

DRAFT RULE TEXT

version final – 29 Dec 2016

This document contains draft text of changes recommended by the SSA Rules Committee as the result of discussions at the annual Rules Committee meeting held in November 2016.

Recommended new wording is shown in blue. In some cases, current wording is shown in red.

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- Both Regional FAI and Sports

When this notation is absent, N is the default.

When a paragraph number is followed by a minus sign (“-“), that number is replaced by a bullet (“•”) in published versions of the rules. This is used to denote one item in a list of similar items.

New Rules Committee election procedure

The SSA Competition Rules Committee (usually referred to simply as the Rules Committee) is a five-member sub-committee of the SSA Contest Committee. The chair of the Contest Committee is appointed by the SSA Board of Directors and serves as one member of this committee; the other four members are chosen by pilots on the SSA Pilot Ranking List in annual elections.

Each elected position carries a 4-year term. At least one elected position is open each year. If an elected position becomes vacant prior to the end of its 4-year term (e.g. due to a resignation) the Contest Committee Chair may appoint an interim Rules Committee member – but that position will be filled (for any remaining balance of its 4-year term) at the next annual election.

Any current SSA member who is a US citizen or permanently resident alien is eligible for nomination. Nominations come from SSA Directors, and are submitted to the SSA Office.

The nomination deadline is set by the Contest Committee Chair, in time to allow the election to be conducted online in conjunction with the annual pilot opinion poll. A call for nominations is sent to all SSA Directors and all pilots on the SSA Pilot Ranking List at least three weeks prior to the nomination deadline.

Nominees are encouraged to submit a short description of their soaring background and rules-related ideas, to be included with the electronic ballot that will be seen by all voters.

Voting is conducted and open positions are filled in accordance with Article 12 (Voting) of the SSA Bylaws.

Existing election procedures, which date from 2003, are outmoded, not in full conformance with SSA bylaws, and have not been closely followed for some time. This proposed new procedure is simpler.

Rules changes recommended for 2017

Sanction fees waived for those who serve as CD

3.1.3 Competition Director

3.1.3.1 The Competition Director (hereinafter referred to as the CD) shall be an experienced competition official nominated by the sponsor at least 60 days before the contest and approved by the SSA Contest Committee. The CD works for the Contest Manager, and is responsible to the SSA for ensuring compliance with these rules and fair competition.

3.1.3.2 The CD supervises the Contest Competition Committee, task selection, flight documentation procedures and analysis, start and finish procedures and scoring.

3.1.3.3 The CD must not be an entrant in any competition over which that CD has authority.

3.1.3.4 Pilots who serve as Competition Director are exempt from the requirement to pay a Sanction Fee for SSA-Sanctioned competitions they enter whose first competition day falls within a one-year period that starts on the last scheduled day of competition.

3.1.3.5 Pilots who serve as Competition Director are eligible for enhanced entry priority at upcoming SSA-sanctioned competitions, under the following provisions:

3.1.3.5.1 To be eligible, a pilot must serve as CD for an entire competition, and be listed on the SSA Pilot Ranking List.

3.1.3.5.2 The period of eligibility is from the end of the contest at which the pilot served as CD to the end of the next calendar year.

3.1.3.5.1 At one competition of the pilot's choice, the pilot's Ranking Score (Rule 5.3.1) shall be treated as 100.

3.1.3.5.4 To claim enhanced entry priority, an eligible pilot must notify the contest to which entry is sought and the SSA Competition Committee.

5.3.1.4 A pilot who qualifies under the provisions of rule 3.1.3.5 has a pilot ranking score of 100.

5.4.2.5.3 No Sanction Fee is owed by an entrant who qualifies under Rule 3.1.3.4, and who makes this known to contest organizers during registration. The Sanction Fee is deducted from the entry fee. In case of questions as to qualification, organizers should consult with the SSA Contest Committee.

This addition is seen as a small token recognition of the sacrifice made by pilots who serve as CDs.

Contest fees

5.4.2.1 Entry fees

5.4.2.1.1 The maximum fixed entry fee shall be:

- For a scheduled 10-day contest, \$685 per entry.
- For a scheduled 9-day contest, \$645 per entry.

5.4.2.1.2 The maximum variable entry fee shall be \$300 per entry plus \$55 per aerotow.

5.4.2.1.3 The entry fee may be set as a base amount of up to the maximum variable entry fee plus a specified number of nonrefundable aerotows, at \$55 each.

5.4.2.1.4 These amounts may be increased to cover pre-existing local per-pilot fees that apply to all pilots (not solely pilots entered in a competition) who fly at the contest site, up to a maximum of \$25. Organizers must fully explain such local fees on the Application for Sanction form.

5.4.3 When a fixed entry fee has been announced, it includes a number of aerotows equal to the number of scheduled competition days, for use during the period of the contest. But aerotows taken after the start of competition for practice purposes are not covered under this rule.

[N]5.4.2.1 Entry fees

5.4.2.1.1 Entry fees are structured as a fixed base fee plus an amount per aerotow. Unless otherwise approved, the maximum amounts shall be a base fee of \$300 and a cost per aerotow of \$55.

5.4.2.1.2 Organizers may require non-refundable pre-payment for a specified number of aerotows, the maximum of which shall be 4 fewer than the number of scheduled competition days.

5.4.2.1.3 The base fee may be increased to cover pre-existing local per-pilot fees that apply to all pilots (not solely pilots entered in a competition) who fly at the contest site, up to a maximum of \$25. Organizers must fully explain such local fees on the Sanction Application form.

5.4.2.1.4 Organizers who face local circumstances that increase costs are encouraged to apply (on the Sanction Application Form) for a waiver that requests increased fees.

5.4.3 The pre-paid aerotows of Rule 5.4.2.1.2 may be taken at any time during the period of the contest (Rule 4.0); aerotows taken after the start of competition for practice purposes are not included.

[RX]5.4.2.1.1 Entry fees are structured as a fixed base fee plus an amount per aerotow. Unless otherwise approved, the maximum amounts shall be a base fee of \$200 and a cost per aerotow of \$55.

[RX]5.4.2.1.2 Organizers may require non-refundable pre-payment for a specified number of aerotows, the maximum of which shall be 3 fewer than the number of scheduled competition days.

This simpler fee structure allows the same options as previously, in that a contest can require non-refundable tow pre-payment. Additionally, it specifies the maximum number of tows the organizer can ask to be pre paid and not refundable. Rule 5.4.2.1.4 encourages organizers to request higher fees when this is called for.

Guest pilots

5.8 Guests

5.8.1 In addition to foreign pilots (Rule 5.2.5) organizers may, at their discretion, accommodate other pilots who wish to fly as guests.

5.8.2 Guest pilots must meet all the provisions of Rule 5.0, including the specific requirements of Rule 5.5.

5.8 Guests

5.8.1 Organizers may, at their discretion, accommodate pilots who wish to fly as guests.

5.8.2 Guest pilots must meet all the provisions of Rule 5.0, including the specific requirements of Rule 5.5. But organizers may announce (prior to the Preferential Entry Deadline) that the provisions of Rule 5.5.3.1.3 are relaxed for guest pilots, and declare what restrictions apply to the sailplanes that guest entrants may fly.

The change to 5.8.1 removes an obsolete reference, dating to the time when foreign pilots were required to be guests in National contests.

The change to 5.8.2 allows organizers to accept guest pilots with gliders that do not meet all requirements of a class. This would, for example, allow organizers of an 18-Meter contest to accept guest entrants flying 20-Meter gliders.

Remove bugwiper restriction

N6.6.2 An external cleaning device is any device with moving parts designed to clean the exterior of the sailplane during flight, such as bugwipers. The use of such devices is allowed in all classes Rule 6.12.

R6.6.2 An external cleaning device is any device with moving parts designed to clean the exterior of the sailplane during flight, such as bugwipers. The use of such devices is prohibited in all classes as described by Rule 6.12. Such devices need not be removed from the sailplane if they are disabled to the CD's satisfaction.

6.6.2 [delete]

Bugwipers are rarely used – or useful – at US contest sites. They were formerly prohibited in World Class (no longer a defined class) and Club Class. The Rules Committee sees no compelling reason to ban them in any class.

Data reception

6.6.3 Carrying any two-way communication device is prohibited, with the following exceptions, each of which must be a standard, commercially available model.

6.6.3.1 An aircraft-band radio (Rule 6.5.3)

6.6.3.2 An aircraft transponder

6.6.3.3 A wireless telephone (not to be used for in-flight two-way communications)

6.6.3.4 A position tracker (Rule 6.5.2.1.2)

6.6.3.5 An anti-collision device.

6.6.4 Other than an aircraft-band VHF radio, any device that allows in-flight access to weather data is prohibited.

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6.6.3.3 A wireless telephone (not to be used for in-flight two-way communications)

6.6.3.4 A position tracker (Rule 6.5.2.1.2)

6.6.3.5 An anti-collision device

6.6.3.6 A device that receives weather data

6.6.4 Reception of aircraft tracking data from any ground source is prohibited.

Restrictions on in-flight reception of weather data are removed. But note that Rule 10.7.2.8 prohibits individualized ground-to-pilot communications, which would include 'private' weather information not available to all pilots.

Reception of tracking data from the ground is prohibited (reception of Flarm data from other gliders is allowed).

Awards

[N] 7.1 Awards will be made to regular entrants credited with the following achievements:

- Highest final score in the U.S. National Open Class Championships - The Richard C. duPont Memorial Trophy with medallion and endowment check.
- Highest final score in the U.S. National 18-Meter Class Championships - The Charlie Spratt 18-Meter Class Trophy.
- Highest final score in the U.S. National 15-Meter Class Championships - The 15-Meter Trophy.
- Highest final score in the U.S. National Standard Class Championships - The Standard Class Trophy.
- Best speed on any task in the U.S. National Open Class Championships - The Larissa Stroukoff Memorial Trophy.
- Best speed on any task in the U.S. National 15-Meter Class Championships - The Joe Giltner Trophy.
- Best speed on any task in the U.S. Standard Class Championships - The Jon Kubly Trophy

[S] 7.1 Awards will be made to regular Sport Class entrants credited with the following achievements:

- Highest final score - The Lattimore Trophy.
- Highest final score by a junior entrant - Bronze Medallion
- Best sportsmanship (as determined by the Contest Competition Committee) - The Ed Finegan Trophy

[N] 7.1 Awards will be made to the US pilots who are regular entrants and achieve the best results in the following categories:

7.1.1 Final score:

-7.1.1.1 in the U.S. National Open Class Championships - The Richard C. duPont Memorial Trophy with medallion and endowment check

-7.1.1.2 in the U.S. National 18-Meter Class Championships - The Charlie Spratt 18-Meter Class Trophy

-7.1.1.3 in the U.S. National 15-Meter Class Championships - The 15-Meter Trophy

-7.1.1.4 in the U.S. National Standard Class Championships - The Standard Class Trophy

7.1.2 Scored speed on any task:

-7.1.2.1 in the U.S. National Open Class Championships - The Larissa Stroukoff Memorial Trophy

-7.1.2.2 in the U.S. National 15-Meter Class Championships - The Joe Giltner Trophy

-7.1.1.3 in the U.S. Standard Class Championships - The Jon Kubly Trophy

[S] 7.1 Awards will be made to the US pilots who are regular entrants and achieve the best results in the following categories:

-7.1.1 Final score - The Lattimore Trophy.

-7.1.2 Final score by a junior entrant - Bronze Medallion

-7.1.3 Sportsmanship (as determined by the Contest Competition Committee) - The Ed Finegan Trophy

These changes comply with a directive from the SSA Board of Directors.

Awards simplification

7.3 An award may be presented to the pilot having the highest final class score in a U.S. designed and built sailplane provided this score is at least 60% of the highest final class score.

7.6 Awards may be made for the highest scores on each contest day.

7.7 Commemorative awards are encouraged for all entrants.

7.3 [delete]

7.6 [delete]

7.7 [delete]

These paragraphs aren't needed. Contest organizers are free to present additional awards as they see fit, without suggestions to that effect in the Rules.

Remove multi-point start option

10.8.3 Single-point start

10.8.3.1 Each task shall include a Start Point and a Start Radius which shall be an integral number of miles not less than 5 nor greater than 20.

10.8.3.2 The Start Point and Start Radius should be chosen so that pilots are likely to be able to find lift prior to starting and to return to the home field if they fail to do so.

10.8.4 Multiple-point start

10.8.4.1 Up to four start groups containing 2 to 4 start points each shall be declared; each start group shall contain the same number of points. The start groups shall be labeled with sequential letters, and the points within a start group with sequential numbers starting at 1. Start point names thus consist of a letter followed by a number.

10.8.4.2 Each start point is the center of a start cylinder, whose radius is an integral number of miles not greater than five, as designated by the CD. Cylinder perimeters shall be no closer than 1 mile.

10.8.4.3 For each task, each pilot is assigned a start number not larger than the number of points in a start group; the total of pilots assigned each number shall be approximately equal. A pilot may elect to start within any start group, but must start from a point whose number matches the assigned number. (Thus with three groups, a pilot assigned number 2 may start from A2, B2, or C2.)

10.8.4.4 If there was a pilot option, the chosen start point must be claimed on the Task Claim Form. If a pilot claims a start from a point that was not assigned, a penalty applies (Rule 12.1.4.2).

10.8.3 Start geometry

10.8.3.1 Each task shall include a Start Point and a Start Radius which shall be 5 miles.

10.8.3.2 The Start Point should be chosen so that pilots are likely to be able to find lift prior to starting and to return to the home field if they fail to do so.

The multi-point start has rarely been used and is not needed. Removing it simplifies start rules.

10.8.3.1 is revised to eliminate the variable start radius that has not been used in actual practice.

Turn-Area Task 85% distance rule

11.3 Scoring Nomenclature

MAXTATDIST - maximum Turn-Area Task distance (Rule 11.6.5.2) - applies to a finisher of a TAT whose TOC is less than MINTIME

UTF - Undertime Factor (Rule 11.6.5) - applies to a finisher of a MAT or TAT whose TOC is less than MINTIME

11.6.5 Undertime factor:

11.6.5.1 For a Modified Assigned Task: $UTF = 0.1$

11.6.5.2 For a Turn-area task:

MAXTATDIST = maximum possible distance, computed from the center of the start cylinder, less the start radius

$UTF = 0.1 + 6 * ((DIST / MAXTATDIST) - 0.85)$ (but not less than 0.1, nor greater than 1.0)

11.6.6 Scored Time on Course:

For finishers whose TOC is not less than MINTIME: $STOC = TOC$

For finishers whose TOC is less than MINTIME: $STOC = MINTIME - (MINTIME - TOC) * UTF$

11.3 Scoring Nomenclature

[delete MAXTATDIST and UTF]

11.6.5 [delete]

11.6.6 Scored Time on Course:

For finishers whose TOC is not less than MINTIME: $STOC = TOC$

For finishers whose TOC is less than MINTIME: $STOC = MINTIME - (MINTIME - TOC) / 10$

This change removes the provision that a pilot who achieves more than 85% of the maximum possible distance on a Turn-Area Task in less than the assigned minimum time receives more credit for his actual speed. This is regarded as an unnecessary complication principally aimed at compensating for a questionable task call – so the issue is better dealt with by better task-setting advice and guidelines.

Handicapping & scoring generalization

6.12 Sailplane Classes

6.12.1 Open Class

6.12.1.1 No nominal wingspan applies - an Open-class sailplane may change span at any time.

6.12.1.2 No size or configuration restrictions apply - an Open-class sailplane may change configuration at any time.

6.12.1.2 This is an unhandicapped class (Rule 11.4.1.1).

6.12.2 Multiseat Class

6.12.2.1 Nominal wingspan is 20.0 meters.

6.12.2.2 Sailplanes must accommodate at least two adults, and at least two seats must be occupied during each contest flight.

6.12.2.3 No-ballast rules shall apply (Rule 6.8.3).

6.12.2.4 Sailplanes are assigned a handicap from the SSA Handicap List; the maximum handicap shall be 1.20.

6.12.2.5 This class is used in Regional but not in National contests.

6.12.3 18-Meter Class

6.12.3.1 Nominal wingspan is 18.0 meters.

6.12.3.2 This is an unhandicapped class (Rule 11.4.1.1).

6.12.4 15-Meter Class

6.12.4.1 Nominal wingspan is 15.0 meters.

6.12.4.2 This is an unhandicapped class (Rule 11.4.1.1).

6.12.5 Standard Class

6.12.5.1 Nominal wingspan is 15.0 meters.

6.12.5.2 Any method of changing the wing profile other than the normal use of ailerons is prohibited. Lift-increasing devices are prohibited, even if unusable.

6.12.5.3 The sailplane must be fitted with airbrakes which cannot be used to increase performance. Drag parachutes are prohibited.

6.12.5.4 Pilots of non-production Standard Class sailplanes must obtain a letter of approval from the SSA Contest Committee before entry can be accepted.

6.12.5.5 Sailplanes are assigned a handicap from the SSA Standard Class Handicap List; the maximum handicap shall be 0.95. Handicaps are not adjusted for weight or configuration changes.

6.12.6 Sport class

6.12.6.1 No-ballast rules shall apply (Rule 6.8.3).

6.12.6.2 Sailplanes are assigned a handicap from the SSA Handicap List. Contest organizers may restrict entries to a specified handicap range.

6.12.7 Club class

6.12.7.1 Nominal wingspan is 15.0 meters.

6.12.7.2 No-ballast rules shall apply (Rule 6.8.3).

6.12.7.3 Sailplanes are assigned a handicap from the SSA Handicap List. Eligibility is limited to a handicap range of 0.898 to 1.02.

6.12.8 FAI handicapped class

6.12.8.1 Sailplanes are assigned a handicap from the SSA Handicap List. Contest organizers may restrict entries to a specified handicap range; sailplanes with a handicap greater than the specified maximum may compete by accepting the maximum handicap.

6.12.8.2 This class is used in Regional but not in National contests.

10.3.1.1 Task Parameters

10.3.1.1.1 Standard Minimum Task Distance

10.3.1.1.1.1 For National contests, 60 miles for classes listed as unhandicapped in Rule 6.12; 50 miles for other classes.

10.3.1.1.1.2 For Regional contests, 50 miles for classes listed as unhandicapped in Rule 6.12; 40 miles for other classes.

10.3.1.1.2 Standard Minimum Task Time

10.3.1.1.2.1 For National contests, 3.0 hours

10.3.1.1.2.2 For Regional contests, 2.0 hours.

10.3.1.1.3 Standard Task Time

10.3.1.1.3.1 For National contests, 4.0 hours

10.3.1.1.3.2 For Regional contests, 2.5 hours.

10.3.1.1.4 Minimum length of first leg: 5 miles

10.3.1.1.5 Minimum length of subsequent task legs: 2 miles

10.3.1.1.6 Maximum number of task turnpoints: 11

10.3.1.4 Minimum Task - The minimum handicapped distance of a task for which a finish will be awarded is the Standard Minimum Task Distance (SMTD), as specified in 10.3.1.1.1:

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 when the ratio of largest to smallest handicap within a class is less than 1.15. In Regional competition, the CD should use this task only when the range of pilot skill within a class is appropriately narrow.

11.1.3 A valid competition day is a day on which every regular entrant is given a fair opportunity to compete, and at least 25% of Contestants achieve a Handicapped Distance not less than the Standard Minimum Task Distance (Rule 10.3.1.1.1).

11 Scoring

[To smoothly accommodate contests that from now are all at least nominally handicapped, use the existing Sport National scoring rules.]

11.2.3.5 Scored Distance is zero if:

- The pilot has no valid start time (Rule 10.8).
- The pilot lands at the home field (or the pilot of a motorized sailplane used the power unit after starting and before landing) and Handicapped Distance (Rule 11.4.3) is less than half the Standard Minimum Task Distance (Rule 10.3.1.1.1).

11.4.1 Handicap Factor

11.4.1.1 For an unhandicapped competition class, each sailplane is assigned a Handicap Factor (HCP) of 1.0, which is not modified for weight, sailplane configuration, or other reasons.

11.4.1.2 For a handicapped competition class, each sailplane is assigned a Handicap Factor from the SSA Handicap List. An entrant planning to fly a sailplane not listed must obtain a Handicap Factor by contacting the SSA Contest Committee at least 30 days prior to the scheduled competition.

11.4.1.3 When a minimum handicap has been specified, sailplanes with a lower handicap in the SSA Handicap list are ineligible, nor may any sailplane compete with an adjusted handicap (Rule 11.4.1.5) lower than the minimum.

11.4.1.4 When a maximum handicap has been specified, this is the maximum that will be assigned to any sailplane. Sailplanes with a handicap greater than the maximum are eligible, but they are assigned the maximum handicap.

11.4.1.5 Unless otherwise specified in Rule 6.12, sailplanes that compete in a configuration different from that on which the listed handicap was based receive handicap adjustments, as follows:

Rules – in particular, those relating to score calculation – become simpler when all gliders are assigned a handicap (for unhandicapped classes, a handicap of 1.0 is used for all entries). These changes allow a single set of scoring rules to apply to all contests.

Status of pilots with withdrawn flight documentation

11.2.2.8 Procedures for airspace clearance violations

11.2.2.8.1 If it is determined that a flight includes a serious airspace clearance violation, the Scorer shall give the affected pilot the opportunity to withdraw the flight log for that flight. This withdrawal shall be treated as a failure to submit flight documentation.

11.2.2.8.2 Notwithstanding the withdrawal of flight documentation, the pilot's daily status as a Competitor and a Finisher shall be determined and used in calculating daily scores for other entrants.

11.2.2.8.3 A withdrawn flight log is not published, and no copy is retained by the Scorer.

11.2.2.8.4 A pilot with more than one contest flight that includes either a serious airspace violation or a failure to submit flight documentation is disqualified from the competition.

11.2.2.8.2 [delete]

The provision to regard a pilot who has withdrawn flight documentation as a Competitor and Finisher introduces the possibility of significant scoring complications. It is simpler to treat such a pilot as not having flown at all.

Waiver for handicapped FAI class that allows waterballast

Organizer of Regional contests may announce that a handicapped FAI class will be allowed to use disposable ballast, under the following rules:

- Each glider is assigned a handicap from the SSA Handicap List; motorized gliders are assigned the handicap of the equivalent non-motorized glider, provided the list includes such an entry. Handicaps are not adjusted for changes in weight.
- Pilots may carry waterballast subject to the provisions of Rule 6.8.
- Organizers may announce a maximum takeoff weight limit, or a maximum wingloading limit.
- The class and the detailed rules that will apply to it shall be announced no later than the Preferential Entry Deadline.

This would allow interested Regional contests to include a handicapped FAI class that allows water ballast. A motor glider and the equivalent non-motorized glider flying at the same weight would have the same handicap.

Changes contemplated for 2018

20-Meter National class

6.12.2 Multiseat Class

6.12.2.1 Nominal wingspan is 20.0 meters.

6.12.2.2 Sailplanes must accommodate at least two adults, and at least two seats must be occupied during each contest flight.

6.12.2.3 No-ballast rules shall apply (Rule 6.8.3).

6.12.2.4 Sailplanes are assigned a handicap from the SSA Handicap List; the maximum handicap shall be 1.20.

6.12.2.5 This class is used in Regional but not in National contests.

6.12.2 20-Meter Multiseat Class

6.12.2.1 Nominal wingspan is 20.0 meters.

6.12.2.2 Sailplanes must accommodate at least two adults, and at least two seats must be occupied during each contest flight.

6.12.2.3 Handicapping based on relative performance will apply.

6.12.2.4 For National contests, the maximum handicap shall be 0.905.

6.12.2.5 For Regional contests, organizers may specify that no-ballast rules will apply, and a maximum handicap up to 1.20.

This is contemplated as National class for 2018 and beyond. It's proposed as a handicapped class, with a limited range of handicaps – the same way this class is treated at all FAI competitions with the exception of World Gliding Championships (the only competition at which the class is not handicapped).

Setting the maximum handicap limit at 0.905 would cover gliders whose performance is equal to or better than the Schempp-Hirth Janus. A decision for official adoption of this class – and its maximum handicap - will be made at the 2017 RC meeting, and will depend on pilot feedback and the likelihood of a National contest achieving at least 12 entries.

Updates to Rules Appendix A

A10.3.1.2 Task-calling considerations for the CD.

Calling an entirely new task while pilots are in the air tends to produce confusion and compromise safety (pilots are distracted while programming the new task). CDs should strive to avoid the need for this. It's good practice always to include several tasks on the daily task sheet, so any task change simply consists of announcing the ID of the new task (which pilots have already programmed). These pre-announced tasks should fully cover the possible range of soaring conditions.

A10.3.2.1 Assigned Task

This task is appropriate when sailplane performance, pilot skill and weather uncertainty are all within a range that the CD feels is acceptably small. When they are not, the result can be an overcall (only the fast pilots get home) or an undercall (fast pilots are home with plenty of soarable conditions still left in the day).

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 will be able to cover in the time available.

A10.3.2.2 Modified Assigned Task

The MAT is well suited to contests in which pilot ability varies considerably, and to days where the weather may be significantly better or worse than the forecast. Because it is time-limited, it "scales itself" to the actual conditions of the day, and to the abilities of individual pilots. Pilots can react to weather issues found on course by selecting turnpoints that give the best conditions (and which steer clear of problem weather). Because a pilot is allowed to finish after any turnpoint, it tends to produce a lower rate of outlandings in difficult conditions.

The CD has many options here: He can assign few or no turnpoints, leaving the course decisions to the pilots. (Note that when no points are assigned, the CD can restrict the choice of the first turnpoint, for example to send the pilots into the same general area without specifying just one point.) He can assign a few points that will send pilots to a limited part of the task area.

A "long MAT" is the common term for a MAT that includes lots of assigned turnpoints – spanning enough distance to consume much or all of the MINTIME (and possibly more points than any pilot will be able to reach). This makes for something similar to an Assigned Task, with the added feature that slow pilots can choose to return home for a finish after reaching any assigned point – an attractive option.

But the "long MAT" can be tricky. Here are a couple of problems that occasionally affect fast pilots who reach a late turnpoint well under MINTIME:

- They find that attempting the next point in the assigned sequence would add enough extra distance that there's a risk of not being able to complete the task.
- They discover that the next point in the assigned sequence requires flying into soaring conditions that are obviously worse than those encountered to that point.

In each of these cases fast pilots face a difficult choice: head home for a finish under MINTIME (which would waste their good speed achieved to that point) or try for the next assigned point (which may incur a substantial risk of getting slow or outlanding). Meanwhile, slower pilots who reach that late turnpoint have an easy decision: they head directly home for a finish that will not be under MINTIME– they have no reason to attempt the treacherous next turnpoint, and may

well score better than some or all of the faster pilots. A task that tends to punish fast pilots and reward slower ones is clearly not a good choice.

The right way to deal with these challenges is as follows:

- Unless there's good confidence that end-of-the-day conditions at all assigned turnpoints will be reliable, limit the distance required to reach all points to about 75% of what fast pilots can be expected to achieve in MINTIME.
- When the distance required to reach all assigned turnpoints is more than this 75%, take care that the late turnpoints are spaced in such a way that the extra distance required to reach each one is acceptably low *and steadily decreases*.

A10.3.2.3 Turn-Area Task

This is also a time-limited task, so, like the MAT, it works on days of unpredictable weather and with a range of pilot skill and sailplane performance. Turn areas do not force pilots to a single point and thus allow fairer and safer flying on days with thunderstorms or other localized weather problems.

It is important to carefully consider the minimum and maximum possible distances. In general, the shortest possible distance should be really short – about how far a pilot would fly in the declared minimum time if he maintained half the winner's estimated speed. The longest possible distance should be unreachable in the minimum time, requiring at least 130% (or more) of the winner's estimated speed. Take care about forecast weather – if bad soaring conditions cause pilots to avoid, say, half of the first turn area, this may mean they have few options in subsequent areas (fast pilots may be forced to the back of each).

A well-designed TAT will generally have a reasonably large (say, 15+ mile radius) final turn area located so that the distance from its closest point to home is about 10 miles. This will allow pilots to "tune" their distances near the end of their flight. If the minimum possible final leg is long, pilots must turn for home without much certainty as to conditions during the final hour of their flight.

A TAT with small turn areas can behave sort of like an Assigned Task with enlarged turnpoints. One option is to assign several small areas and one final larger one. If all areas are small, the MINTIME should be set small enough that even the fastest pilot cannot complete the minimum distance in that time.

A11.1.3 Fair opportunity to compete

The wording "a fair opportunity to compete" provides a means by which a CD can decide to "scrub" an otherwise valid competition day if he feels it was unfair. This is to be done only under the most extraordinary circumstances, and not to deal with the case of unusual or difficult soaring weather (weather is often unfair, but this unfairness is an inherent part of soaring competition). In general, only some sort of "force majeure" that prevents fair competition qualifies. An example might be an emergency that closed the airfield, making it impossible for some pilots to finish.

The wording "a fair opportunity to compete" provides a means by which a CD can decide to "scrub" an otherwise valid competition day – even after it is complete – if he feels it was not fair. A simple case would be any sort of *force majeure* that prevents fair competition, such as an emergency that closed the airfield, making it impossible for some pilots to finish. This sort of thing is quite rare, and typically makes an easy call for the CD.

More difficult are cases where weather is the problem – weather is often unfair, but to a great extent this unfairness is an inherent part of soaring competition. Yet there can be cases where problem weather justifies the cancellation of a day. One example would be a day on which unflyable or unsafe conditions such as frontal passage or thunderstorm development overrun the tow release/start area, limiting the ability of pilots – especially those who are late in the launch sequence – to climb and start. Frequent consultation with airborne task advisors as to fairness and safety of conditions and the status of pilots will greatly help the CD make good decisions in these circumstances.

It should not be a requirement that all pilots must achieve a problem-free start, or that late-to-launch pilots are granted a veto. In some cases the flying that pilots do before the task opens is important to their daily score. But the CD should use all available information, including direct observation, reports from advisors & other selected pilots, and tracking data to make an informed decision about fairness and safety.

When this is in doubt, it's appropriate to postpone the task opening time. Whenever possible, this should be done with at least 10 minutes notice – very short notice can cause problems for pilots who are ready to start.

When doubts about safety and fairness cannot be resolved favorably, it makes sense to cancel the task rather than opening it. This may cause grumbling, especially if conditions later turn favorable – but a CD is fully justified in not proceeding simply in the hope that a task may eventually prove fair and safe. And the decision not to open a task is not grounds for a protest.