

2008 SRA Pilot Opinion Poll Results

October 10, 2008 3:42 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. | | 160 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.0 | Demographics | All | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 | What class(es) in National contests did you fly this year? | <table> <tr><td>1-26</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>World</td><td>4 3%</td></tr> <tr><td>Sport</td><td>15 9%</td></tr> <tr><td>Standard</td><td>16 10%</td></tr> <tr><td>15Meter</td><td>20 13%</td></tr> <tr><td>18Meter</td><td>15 9%</td></tr> <tr><td>Open</td><td>5 3%</td></tr> <tr><td>Senior</td><td>9 6%</td></tr> <tr><td>None</td><td>68 43%</td></tr> </table> | 1-26 | - | World | 4 3% | Sport | 15 9% | Standard | 16 10% | 15Meter | 20 13% | 18Meter | 15 9% | Open | 5 3% | Senior | 9 6% | None | 68 43% |
| 1-26 | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| World | 4 3% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sport | 15 9% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Standard | 16 10% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15Meter | 20 13% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18Meter | 15 9% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Open | 5 3% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Senior | 9 6% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| None | 68 43% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2 | What class(es) in Regional contests did you fly this year? | <table> <tr><td>Sport</td><td>37 23%</td></tr> <tr><td>Standard</td><td>22 14%</td></tr> <tr><td>15Meter</td><td>44 28%</td></tr> <tr><td>18Meter</td><td>9 6%</td></tr> <tr><td>Open</td><td>- -</td></tr> <tr><td>None</td><td>42 26%</td></tr> </table> | Sport | 37 23% | Standard | 22 14% | 15Meter | 44 28% | 18Meter | 9 6% | Open | - - | None | 42 26% | | | | | | |
| Sport | 37 23% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Standard | 22 14% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15Meter | 44 28% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18Meter | 9 6% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Open | - - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| None | 42 26% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.0 | Club Class team selection | All | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Selection for the US Club Class team at World Gliding Championships is restricted to pilots who have not competed in a previous FAI World Championship. Should this restriction be continued? | <table> <tr><td>Yes</td><td>71 44%</td></tr> <tr><td>No</td><td>81 51%</td></tr> </table> | Yes | 71 44% | No | 81 51% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 71 44% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No | 81 51% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.0 | Club class | All | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Several pilots have suggested that the US introduce a club class for both regional and national competition. Only gliders on the current US team club class selection list could enter a club class contest. (You can see the US team club class list here . The WGC club class list is too unstable and excludes too many gliders in widespread US use.) Like all | All | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

major changes, this would be implemented gradually. We would start with a few demonstration contests by waiver, it would then become available for regionals and super-regionals, then for nationals, and then the US team would use this class for WGC selection. Each step depends on sufficient interest and positive pilot opinion.

Note: This is a big question, with many more pros and cons than we can list here. It is on the poll more to stimulate discussion and encourage pilot feedback than to reach any final decisions.

Pro: We should establish in the US a class that more closely mirrors the club class at WGC contests. A class focused on handicapped racing of older gliders, not trying also to be a newcomer class and accommodate a large handicap range, could have a higher level of competition. With this class, the US could develop a larger base of well-prepared club gliders and top pilots, and we could better prepare our club class pilots to compete at the world level. Though "con" worries about eventual effects on sports class, little harm can come from trying the concept at a regional or super-regional level.

Con: The problem in US contest soaring is too many classes and too little participation. Adding another class, defined by who it excludes, goes the wrong way. Most nationals already have to co-locate two contests to remain viable. At 2008 Sports Nationals, only 11 of the 30 entries qualified for team points, though the glider limitation was in place. A 19-entry sports class and an 11-entry club class are not viable. Most regionals cannot fill both classes. If we kill sports class, many pilots have nowhere to go.

The glider limitation for world team points is already in place. What does excluding the other gliders achieve? Sports class nationals are already a "racing" class, not a "beginner" class. A desire to have more "racing" at a regional level can be accommodated by more aggressive tasking.

A US club class will be a small, mediocre, "specialist" class. Most national-level US contest pilots (72 of 88 entries in 2008 standard, 15, 18) fly recent-vintage ineligible gliders. These pilots will fly sports, and be part of the US club team, but the vast majority are not going to borrow or buy an old glider to fly club class when they have a much better glider sitting in the garage. The sports class has been around a long time, giving just as much incentive to develop a pilot and glider base, but this has not happened in sufficient numbers. Most serious contest pilots move on to better gliders. The world class was founded on a similar "build it and they will come" promise, which did not pan out.

| | | | |
|------------|--|---------------|---------------|
| 3.1 | Should we proceed with the introduction of a club class, as described above? | Yes 47 29% | No 101 63% |
| 3.2 | If a club class is created, would you fly in it? | Yes 53 33% | No 96 60% |
| 3.3 | If the introduction of club class reduces the number of sports class contests, will this affect you negatively? | Yes 82 51% | No 70 44% |
| 3.4 | Do you, or do you know other pilots, who do not now compete, but would start competing if a club class were created? | Yes 26 16% | No 123 77% |
| 4.0 | Open class weight | All | |
| | Please answer this question only if you currently compete in the open class, or plan to | All | |

| | | |
|------------|--|--------------------------------|
| | do so in the future. Current rules limit open gliders competing in the open class to 750 KG. | |
| 4.1 | Should the open class weight limit be raised to 850 kg? Pro: Worlds allow 850. Con: Older and 18m gliders become less competitive potentially reducing participation. It may be harder to find towplanes that can handle 850. | Yes 28 18% No 24 15% |
| 4.2 | Some two-place self-launching sailplanes cannot fly with two people aboard below 750 kg. If the 750 kg limit is maintained, should these entries be allowed to fly in open class up to 850 KG, provided they do not carry fixed or disposable ballast, and are prepared to self-launch if suitable towplanes are not available? (This is allowed in sports class.) (Pro: increase participation. Con: unfair to let anyone fly heavier.) | Yes 36 23% No 18 11% |
| 5.0 | Nationals no-water rules | All |
| 5.1 | The CD may declare a no-ballast day at a FAI Nationals only with the unanimous consent of all pilots (6.8.3). Should the CD be allowed to declare a no-ballast day at nationals without unanimous consent? (This is allowed at regionals.) Pro: Removes catch-22 that people want to water before the pilot meeting, but you can't declare no-water until you poll all the pilots. Sometimes there is not time to meet, ballast and still fly a task, so the day is lost if one holdout says no. It can simplify the organizer's job and save costs and water where scarce -- don't make the Mifflin fire truck come out for an iffy 1 knot day . Con: WGC rules always allow water, no matter how weak the weather or inconvenient. We should stay close to WGC rules where possible, to make a more competitive US team. | Yes 99 62% No 53 33% |
| 6.0 | Regional to National Transition | All |
| | The following rules were implemented for regionals in 2008 and are scheduled to be implemented in nationals for 2009. Do you favor adopting these rule changes for nationals as scheduled? (If you have positive or negative experience with these rules, please say so in the comments section.) | All |
| 6.1 | "Start anywhere" gives pilots credit for distance from the actual start point. | Yes 138 86% No 18 11% |
| 6.2 | Distance points are increased from 400 to 600, with a compression of scores for very slow finishers. | Yes 134 84% No 22 14% |
| 6.3 | If a TAT is so undercalled that you fly almost all of the available distance but still finish undertime, you get full credit for your speed (11.6.3.2 gives the exact formula). | Yes 133 83% No 25 16% |
| 6.4 | Motorgliders and turbos are allowed in Standard and 15M classes. | Yes 95 59% No 62 39% |
| 7.0 | Motorglider airborne relight | All |
| | Rule 10.6.3.7 requires motorgliders who need a relight to land and then re-launch with | All |

| | | |
|------------|--|--|
| | <p>the other relights. Relights often conflict with the launch operation. Should motorgliders be allowed to restart their engines to "relight?"</p> <p>(This option would be subject to restrictions to make it as fair as possible to non-motorized competitors. For example engine restart could be limited to 1 mile from the airport, and the pilot could not start the task for some period – say 30 minutes -- after engine shutdown. Motorgliders will still be limited to 3 "launches" just like everyone else. Other restrictions might also be imposed.)</p> | |
| 7.1 | Regionals: | Yes 102 64% No 54 34% |
| 7.2 | Nationals: | Yes 83 52% No 73 46% |
| 8.0 | Combined classes at regional contests | All |
| 8.1 | Regional rule 5.8.2 allows a combined standard / 15 meter class, in which standard class gliders receive a 2% handicap advantage. This is used when there are not enough gliders to form a class of their own, and is a popular option. Should this rule be extended to allow a combined 15/18 meter class, or 18 meter/open class? This change is suggested for regionals only. | Allow15/18 95 59% Allow18/Open 70 44% NoChange 35 22% |
| 9.0 | Other Issues | All |
| 9.1 | Are there any other issues that you would like the SSA Rules Committee to address, any rules-related problems you observed this year, or any questions that you would like to see included on future SRA polls? | 44 28% |
| 9.2 | Did you experience or witness any significant safety-related incidents that the rules committee should be aware of? | 25 16% |

Return to the [2008 SRA Pilot Opinion Poll survey form](#) to check your input.

Return to main [survey page](#).

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