

Premier Aircraft's PIREPS, September 2026

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Diamond Aircraft puts *sport* back into the FAA's Sport Pilot Certificate.

Under the FAA's final MOSAIC rules, pilots operating under Sport Pilot Privileges can enjoy all the fun of flying all Diamond DA20s and select DA40-180 models.



It's hard to believe how much the "Sport Pilot" world has changed since the FAA replaced the original, and greatly restrictive, *Sport Pilot Rule* with the updated, and much more pilot-friendly, MOSAIC (Modernization of Special Airworthiness Certification) designation.

The part of the MOSAIC rule that got all of GA excited was the greatly expanded array of aircraft available to sport pilots or those exercising sport pilot privileges. Pilots operating under the revised *Sport Pilot*

eligibility rules can fly a much wider variety of aircraft, including those with longer range, up to four seats, and more powerful engines.

Two aircraft that have been at the forefront of a growing number of 'Sport Pilots' wish lists are the two-place Diamond DA20 and *specific models* of the Lycoming-powered, four-place Diamond DA40-180.

Which DA40-180s can be flown under MOSAIC guidelines?

While Sport Pilots can fly any of the 'sporty' two-place Diamond DA20's, there are specific requirements as to which DA40-180s qualify.

Basically, MOSAIC rules apply to any Diamond Lycoming-powered Diamond DA40-180 with a maximum takeoff weight of 2,535 pounds (1,150 kg) and a clean stall speed of 60 knots calibrated airspeed.

A part of the new MOSAIC rule that surprises many pilots is that instead of the MTOW restriction that was part of the original requirements, the latest rule uses stall speed as the definition point.

(NOTE: The DA40-180 Aircraft Flight Manual (AFM) provides clean stall speeds as indicated airspeed (IAS), and an approved graph is required to determine the corresponding stall speeds in calibrated airspeed (CAS).)

Before flying a DA40-180 under MOSAIC and the Sport Pilot Privileges, pilots must confirm the certification weight and stall speeds for that specific airplane.

Also, regarding the aircraft's avionics and the MOSAIC rules, DA40-180s with factory-equipped analog "steam gauges," as well as early (2004-2006) generation Garmin G1000 and King KAP 140 avionics, will likely qualify for flight under the FAA's Sport Pilot Privileges requirements.

Although Sport Pilots can fly these specific Diamond Aircraft DA20 and some specific DA40-180 models, this does not mean that these aircraft are considered "Light Sport Aircraft." ALL Diamond Aircraft are certified under FAA Part 23 standards and must be maintained in accordance with those requirements.

What this really means to pilots.

Whether you're flying a two-place Diamond DA20 or one of the "LSA qualified" four-place Diamond DA40-180s, pilots flying under the Sport Pilot Privileges rules can enjoy all the benefits that Diamond Aircraft delivers.

"There are a lot of reasons why the DA20 and DA40 are so popular with flight schools and first-time owners," Jeff Owen, Vice President of Sales, Premier Aircraft, said. "With their large, transparent canopies, 'joy stick', and solid feel, they're a lot of fun to fly – no matter how many hours you have."

"Plus, Diamond Aircraft share an exemplary safety record, which helps build confidence as pilots build hours," he continued. "And, let's not overlook how easy they are to maintain and cost-effective to operate – that's a plus for owners and flight schools."

"Whether they are new to flying and using the Sport Pilot Privileges or certified Private Pilots wanting to continue flying under those rules, the FAA's modernized MOSAIC gives everyone the opportunity to fly a Diamond Aircraft and get more out of every flight," Owen said. "Every pilot deserves to fly the safest, most comfortable, and most efficient aircraft they can, and the LSA-qualified Diamonds make it all possible."

If you're interested in learning more about flying a Diamond DA20 or whether a specific DA40-180 falls under MOSAIC rules, the team at Premier Aircraft is here to answer all of your questions and find the right Diamond to fit your experience and mission.

Texas Southern University adds a brand-new Diamond DA42 to its training fleet.

With the latest avionics and state-of-the-art FADEC engine controls, the Diamond DA42 continues TSU's commitment to providing students the best foundation for advancing their professional piloting careers.



They say, "everything's bigger in Texas." While Dr. Terence Fontaine, Director of Aviation for Texas Southern University (TSU), and his team don't have dreams of being the biggest collegiate professional flight training in the state, they are well on their way to making it one of the best.

Sometimes Dr. Fontaine has trouble believing how far the program has come in just eight years. "When I joined the program in June of 2018, we didn't have any airplanes or CFIs," Dr. Fontaine said. "My background was flying 727s and 777s, and instructing for the airlines. I had no experience with a flight school."

But, from the moment he stepped on the TSU campus, he knew it would work. "My heart told me this was something I could do and do well," he said.

It wasn't long before they had acquired 10 pre-owned airplanes, and while they gave the fledgling program a good start, the legacy fleet suffered from reliability problems and mounting maintenance costs. But Dr. Fontaine's vision didn't diminish.

In 2021, the program took a huge step forward when it became the only professional flight training program in Texas (and the only second historically Black college in the U.S.) to earn accreditation through the *Aviation Accreditation Board International* (AABI). That's when things took off – literally!

"We then partnered with Southwest Airlines, United, Republic, and most recently with Delta," Dr. Fontaine said. "These partnerships offer students working opportunities, conditional job offers, and career pathways.

As he shared, the program's next great step came when an "anonymous donor" who felt TSU's story was "compelling" contacted Dr. Fontaine and asked what they needed to continue the program's growth.

"That turned into a fleet of 10 brand new Cirrus SR20 aircraft," Dr. Fontaine said. "We had been using an old Piper Seneca for twin-engine training, but it had maintenance issues. I went to our airline partners and learned about the Diamond DA42 twin and felt it was the right fit for our program."

He explained that he and other representatives from TSU's Professional Pilot Program traveled to Oshkosh in 2025 to shop for a new twin. With a brand new Diamond DA42 at the top of their wish list, the TSU team's first stop was to meet with Dirk Vander Zee, Regional Sales Manager at Premier Aircraft (Diamond's largest dealer), to discuss purchasing a new Diamond DA42.

"It was just an initial inquiry, but from that first meeting I knew Terrance (Dr. Fontaine) would make it happen. He's one of those special people destined to make an impact – and he has," Vander Zee said. "Exactly one year later (July 2026), we had that brand-new

Diamond DA42, painted in Texas Southern University livery, on display in the Diamond booth. It was an amazing thing to share.”

“They needed a modern multi-engine airplane with the modern technologies that would ensure that TSU’s graduates would be ready to fill the needs of the airlines they are partnering with,” he continued. “With advanced Garmin glass, turbo-diesel engines, and FADEC, the Diamond DA42 is a great complement to the other aircraft in their fleet.”

“I am confident this won’t be the only DA42 we buy. I predict we’ll have one or two more by 2030,” Dr. Fontaine said. “We’re growing that fast. We started with 38 students and now have over 200. Our goal is to reach over 300 by 2030.”

But, as you might well imagine, it’s not about how many new professional pilots graduate from TSU; it’s that each of them has the training to be the best pilots they can be.

“It’s been an exciting ride, and I’m so happy and proud to have been a part of it,” Dr. Fontaine said.

Click the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LfpPi2tL78> to watch Hayley Halberg’s (A.K.A. Diamond Girl) recent YouTube vlog on Premier’s delivery of the new DA42 to TSU.

Maintenance Matters: Lycoming boosts TBOs to 2,600 hours.

Lycoming made big news during Oshkosh 2026 by increasing the TBO on its new and factory-remanufactured O-320, IO-320, O-360, IO-360, IO-390, O-540, and IO-540 series engines to 2,600 hours or 12 years.

If you're flying a Lycoming-powered Diamond DA40, the company has some very good news for you. Lycoming kicked off EAA AirVenture 2026 by releasing *Service Instruction 1009BF*, announcing that it is raising TBO for its new and factory-rebuilt O-320, IO-320, O-360, IO-360, IO-390, O-540, and IO-540 series engines (when operated and maintained in accordance with all applicable Lycoming technical publications and FAA airworthiness requirements) to 2,600 hours or 12 years, whichever comes first.

In the company's announcement, Lycoming Engines' Senior VP, Jim Wright, said, "Lycoming's updated TBO schedule represents our ongoing focus on delivering maximum value, reliability and performance to aircraft owners, operators, and maintainers. This enhancement reflects decades of engineering experience combined with the latest fleet data," he said.

The data the company built the TBO extension on was collected over six years, including detailed analysis of engines that had reached TBO, collected from various flight schools around the U.S.

According to the company, the 2,600-hour TBO applies only to factory-new and factory-rebuilt engines because those are the only engines included in its data set and analysis.

That means any engine overhauled or rebuilt by a third-party MRO or engine shop is excluded from the TBO extension.

In addition, Lycoming Engine owner/operators must use only new Lycoming parts for any ongoing repairs or replacements. Using anything other than what the company defines as "genuine Lycoming parts" would exclude that engine from the TBO extension.

For more information on the Lycoming TBO extension, visit: <https://www.lycoming.com/2600>