

Making Big Navy Waves on the Shores of Pensacola

The finest showing of NJROTC excellence ever assembled was on display at the 2005 NJROTC Championships, but would it be enough to topple the Flour Bluff dynasty?

Another amazing two-day display of all-around Naval excellence was put forth at the **2005 NJROTC National Academic, Athletic & Drill Championships**. The "Navy Nationals" is the supreme test of NJROTC excellence held every April. Twenty-three NJROTC units from across the United States proved to be tough as barnacles as they converged on the home of the Blue Angels, NAS Pensacola, Florida to compete for the coveted Navy National Championship.

Never in the event's history have so many schools attended with a realistic shot at wresting the Overall Title away from eight-year champion **Flour Bluff HS** from **Corpus Christi, Texas**. So it was no surprise the 2005 "Navy Nationals" was the closest, most competitive event in the history of this elite competition.

Early school registration on Friday morning moves schools on the double into the one-two punch of the Navy Chiefs evaluating every competing cadet in Unit Personnel Inspection (UPI), followed by schools going directly before a meticulous group of Devil Dogs judging the Color Guard event.

Steely bearing & snappy responses were the order of the day as units stood the grueling test of Unit Personnel Inspection. The tight scoring for the 2005 Navy Nationals started right off the bat as **Flour Bluff HS** from **Corpus Christi, Texas** beat **Boca Raton HS** from **Boca Raton, Florida** in a tie-breaker to capture the Unit Personnel Inspection victory. Only a single point back placed tough **Serra HS** from **San Diego, California** into a strong 3rd place finish.

Quickly dropping uniforms for shorts and t-shirts, schools move on to the always-exciting athletic events. 16-member squads begin by executing correctly done, cadenced push-ups & curl-ups. Crowds of on-lookers go wild for those few cadets that "max out" their 5-minutes of 250 curl-ups before going for broke in a one-minute battle to the finish! It was **Flanagan HS** from **Pembroke Pines, Florida** that came out on top in curl-ups, followed by **Pearl River Central HS** (**Carriere, MS**) in 2nd place and **John Marshall HS** (**San Antonio, TX**) in 3rd. Hard work and sweat paid off for **Kennesaw Mountain HS** from **Kennesaw, Georgia** as only 7 push-ups gave them the victory over **Flanagan HS** in the push-ups event, with **Neshoba Central HS** (**Philadelphia, MS**) capturing 3rd.

Cadets then moved to the athletic track to compete in the 8x220 yd. relay. The track was rung with on-lookers brimming with encouragement, as each school worked to move the baton one mile around the oval track. With olympic speed, **Kennesaw Mountain HS** motored to first, with **Alma HS** from **Alma, Arkansas** (2nd place) and **Centennial HS** from **Las Vegas, Nevada** (3rd place) also finishing strong.

As the sun sets on the final athletic event of the day, the energetic 16 x 100 yd. relay is held. Well over one thousand parents, instructors, and team followers line the track and cheer on the cadets. In a strong upset, **Silver Bluff HS** from **Aiken, South Carolina** blazed to victory. In a tight battle, **Alma HS** just edged out **Kennesaw Mountain HS** in the battle for 2nd & 3rd place.

Teams quickly grab a bite to eat then send their brightest cadets to the pressure-packed Academic Exam. Schools form into 10-cadet academic teams, taking the 100-question test on relevant NJROTC material. In another strong upset, **Pearl River Central HS** stunned both **Flour Bluff HS** (2nd place) and **Princess Anne HS** from **Virginia Beach, Virginia** (3rd place) by answering a staggering 883 questions correct out of the 1,000 possible.

Cadets caught a few hours of sleep before marching into the drill phase of the competition. The pre-dawn wake-up and early start times didn't diminish the effort and results as **John Marshall HS** from drill mecca **San Antonio, Texas** stormed their way to the overall drill title. **Serra HS** stepped up with a strong 2nd place overall drill finish, while **Union Grove HS** from **McDonough, Georgia** took 3rd place in overall drill.

The awe-inspiring **National Museum of Naval Aviation** (www.naval-air.org) played host again for the closing evening ceremony. The night kicked off with a keynote speech from special guest speaker **Rear Admiral Gary R. Jones, U.S. Navy Commander, NSTC/Navy Region Midwest**. His speech laid the

groundwork for a special evening for the nervous cadets.

Every school was MORE TENSE than usual this year as the wide diversity of schools walking to the podium accepting awards throughout the evening left everyone on the edge of their seats wondering if this was the year that a new champion would be crowned.

As the evening wore on and the presentation of trophies continued, it appeared that the reign of **Flour Bluff HS** was over as *they only won a single 1st place trophy (UPI) during the event*. However, their trademark strength in all areas is the item that makes them so tough to beat and by a razor-thin margin, the legends from Corpus Christi, Texas took home their 9th consecutive Overall Navy Nationals Championship Title, leaving nearly a half-dozen schools in their wake to ponder, "if we had only done a little better in..."

Grabbing the Navy National Runner-up title was **Flanagan HS**, who just edged out **Union Grove HS** who finished in 3rd place overall. Schools looking for complete, top-to-bottom scoring in all events should go to the official home of the Navy Nationals on the web at: <http://navy.thenationals.net>.

NAS Pensacola is an unparalleled host. No words can express what they do for so many NJROTC cadets and their families. From the Marines, to the Navy Chiefs, to the OCS personnel, everyone works to ensure the cadets are treated in a first-class manner.

We at SNI look forward to the 2006 Navy Nationals, with all units again gearing up to see who could forever be remembered as the school that dethroned the Flour Bluff dynasty!



Flour Bluff HS was proud and a bit in shock as they pose with **Rear Admiral Gary R. Jones, U.S. Navy Commander, NSTC/Navy Region Midwest**, who congratulated them on their unparalleled 9th consecutive Navy Nationals Overall Championship.