

Provides the framework for writing a contest article for Soaring Magazine. Includes tips, suggested editorial content and a good deal more to make your contest report as good as it can be.

Soaring Society of America, P.O. Box 2100, Hobbs, NM 88241-2100.
Tel (575) 392-1177, Fax (575) 392-8154, e-mail <contests@ssa.org> Last Update 11/20/2008.



For National contests, aim for an article of 1500-2000 words; for Regional contests, figure on 600-800 words. A longer article can usually be made more appealing (and more likely to be published) by shortening it.

A bald recital of each day's task and results is strongly discouraged – this information is available to interested pilots on the SSA website, in far more detail than can be provided in a magazine article. The report that appears in *Soaring* magazine should concentrate on the highlights – the things that those at the contest found interesting and out of the ordinary.

For an interesting article, try to include various points of view. What are the top pilots talking about? The new pilots? The crews? Contest officials and workers? Report on the notable flights (this category is certainly not limited to the best-scoring flights – sometimes landouts or slow flights are the most interesting). What gliders/instruments/tasks attracted interest? What made this contest different from others?

In describing a flight, remember that many or most readers will not be familiar your contest site. Avoid the use of place names that only a local would understand. Pitch your article to the interested soaring pilot who is not an experienced competitor.

A few carefully selected photos are always a good idea. They should principally show people – gliders are often better as background than as foreground subjects. An exception is a good aerial photo showing a fairly close glider against an interesting background (such as the home airfield). The catch is that such photos are not often easy to take.

Details

Articles are best when submitted within a week of the end of the contest, but two to three weeks is acceptable. Timely reports that conform to these guidelines are virtually guaranteed to be published. Reader interest declines with time – very late reports (those received by the SSA Office more than 60 days after the end of the contest) have limited appeal and may not be published.

Articles should be submitted to the SSA Office:

P.O. Box 2100, Hobbs, NM 88241
575-392-1177 <magazine@ssa.org>

The SSA uses Microsoft Word, and can generally convert most common electronic formats to Word documents (but it's a good idea to check).

Digital images must be of reasonably high resolution. As a rule of thumb, a resolution of 400 dots per inch is required for good printed appearance. Photos should be cropped as appropriate, and a caption included for each (as separate text, not as part of the image). If credit needs to be given to the photographer, this should be clearly indicated in the photo caption.

Please do not embed images in text. Instead, include them at the end of the text, or in separate files. Within the text, you can make reference to "Fig. x". If separate files of graphic images are included, their names should be listed at the end of the text.

Author's contact information (e-mail address and phone number) should be included at the top of the text. For articles on National competitions, at the end of the text there should be a short (2-3 sentence) biographical sketch of the author and a picture showing the author's face in reasonable detail.