%
Somewhat Agree	2	9.09%
Somewhat Disagree	1	4.55%

7. Customer Focus Scale (Range: 0 to 100)

This is the score you received from your customers, derived solely from the questions related to Customer Focus; adding value by demonstrating professionalism and engagement with students

Your Score: 95

7.1 Compared to All Nominees (those with at least 1 evaluation)

National Average: 96

Your national percentile ranking: 32%

Regional Average: 93

Your regional percentile ranking: 39%

7.2 Compared to All Eligible Nominees (those with at least 10 evaluations)

National Average: 96

Your national percentile ranking: 33%

Regional Average: 94

Your regional percentile ranking: 50%

7.3 Responses per Question

Instructors at my school were never available to answer questions outside of formal lessons.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	4.55%
Somewhat Disagree	1	4.55%
Strongly Disagree	20	90.91%

I found it easy to reschedule lessons at my school when there were issues, like maintenance or weather.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	15	68.18%
Somewhat Agree	3	13.64%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	9.09%
Somewhat Disagree	1	4.55%
Strongly Disagree	1	4.55%

Staff at my school always treated me with respect.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	22	100%

Sometimes I wish I had chosen a different flight school.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	9.09%
Strongly Disagree	20	90.91%

8. Community Focus Scale (Range: 0 to 100)

This is the score you received from your customers, derived solely from the questions related to Community; emphasizing social connections and accomplishments.

Your Score: 95

8.1 Compared to All Nominees (those with at least 1 evaluation)

National Average: 96

Your national percentile ranking: 34%

Regional Average: 91

Your regional percentile ranking: 50%

8.2 Compared to All Eligible Nominees (those with at least 10 evaluations)

National Average: 96

Your national percentile ranking: 32%

Regional Average: 96

Your regional percentile ranking: 30%

8.3 Responses per Question

After training at my school, I feel like a member of the general aviation community.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	19	86.36%
Somewhat Agree	3	13.64%

Sometimes I felt as if I didn't belong at my school.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	4.55%
Strongly Disagree	21	95.45%

My school provided adequate opportunities to meet students, new pilots, and members of the local aviation community

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	13	59.09%
Somewhat Agree	6	27.27%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	9.09%
Strongly Disagree	1	4.55%

I received regular positive encouragement that made me want to come back for my next lesson at my school.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	21	95.45%
Somewhat Agree	1	4.55%

9. Information Sharing Scale (Range: 0 to 100)

This is the score you received from your customers, derived solely from the questions related to Information Sharing; educating and empowering students to make informed decisions about flight training investments.

Your Score: 90

9.1 Compared to All Nominees (those with at least 1 evaluation)

National Average: 91

Your national percentile ranking: 27%

Regional Average: 89

Your regional percentile ranking: 50%

9.2 Compared to All Eligible Nominees (those with at least 10 evaluations)

National Average: 92

Your national percentile ranking: 22%

Regional Average: 91

Your regional percentile ranking: 30%

9.3 Responses per Question

I always understood the steps required to reach my flight training goals at my school.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	19	86.36%
Somewhat Agree	2	9.09%
Somewhat Disagree	1	4.55%

My flight training at my school has required more time and/or money than I expected.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	1	4.55%
Neither agree nor disagree	4	18.18%
Somewhat Disagree	4	18.18%
Strongly Disagree	13	59.09%

My school readily shares information about student success rates (e.g. passing FAA checkride).

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	12	54.55%
Neither agree nor disagree	10	45.45%

I was shown where I could find additional resources, like study guides or practice exams, to supplement my studies in anticipation of written or practical exams.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	20	90.91%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	4.55%
Somewhat Disagree	1	4.55%

10. Net Promoter Score

10.1 Questionnaire Responses

The Net Promoter Score is generated by asking customers how likely they would be to recommend a given product or service - in this case, your services as a flight instructor to another potential customer, on an 11 point scale.

How likely are you to recommend your CFI to someone interested in flight training?

Response Choice	Frequency	%
10	20	90.91%
8	1	4.55%
1	1	4.55%

10.2 NPS Grouping

Responses to this question are then used to sort customers into one of three groups:

Detractor: Less likely to use your services again and may not speak highly of your services to others.

Passive: Generally somewhat satisfied, passive respondents likely won't help or hurt your business in talking to other people.

Promoters: Ideally, all of your customers would be promoters. Promoters would fly with you again in the future and would tell others how great they think you are.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Promoter	20	90.91%
Passive	1	4.55%
Detractor	1	4.55%

10.3 Standardized Score Calculation

The overall Net Promoter Score is calculated by subtracting the percentage of your customers who are 'detractors' from the percentage of your customers you are 'promoters.' Thus, the overall Net Promoter Score can range from - 100 to 100.

For more information on the Net Promoter Score and how to interpret it, check out: <https://www.medallia.com/net-promoter-score>

Your Score: 86

10.3.1 Compared to All Nominees (those with at least 1 evaluation)

National Average: 92

Your national percentile ranking: 14%

Regional Average: 72

Your regional percentile ranking: 28%

10.3.2 Compared to All Eligible Nominees (those with at least 10 evaluations)

National Average: 95

Your national percentile ranking: 12%

Regional Average: 90

Your regional percentile ranking: 30%