

2009 SSA 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.		184
1.0	Demographics	All
1.1	<p>What class(es) in National contests did you fly this year?</p> <p>Multiple selections are allowed</p>	1-26 2% World 2% Sport 14% Standard 4% 15Meter 16% 18Meter 7% Open 4% Senior 6% None 46%
1.2	<p>What class(es) in Regional contests did you fly this year?</p> <p>Multiple selections are allowed</p>	Sport 30% Standard 15% 15Meter 19% 18Meter 11% Open 1% None 23%
2.0	Contest Schedules (rule 4.0), increasing participation	All
2.1	<p>Nationals are currently run from Tuesday until the following Thursday, with two days of official practice Sun, Mon. Organizers and pilots have suggested other schedules, including a) Sunday official practice, Monday-Wednesday contest b) Friday official practice, Saturday-Sunday contest (9 days) c) Saturday official practice, Sunday-Monday contest (9 days). Naturally, schedules would have to allow sufficient driving time from adjacent contests and consider weather and the likely contestants. Some requests for different schedules come from organizers, who would find these schedules easier on their volunteers. For the moment, we would allow some contests to change without forcing all to change.</p>	All
	a) Do you favor allowing changes to the current Tues-Thurs schedule?	Yes 65% No 30%
	How do you feel about these alternative schedules compared to the current Tuesday-Thursday schedule?	All
	b) Monday-Wednesday,	Prefer 12% Indifferent 53% Dislike 24%
	c) Saturday-Sunday,	Prefer 32% Indifferent 39%

		Dislike 20%
	d) Sunday-Monday,	Prefer 14% Indifferent 46% Dislike 28%
2.2	Regional contests can be split across two or even three periods. This discourages out of region participants, but we'd like to gauge demand from locals who might not otherwise fly. Would you be more likely to attend a regional in your location if it were split across two or three weekends?	Yes 25% No 73%
	If yes, which regional?	Select 74% 1 5% 2 4% 3 2% 4 2% 5 5% 6 2% 7 3% 8 1% 9 4% 10 2% 11 2% 12 2%
2.3	Many of our national contests are too small to be financially viable. Organizers often run a regional at the same time, but the different schedule makes this option less than perfect. Should we allow nationals sponsors to run a concurrent 10 day regional or super-regional contest on the same schedule as nationals (currently Tuesday - Thursday)?	Yes 74% No 22%
2.4	National participation overall is declining. West coast nationals are particularly poorly attended. Very few pilots travel across the country to attend "their" nationals, preferring to sit out, fly regionals, or fly a closer nationals in the "wrong" class instead. US team selection picks from a small number of pilots willing to drive a lot and to try multiple nationals each year. Several ideas are floating around on how to restructure national contests to address these issues. We'd like to hear yours.	43%
2.5	What do you feel are the largest barriers - real or perceived -- to increased participation in contest soaring at all levels?	66%
3.0	Motors (Rule 6.3.3.1) Background: Motorgliders are allowed in all FAI classes except the World Class, and are scored up to the point at which the engine is started. Some pilots feel that motorgliders have an unfair advantage. They can avoid the physical exhaustion and damage potential of an outlanding, and some motorglider pilots may fly over unlandable terrain. We don't want to penalize engine use, as that will lead to (even) lower engine starts. Thus, a small handicap is the best realistic option if we wish to address this perception.	All

3.1	Should motorized gliders suffer a small 1-2% handicap, to "level the playing field?"	Yes 51% No 47%
4.0	Loggers (Rule 6.7.4, Appendix B) Background: The rules and US team committees want to lessen the financial burden of competing and the complexity of log procedures. However, it is important to make sure that cheating does not occur, in particular quick tampering of a log to remove airspace, turnpoint, or start/finish penalties. IGC Loggers have two kinds of security. First there is a "physical security seal" which verifies that the electronic equipment was not tampered with. Second, there is "file security" which consists of a code inserted by the logger on download, which verifies that the file is not tampered with between download and scoring.	All
4.1	Do you believe that cheating by physical manipulation of loggers is enough of a concern that we should require loggers at national contests to have been IGC approved at the "All Flights" or "All Badges" levels, and possess intact security seals? (This would allow the Cambridge 10/20/25 loggers. It would exclude the SN10 and any logger that has an external GPS or commercial off the shelf (COTS) i.e. Garmins.)	Yes 31% No 67%
4.2	Have you witnessed or strongly suspected that a logger was manipulated to avoid a penalty or increase a score? (I.e. cheating that security seals should catch.)	Yes 1% No 99%
4.3	Have you witnessed or strongly suspected that a log file was manipulated to avoid a penalty or increase a score? (I.e. cheating that file security should catch.)	Yes 3% No 97%
4.4	While we're at it, have you witnessed or strongly suspected cheating of any other kind, including but not limited to radio communication, use of banned equipment, or significant preferential treatment by contest officials? (NOTE: Answers to these questions will be kept strictly confidential.)	Yes 24% No 72%
4.5	Comments for questions 4.1 - 4.4	38%
5.0	Worst day adjustment (rule 11.4.4) Background: The "worst day" option has been in the rules for a while, but so far has not been used. The rule avoids obvious problems: it does not force you to drop a devalued day which you won, and it phases in so that it does not take full effect until there are 5 contest days. Many pros and cons have been argued about this rule, among others: <i>Pro:</i> This rule can make contests more fun. If you land out the first few days, you're not out of the running. This rule can help pilots make safe decisions. If there is dangerous weather, you can turn back and take your "worst day." This rule lessens the luck factor of a landout or low save. <i>Con:</i> Pilots might take more risks, knowing they can throw out a bad result. Scoring will get more complex and opaque as the worst day jumps around. However, we won't really know how it works until we try it, which is why it has	All

	been in the rules as an option. CDs are unlikely to try it unless pilots voice an opinion, hence this poll question:	
5.1	Would you like to try the "worst day adjustment" in a regional contest?	Yes 48% No 51%
6.0	Club Class regionals Background: Club class follows sports class rules but allows the AST, is restricted to specific gliders (see the list), and is philosophically a "racing" class not an "entry" class, with tougher tasking guidelines. With some vocal supporters but more widespread disapproval (see last year's poll 3.0), the RC allowed a club class by waiver at regionals last year. We had one such contest. There was a good turnout of 17 pilots who expressed great satisfaction with the format. The next step would be to make club class routinely available to regionals and super-regionals. The major concern is that this will leave out sports class pilots with non-qualifying gliders (lower as well as higher performance), or who desire the "entry class" character of sports class. We may address this concern by insisting that there can only be a club class if nobody will be left out of a competition as a result.	All
6.1	Would you participate in a club class regional or super-regional contest?	Yes 47% No 51%
	Background: The club class excludes lower performance gliders -- Slient, Sparrowhawk, PW5 etc. Other classes do not exclude low-performance gliders by rules -- you can fly a Standard Cirrus in 15 meter if you want to. Participation might be enhanced by allowing these gliders in club.	All
6.2	Should club-class regional contests allow lower performance glider to participate, with no reduction in tasking, as is the case in other classes?	Yes 68% No 27%
7.0	Club class nationals and team selection Background: Currently, the US team is selected from the sports class nationals, but that selection is restricted to pilots who have not participated in FAI worlds and to gliders on the club class list . (See team selection guidelines .) As a result, only 12 of 36 entries at Elmira and 11 of 31 entries at Montague qualified for team selection.	All
7.1	Should the US team continue to restrict selection to the club-class worlds to gliders on the US club-class list?	Yes 47% No 44%
7.2	If no, should the club class team-selection list be expanded to include:	All
	a) All gliders	Yes 24% No 29%
	b) Any lower performance glider (handicap 1.0 and above), with the understanding that tasks are still set for club performance?	Yes 38% No 14%
	c) Any glider in the handicap range, i.e. include current production standard class?	Yes 36% No 17%

7.3	Should the club class team selection list be further restricted to include only gliders on the current IGC club class list?	Yes 29% No 53%
7.4	Should the US team continue to restrict selection for club class worlds to pilots who have not participated in an FAI world contest?	Yes 29% No 51%
	Background: Club class advocates argue for a separate club class nationals to be held as soon as possible, and US team selection for club class to use only this nationals' results. Arguing against this is the still low turnout of qualifying gliders at sports class nationals, and the danger of killing the very popular sports class nationals. The other path is to wait to see large participation at regional and super-regional venues and larger participation by club class gliders in the sports nationals.	All
7.5	Do you favor a separate club class nationals as soon as practicable?	Yes 30% No 58%
7.6	As long as sports and club are merged, do you favor publication of a separate club-class scoresheet?	Yes 64% No 24%
8.0	Safety	All
8.1	Did you witness or are you aware of any important safety-related issues or incidents that the rules committee should be aware of?	26%
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 SSA Contest Committee polls?	39%

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