

2006 SRA Pilot Opinion Poll Results

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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.		126
1.0	Demographics	All
1.1	What class(es) in National contests did you fly this year?	1-26 - World 2% Sport 20% Standard 8% 15Meter 10% 18Meter 13% Open 5%
1.2	What class(es) in Regional contests did you fly this year?	1-26 - World 1% Sport 21% Standard 13% 15Meter 26% 18Meter 8% Open 1%
1.3	Are you a current or "prospective candidate" for membership on the US Team in the next 2 years?	Yes 17% No 78%
1.4	Have you competed in the Open Class Nationals in the last 3 years or expect to compete in this class within the next 2 years?	Yes 16% No 79%
1.5	Have you competed in the Sports Class Nationals in the last 3 years or expect to compete in this class within the next 2 years?	Yes 57% No 39%
2.0	Emergency Locating Transmitters (ELT): For the last two years, impact activated ELTs have been an optional requirement, at the discretion of contests organizers, where notification of this requirement is made prior to the preferential entry cutoff date.	All
2.1	Do you use a portable (user activated) ELT in your glider?	Yes 18% No 79%
2.2	Do you have a fixed, impact activated ELT in your glider?	Yes 65% No 34%
2.3	Have you participated in a contest where the organizer has required impact activated ELT's for all participants?	Yes 48% No 50%
2.4	Have you elected not to participate in any contest because of a requirement to install an impact activated ELT?	Yes 12% No 86%
3.0	Equipment:	All

	In light of a recent mid-air between a glider and business jet, the Rules Committee would like feedback from pilots regarding the use of collision avoidance equipment in sailplanes. Gliders and aircraft without electrical systems are currently exempted by the FAA from the requirement to carry Mode C transponders. However, a number of glider pilots throughout the country, particularly those flying near high traffic terminal areas, have elected to voluntarily install transponder equipment. The following questions are posed to better understand the experiences of those flying with this equipment, as well as the sentiments of those who are not presently using collision avoidance equipment. Be aware that the Rules Committee is NOT considering any change in rules regarding use of this equipment for competitions.	
3.1	Is your glider PCAS (Portable Collision Avoidance System) equipped?	Yes 4% No 96%
3.2	Is your glider transponder equipped?	Yes 13% No 87%
3.4	If you are currently flying with PCAS or Mode C transponder, please describe your experiences, good or bad, and your opinion of the effectiveness of these systems in gliders.	15%
4.0	Tasking: Modified Assigned Task - Several pilots have suggested that MAT tasks should be eliminated due to excessive luck factor and "heads down" time associated with managing the many variables. Conversely, the MAT is arguably our most "difficult" and rewarding task requiring independent strategic thinking. It can also be an effective tool for getting in a fair task when conditions are uncertain.	All
4.1	Do you believe that flying a typical MAT task requires an excessive amount of "heads down" time managing the increased variables associated with this task?	Yes 25% No 74%
4.2	Do you believe that the results of a MAT task are more affected by luck (good or bad) as compared to a TAT or AAT task?	Yes 37% No 63%
4.3	Should the use of MAT tasks be eliminated due to fairness, safety, or other concerns associated with this task?	Yes 25% No 75%
5.0	TAT Undercalls: There have been several recent actions taken to minimize the occurrence of TAT undercalls. The maximum cylinder size has been increased, and the Rules Appendix recommends a maximum TAT distance equal to approximately 150% of the expected winner's speed.	All
5.1	Should the Rules Committee consider a rule change where a pilot who flies at or very near the maximum available distance, but still comes home undertime, is scored with his Actual Time instead of the Min Time?	Yes 48% No 52%
5.2	If you answered "No" to Item 5.1, Should the Rules Committee consider adding a devaluation factor for undercalled TAT's where one or more pilots fly at or very near the max distance, but still come home undertime?	Yes 29% No 24% N/A 22%
6.0	IGC vs SSA Scoring: There have been frequent suggestions that we should adopt "international scoring" formulas for US Competitions. John Good has written an excellent summary of the major differences between SSA and IGC scoring and how these differences may affect scoring and pilot strategy. John Good's WGC Strategy Document	All
6.1	Speed Points - Under US rules, the total score for a finisher is generally based on the ratio of his speed to the winner's speed. Under WGC rules, the point differences attributable to speed are twice as large as under US rules and... You must do at least two-thirds of the winner's speed to get speed points. This greater volatility tends to cancel out over the period of the contest. However, this same volatility may provide a greater	Yes 61% No 33%

	incentive for pilots who successfully "break away from the pack" possibly encouraging more aggressive strategies. Should the Rules Committee pursue further study or trials associated with adoption of a more volatile speed formula?	
6.2	Landouts – Carefully read John Good's evaluation of treatment for landouts under IGC scoring. Should the Rules Committee pursue further study or trials associated with adoption of a more "lenient" landout penalty, similar to IGC scoring philosophy?	Yes 79% No 17%
6.3	Devaluation Factor - Under IGC scoring, mass-landout days tend to be devalued much less than a similar day under US rules. Should the Rules Committee consider changes to reduce the devaluation factor on mass landout days?	Yes 70% No 25%
7.0	Open Class Weight Limit: The International Gliding Commission (IGC) has modified the rules pertaining to the maximum allowable weight for open class gliders. The Open Class weight limit remains at 750 kg, except that two-seater motor-gliders that exceed 750 kg may be flown at their actual mass but may not carry disposable ballast and may not exceed 850 kg. The current SSA rules currently specify a uniform weight limit of 750 kg for the Open Class. (The following question should be answered only by those pilots who have flown in the Open Class Nationals in the last 3 years, or plan to fly in the Open Class Nationals within the next two years.)	All
7.1	Should the Rules Committee consider modifying Open Class weight limits to provide an exception for 2-seat motor gliders? (This question should be answered only by those pilots who have flown in the Open Class Nationals in the last 3 years, or plan to fly in the Open Class Nationals within the next two years.)	Yes 10% No 10%
		All
	US Team Questions: The US Team Committee has the responsibility and authority to oversee the affairs of the US Soaring Teams with respect to our participation in FAI World Gliding Championships. As such, the US Team Committee would like some feedback from the membership on their efforts to meet their operational objectives. (Refer to the US Team Policies and Procedures document at the US Team Web Site.)	All
		All
8.0	Club Class Pilot Selection: In the Club Class World Championships, pilots must fly in a glider with a (US) handicap approximately between 0.90 and 1.140. The US Club Class selection is currently open to all pilots flying the Sports Class Nationals regardless of handicap. It has been suggested that the criteria for selection of the US Club Class team should be better aligned with the IGC Club Class in order to improve the preparation and competitiveness of the US Club Class Team. This could possibly include limiting the pool of team candidates to those pilots flying gliders with performance levels similar to the "Club Class". For additional information on this topic, click on the following links to the US Team Web Site: Sports Class sailplane requirements in Club Class World Team qualification Club Class Sailplane List	All
8.1	Should the Club Class team selection be limited to pilots flying "Club Class" performance gliders?	Yes 65% No 30%
8.2	If so, what do you think the lower handicap limit should be?	All
	1. 0.88 (similar to an ASW-27) 2. 0.90 (similar to an ASW-20) 3. 0.92 (similar to a Discus) 4. 0.94 (similar to an ASW-24)	1 9% 2 29% 3 13% 4 16% N/A 12%

8.3	If so, what do you think the upper handicap limit should be?	All
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1.14 (similar to an Austria SHK) 2. 1.18 (similar to an ASK-21) 3. 1.22 (similar to a Ka-6E) 4. 1.26 (similar to an L-33 Solo) 	1 29% 2 15% 3 10% 4 14% N/A 10%
9.0	Pilot Selection: Currently, for a particular class we select one pilot two years prior to the WGC; this pilot is required to fly the pre-worlds. Any other pilots for that class are selected the year prior to the WGC. This has the benefit that the team gets some site experience.	All
9.1	Should we continue this, or should we select all pilots in the year prior to the WGC? This would have the benefit of selecting pilots with current performance "at the top of their game"?	Yes 60% No 30%
10.0	Team Fund Allocations: There is a broad range of popularity between the various classes. For example, Sports class (our Club) had 125 contestant (over three years), while the World and Open classes had 33 and 25 contestants, respectively. Currently, all classes attending the same venue receive equal funding (different venues may be funded differently).	All
10.1	Should we consider allocating funds based upon participation levels at national events in the US?	Yes 52% No 43%
11.0	Team Fund Allocations: Funds collected for US Team support are currently allocated to a venue then spread evenly amongst all competing pilots based upon the determined "defined benefit".	All
11.1	Should the method of allocation be changed to take into account the individual needs or means of the participating pilot?	Yes 37% No 60%
12.0	Team Training: One of the "Training Objectives" described in the US Team Policies and Procedures is to encourage the study and practice of team flying. Various forms of team flying have been successfully employed mainly by the larger European Teams. US pilots selected for WGC usually have no "team flying" experience and have difficulty employing this tactic at WGC events.	All
12.1	Should US Team selectees be encouraged to practice team flying techniques at certain US contests in preparation for the WGC?	Yes 70% No 28%
13.0	Training Camps: The US Team has hosted several cross-county training camps at various locations across the US. This is an effort by the US Team Committee to "give back" to the community through transfer of knowledge and experience.	All
13.1	Do you believe that you would personally attend and benefit from such a training camp?	Yes 71% No 24%
14.0	Narrative Comments: Are there any other issues that you would like the SSA Rules Committee, or the US Team Committee to address? Are there any additional issues that you would like to see addressed in future SRA polls? Finally, please make any additional narrative comments to the questions above.	37%

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