

The New DEAS Forecast Contest

User Guide

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Submit all questions and concerns to contest@**REMOVETHIS**atmos.albany.edu

This guide will assist you, the forecast contest user, in how to navigate the new system and submit your forecasts. Because this is the active semester for the contest, bugs are possible. Please be aware of anything that looks incorrect or any problems you have in navigation and submit such information to the email address above.

Please note, to login to the site, you ***MUST*** have cookies enabled. If you cannot log in or submit a forecast, immediately contact the support email. The problem may be due to an incorrect password.

If you are wondering, each of the contests (Albany, Extended, and Thunderstorm) have not changed in format. You submit the same kind of forecasts for each one and are officially scored the same way. However, the codeset and display have been substantially upgraded. So the rules you followed before still apply.

I. Format of Site

The contest section of the site can be accessed by clicking "[Weather Data and Forecasts](#)" from the main DEAS page and then clicking "[Forecast Contests](#)" as before. There is a link to the old contest page. You should NOT use that system to submit forecasts.

You will now see a list of the main contests on the left side, a login box (if you haven't logged in) on the right side, and a few links below that. The look of all three contests is the same so this guide will simply discuss the ALB contest. The first page you will see contains a calendar on the left side and some content boxes on the right. This isn't very different from the prior contest system. The calendar will contain all of the forecasting days (including information on off days). Each day is a link to the consensus and verification for that day (you can only view that information until AFTER the day concludes). For each week there is a dropdown with different links leading to the scoring page.

On the right side will be several sections. The top section will either be a login or entry box. Once you login you will (if you are within the deadline of an active forecasting day) see an entry form. You will use this form to submit your forecasts. Below that (if the data is in) will be the climo and model forecasts for the day. Below that are the most recent verifications. Below that will be some useful links. Finally, there will be a list of prior games. Early on you will only see last semester's game. Older data may be loaded in, in the future.

The rest of the pages will be discussed in the following sections.

II. Logging In

It is imperative that you test this form immediately. Remember to enable cookies if you haven't already (they are enabled in most browsers by default). Your username will be the *FULL NAME* that you had on the prior contest. There is no shortening of the name or x's as in the prior contest. So "STOCKW" will now be "STOCKWELL" and "COOKXX" will be "COOK." A list may be provided on the forecast contest page so you can find your username. Although it is capitalized, the username input is not case sensitive (the password input is). Your password will be the same as before. If you cannot log in with the old password, please send a support email immediately as there may have been an error in the loading of your old password. Once you login you will see the entry forms (if you're allowed to forecast) and a small profile box on the main contest page. On that profile box you'll find links to change your password and email. It is recommended that you enter an email address immediately so if you forget your password in the future, you can automatically have it emailed to you using the forgotten password function. In the beginning, you may not have an email address previously entered so the forgot password function will not work.

III. Submitting a Forecast

To submit a forecast, you must be permitted to enter forecasts. Obviously, you must be logged in (you don't enter your username/password at submission time like before). For most, this will already be the case and not a problem. It must also be an active forecasting day. You will see the active day on the calendar in green. You can only submit a forecast (roughly) after 12/1AM on the forecast day. So if the active day is a Monday and it is Saturday, you CANNOT submit a forecast for Monday. You must also be within the deadline (4:45 PM) to submit a forecast. The times are all based on the server clock. A five minute "grace period" is available after the deadline to submit a forecast but you should NOT depend on it. Please note that the time on the page only updates when you refresh the page.

If all of the above holds, you will see an entry form for the forecast. The format for each contest is just like the old one. Simply enter the numbers and hit Submit/Edit my Entry. If the entries were valid, you will see a green message box (and sometimes a few caution –yellow boxes). Notice that the entry form is now filled with the forecast you just entered. So, when you wish to edit your forecast, you need only modify the numbers. You do not have to re-enter the numbers like in the old contest. For your convenience, some yellow warning boxes may be displayed if your numbers are "strange." As long as you see the green confirmation box, your forecast is in. Should you see an error after consensus is generated, please send an email to the support contact above.

IV. Scoring Pages

The contest redesign features new score displays and a forecaster of the week function. Like before, official scores are based on Consensus. However, you can view your scores during any period against many different benchmarks. Note that Forecaster of the Week requires 100% participation. While you can view F.O.W. scores for a day or the entire contest, the numbers are really only relevant for the week you select.

All scoring pages can be accessed through the dropdowns under the "Links" column in the calendar. I will now explain the general scoring page and F.O.W.

General Scoring Page

Scores on this page are calculated the same way as they were in the prior contest (based on percentages not strict error points). The top of the page several drop down menus. The top left will contain several benchmarks to score against (some benchmarks do not have 100% participation, scores would be based on the days that you and the benchmark forecast – CONSENSUS is guaranteed to have 100% participation). The second dropdown has different scoring scenarios, much like the old contest. To the right of that is a participation requirement (each contest has an official requirement).

The second line of dropdowns contain start and end date/week values. These are automatically entered based on which week you select to view scores. Note that selecting a small amount of days will result in some strange scores. This is why official scores were posted in week 3 or 4 of the old contest. The last selection item is "Official Scores Only." This forces the requirement that scores are based on days with official consensus and verification values. You will be able to see scores live as verifications come in... but the verifications are not guaranteed to be accurate.

Forecaster of the Week

The forecaster of the week page is different from the general scoring one. Since this scoring system requires 100% participation, there is no selection for different benchmarks or score displays. Scores are displayed in number of error points (where the overall or total is an average of temperature and precipitation). On the top of each column is a link for different sorting so you can sort by temperature error points, etc.

Official Scores

Each contest has different rules for official scoring.

For the Forecaster of the Week of any contest, scores are official once all days in the week are official (generally after Sunday for Albany and Thursday for Extended). If part of your grade in a class depends on these scores, your professor will directly inform you on when the scores are official.

For the Albany contest, you must participate 70% of the time and official scores are against Consensus. If you are scored against a model (like in Mike's old class), your professor will produce an official list based in their participation requirement.

For the Extended contest, you must participate 70% of the time and official scores are against Climatology.