

SSA RULES COMMITTEE

2013 COMPETITION RULES - PROPOSED CHANGES

This document contains the text of rules changes recommended by the SSA Rules Committee for implementation in 2013. The deadline for comments to the Rules Committee is January 18, 2013.

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When appropriate, letters in brackets indicates the “level” of a rule, as follows:

- N – National FAI class
- R – Regional FAI class
- S – National Sport class
- X – Regional Sport class
- RX – Regional FAI and Regional Sport class
- A – indicates an addition to the rules appendix, not the rules themselves

Note that R and S “inherit” rules from N, and X in turn inherits from S.

- Added language is underlined.
- ~~Deleted language is struck through.~~
- Unchanged language is without decoration

1. Define US Club Class and Modern Class within the Sport Class

If sufficient gliders participate, allows splitting of Sport Class in to a "US Club" class and a "Modern" class based on handicap ranges. This means that the National Sports Class contest will normally include two classes, each with a champion. At the regional level, if sufficient gliders participate, splits the Sports Class into Sports Class and US Club Class - again based on handicap ranges.

[S]5.7 Competition Classes

[S]5.7.1 A National competition shall consist of a US Club Class {Rule 6.12.3} and a Modern Class {Rule 6.12.4}, provided each has at least 12 regular entrants at the start of the competition.

[S]5.7.2 In the event that the provision of Rule 5.7.1 is not met, the contest shall consist of a Sport Class {Rule 6.12.2} only.

[X]5.7.1 A competition shall include one or more handicapped classes.

[X]5.7.2 Entries to a class can be restricted based on criteria specified by the contest organizers on the Application for Sanction form. Possible criteria include (but are not limited to) maximum wingspan or a handicap range (or a combination).

[X]5.7.3 The handicap ranges of classes may overlap.

[X]5.7.4 Competition classes can be labeled, promoted and tasked to appeal to pilots by skill level rather than or in addition to limitations based on sailplane performance.

[S]6.12 Sailplane Classes

[S]6.12.1 ~~Handicapping based on relative performance~~ will be used to minimize the differences in sailplanes {Rule 11.6.1}.

[S]6.12.2 Sport Class

[S]6.12.2.1 This class is open to all sailplanes, regardless of handicap

[S]6.12.3 US Club Class

[S]6.12.3.1 This class is open to sailplanes whose handicap per {Rule 11.6.1} is 0.898 or greater.

[S]6.12.4 Modern Class

[S]6.12.4.1 This class is open to open to all sailplanes, but the maximum handicap used for scoring will be 0.940

[X]6.12.4 Not Applicable

[X]6.12.4.1 Not Applicable

2. Allow Assigned Task in Some Sports Class Contests (US Club and Modern)

The Assigned Task can now be used in the two subdivisions of Sports Class (US Club and Modern). However, when there is only a combined class (Sports) the AT is not permitted.

~~[S] 10.3.2.1 Assigned Task — not used~~

[S] 10.3.2.1 Assigned Task (AT) - Speed over a course of one or more designated turnpoints, with a finish at the contest site. This task is available for US Club Class {Rule 6.12.3} and Modern Class {Rule 6.12.4}, but is not used in Sport Class {Rule 6.12.2}.

[X] 10.3.2.1 Assigned Task (AT) - Speed over a course of one or more designated turnpoints, with a finish at the contest site. This task is available for US Club Class {Rule 6.12.3}, but is not used in Sports Class {Rule 6.12.2}.

[A]10.3.2.1 The Assigned Task has been in use for many years and is thus understood by most CDs. It is best in contests where pilot skill is reasonably uniform, and on days when the weather forecast is thought to be reliable and does not include problems such as thunderstorms. Using the help of the weatherman and the task advisors, the CD should estimate the speed that the day winner is likely to be able to achieve, and the amount of time available from task opening to the end of soarable conditions. The right task length is then the distance that a pilot who maintains 75% of the winner's speed is able to cover in the time available..

The Assigned Task is appropriate when sailplane performance, pilot skill and weather uncertainty are all within a range that the CD feels is acceptably small. As an alternative, consider a MAT with a sufficient number of designated turnpoints that the assigned part of the task will consume most or all of the minimum time – this choice allows pilots who do not achieve projected speeds to return home after any turnpoint.

3. Allow Inter-pilot Radio Communication (Team Flying) in Regionals

Regional rules now permit the use of pilot-to-pilot radio, subject to the control of contest organizers and CD

~~[N] 10.7.2.9 Relaying of information between aircraft for any reason other than safety is prohibited; unsportsmanlike conduct penalty may apply. This specifically forbids team flying.~~

[N] 10.7.2.9 Air-to-air and ground-to-air radio communication for any reason other than safety is prohibited; an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty may apply.

[RX] 10.7.2.9 Ground-to-air radio communication for any reason other than safety is prohibited; an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty may apply.

[RX] 10.7.2.10 Air-to-air radio communication between competing pilots is permitted, subject to the following rules:

[RX] 10.7.2.10.1 Such communications shall exclusively use aviation radios, and shall be done in a way that does not interfere with normal contest procedures conducted on the contest frequency.

[RX] 10.7.2.10.2 For any reason other than safety, radio communication with pilots not entered in the competition and ground-to-air communication are prohibited.

[RX] 10.7.2.10.3 Contest organizers may elect to disallow the radio communication provided for in this Rule; this should be announced well prior to the Preferential Entry Deadline. Such communication may be disallowed for some classes and not for others.

[RX] 10.7.2.10.4 The CD may temporarily or permanently disallow radio communication that proves detrimental to the operation or safety of the contest.

4. Foreign Pilots in National Competitions are Now Regular Entrants, not Guests

A foreign contestant can now be the winner of a National contest, in which case the National Champion is the highest scoring US citizen / permanent resident.

- 5.2.5 Nationality
- 5.2.5.1 A US pilot is one who is a US citizen or a Lawful Permanent Resident as defined by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (i.e. one who possesses a valid "Green Card"); others are considered foreign pilots.
- 5.2.5.2 ~~Foreign pilots are listed as such on scoresheets, and are considered Guest entrants (Rule 5.8).~~
- 5.2.5.2 Foreign pilots are eligible to be listed and scored as regular entrants.
- [NS] 5.2.5.3 The US National Champion shall be the US pilot with the highest total score for the contest.
- [RX] 5.2.5.3 Not applicable

5. Finish Cylinder Guidance

The guidance for finish cylinder minimum finish height is 700' AGL centered on the airport and 1 mile radius plus 200' per additional mile of radius.

- ~~10.9.2.2 A task shall include a Minimum Finish Height above the home field, set by the CD at least high enough that pilots who finish at or above that height can return to the home field for a normal pattern and landing. The Minimum Finish Height shall be communicated as its equivalent MSL altitude.~~
- 10.9.2.2 Minimum Finish Height
- 10.9.2.2.1 Each task shall include a Minimum Finish Height (MFH), set by the CD at least high enough that pilots who obtain a valid finish can return to the home airfield for a normal pattern and landing.
- 10.9.2.2.2 The MFH should normally be at least 700 ft AGL at a distance of one mile, plus 200 ft per mile at greater distances.
- 10.9.2.2.3 The MFH shall be communicated as its equivalent MSL altitude.
- [A]10.9.2 A cylinder finish means that the race does not end at the airport, rather it ends at a defined altitude and distance from the airport. Use of the cylinder for a finish is desirable in a number of circumstances including: 1) The contest is held at a public-use airfield where the field is open to non-contest traffic during the finish 2) The contest includes a Regional Sport class 3) A finish line creates the potential for low energy finishes over densely populated or busy areas (e.g. roads) 4) any other circumstance that creates safety issues for a line finish.

In setting the Minimum Finish Height (MFH), the CD should take in account expected weather, glider performance, pilot skill and experience and local traffic. The goal is for all pilots to be able to safely merge into the pattern, land normally, and roll safely clear.

Note that the MFH is the minimum height for a penalty-free finish. Because a valid finish (with a penalty) may be up to 200 ft below the MFH, it is this lower height that should be considered when setting the MFH. Thus 700 ft. AGL should normally be the MFH.

When non-contest traffic is allowed during the time gliders are finishing, consider a MFH of at least 1000 ft. AGL at one mile, plus 200 ft per mile beyond that with the goal that contest and non-contest traffic can be smoothly integrated into a normal pattern.

- [A]10.3.2.2.5 Feedback from pilots indicate that when using a MAT, a steering turn of 1 mile radius can be problematic as it may create high speed traffic converging from multiple directions (especially in the West). A better alternative may be a cylinder finish with a larger (2 mile) radius and no steering turn.

6. Nationals may be Given Relaunch Preference when Collocated with a Regional

Adds language that permits relaunches for a National to occur during the launch of the Regional class(es) .

- 1.6 National competitions held at the same place and times as other competitions are to be given preference for entry positions, and in gridding and launching. When in the judgment of the Competition Director it is practical, re-launches of National entrants should also be given preference over those of other classes

7. Process for Requesting Rules Waivers

Adds a rule to clarify the process for requesting waivers.

- 1.7 Rules waivers
- 1.7.1 Competition organizers may request waivers from the provisions of these Rules. Such requests shall be submitted in writing to the SSA Competition Committee Chairman, and should include full detail as to the purpose and operation of the requested waiver.
- 1.7.2 The normal deadline for a rules waiver request shall be 10 days prior to the Preferential Entry Deadline.
- 1.7.3 The Competition Committee Chairman, in consultation with members of the SSA Rules Committee, shall make a prompt decision to grant or deny the waiver, and shall communicate this decision in writing.

8. Process for Requesting Official Rules Interpretations

Adds a rule to clarify the process for requesting official interpretations of the rules.

- 1.8 Rules interpretation
- 1.8.1 Any SSA member may at any time request an interpretation of a Rule. Such requests shall be submitted to the SSA Rules Committee Chairman.
- 1.8.2 The Rules Committee Chairman, in consultation with members of the SSA Rules Committee, shall make a prompt interpretation and shall communicate this in writing.

9. Maximum Late Entry Surcharge Equalized for National and Regional Contests

The purpose of the Late Entry Surcharge (which is optional, at the discretion of the organizer) is to increase the incentive to apply for entry to a contest early, thus allowing for better planning by the organizer. This objective is the same for both Nationals and Regionals.

5.4.2.4 The maximum late-entry surcharge is \$100, which may be added to the required entry deposit (Rule 5.4.2.3).

~~[RX] 5.4.2.4 The maximum late-entry surcharge is \$50.~~

10. Maximum Tow Fee Increased by \$3 to \$55

This reflects increasing fuel prices.

[NS] 5.4.2.1.2 The maximum variable entry fee shall be \$300 per entry plus ~~\$52~~ \$55 per aerotow.

~~[RX] 5.4.2.1.2 The maximum variable entry fee shall be \$200 per entry plus \$52 per aerotow.~~

11. Consolidate Sport Class Weight Rules in One Place

No rule change. Consolidates section 6.12.3 into 6.8.1.3

~~[S] 6.8.1.3 Additional limitations of Rule 6.12.3 may apply.~~

[S] 6.8.1.3 Competition Weight

[S] 6.8.1.3.1 For team and multiplace entries, Competition Weight is the largest weight at which the sailplane is expected to launch for any contest flight, as declared by the entrant(s) prior to the start of competition. The sailplane shall not exceed this Competition Weight plus 10 pounds for any contest launch.

[S] 6.8.1.3.2 For other entries, Competition Weight is the weight at the first contest launch. The sailplane shall be within 10 pounds of this weight for every contest launch.

[S] 6.8.1.3.3 The Competition Weight is used in the determination of a sailplane's handicap (Rule 11.6.1.2.2).

~~[S] 6.12.3 Competition Weight~~

~~[S] 6.12.3.1 A sailplane may compete at any weight that conforms to Rule 6.8.1 and the manufacturer's limitations.~~

~~[S] 6.12.3.2 For team and multiplace entries, Competition Weight is the largest weight at which the sailplane is expected to launch for any contest flight, as declared by the entrant(s) prior to the start of competition. The sailplane shall not fly at a weight greater than this Competition Weight.~~

~~[S] 6.12.3.3 For other entries, Competition Weight is the weight at the first contest launch. The sailplane shall be within 10 pounds of this weight for every contest launch.~~

~~[S] 6.12.3.4 The Competition Weight is used in the determination of a sailplane's handicap (Rule 11.6.1.2.2).~~

12. Clarification re Deadline for Registration

No rule change, but additional clarifying language is added to the Appendix

- [N] 5.5.3.2 Entry Deadline
Registration must be complete by 09:00 of the first scheduled competition day; no entries will be accepted later than this.
- [A] 5.5.3.2 The physical presence of an entrant is not required at the time of entry deadline (registration). An entrant who wishes to arrive late may do so provided all contest registration requirements of Rule 5.5.3.1 have been completed prior to the specified deadline time and arrangements have been made to receive the required safety briefing directly from the CD. All pilots have a right to know about any entrant who plans to arrive late.

13. Simplification: Always Use the Best Scoring Start

This simplifies score calculation; the prior language was the source of some confusion.

- 10.8.2.1 A valid start is a start obtained after the task has opened and after the pilot's last launch. A pilot must have a valid start to be given a scored start time and position. The best-scoring valid start of the claimed task is used. ~~The last valid start of the claimed task is used unless:~~
- 10.8.2.1.1 ~~it incurs a penalty under Rule 10.8.5.6 and Rule 12.1.4.3, in which case the best-scoring valid start is used or~~
- 10.8.2.1.2 ~~the pilot has achieved one fix more than 5 miles outside the start cylinder after a start which otherwise qualifies, in which case that previous start may be used.~~

14. Simplification: Remove Task Penalty Devaluation

This simplifies score calculation.

- 12.1.2 ~~Task penalties are multiplied by the daily penalty factor, which is equal to the largest daily score (before penalties) of any Regular entrant in the class divided by 1000.~~

15. Equalize Missed Start and Turnpoint Cylinder Penalties

This equalizes the penalty for a slightly missed start or turnpoint.

- 12.1.4.1 Missed turnpoint (Rule 10.5.3.3): penalty = 25 + 100 * (miss distance)
- 12.1.4.3 Start penalty (Rule 10.8.5.6): penalty = 25 plus the sum of the following (neither of which shall be less than zero):
 Distance penalty = (Start Distance - Start Radius) * 200 / 100
 Height penalty = (Control Height - MSH - 100) / 2

16. Clarify Usage of Bug Wipers

Elimination of World Class in 2012 introduced ambiguity. Bug wipers are legal in classes unless the class is organized under the Sport Class Rules (including Modern and US Club).

- [N] 6.6.2 An external cleaning device is any device with moving parts designed to clean the exterior of the sailplane during flight. The use of such devices is allowed in all classes {Rule 6.12}.
- [S] 6.6.2 An external cleaning device is any device with moving parts designed to clean the exterior of the sailplane during flight. The use of such devices is prohibited in all classes {Rule 6.12}.