



# Soaring Surveys

## 2015 SSA Pilot Opinion Poll Results

October 19, 2015 4:32 PM

Percentages usually do not add up to 100% because multiple selections can be made on many questions. Also, some questions are not answered by all survey submitters.

Analysis Categories		All
Summary of detailed data representing All respondents.		178
1.0	Demographics	All
1.1	Which National contests did you fly this season?	PanAmerican:15Meter 13 7% PanAmerican:Handicap 4 2% Open:Hobbs 6 3% 18Meter:Hobbs 15 8% Club:Hobbs 11 6% 15Meter:HarrisHill 17 10% Standard:HarrisHill 7 4% Sports:CeasarCrk 12 7% 1-26:Minden 1 1% 178 100%
1.2	How many Regional contests did you fly this season?	0 63 35% 1 72 40% 2 27 15% 3 8 4% 4 6 3% More - -
2.0	FLARM	All
2.1	Does the glider you fly have a FLARM unit?	Yes:OwnFlarm 127 71% Yes:RentBorrow 10 6% NoFlarm 41 23%
2.2	<b>FLARM questions</b> With respect to <b>FLARM at NATIONAL</b> championships: 1) FLARM should be required equipment 2) It should be an organizer option as to whether FLARM is mandatory (like ELTs)	FlarmMandatory 74 42%

	<p>3) FLARM use should be left up to the individual pilot</p> <p>4) FLARM should be prohibited</p> <p>5) No preference</p> <p>6) Other Opinion (use 2.8 comment box)</p>	<p>OrgnizrChoice 41 23%</p> <p>PilotChoice 45 25%</p> <p>FlarmProhibited 3 2%</p> <p>NoPreference 7 4%</p> <p>Other(use2.8) 4 2%</p>
2.3	<p>With respect to <b>FLARM at REGIONAL</b> contests:</p> <p>1) FLARM should be required equipment</p> <p>2) It should be an organizer option as to whether FLARM is mandatory (like ELTs)</p> <p>3) FLARM should be left up to the individual pilot</p> <p>4) FLARM should be prohibited</p> <p>5) No preference</p> <p>6) Other Opinion (use 2.8 comment box)</p>	<p>FlarmMandatory 37 21%</p> <p>OrgnizrChoice 65 37%</p> <p>PilotChoice 61 34%</p> <p>FlarmProhibited 3 2%</p> <p>NoPreference 6 3%</p> <p>Other(use2.8) 5 3%</p>
2.4	<p><b>Stealth mode questions</b></p> <p>Background: when a FLARM is in "stealth" mode, the information it sees about other gliders, and information that other gliders can see about the stealth mode FLARM, is restricted to a short range and imminent collision threats. Call signs and climb rates are not shown. Imposing stealth mode is advocated to reduce gagging and leeching and other tactical use of position data. Imposing stealth mode was tried at the Elmira 15 meter nationals. The nature of stealth mode is currently under review by the IGC, British Gliding Association and FLARM, aiming to improve collision alerts and minimize tactical information.</p> <p>With respect to <b>STEALTH mode in NATIONAL</b> championships:</p> <p>1) Stealth mode should be required for any FLARM</p> <p>2) Stealth mode should be required/forbidden at the organizers' option</p> <p>3) Stealth mode should be used at the pilots' option</p> <p>4) Stealth mode should be prohibited</p> <p>5) No preference</p> <p>6) Other Opinion (use 2.8 comment box)</p>	<p>StealthMandatory 54 30%</p> <p>OrgnizrChoice 34 19%</p> <p>PilotChoice 42 24%</p> <p>StealthProhibited 23 13%</p> <p>NoPreference 19 11%</p> <p>Other(use2.8) 5 3%</p>
2.5	<p>With respect to <b>STEALTH mode in REGIONAL</b> contests:</p> <p>1) Stealth mode should be required for any FLARM</p> <p>2) Stealth mode should be required/forbiden at the organizers' option</p> <p>3) Stealth mode should be used at the pilots' option</p> <p>4) Stealth mode should be prohibited</p> <p>5) No preference</p> <p>6) Other Opinion (use 2.8 comment box)</p>	<p>StealthMandatory 36 20%</p> <p>OrgnizrChoice 39 22%</p> <p>PilotChoice 51 29%</p> <p>StealthProhibited 30 17%</p> <p>NoPreference 19 11%</p> <p>Other(use2.8) 3 2%</p>
2.6	<p>In your overall experience, is the use by yourself or others of FLARM to keep track of other gliders at range beyond imminent collision threats ("FLARM radar"), a feature that hinders your enjoyment of the contest, or enhances it? This is an overall question, considering safety, tactical use, the pleasure or pain of knowing where other gliders are, and anything else you feel relevant.</p> <p>a) Flarm "radar" Hinders Enjoyment</p> <p>b) Flarm "radar" Enhances Enjoyment</p> <p>c) Indifferent/no opinion/I haven't flown with FLARM</p>	<p>HindersEnjoyment 43 24%</p> <p>AddsEnjoyment 71 40%</p> <p>Indifferent 61 34%</p>
2.7	<p>Do you think gagging and leeching are serious problems, and the RC should consider other rules changes (not Flarm-related) to reduce their prevalence?</p>	<p>DevelopRules 20 11%</p>

		No	152 85%
2.8	Please use the comment box below to tell us any other views you have on the use of FLARM in contests.		57 32%
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Other Topics</b>	All	
3.1	<p><b>Rules Simplification</b></p> <p>For many years, the RC has heard pilot comments that the rules are too complex. The RC is contemplating a sweeping rules-simplification proposal. This proposal would produce a rule book about half its current length, and aim to make the rules and the scores simpler and more transparent. However, some rules and procedures would change or disappear. Some complex rules that address rare, small or hypothetical issues of fairness, or one-time events from decades ago, would be eliminated. For example, we might remove the ban on replacing damaged components. The scoring formulas would be simplified as well, leading to some small strategic changes. For example, we might change the complex devaluation system, or remove the slight tie-breaking bonus for undertime finishers. You'd have to read and understand the new rules.</p> <p>Given the above pro and cons, would you like to see a much simplified set of rules?</p>	<p>SimplifyRules 135 76%</p> <p>LeaveRulesAlone 16 9%</p> <p>NoPreference 20 11%</p> <p>Other(use7.2) 7 4%</p>	
3.2	<p><b>Standard Class Handicaps in Nationals</b></p> <p>For the last few years, standard class nationals have included handicaps to try to encourage older generation gliders to compete. Starting 2015, club class was introduced, which is also handicapped, and includes all standard class gliders. We seek your advice on whether to continue handicapping standard class nationals.</p> <p>a) I have not flown nor plan to fly standard class nationals. b) I have flown or plan to fly in standard class nationals, and I think handicapping should continue. c) I have flown or plan to fly in standard class nationals, and I think handicapping should not continue.</p>	<p>NotFlyingStdNats 110 62%</p> <p>Flying:PreferHcaps 51 29%</p> <p>Flying:DontHcap 14 8%</p>	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Grand Prix format in regional or national competitions</b>	All	
4.1	Should the US team select grand prix team members and support their entrance in international Grand Prix events, on a par with other IGC world championship classes?	<p>Yes 62 35%</p> <p>No 51 29%</p> <p>Indifferent 65 37%</p>	
4.2	Should the SSA introduce and sanction a Grand Prix qualifier as a regular event, run fully under IGC rules? (Start line, kilometers, scoring by position, etc.)	<p>Yes 80 45%</p> <p>No 33 19%</p> <p>Indifferent 64 36%</p>	
4.3	Should RC bring back "Last start time" to allow Grand Prix type tasks within SSA rules and procedures? yes/no/indifferent	<p>Yes 41 23%</p> <p>No 51 29%</p> <p>Indifferent 82 46%</p>	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>National Championship Trophies</b>	All	
	<p>Background: The trophies were gifted to the SSA by endowments from various donors as a way to recognize the winners of National Championships. It was the donor's original intent that each trophy would be presented to the winner at the conclusion of the competition. In addition, the trophies would remain in the winner's possession until the next competition cycle. Considering the historical significance of the trophies, and the damage done to a number of them over the years, all of the contest trophies have recently been moved to the National Soaring Museum.</p> <p>Some members of the competition community are concerned about this action for a number of reasons:</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The terms of the endowments did not contemplate them being "retired", but rather to remain in the possession of the winner until the next competition cycle.</li> <li>• A fear that potential donors might not have their wishes carried out.</li> <li>• The competition community was not fully involved in the decision making process</li> <li>• The meaning and historical significance of a trophy is lost if it cannot be "raised by the winner's hand" at the time it is won</li> </ul>	
5.1	Should the trophies be retired from circulation?	Yes 41 23% No 123 69%
5.2	<p>If you answered no, how would you like to see the trophies managed? Imagine you are the winner.</p> <p>a) Present the trophies to the winners at the competition venue. At the winner's option, the trophy would remain in their possession until the beginning of the next competition. The winner would accept responsibility for the care of the trophy and its timely shipment to the next competition.</p> <p>b) Present the trophies to the winners at the competition venue. The trophy would then be returned to a location where it would be publicly displayed (SSA office, NSM) until the next competition cycle.</p> <p>c) No Preference</p>	WinnersPossession 64 36% ReturnForDisplay 62 35% NoPreference 16 9%
5.3	Comments regarding management of National Championship Trophies	43 24%
<b>6.0</b>	<p><b>National Contest Duration</b></p> <p>The length of time required for a national contest is often cited as a barrier to participation. Currently nationals are either on a Tuesday through following Thursday schedule (10 race days), or Saturday through following Sunday (9 race days), in each case preceded by one or two optional practice days.</p> <p>The RC is considering allowing nationals to run for only 7 race days - Sunday through following Saturday. Pro: Many pilots could attend while taking only one week off of work or other commitments, including one day of travel. Con: fewer days means more luck factor in the results, and a larger chance of not achieving a valid contest due to weather.</p>	All
6.1	Would such a schedule make you more likely to participate in a national contest?	MoreLikely 78 44% LessLikely 20 11% Indifferent 80 45%
6.2	Do you approve or dislike the proposal on grounds (fairness, etc) other than participation?	Approve 64 36% Dislike 54 30% Indifferent 60 34%
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Comments</b>	All
7.1	Please let us know about any safety or operational problems you have encountered.	32 18%
7.2	Please let us know about any other rules issues on your mind	55 31%

Return to the [2015 SSA Pilot Opinion Poll survey form](#) to check your input.

Return to main [survey page](#).

If you have problems or questions contact the [survey administrator](#).



## Soaring Surveys

### 2015 SSA Pilot Opinion Poll Results

October 19, 2015 4:53 PM

ALL text responses (no suppression) are listed below. The **View and suppress text responses for question:** selector on the author page may be used to suppress any inappropriate text responses so that offensive language or direct references can be eliminated from a published report. Current suppressed text is presented in red.

2.8

Please use the comment box below to tell us any other views you have on the use of FLARM in contests.

1) It is my opinion that the popularity of FLARM is due primarily to its ability to be used as a tactical tool rather than a safety device. In most public forums, safety is the stated reason for use. HOWEVER, the majority of private, casual conversations to which I have been privy, tout the tactical assistance FLARM has provided and only rarely is safety even mentioned. The implementation of mandatory stealth mode would/will result in a large number of telltale objections and a resulting decrease in the current popularity of this technology. 2) While I readily concede that I personally have not used FLARM, it is my strong opinion (dictated by pure logic) that this technology will result in more 'head in the cockpit' time while attempting to interpret a alarm, resulting in a net loss of safety.

1- KISS for FLARM. 2- Those who are afraid of leeching might want to consider flying/playing with themselves! 3- Safety through education and camaraderie, instead of supporting paranoia of some mediocre/aging pilots.

2.2 - if required, rental units should be provided at nominal cost 2.3 - if required, rental units should be provided at nominal cost

2.4 and 2.5. It seems there is a lot of information going around about Stealth Mode, and nobody seems to agree on what it actually is or does. Until it is fully disclosed by the manufacturer, and understood by the community, I think it would be wist to avoid use or mandate of its use.

Any discussion of FLARM should include discussion of ADS-B as well. If a mandate were to come out for ADS-B, and if FLARM were also mandated for contests, I could see a situation where a unified FLARM/ADS-B solution would be the choice most pilots would then make. This would also make the FLARM stand-alone obsolete. Without knowing where ADS-B is going, mandating FLARM seems premature.

As a junior pilot, I can't afford to purchase a FLARM to install in the glider I normally race. I'm of the opinion that safety dictates that large contests (30+ gliders) should mandate FLARM usage. As a result, the SSA should support the FLARM rental program so that pilots that do not own a FLARM are still able to compete in large contests. From my experiences at contests in the western US, there is not a need for FLARM at small contests (less than 20 gliders).

Because of the safety advantages of having all pilots flying with Powerflarm on the same course, and the proven effectiveness in collision avoidance, it should be mandatory. Seriously competitive pilots are going to be aggressively flying the same lines increasing the likelihood of collisions. However, portable units should be available to pilots who do not have the Powerflarm Brick installed to insure a fair compliance. Especially at a National level, investing in safety technology seems quite reasonable considering the level. A few competitions, safaris and meets I was in, meet organizers made portables available for rent. So, this is quite doable at least within region 11. For Regional competitions, this should be decided on by region, since it may not currently be economically feasible to have mandatory PF requirements.

Existing Stealth mode has numerous issues, among them a stupid name that invites criticism. I am hopeful that a better competition mode will be forthcoming. Uniform flarm policy for Nats probably a good thing. Needs to be established with an eye towards what FAI decides to do. If FAI goes competition mode, US Nats should do the same.

FLARM can enhance the soaring experience and the safety aspects of this technology is definitely necessary in large contests. The pilots that use it as a tool to leech are known to most folks. Hope the US Team takes that into consideration.

FLARM should be mandatory at all contests.

FLARM should not be required unless the organizers can ensure adequate supply of rental units.

Farm is already an antiquated system which will become even more so with the mandate of ADS B -out in aircraft. I think once this nationwide system is a requirement that will keep not just glider pilots safe, but everyone in the sky safer, than, and only then it should be mandated. Until that time, FLARM is an expensive tool which only furthers the "rich old white guys" lock on soaring in the U.S.

Flarm "radar" is a distraction. However, the current stealth mode is dangerous. I was thermalling in a crowded start cylinder and the FLARM started alerting, and then alerting at high rapidity. My screen did not show the glider entering the thermal that passed within a wingspan of me until it was too late to react. Non-stealth mode would have given me more time. I know this is not how Stealth mode is intended to work, but this is my experience.

Flarm data is a useful teaching tool for new pilots. Knowing that SM or KS are going 100 kt at cloudbase does not help me "leech" a tactical advantage!

Flarm is a useful learning tool in Regional contests and improves safety at the same time. We should encourage leeching and team flying in regionals for increased learning

Flarm is a very useful safety device. I don't think the leeching issue amounts to much. Most good pilots make their own decisions with or without Flarm input.

Flarm is not recognised by the FAA and ADSB should be used (problem of collision with a blind GA or airliner aircraft).

Flarm not mandatory at regionals because it would impact participation.

Flarm should be mandated in all sanctioned events including "camps" where multiple gliders are planned to be flying in the same general airspace. Stealth mode is of little value as the range of Flarm is similar to range of sight. If one can see a gaggle one knows where a thermal is and a single glider is iffy.

Flarm still has teething problems and there is not as yet any effective US-based product support. Making a single source piece of equipment mandatory in this context is premature.

Flarm was introduced as a collision warning system. Using it for any other purpose renders it a distraction and contributes negatively to safety.

Flarm works great. Please do not limit any electronics in the cockpit.

For Nationals Mandatory Flarm only with Stealth to reduce leaching. For Regionals - only in Stealth mode.. organizer should make call on if needed depending on size of contest

Gagging and leeching are less a problem now because there are generally so many fewer gliders at a contest than in the past. Focus on improving participation and we may have to revisit this. In the meantime, FLARM stealth mode helps by improving safety without aiding leeching.

Has really enhanced safety and should be in every racing pilots cockpit.

Have not used FLARM. Read lots of rumors and discussion about it on RAS Forums. Would like to know more hard data, unbiased.

Having Flarms in Stealth mode at Elmira worked extremely well. There was plenty of warning of threats and imminent collisions, and, obviously, no longer range leaching. I am a strong supporter of Stealth Mode. W3

I believe that any modification to FLARM, such as Stealth Mode, that in any way reduces the safety enhancing capabilities of FLARM should be prohibited. I would be in favor of working with the FLARM manufacturer to develop a "contest mode" that retains all the safety aspects but removes any tactical data such as contest ID or climb rate.

I believe that there are too many rules already, so question 2.7 asking if the RC should develop more rules about leeching is a clear NO. Personally, I do not use FLARM for leeching (does not seem sportsman like) and thus don't think that Stealth mode is a good idea for contests. Let the FLARM unit do what it can do and see what develops. Besides, if we are forced to have ADS-B in/out in a few years, the extra range of ADS-B will make all these questions moot. Also - I do not know if there is data that clearly says FLARM leeching is used much or helpful to competitors.

I don't like folks watching the Flarm display too much to determine who is climbing the fastest - too much like a video game.

I enjoy having the FLARM, but do not use it to either track competitors or locate gaggles. I do appreciate the warning and collision alert features. I don't think the stealth makes much difference.

I have seen far more verbage on leaching than my experiences in RL have witnessed. There are times when CD's actually encourage groups on course, such as blue-weak days. At regionals following leaders is a great way for new contestants to learn. They will do better than if alone but not well enough to seriously challenge the top scores.

I haven't flown a nationals since the "open FLARM warfare" era began. I was one of the first to purchase a FLARM, thinking we were all installing collision avoidance devices. Thought for sure that STEALTH mode would be required and accepted at the Nationals level. When I saw how it was perverted into a beyond visual range information sharing device I sold it, installed a transponder and quite racing. Loved what they did at Elmira.

I hear a lot of people WORRYING about FLARM negatively affecting their competitive advantage/secrets; but I have yet to see or hear a well-documented instance where someone has won a contest directly because they were able to use FLARM for "extended leeching" or similar techniques. Seems like a lot of hand-waving. Furthermore: its one thing to simply spot someone several miles away; its another to have the skill and abilities to be able to close the distance and use lift well-enough to catch-up-to or pass someone.

I think flarm is great but I can't buy it its too much \$\$\$ for me, or Im cheap if made mandatory SSA should maintain a rental program

I think that any competitor that is using FLARM as part of a strategy has likely already lost to those competitors who do not need to rely on a "head down" display in the cockpit to figure out the location of the best lift.

I think that the safety features far outweigh the risk of leeching.

I was at Harris Hill in 2015 and flew with FLARM in stealth mode. I found that all the collision avoidance features worked fine. It should be stated that imminent threats do generate a warning even if they are out to the 2 km, +/-1000 feet limited range for displaying data for normal targets. Certainly in east coast contests, with lower working bands and land outs being a more prevalent occurrence and factor in scoring, being able to use FLARM to find or follow gliders changes the nature of the sport and leads to an invalid ranking of scores. The rules committee should act to eliminate this homogenization of pilot skills and the dumbing down of our sport.

I would prefer that everyone has a Flarm in Stealth mode. If Flarm is "open" or not in Stealth, I feel compelled to use that technology to stay in the game. I would rather have the safety and give up the radar stuff to fly like we used to and compete to win by our own decisions.

I'm certain that my enjoyment at contests would be improved not only if Stealth is prohibited but also if a true contest ID registration is required before the contest so that the identity of a distant Flarm target would be exactly known.

I've been using FLARM since it was introduced in the US, first renting a unit for a regional contest. FLARM has enhanced both the safety and enjoyment of the sport for me and I believe SSA should be actively promoting at contests for safety reasons. I flew the 2014 Nephi event with 60 plus gliders and was pleasantly surprised that congestion wasn't an issue. In part because of mandatory FLARM and in part because there was a lot of room to spread out. It's still too early for mandatory STEALTH. It may become a useful option with software refinement. It should remain available as an option to the organizer and not be mandatory.

IMHO, there will always be gagging & leeching. If you continue developing rules to try to eliminate these things or make it mandatory for the use of FLARM, my feelings are that the number of entrants at contest will diminish even more.

It make common sense that if the Sport does not allow contact with ground crew and other pilots - then it is consistent not to allow pilots to see other gliders more than a mile or two away. I am not even sure why this is a question, unless we are opening up all communication and changing the sport. I am OK with that, but it is a different dynamic. For me it seems you either don't allow communication of tactical info or you allow all info - either way works, but a hybrid makes no sense.

Leave it completely optional and do not try to make it an issue.

One more item that takes away from contest fun. If Flarm is implement i will never fly a contest again.

One purpose of Regional Contests is to develop new racing/X-C pilots and skills. Since in my experience gagging/leeching is not an issue at Regionals, Flarm Stealth mode should be prohibited to allow newbies to "chase". And BTW, the 2015 Flarm software update seemed to significantly reduce its effective range.

Our rules with respect to flarm use should reflect international (WGC) rules

Portable FLARM's do not show call signs and climb rates. Only traffic.

Regionals, I feel Flarm should be Strongly encouraged, but not mandatory. Stealth mode, might be best to see what the worlds are doing regarding stealth or open mode, however all gliders should be in the same mode.

SSA is not tasked with regulatory power. That power lies with the FAA only. By forcing, and recommending the use of Flarm, you are becoming part of the problem. The information displayed by the Flarm is very difficult to the pilot perception, Flarm is not giving a precise position of possible targets. It only complicates the sport and I believe it will lead to more accidents.

Seems to me that the Flarm Stealth argument is very much the same as arguments stated when anything new was coming coming out. For instance I recall this kind of argument with regard to GPS "Navigation is an important pilot skill and we shouldn't allow GPS moving maps" I support flarm and would not want to see it restricted in anyway such as stealth.

Stealth mode of Flarm introduces another layer of rules, it should be pilot's decision if he likes to share data. It takes away workload from organizers, no penalty if wrong set up of Flarm, less stress for pilot during flight( did I set up properly Flarm?) No lost points due to set up mistake,power failure.

Stealth mode should be enforced, otherwise pilots be staring at screen to see where the best lift and gaggle are making competitions less safe about technology, up the the point when the software steers you to the best FLARM identified thermals and best performing pilots.

The leeching issue with Flarm is overstated - a thermal 6 miles away takes approx 4 mins to arrive by which time you've missed the advantages of having the thermal centered for you and you have to find it yourself maybe 1000-1500' lower which means the flarm was basically no help. Pilots can see each other within 2-3 miles relatively easily and under these conditions Flarm is not a necessary tool for leeching. This issue is a Storm in a Teacup. Someones pet peeve. If stealth mode information can be improved to a point where it gives useful situational awareness information without giving climb rates that might be a suitable compromise. See what the Brits come up with and then decide - until then keep it pilots choice so that pet peeves can be exercised on an individual basis.

The range of "PORTABLE" FLARM units needs verified as adequate for imminent collisions if Flarms are required. I have done extensive range testing of many different portable units and in my opinion they are not adequate in many cases. Also, in my opinion it is not just because of poor installations. It is an underpowered device.

Use of Flarm radar increases pilot head-down time and contributes to a false sense of security causing the pilot to believe he knows about all nearby traffic which may not be the case. In serious competition, requiring non-stealth Flarm isn't fair to whoever is in the lead. It's like putting a tracking collar on an animal before hunting it down - where is the sense of sportsmanship? Stealth or not isn't about gagging and leeching, it's about fairness and safety.

You have covered it. The idea that Flarm should have a radar mode for contests is a game changer for no benefit. Implement Stealth ASAP and figure out how to reduce Flarm to a safety device for midair avoidance only.

5.3

Comments regarding management of National Championship Trophies

- allow the winner to decide on keep in possession or return for display. Whether immediately after presentation or some time period during the year.

5.1, we just had a similar conversation within the 1-26 group. The trophies were donated for the purpose of the winner having them for a year. Surely the donors knew there could possible be damaged through out the years, but what is meaningful with a traveling trophy is holding it and keeping it for a year seeing all the names of the previous winners. the 1-26 group is looking at and has already made for at least one of its trophy a copy that the winner can keep , but they still get the original for a year.

A new/separate fund should be managed to maintain the trophies as wear and tear is normal in sports with such trophies. I parallel trophy should be commissioned for the soaring museum. The pilots/clubs who win these contests DESERVE to enjoy the trophy in the way the creators intended. It is shameful if the tradition of these trophies is being taken away from the pilots (and competitors) at the awards ceremony's.

A plan needs to be made how to update and maintain the trophies. The 15M trophy does not have room for more names unless it is changed or the style of engraving is updated. The glider and glass that should be on the top of the 15M trophy have been broken and replaced several times with very poor replacements.

A simple solution is for SSA to budget for refurbishing the trophies every 5 years or so - it is unfair to burden individuals with the cost of repairing normal cumulative wear and tear unless clear negligence is indicated.

About the Grand prix tasks. The "Last start time" is not required for Grand Prix tasks, so your question 4.3 is misleading. I hope you disregard any data you receive from that question. I like the idea of the grand prix start. I don't like the idea of a "last start time" --

the last start time should be the same as the start time.

Allowing the winner limited time to display the trophy at home is of little benefit to any one. Trophies should be on display at the relevant contest venue and then returned to the national office to be displayed in a prominent position. If greater access to the trophies is desired they could be displayed on a rotating basis at regional sites that have the facilities.

Being the privileged custodian of a historic trophy for a year is something that should never be taken from our winners. Ask the donors and families of the donors how they feel about their trophies being hidden away in the museum.

Document condition of trophy, holder is financially responsible for any repairs required.

Give winners a smaller trophy to keep.

I believe Charlie Spratt was the Director who proposed retiring the trophies, and the SSA BOD was heavily populated by racing pilots at the time, so your statement that the "competition community" was not "fully involved" is questionable. BTW, the trophies were given to the SSA, not the "competition community", so the SSA Board is ultimately responsible for them. I said "No", but option (b) is acceptable. I will point out that the trophies were retired because they were damaged by pilots who accepted no responsibility doing so; why do you think this might change? It has been my understanding as a long serving Director that the endowments were for the purpose of transporting and maintaining the trophies, not as a "prize" for the contest winner(s).

I believe that the "Original" National Championship Trophies should be presented to the winner at the competition venue each year. How would it look if Rodger Federer hoisted a little plastic cup at Wimbledon ?? These trophies should have dedicated travel cases that protect them for shipping to and from the competition venue each year. After the competition is over, the "Original" trophy is engraved with the winners name and goes back to the National Soaring Museum. The cost of shipping should be borne by the monies received from Contest Sanction Fees. The winner also gets a smaller engraved replica or some other real trophy that highlights the victory. There are two possible types of trophy that could be used for this latter purpose... (1) One possibility would be an engraved plate or trophy that the winner can keep forever. The trophy should be nice, winning a national competition is an impressive benchmark in anyone's soaring career. (2) Another possibility would be a traveling trophy that is suitable for easy boxing and shipping around the country (like a plate). This trophy would have all previous winners names engraved on it and would stay with the winner for one year until the next year's national contest. Last year's winner would be responsible for getting it to the venue of the current national contest. The traveling trophy would have the advantage of displaying all previous winners names. This list would make the trophy more valuable and impressive. Which trophy option (1 or 2) is best ?? In my opinion, number 1 is probably best. It is simple, does not require any logistics and the winner gets a trophy to keep and display for life. I have a number of sailing trophies from many years ago and I still enjoy looking at them.

I would favor paying to send trophy to Nats for presentation then back to safe place (NSM ??) Rues change \_ eliminating "replacing damaged components" would allow pilots to bring 2 (or more ??) ships to contest. This would favor very wealthy pilots and hurt participation.

I would really like to display the national winners trophy in my house to show my friends and family who will never go to the NSM to see it. How cool would that be? I've heard different reasons about why the national trophies are now in limited circulation. If a trophy becomes damaged the trophy winner should be responsible for the costs to have the damages fixed which would be part of deal if you took the trophy home. We should also make sure each trophy has a great trophy carrying case to ensure safe travel.

If the trophy is damaged in your possession, you pay to fix it.

If trophy is to be in the winners possession he buys an insurance policy the value of which is to be determined by the RC/SSA.

Investigate 3-D scanning and 3-D printing of replicas (or relief/cast medallions) to present to winners as a permanent memento. This would replace the generic medallion they currently receive.

It would be a shame to lose one of these trophies in a house fire, or worse, a divorce! Keep them safe at NSM and present them at the venue along with a take home plaque or other trophy that the winner can keep forever. The national trophy would be returned to the NSM for public display.

It's cool to see the winner raise a big trophy at the banquet but poll the folks who've actually won one for a better answer on this.

Items of greater value and delicacy are shipped all over the world every day. Produce cases able to ship them without damage.

It's a lot nicer to hand the winner his trophy after all the work and expense he or she expended to win!

New trophies should be procured, to allow the tradition to continue but the historic originals should be retired to the museum.

No big deal.

No hard-core opinion, but I like the winner deciding whether to keep it with the accompanying responsibility of safekeeping and transfer or surrender it to the museum. In the latter case Perhaps we could offer the winner a small plaque.

Pictures of winner are taken. The trophy should be kept by the winner in the same way that I own my FAI diamond badge.

Present the actual trophy to the winner at the end of a contest, but the trophy would be shipped back to the NSM immediately afterwards. A miniature replica or similar appearing trophy will be given to the winner for their permanent possession.

Present the winner with a nicely framed picture of the trophy.

Present trophy, returns for display, winners keep a smaller representation of master trophy.

Put a financial obligation on anyone that takes possession of the trophies so they are not forgotten about.

Refurbish the trophies. Also, give a small trophy to the top three at nationals. Regional winners receive medals as is

Retire the original, and produce annual plaques to commemorate their award to be given to the recipient permanently.

The trophy should be returned to the NSM for display and safe keeping. The winner should be presented with a small scale version of the trophy to keep.

They can be reconditioned or replaced with new ones, the originals put on display...

They should stay in the Museum or in a sanctioned location where you know they are displayed and cared for. Most clubs do not have places that would meet that criteria - and even less individuals.

This is a tough question to answer in some respects. I believe that the winners of these trophies should have the opportunity to to

receive their winning trophy & proudly display it at home if they so desire. On the other hand, who would be responsible if the trophy is damaged during transportation? My guess is that some of these trophies could never be replaced if damaged. What about a replica of the trophy that the winner receives & gets to keep. Their name can be placed on the original trophy wherever it might be housed & therefore remain safe & intact.

Trophies presented at the end of the comp. Winners option as to retain or send back to the NSM.

We have some pretty-battered furniture in our house. Some of it was built by my father. One piece by (name redacted)'s grandfather. Every nick and scratch is a story. Last year's winner gets to tell this year's winner a story?

When the trophy gets too many names on it or becomes worn, it should be replaced.

Whomever decided to "retire them" should be banned from the SSA for life. They also have a serious mental health issue and should seek professional help.

Winner's option to retain the trophy only if the winner posts a \$500 damage indemnity with SSA. This should provide an incentive to protect the trophies. Money would be returned when the trophy is returned in good condition.

Winners keeping possession of the trophy should have to post a bond or some other type of insurance. Better possibly, why not have the winner keep possession of the trophy for a limited period of time, with the trophy then returning to the NSM for "most" of the year - this is IMHO a better option for all concerned (winner, donors, community at large, etc.)

Winners should be given the option to take trophies home. In addition, some contests in the past have not given trophies of any kind for pilots to keep. As part of sanction, organizers should be required to provide trophies to the top three places in each class. Winners should have something besides a medallion to display permanently

none

7.1

Please let us know about any safety or operational problems you have encountered.

6.0. Sunday Thru Saturday and assuming you only have to take one week of vacation to attend is just plain wrong for the majority of people. Most contestants will not be within one day's drive of a Nationals. And, you want to fly practice before, well, there go more days. It is also nice to have a couple of days to get home after a Nationals that ends on Thursday, with a day to actually "rest" before going back to work. I have done the fun of driving 16+ hours the day after a contest to get home at near midnight so I can go to work the next morning. Please understand that a Sunday-Saturday contest will be great for the contest organizer, but will not likely help the contestants any at all. As such, I don't think it will help participation. You need to have travel time before the contest starts and enough time for travel and flying at least one practice day. The alternate schedule run at Uvalde in 2011 required the same number of days of vacation for me to go there, have 9 possible flying days, then go home, as it would have required for a Tues-Thurs 10 day contest. And, I didn't have any time after getting home before going back to work.

As long as National Contests are only held in 1 location, this change in length won't help with the long travel-distances that are the real major barrier to entry for most of the "middle-of-the-pack" pilots who would (in theory) help round out the participation at a Nationals event. Making the event shorter while still requiring some serious competitors to drive 3+ days to the contest site (wherever it is in our giant USA) could actually work against the event, as now the cumulative drive-time equals the contest length itself! And saving 2 tows and 1-2 nights of hotel costs really don't change the financial equation much, either; in fact some people might be mad at paying the same entry fees for a National and yet get fewer competition days for their money! Holding 2 Nationals is probably a better solution, as it gives people more flying in return for less total driving.

At regional contest, task was modified after the launch to a task that was not on the task sheet leading to a number of airborne novice pilots having to reprogram their flight computers while loitering in the start cylinder. This happened on multiple occasions. CDs should be encouraged to more carefully plan alternative tasks and fallback to these or delay the launch rather than creating a new task on the fly after the launch.

Best safety rules are to keep pilots at home in their closet!

Calling the pilots to grid when it was obvious that Cumulonimbus were building up and launching the pilots. It is better to cancel the day and let pilots take off to have fun if the day turns OK than opening the gate and get pilots making hazardous outlandings and having a rain of gliders at the same time in that small airport.

Contests all seem to be run at a very high Safety standard.

Extra high finishes like McMinn have gliders flying around the finish for about 5 mins to lose speed/height and sequence. A 100-500ft finish would have been better for the gliders, the power traffic is usually so scant that this would not have been an issue for them.

FLARM Fails Carbon Fiber ships and who know what else. People rely on it and stop LOOKING out the window New Pilots especially

Finish ring with landout if crossed below a certain altitude. This finish type has resulted in an unintended consequence of low thermalling outside of the ring and a field landout when the home airport was no longer reachable. If you are going to be scored as a landout by crossing the ring then why not try and climb out and cross at a non-penalty altitude? This finish procedure introduces an unsafe strategy.

Flarm portable units are not as effective as the Core units. This needs to be understood by the renters of the units and by the SSA. Steve Northcraft and I have done work in this area.

Have option in flarm to disable for a time, say 30 seconds when in a gaggle.

Having been the Weather man for a couple of Regional contests [in context of 6.0] I have encountered pressure on CDs to get minimum number of days for a valid contest. Sometimes conditions are right on the threshold between good and 'the porridge is just too hot'. In a couple instances, conditions deteriorated rapidly after some had launched and were on course, and the CD was in a pickle with rules. Some completed tasks others did not get out of the gate due to OD. It appeared to me that the rules should be clarified, simplified and modified in regards to this.

I believe we try too hard to get in a regional in marginal weather. Of course the pilot is ultimately responsible for his safety but it would be good if the CD's erred on the side of every ones safety.

I know this may not sit well but REFERENCE TO NAMED INDIVIDUAL REDACTED BY RC CHAIR

I understand that you are under pressure to increase participation. I doubt this will help , just as I do not think handicapping has helped. "Dumbing down" the contest is likely not a good idea.

I understand the dilemma, but one can't expect someone's employer to grant several long vacations in a year.

If we are going to add the Gand Prix to the world teams we should drop support for the 13M and Two Place. These two classes do nothing to help the US get better and are using funds that could be better spent elsewhere.

Launching grids in severe winds that caused multiple ground loops. CD's and CM's should have more ACTUAL safety in mind rather than an obligatory "safety talk" every morning.

Loggers in motor gliders should be hard mounted to glider air frame. Loggers in motor gliders should be mounted so that the pilot can not touch logger in flight.

Many contests are finding that raising the tow height to 2500 feet (or more) has several benefits, including fewer relights. For some sites, 2000 ft is really too low from a safety standpoint and the rules should reflect this. There should be some criteria in the rules for requiring increased tow heights based on distance from the contest site and AGL at the drop area. For example, if the drop area is more than 5 miles from the contest site, or a 2000 ft tow to the drop area means that you are releasing less than 1000 AGL, the minimum tow height should be raised to at least 2500 ft.

Near Misses that could have been avoided by universal use of Flarm. Also, Flarms should be checked for operation prior to contest day. Simple to use a portable unit and walk the grid.

No -- I have no comments about safety or operational problems. The contests I attended have been run fairly and safely.

Not enough Junior pilots, the participation of juniors in XC or contest or promotion of junior contests. No Junior Nationals. I would like to see MUCH more focus on the revitalization of junior cross country soaring and contest participation (youth only events first, participation in adult contests a distant but significant second).

Only the continued use of poly tow ropes, we should all be using Dacron ropes. Poly tow ropes are dangerous IMHO and are a unnecessary risk.

Operational: Winscore continues to give scorers troubles. Improve testing before subjecting scorers to new releases...

People continue to show up at contests with misconfigured flarms that cause problems. The common scenario is flarm set to report presence as a power plane, causing widespread nuisance alarms. At present, flarm doesn't report to the pilot the type of aircraft generating the collision warning, and so trouble shooting this condition is difficult. Flarm needs to make their product easier to trouble shoot in a contest setting. I have discussed this with Flarm, but hearing from the RC as representatives of the US contest community might jack the pressure up a notch.

Pilots looking into computers, vario interfaces and lately the Flarm without looking outside.

Retrieve office often note well organized, leads to confusion and complaints. Steering point good idea for MAT or large area TAT to help avoid finishers in opposite directions.

Shorter nats should have optional "rain" days allowed at the end.

The organization did an outstanding job at Harris Hill, it was professional and safe and a lot of fun.

The safety finish is still a work in progress. When weather is bad at the finish gliders should not be encouraged to enter the safety zone at any altitude. Rule 10.9.5 should be changed so that: 10.9.5.3 When a Safety finish is active, a pilot may claim a finish by obtaining one fix [not more than 1 mile] within the Safety finish cylinder, provided the slope from the claimed fix to the Projected Finish Location is not less than 200 feet per mile and no claimed turnpoint was achieved after the time of the claimed fix. Pilots entering the safety zone by more than one mile and who have not achieved a safety finish will be considered to have landed out at the safety finish radius.

When multiple classes run from the same contest site, and when the CD is coping with large differentials in launch times due to large grids, there can often be considerable congestion just after each classes' finish time; often within minutes of each other. The ensuing landing frenzy can be quite interesting. As a suggestion: the CD should consider task duration (and therefore task end times) when he announces the gate opening times at a multi-task and/or high-attendance contest such that projected finish times would be separated by at least fifteen minutes between classes.

7.2

Please let us know about any other rules issues on your mind

3.1. I would really like to see what the simplified rules are before saying "Give the simplified rules."

3.2 Although not flying in Standard Class, I firmly believe that handicapping should not be done to attract participants. Once this is done there is no longer a valid Standard Class. The Club Class exists to deal with this issue, and handicapping the Standard Class can only detract from participation in the Club Class. 2.7 IMHO leeching has always been an issue which some feel is "real racing" and some feel is "cheating". We have three task types that address that matter in various ways. If the rules recommendations are followed--a roughly equal number of each task type--then we've done all we can do to address the perceived problem.

Handicapping: The FAI Handicaps are obviously unfair with regards to engines. In the Sports Class where everything is both glider and weight based, the handicaps are reasonable. But in the FAI Handicap Class where weight is no longer taken into consideration, the weight penalty for having an engine must be eliminated. There is absolutely no reason for a Ventus 2cx, a Ventus 2cxT, and a Ventus 2cxM to have three different handicaps. They are all allowed to fly at max gross.

3.2 - handicaps should be revised annually based on combined OLC results and contest results for all gliders. For example, A fuselage designed models and other drag reducing modifications should be reviewed for impact on handicaps.

6.0 Participation numbers in a Nationals are a secondary consideration. Driving across the country for a short contest (especially in the East) makes little sense. A national championship should be of long duration and difficult, worthy of the trip. If that means the number of national championship events gets reduced to (say) one east and one west with multiple classes colocated, so be it.

6.0, PLEASE encourage sites to use the Tues - Thru time frame. This gives travel time on each end of the contest and only cost 2 weeks vacation. This has been very successful starting on Wed with the 1-26 group for years. The Saturday start ONLY favors pilots in the local area. I can understand why an organizer might want to do this, but it really limits participation from any distance, and potentially cost a person 3 weeks vacation. Not a good deal.

6.2: Our Nationals need to mimic World Championships, the winners need to show the stamina to represent us.

Allow XM weather radar

Allow any and all types of devices including adsb, iPads, phones, etc. in all competitions.

Are we allowing all electronic data (weather, etc.) in the cockpit for 2016???

As has been illustrated, there are too many MAT tasks. One or two turn MATs should be eliminated except in extreme cases. Get rid of the ridiculous finish cylinder penalty!!! And stop trying to force US rules and penalties in FAI events...PanAm. Other than that, good job.

Before the Grand Prix formula is fully endorsed by SSA I hope the safety ramifications of that contest's method of scoring and finish are given thought. Are there safety concerns with a mass start? What does the experience so far indicate? Are there issues with the finish? Let's not create a contest that encourages worm-burner finishes. If the finish line is sufficiently high to allow a normal landing, and if a finish below that altitude is not counted as a finish, much of my concern related to the finish would be addressed. Without those features, I would oppose SSA supporting the format.

Concerning the length of nationals, let me propose something different. I think plans similar to mine have been discussed by others. NASCAR holds many races throughout the season and the winner is the one with the most points. A gross simplification, but I like the concept. Closer to home, Condor contests are conducted online and offer many days of tasks. At the end of the series a predetermined number of each participant's best scores are totaled to determine the overall winner. If a similar format were adopted, national level contests could be reduced in length and increased in number and spread over more scattered venues. Given the reduced length and travel time to each, we might see more participation. Scoring and evaluation of team members would require re thinking but the sum could be a more robust selection process and a more competitive world team.

Duration on a Nationals should be same as a Worlds.

Fairness of start open time for late launcher is a continuing unnecessary problem. 15 minutes minimum from takeoff should only apply when nominal drop zone is within 5 miles of a good start point and max start height is less than 5000 ft above launch point. Remote drop zones and higher start heights should add 1 minute per extra mile and 3 minutes per extra 1000 ft. This minimum can be calculated based on the task and put on the task sheet. And its still a guide for a minimum that can be adjusted to give a reasonably fair start regardless of launch sequence.

Farm is helping the mid-air problem, that's great! Task setters have to keep in mind the amount of gliders in a start area, maybe we need two start circles for a big contest, and the "head on" problem in setting tasks.

Grand Prix: We should keep the SSA out of Grand Prix contests and let local groups hold races, if desired. So far, only 1 local group has decided to hold an event. IF we end up with multiple Grand Prix Races across the country, we should then reconsider SSA participation because you can only have 1 qualifying Grand Prix per country to qualify for the world wide Grand Prix final. Grand Prix Selection: The organizer of a GP should use the SSA Pilot Ranking List for pilot selection which is being used for the GP in Ionia next summer. I do not see the value in changing the process, since the current process will send the best interested pilots. Rules Simplification: I like the overall idea of Rules Simplification. However, I'm not sure the rules need to be reduced by 50%. I do like the idea of removing: "Some complex rules that address rare, small or hypothetical issues of fairness, or one-time events from decades ago, would be eliminated."

Having recently gotten a ship with a sustainer engine I find that the rules for engine run are complex and even a bit dangerous. I feel it is good practice to start the engine on every flight as just a check to make sure it is working properly. The restriction on altitude and distance from airfield make this awkward to achieve. I find it much more practical to thermal up after release and then start the engine at a higher altitude say 3,500 AGL and above. I would like to see the rules changed (again for sustainer engine only, not self launch) That would allow engine start for a short duration with no height restriction so that it can be shown that no significant altitude was gained from the engine start to shutdown and that the engine start be allowed with 5 miles of the airfield or start point. If the engine is used in this manner the 20 minute after engine start to actual start time on course restriction should be deleted.

I agree with rules simplification if it means moving closer to IGC rules.

I favor task that can be flown in three hours.

I have been finding competition much less interesting/enjoyable because of the lack of FAI class participation at regionals. As a result we are flying combined FAI handicapped classes. I find this much less enjoyable. Also the tasking is not as challenging as it used to be with fewer AST's being called. The last time i flew an AST was at Cordele, probably 10 years ago. i think the RC should consider reverting to AST's and start and finish lines for a year to see if this spurs more interest in racing.

I have recently entered the world of motorgliders. I discovered the rules covering starting the engine prior to starting as deeply flawed and thus likely to hurt safety because pilots will not test their engines and just hope they start. For Turbo engines I recommend that you allow a start and short duration run without regard to location or initial start height prior to start. I suggest that one be allowed to start the engine, run it for a short time and return to the original pre start altitude prior to start, perhaps within a mile or so of the engine start location.(not a great idea however) The benefit of this would be that each turbo engine would be tested every day for operation. This is a good thing! I cannot see any reason for the present,complicated rules regarding distance from airport or altitude at start. The present rules have prevented me from testing the engine pre start a couple of times. This cannot be the original intent, but it is the result. Why is it not your intent to encourage engine test prior to start? This seems to be the result if not the intent. Proper engine use/test should be a very short run every day prior to start. The idea of an advantage to be gained by a two min run at 4000 ft. above the ground without an altitude gain beyond the start point seems an example of overly

complicated rules. There is no advantage gained if I release from tow, climb in a thermal, then after topping it out start the engine, run for a few seconds, and put it away. If you are concerned about the advantage of self re-light issues create a second rule regarding the requirements for a self re-light. This is reasonable and pilots will try to comply or lose points. But the simple act of testing an engine for a few seconds prior to start should be encouraged. At present it is not due to overly burdensome rules regarding distance from airport and altitude at start. I hope you agree and re-do this section as it discourages safety and is needlessly complicated. Neither is a worthy goal.

I participated in an FAI handicap contest, and discovered that the handicapping rules greatly favored newer gliders that could carry 400 lbs + water without affecting handicap. The handicap rules need to address this discrepancy. I believe the organizers are amenable to doing the required work, but there is currently no guidance from the RC as to what to do.

I really agree with simplifying the rules. There are so many rules that address rare, small or hypothetical problems that I believe they are inhibiting participation. As an example, look at the number of people who participate in the OLC versus those that fly for FAI badges ..... The OLC rules are simple - fly a flight and upload it to the OLC website. FAI badges are harder to achieve, mean more, but the rules are complex enough that they keep many from making even a silver distance flight.

Ideally a Nationals would be 5-7 days long and a Regional would be 3-5 days long. We are not attracting a younger crowd by requiring two weeks of vacation to be taken in order to compete in a Nationals. The longer contests may work for people with seniority in their job, or who have retired, however those of us who are at the beginning or middle of our careers are stuck balancing soaring with work and families. The 10 day contest are not attractive to families or employers. The use of more AST's would help reduce the "Luck" factor in a shortened contest schedule.

In regards to short nationals 9 days (Sat to Sun) or 7 Days (Sun to Sat), they are a really bad choice for people who need to drive 2-3 days to a contest site. I would still have to use almost 2 full weeks of vacation for only 7 or 9 flying days. This arrangement only works for local folks. The Tue - Thu arrangement let's me have a good contest potential with just two weeks of vacation. I take advantage of two weekends as opposed to just one with the shorter contest. If you keep making Nationals shorter they will turn into Regional contests.

It might be good to mandate a hard deck for those flying engine equipped aircraft. I know of one mishap at Perry and the recent crash at New Castle that was a direct result of waiting too late to put out the iron thermal. Another pilot at New Castle got away with a low start with no where to land the same day of the crash. Again the pilot is responsible but it just does not happen. There guys also have an advantage on the marginal days if they are stupid enough.

It should be addressed that 10 day Nationals are flown for primarily that length as training for the WGC (as the Worlds are longer).  
 REDACTED BY RC CHAIR Stop using RAS as a means of primary communication and entering "pissing contests" as a few on the rules committee do. REDACTED BY RC CHAIR

Just because SSA has a rules committee we shouldn't be adding new rules all the time. Go have some fun. Keep the rules alone.

National contests should not be reduced below the present 9 days in length. Shortening the contest length will do very little to increase participation. Nationals should remain a longer contest for the more serious competitors to determine which pilots are selected to go to the World Championships.

OLC is giving many pilots visibility on their flights. The pool of OLC pilots is increasing where contest pilots are shrinking. There is also two demographics of pilots. One group are pilots learning XC flying that are not ready to transfer to racing given either lack of skills or equipment. There is another demographic of pilot that either got tired of racing or feel they are too old to be competitive. The question is how to graduate OLC pilots into Racing pilots or should OLC flying have meaning awards for the market it serves.

Penalty for below finish ceiling should be removed, this takes the fun out of finishing

Perhaps it's time to reconsider ways to allow for an extension of a day to get a valid national competition.

Please change to the international standard of kilometers!

RE 3.1: To simply mandate an over-all simplification of the rules ignores the complexity of competition. No doubt some rules could be re-written and simplified, but the primary goals of the rulebook should be that it is both comprehensive and comprehensible.

Regarding rules simplification, I'll believe it when I see it. :) With all due respect to the dedicated people who have labored over the years, I've been competing since the late 1960s and I don't know that the rules have ever been more impenetrable than they are now, after many rounds of "simplification." In the IT world, this is referred to as "spaghetti code"--it's been fixed and modified and patched so many times that it can't be simplified. You really should start over...beginning with a real-world definition of mission, vision and objectives for competition in this country. It's a lot more complex than just American pilots winning the World Championships. Another issue is the scoring software. Winscore works pretty well once you learn how to use it but changing the rules/scoring formulas triggers requirements to change the code, and that introduces new opportunities for bugs, which may not be discovered until well after a contest is concluded. Finally, I'm against the "carry whatever electronics you want" philosophy. Every technical advance ought to be considered individually with careful thought as to the impact on cost and what it is we're trying to measure.

Rules-Simplification: I am all in favor of this - especially at the Reigonal Level and for Sports Class. The rules themselves are not insanely complicated; but I think it would be good to clean them up a bit and make them more-approachable; especially for novices and for "casual" events like Regionals. However, if the simplification applies to all classes and National-level contests, I think the level of simplification needs to be carefully thought through.

SIMPLIFYING RULES... I'm all for simplifying the rules however there MUST be agreement on draft proposals before anything moves forward - the question in the survey was poorly worded and leaves the door open to personal agendas being exercised in the process. After all , complex as the rules are, they were all polished and nuanced based on pilot feedback and numerous survey votes. It would be good to get some idea of WHICH rules are being thrown out or MODIFIED. I would DEFINITELY READ, COMMENT and VOTE on any new rules set proposal. STANDARD CLASS HANDICAPS - Limited range handicapping works well for LS4 through Discus and LS8/D2/ASW28. Since none have flaps, the polars of these gliders do not diverge massively at higher MacCready and so for the time being, the DRY handicaps are still within 1% or so of SSA figures at higher lift strengths. Rebuilding Standard Class popularity and competitiveness is more important than punting Standard Class into Club class just because its the

easy way out. Some handicap modification factor (max wing loading driven) should be evaluated and applied for BALLASTED Standard Class contests. I think it is very important to keep STANDARD class going as it represents a sweet spot in terms of performance and cost (accessibility) especially when handicapped and of course we still need decent sized and highly competitive Standard class contests to select for WGC's. Standard is VERY competitive and popular at the World level. CLUB CLASS - we should revisit the decisions to allow higher performance flapped gliders (Ventus1, LS6), in club class. Studies and experience show that these gliders enjoy significant advantages over and above simple MacCready handicapping over reference gliders (Cirrus, Libelle, etc) due to longer final glides (proportion of task flown above MacCready), longer inter-thermal reach, significant advantage in strong conditions etc and this changes the effective handicap significantly. Handicapping only works WELL for limited ranges and similar generations/configurations of gliders. NATIONAL CONTEST DURATION - Significantly shortening the contest duration is not the best way forward - In fact I think you're missing the major point - its not the duration of the CONTEST its the duration of the DRIVE that prevents people attending - Keep the contests the same (or max out at 9 days) but work at finding and setting more centralized contest sites that reduces the overall average drive for contestants. TIME is only really a factor for NON-RETIRED contestants of which (unfortunately) there are fewer every year.

Scoring of minimum distance on tasks should be reviewed based on the participation of motor gliders. In the 2015 Sports Class contest, the first day was not official because one motor glider started his engine 0.2 of a mile before minimum distance was achieved. This glider could have flown another mile or so before landing due to the altitude of the engine start. However, due to the rules, this was a "no contest" day. Maybe give the CD some latitude on the distance minimum when it involves a motor glider.

Short Nationals - In the past I have found: That the Practice Day is not for the pilots, it is for the sponsors to get their act together. That the Rest Day is not for the pilots, it is for the contest workers. Making a short Nats could be in conflict with both of the above.

Task changes should be severely limited after fleet launch. If conditions are changing so dynamically that tasks need to be changed after fleet launch you must assume the conditions can again change in the time it took to launch the fleet.

Thank you Rules Committee members for all your time and hard work.

Thanks for all you do for the rest of us.

The US Team would benefit from using the FAI scoring at the Nationals. The compromise rules at the PanAmerican contest were only a modest training benefit. It appears that unlimited starts are the FAI norm and straight-in finishes are used by competitors about 90% of the time. Flying around and under airspace is second nature in Europe but something that we get very little practice at here in the US. The flapless Worlds can expect Area tasks only on iffy weather days - we do not practice long, finishing within 30 minutes of the day's soaring end, assigned tasks so much anymore. This is how the European Open Class #2 finishes - last 4km on the deck: <https://www.facebook.com/ecc.czeladz/videos/863749863719974/>

The US tasking guidance should be the same as the IGC in terms of assigned (or non-timed) tasks (50%) vs. timed distance tasks (HAT's, MAT's, TAT, etc). We are currently running about 5% assigned (non-timed) vs. 95% times (or OLC).

The only reason I occasionally fly regional competitions is to fly with friends with a common task and course framework in setting I may like. I am more of an XC pilot and more into optimizing tasks for specific weather; optimizing the meteorology to do exceptional, often unusual, flights. Since there are already many rules in aviation and bureaucracies abound, rule complexities are a deterrent in themselves. Of equal significance is the truncation of the soaring window which often reduces the overall potential for optimizing given meteorological conditions (as compared to XC strategies). The slice of time-pie is only so big. I would have additional, quite different, competition strategies targeting meteorological optimization. Current strategies seem to suffer too much compromise in that area.

There is a problem with the SSA contest business model. the business model usually dictates the real life result, both good and bad. Currently to be a competition pilot you must be retired or young enough to be out of University but not yet married with a job. I do not think a person who is competitive by nature - would look At Soaring as a good fit to put their competitive energy into because at best American's only get 2 or 3 weeks off a year. SO psychologically you can become a OLC pilot or Badge pilot - but it is impossible to commit yourself to being a competition pilot. We have National (10 days) - Regionals (7 days) - But we need an Official 3 or 4 day event that normal working people can attend. We split Region 2 at Wurtsburo to 2 weekends and that allowed 5 additional entries. Which was a 30% increase. As it is now - the feeder system for comp pilots if the group of 50+ year old's that are getting close to retirement. We need to change the model if we want to change the age of the pilot population.

There should be a difference between what constitutes a legitimate contest for the purposes of declaring a National Champion vs. seeding, including for the US Team. If we fly only one day, we should declare a Champion (and issue the medallions), but we should require at least 4 for seeding (not the current 3), and for the US Team seeding. If you "simplify" the rules, you could still have a "CD package" that includes an expanded version of rules which would include the official interpretation of the various simplified rules. A rule that allows for the CD to assess penalties based on "unsportsmanlike conduct" encompasses a broad range of topics, but in the "CD package" it would have many of those spelled out. Basically move many rules from the "rules package" to the "CD package". Why do we need to change the scoring? Are the "wrong" people winning?

There should be a handicap difference for ballast or no-ballast in the Combined FAI class contests. At this time there is no penalty for ballasted ships.

Use of electronic devices such as, for example, displaying meteorological data in the cockpit. I'm generally in favor of it... but, recognize the "distraction" factor that effects safety, and the cost. Perhaps it should be allowed only in Open Class to start ... or perhaps only in two place ships. My decision leans toward allowing anything in the cockpit for all. I'd like to discuss this with others while attending the Greenville SSA convention. I will be giving a talk on new sources for meteorological data in soaring... and will comment on how this may effect rule changes.

Way too many clueless rookies at Perry this year. I'm all for rookies, but a 65 glider contest isn't a good place for rookie mistakes.

While not directly related to rules, I think we have to look at contest formats and participation again more carefully. In particular, I think a good benchmark would be to look at people who participate in the OLC scoring some minimum number of points vs. people who participated in SSA Sanctioned contests. The "delta" in those groups is really who we should be surveying. It wouldn't be terribly hard to download a print-format report from the OLC (they seem to be completely uncooperative with data, but maybe the SSA could put some pressure on them). Do a name compare with a little human correction, and we could pretty easily identify a mailing list of people we want to contact. Using survey-monkey or equivalent, we could then get input from this group. I'd be willing to help with this. P3

Why not introduce OLC type contest where the pilot will be tested on his flying and decision making skills. Also, the chance of

dangerous gaggles in thermals will be considerably reduced since pilots will basically be on their own.

Would want to hear about each specific rules simplification proposal. Many old rules could be simplified, with a eye toward making them more like igc rules. [not identical but should move closer to igc.] Breaking a tie on undertime TAT tasks still needs some resolution, current solution seems fine. I do not want to see unlimited technology allowed in the cockpit, having a second person, subscriptions to satellite communications, large budgets and 6 screens in a cockpit will win instead of skill. The unlimited technology would give a barrier to entry deterring new pilots from participating in competitions. It also gets away from the sport of the event and just becomes a programming challenge.

Wurtsboro split-weekend regional is an excellent contest format for a local regional contest and I encourage other regionals to consider this as well.

for REGIONAL Contests, Motor gliders need their own class OR pure gliders should be allowed to water ballast up to equalize wing loadings. Typically 5 gallons of water/side should be about right. The Fairness/unfairness argument is bogus as when conditions are weak, the day is usually cancelled or if not, the pure glider lands out after dumping the ballast and the motor glider motors home.

### Responses for each text type.

Value responses:	0
Short responses:	0
Medium responses:	0
Long responses:	187

Return to the [2015 SSA Pilot Opinion Poll survey form](#) to check your input.

Return to main [survey page](#).

If you have problems or questions contact the [survey administrator](#).