

# 2009 SSA Pilot Opinion Poll Results

October 19, 2009 12:19 AM

ALL text responses (no suppression) are listed below. The **View and suppress text responses for question:** selector on the author page may be used to suppress any inappropriate text responses so that offensive language or direct references can be eliminated from a published report. Current suppressed text is presented in red.

## Answers to value response questions.

No responsive questions of this type were found.

## Answers to short responsive questions.

No responsive questions of this type were found.

## Answers to medium responsive questions.

No responsive questions of this type were found.

## Answers to long responsive questions.

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.

- encourage, sponsor and develop young pilots. - reduce the number of nationals if need be.

-East and West Coast Nationals -Actual National winner between the two then based on US pilot ranking. This forces selection based on proven performance over time rather than possible fluke of selection based on a single contest.

Always have the Nationals in a central site, say, Uvalde or Midwest. Time and Distance is the prime problem.

Base selection on a vote of seeded pilots.

Cant really provide useful input on this issue.

Choose central locations, between the Rockies and the Mississippi.

Combine 18m with open and create open handicapped nationals, Create club class nationals Create Junior nationals

Combine more classes in a larger national contest.

Combine several nationals if they are to occur on the west coast. Try to use sites in the middle of the country so that they are accessible to more pilots.

Consider using a system based on the OLC to help choose team pilots. Pilots could gain points towards

National selection by accumulating the most points for the 10 fastest 300km + FAI type tasks flown in the calendar year . They would still have to compete in the Nationals but could use their points gained from fast OLC flights as part of the scoring to help with their team selection.

Couple Nationals. Multi-class nationals are very successful, both for the organisers and the pilots. With several start points, and varied finish methods, e.g. line for some, circle for others, class arrangements as varied as Open class + World class together have been very successfully done.

Difficult problem - central contests seem best attended The country is just too damned big. Perhaps we can find other sites eg in northern NM mtns as well as Hobbs or Uvalde to give some flexibility in central sites and have more Nats in these central locations. This also gives some variety in central sites and means that no site will dominate (or get burned out?)- it also means that Nats will be attended by pilots from across the country (2 days drive from either coast or corner) rather than the punitive 3-4 days for those crossing the country. Just a thought - but it would be nice to have a \*real\* Nats championship each yr vs a West coast vs East Coast Championship, and arange of sites where pilots could be tested in terrain and conditions similar to the targeted WC site.

Dont hold Nationals at the far corners of USA, especially at sites not renowned for consistent weather. Make sure organizers understand rules and task for nationals rather than regionals - local-club-level organizers are a worry for a long commitment. Ensure social activities are planned and advertised in advance to make the trip more appealing to significant-other-decision-makers.

East Coast and West Coast Nationals is a good idea. If there arent enough participants to make it a viable contest, then have two or three classes in the same location at the same time. The National Champion could be the person who won with the highest margin. I believe this would encourage folks to compete in their class. Sports class may see an initial decline since currently it is a catch-all for those who dont have time to drive. I dont see any problem with contestants who wish to compete in both East and West contests, if somebody does do that, say that person wins both contests - Id be proud to see somebody on the team with that type of commitment, and its good for participation.

East and West Coast team slots picked from an east and west coast combined nationals. OLC selection when the competitive pool decreases to the level of Canada.

Expand the size of the west coast area to include more enticing soaring sites. Northern California, Oregon and Washington are too far and not great enough to draw pilots.

Find a good central US site. Hutchinson? Would make Bill happy. Volunteers needed to pull this off.

For me, Nationals are just one or two days too long, but that is a personal perspective. There appears to be many XC pilots in the west, a greater proportion than an equivalent club in the east, but fewer of them are racing. The driving distance has something to do with that, but is only a small part. The XC Camp concept is credit by some for saving XC soaring. Maybe have a series of racing camps aimed at newbies, and designate some regional contests as entry level contests. The Air Sailing Contest has played this role for years. It has a small, but steady, contest pool.

Force all nationals organizers to host two (2) national contests per site/year. Further this should include one currently well attended contest, and one not so well attended (I.e. 15m and Open, or 15m/World or Standard and Open, etc. Split the available entries in half (32/32) per class. If, after the PED there are spots remaining in one class, and there is demand for the spots from the other class, open the remaining spots to those on the other class waiting list. This makes both Nationals more selective (i.e. good for choosing a worthy champion/team member) and potentially more lucrative to the organizers by encouraging full fields. And, hopefully would eliminate the co-hosting of regionals to fill the field.

Give preference to historically successful contest sites during the bid process regardless of central, east, west rotation cycle. Condense Nationals into a Sat-Sun schedule with reduced rest days. Currently I need two weeks vacation to cover a Nationals that is not within a one day drive. Seek out

and promote more central US contest sites, Kansas? Disclaimer, I live in Central US.

Have more of the contests at Hobbs or a new central location. We need to continue to use Hobbs. It is a huge asset.

Have national contests every other year. Perhaps combine two classes for the contest.

Hold all Nationals in the middle of the country, preferably at the same airport. Dont fret about not making use of varying contest areas - Nationals are supposed to identify National Champions, not sanctify soaring sites. Sunflower in Kansas would have been ideal but the SSA manged to blow that opportunity.

Hold more contests in central USA in locations with good soaring weather

How about dual contests: i.e. always have one in the East and one alternating between West and Central. These dual nationals would combine two classes in order to increase number of pilots. Thus there would be six nationals each year (no more than today)as follows: 1. East std/15m 2. West/Central std/15m 3. East open/18m 4. West/Central open/18m 5. East club/sports/world 6. West/Central club/sports/world

How about staging a West Coast and East Coast Nationals and select the U.S. Team from the winners. If the Worlds favor mountain/wave experience, the West Coast winner would be a good pick. If ridge/flat land skill is required, pick the East Coast winner. Using point total to merge the lists would not work due to devalued days. It would also help when a Nationals gets weathered out like the 15 Meter Nationals this year. A U.S. Team committee could pick the best pilots to represent the US from those who flew the best.

How about trying 2 annual Nationals, such as east of the Mississippi and west of the Mississippi National Contests?

I believe it would merit a study to see if we could realistically choose pilots through an average of East and West coast nationals. The other option would be a voting system similar to the British team.

I cannot afford to travel to the east coast for a Nationals. This is especially true when we loose a higher percentage of flying days due to bad weather in the midwest or east coast nationals. At least it appears that way to the outside observer. I prefer to attend a Nationals or regionals in the west. I dont have a good suggestion for increasing attendance.

I dont know

I dont mind driving a couple of days to a contest site to compete in a Nationals. However contests in California are just too far away (3-4) days and require specific knowledge of the area (Montague for example). Mifflin has similar knowledge requirements. My preference is to fly a contest in relatively flat land where local knowledge is a minor factor in the outcome of the contest. I also dont mind driving a longer distance west if I can link a couple of contests together. For example, Ephrata is a place I would like to fly, but is too far to drive unless I can make it a 2 contest trip.

I dont really have a solution other than perhaps looking outside of nationals for team selection. There are a lot of very capable pilots (I would dare to say more so that some national-level pilots) that dont go chasing after national races. Also, I believe that team selection out of a pool of 10 or less gliders is completely ridiculous. It is to the point that saying youre in the top 5 nationally means NOTHING. If a nationals has less than 15 participants it should be cancelled. It is meaningless! Pick the good pilots from elsewhere and with an appropriate algorithm.

I dont think we can fix this problem. It is a function of time and money. Since soaring is an elective sport using discretionary income, it falls behind all other needs. This is also seen in skiing and other vacation expenses. The decline in participation seems to parallel out economic times in my experience

over the last 25 years. People are spending more time in their jobs to make ends meet and have less travel time. Also, vacations are being cut back at companies and people are less secure to take two weeks off for a national. Also, if you change the Tue-Thur format, you will also discourage long-drive participation as people will need to take more time off at either end if they have a three day drive. Main to California will always be a problem as it is a 4 day drive. Moving Nationals as we do, will help this problem of the East coast and west coast people. My answer to Question 2.3 was No because mixing first-time regional pilots with experienced national pilots is not good and can be dangerous for both. If I am at a national, even though I do not know the other pilot, I am confident that he has the experience to thermal close and wont do something stupid. If we are on course, and experienced contest pilot is probably not thermalling in sink. To address this problem so as to have a regional and national together, the organizers could require that the regional pilots have at least two previous regional contests or one national contest experience. Also limit the classes to FAI class gliders. Mixing low performace gliders under 30:1 really causes problems for everyone including tasking. Do not allow a Sports Class. Finally, the National pilots should have priority in launching so that a non-contest does not occur because the regional launched and a t-storm scrubbed the national day. Another option to help Nationals is to combine the 15m with Std and the open with 18m. The performance is similar and gliders will mix well. Since, the Nationals is to select the top pilots for the world team, one could even have all classes represented and limit the entrants in each class. For example, 60 gliders with 15 in each class. If one class did not have 15 after the cut-off date or people drop out, fill the contest with standby pilots from the other classes and alternate the entrant by class. For example, if there are only 10 open class pilots at the cut-off and no other Open class pilots are available take the next Std, then 15m, then 18m and so on. This will result in more pilots in one class but that is not a problem as the Nationals are only looking for the top 5 anyway. This way you have all experienced pilots and it would be more like the WGC with all classes represented.

I have no input on this issue.

I suspect you would increase participation at nationals by tightening the contest period, with practice on Friday and racing Sat-Sun.

I think developing new soaring sites is key. Even though the soaring is not stellar, we need to open up the middle of the country to some new sites. If were trying to pick team members, our nationals should probably be held at sites similar to the upcoming world site (this would probably mean more east coast nationals).

I totally agree with giving more flexibility to the organizers to adapt the schedules of contests. this will allow them to take advantage of holiday weekends/holiday Mondays - easier to find pilots and staff.

I would like to see an analysis of the top 100 ranked pilots over the past several years to determine what percentages fly in regionals, wrong class nationals, super regionals or sit out. The main concern would be if top pilots with national team potential dont compete at the national level in alternate years. Potential ideas: 1) Set the maximum seeding points for any contest to equal the average seeding of the top 5-10 pilots in that class. This is like the strength of schedule calculation in college football rankings. I believe that many of the better attended regional and super-regional contest are more competitive than the less well attended nationals. Adjust the national team selection process to include all high-points contests. 2) Do more combined nationals for the smaller classes. 3) Set the east-west nationals schedule such that pilots have a chance to fly their own glider at a nationals on their side of the country and be competitive every year. 4) Try to get some venues that are west, but not waaay west for nationals. Im not sure what Uvalde counts as, but it seems to draw well.

I would like to see more rest days in between both for the crews and the pilots safety. 3 on 1 off 3 on 1 off 3 on! give the crews and organizers as well as the pilots a chance to catch up and rest. You could accomplish this by using only one official practice day and allow others to fly without scoring prior to that. We are still going to have to use 2 weeks of vacation time and this will make that time more enjoyable for the crews.

Id like to see the Nationals split into two or more. One in the East and one in the West. Pilots could then attend the competition in their part of the country and compete for the championships and for selection. You could then apply some kind of handicapping or if its too hard to come up with a workable formula for that, maybe a shorter run-off competition in the middle of the country to pick teams to attend world championships. This would just be a recognition of the situation that exists today - Nationals arent really Nationals, when they are held in the East there are mostly Eastern pilots and when they are in the West....

If 20% of pilots live on the west coast then we should have 20% of nationals on the west coast. There is no reason for 80% of pilots to travel across the country. For the east coast pilots getting to the Rockies is a huge effort in terms of time, money and price a family pays. Sure we need some competition in mountains, but maybe they dont have to be so often. We could also look at other sites e.g. Sugerbush. Sugerbush does not want to run contest because they have not been making any money. We need to come up with some incentives.

If a pilot doesnt have the time, money or inclination to drive across the country or a substantial part of it to compete in a national contest and this disadvantages him (because he accumulates his points in other contests which are closer to him but less likely to provide him with his best chance to score), this will tend to select him off the US Team where, to compete, he would have to take a lot more time, spend a lot more money and fly or float a much greater distance. I suppose, in the ideal world, time, money and the willingness to travel wouldnt have anything to do with ones qualification for the US Team. In the real world, it would seem these traits do have an impact on qualifications. Maybe there isnt a problem.

If the current system favors the selection of pilots who are prepared to drive long distances perhaps it is wrong. Nationals have to be distributed geographically and many pilots wont drive cross country. Restructuring the Nationals may not be the answer perhaps a change is needed in the US team selection process.

If the desire is to maximize participation, then the obvious thing to do is to optimize the match between pilot demographics and potential competition sites. One possible way to do this is to poll pilots regarding a list of 10-20 possible national venues. The ones that get the most votes should be the ones selected for the competitions. Personally, I would find it very difficult to go to California, but I am planning to go to Parowan next year.

In general, I have not got any good ideas nor have I thought through this very much. Havent heard any of these other ideas, so cannot comment on them. Yes to question 2.3 sounds like the best idea for now.

Keep it the same. Our present system gives great racing experience, in many areas of the country, which in turn pay even greater dividends. Our system now gets pilots out of their back yard and in turn will become much better competition pilots for their travels. If they have the desire, they will figure out a way. It seems only a few are looking at how to climb to the top by taking not only a road that suits their self-centered wants but is also much easier and softer so they can rise to the top. As our Nationals have dropped off in numbers, its more likely the time frame we are in then it is us. By moving our Nationals, as its done now, gives all a fair and equal chance, to excel at our sport.

Maybe no change to how the Nationals are run, but do some sort of three or even four year view for International Team Selection? With a throw out your worst year scheme. But somehow also needs to have bias towards a site that is most similar to where the worlds will be. Pure flatlanders (such as myself) wouldnt have a chance in the mountains.

Multi-class 7 day super-regionals in 3 or 4 zones. Team selection by some kind of BCS-like algorithm. Would likely select a stronger team and maybe a controversial national champion.

My biggest problem is distance (see below) I cant afford to lose 2+ weeks of work for a National...

though I would love to... Maybe having East and West Nationals... or using some national ranking class system on regionals where scoring is tied to the Pilot Rankings of the pilots on a given class... meaning the higher the pilots rankings... the more points... and vice-versa...

My opinion is that contests are tooooooo long. A 3, 4, or 5 day contest is plenty. I don't have the time to do 7 day contests and I suspect that is the case for many others as well.

Not sure exactly how US Team members are selected, but maybe need to look not only at final scores, but how the scores were obtained. Did pilot fly race in tough conditions against stiff opposition? He should get more points than if he flew an easy race against easy competition. Pretty subjective, I guess. But, I suppose life is pretty subjective...

Our problem is that this is a large country. National contests favor smaller countries. To choose National Champions based on who is able/willing to drive a lot is nuts. (I know this is an oversimplification!) Perhaps we could use regional contests as the gate-keeper to the national contest. That way, the contestants would all know that they were good and that they would only be flying against others who were also good. At this point, after earning their way into the National Contest, perhaps more would actually go.

People will typically drive farther if there is a reasonable guarantee of good soaring weather. I.E. Hobbs or Uvalde perhaps the nationals should be held at just one spot.

Perhaps breaking the country into 2-3 regions. From the NE, looking at a 10 day national on the West Coast is an over two week vacation when factoring in the drive times.

Pick permanent sites for nationals that have proven to be popular with pilots, crews, and families. Mifflin is a good example. It is a fantastic contest site for pilots, crew and FAMILY! and when Karl and Iris run it, first class in every way. It also is within reasonable driving distance for a large percentage of competition pilots. Parowen, Uvalde, Hobbs and Uvalde come to mind for the others, but are certainly not convenient drives for anyone east of the Miss. I believe a regional and a national at Mifflin every year would be a great way to entice more pilots to try competition. I would have flown in the 2009 18 meter nationals and the sports class nationals but did not due to the long drive, (Ephrata), and lack of dependable soaring conditions, (Elmira), in late July. Having a contest in Minnesota, or Ohio, doesn't get me excited enough to deal with all the hassles.

Pooling of classes (as already happening) at same site and dates makes the most sense until (hopefully) numbers rebound. Running a regional concurrently worked well at Cordele this year. You could even add on classes for which the SSA doesn't currently sponsor events--20 meter two place, club class, Grand Prix, one-designs (Libelle, AS-W20, etc).

Preferentially hold nationals in strong soaring country nearer to the center of the US: ID, UT, NM, TX, AZ

Rankings and Team selections should be based on a variety of events such as national and regional contests, weekend contests or other short contests, and virtual contests (such as the NJ, PA, NY Governors Cup, and the OLC). Virtual contests have become much more popular and convenient for many pilots and I believe that a reasonable scoring system can be developed to include these flights in the rankings. And short contests in our area have started to generate interest in contest flying. We need to open our view on what should be included in contest flying.

Remove eligibility restriction on standard class gliders for the club class team; try to arrange that one of Sports and Standard class nationals are in the east each year.

See next answer.

Set up East and West Nationals for each class. This will NOT cause more contests. Combine several classes and use the seeding list to limit the entries. You can have 3 classes with 22 each with highly

seeded pilots at one site. If you have to work to get in to a nats you will take it seriously. We are smart enough to figure out a way to select the US team with an east and west system. Look at this years Nats, Std, Open, and 18 had very poor numbers. Are we really selecting the best pilots to represent the USA with this method. If you think so look at the top seed for Club class to go to the worlds. The pilot was an 86 ranking. We are becoming a joke out of stubborn pride that we have always done it this way. Also it is time to dump several classes. World does not have enough entries, are both 15M and Std really needed? Should just be a 15M and 18M classes. Handicap the Standards if needed.

Since the West Coast pilots are not interested in contest, dont hold any Nationals in the West until their Regionals participation picks up. So, alternate between Central and Eastern sites.

The self-cannabization of contest soaring is the driver here. Too many classes, too many contests and OLC becoming the #1 contest format. Im less sure of the solution...increase the value of Regions and Sportsclass towards picking the USA Team?

There are too many National Championships. There used to be one, now there are: Open 18M 15M STD Sports 1-26 Motorglider PW-5 (World) Seniors Club (?) Except for the Seniors, there will inevitably be schedule conflicts which reduces participation. Combine some of the classes permanently and lower how many pilots can fly in a Nats.

Too many classes. Is aggregate participation declining, or is it just spread over more classes? I dont know, but Id love to see the data. As for which classes to merge: not mine!!! :) The recent Sports Class vs. Club Class battle was the height of absurdity to me, however. When I first got involved in soaring, there was one class (excluding the 1-26s, which I flew then). Now there are...six? Cant keep track. There used to be 65 pilots at THE nationals. Now we have, what, an average of 20 or so? At each of 6 nationals? Who says participation is declining?

Too new to provide constructive comments.

Tough problem, I dont have any ideas

Try to have Nationals more centrally located and maybe once every 7 years do a west coast.

Unless we can shrink the country, it is a problem that may not have a solution. We already focus on the middle of the US (Hobbs and Uvalde) every other year with smaller contests in the east (Cordele or Mifflin) and very small contests in the west (Montague). Ive heard the suggestion of having a super nationals that would be used for world team selection but 1) it puts all the eggs in one basket (bad weather like Minnesota or Cordele) could be a disaster and 2) if for some reason a pilot cant make that particular contest he loses his chance for seeding. Allowing handicapping (such as the 2% for standard or 2% for 15 meter when competing with 18 meter) is a possibility, but probably not a good one. In other words, any of the 3 official nationals (standard, 15 meter, 18 meter) could be flown with a standard, 15 meter, or 18 meter glider with an appropriate handicap. It might solve the participation problem and create other problems.

Until you start selecting teams instead of individuals, the US team will just be a novelty for a few pilots. To change this, create team criteria and a team selection race (like a regional) where you choose the winner/s from team flights not individual flights. Financial supporters dont care for loosing so US teams will always struggle for \$\$\$\$. Then you need to add to the selection process only winning pilots who have the \$\$\$ to pay their way.

Using only racing sites that are in the middle of the country to minimize drive time from both coasts.

Wash country, dry on high heat to shrink it. Unfortunately the drive is what it is and some of the best soaring is in the west :( It is fundamentally a time (2 days driving each way) and cost issue even for pilots who live in the area. A Fla pilot has almost a 1000 mile drive for a PA contest. Same for CO Cal to Washington.

We have too many classes. Eliminate the standard and world class. Sports class or club class but not both.

West Coast participation in Regionals is impacted by the lack of cross country pilots wanting to increase their experience level. Regional contests need to focus on getting the new cross-country pilots into the contest by getting them excited about the learning experiences and mentoring that a regionals can offer. Experienced pilots need to take on more of a mentoring role to provide a draw for those new pilots.

Whats the problem here? Not identifying the best pilots for the US Team? Overall decline in participation in Nationals? National Sites are too far for the majority of pilots to attend? Each has its own set of possible solutions, which may be mutually exclusive. Some possible ideas: 1. Develop National Soaring Sites in the middle of the US - Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Illinois. Enough so that there can be a year or two between sites, but try to keep them so that east and west have about an equal drive. 2. Develop a means to share gliders, so that a glider in the local area could be used by a pilot traveling a long distance. 3. Host camps/regionals in geographic locations similar to the future world competitions. 4. Increased participation in Regionals will lead to more participation in Nationals. How do we do that? ...the million dollar question. 5. Refine the method of choosing the US Team members. Perhaps weight their selection by the class they are competing in? Develop a means to have a fly off?

Why not have multi-regional nationals (say 3 or 4) so the driving time isnt so extreme and figure out a way to combine scores (maybe based on speeds with some sort of handicap system) to determine who wins the nationals?

Why not have the Nationals start on a Sunday and end on a Saturday. This gives 7 days of racing, and for a west coast National this is anout what an East coast National would get in over 2 weeks of scheduled competition.

leave it as is

the idea of a national at the level of the US is unavoidably tied to distances of travel I have no perfect solution to suggest other than putting the National champion on a accumulated point system with more participation at regional levels; implying more regional contests. But here different regions have different soaring conditions and facilities, so this again may advantage certain regions.

2.5: What do you feel are the largest barriers – real or perceived -- to increased participation in contest soaring at all levels?

I previously went to a National for the experience and enjoyment. But now I weigh the possibility of placing high enough on the score sheet to make my participation worth the time, effort, and money. Lately that possibility has been reduced to about zero. Whether this is a common attitude I cannot say.

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- encourage, sponsor and develop young pilots.

-Financial -Intimidation on the part of new-comers. (maybe it should become standard practice to host 2-3 day soaring camps that run 1 day prior and concurrent with the practice days at regionals/nationals. If we could somehow encourage the organizers and top pilots that show up early to participate, there could be some great learning... facilities/scoring/towplanes would probably already be there or starting to show up, and you could work out the scoring bugs. If ready, last day of the camp, the newbies could fly the actual practice day task and be scored... END CAMP)

1) Time constraints with work, home and other obligations 2) Costs of travel, fees, equipment etc. Especially the younger generation 3) Newer pilots perceive that a contest is somehow hard to do 4) Some pilots think it impossible to compete without their very own crew 5) Lack of available club equipment for those who do not yet own a sailplane

1. Money -- expensive aircraft. 2. No ground crew. 3. No time.

1. Cost of maintaining currency suitable for racing 2. Time for above.

1. Economy 2. Pressure to not take a lot of time off.

1. Expense 2. Complexity of rules: Ive been involved in competition for 40+ years and still feel nervous reading the rules every year knowing there are whole sections I dont understand that could impact me. 3. Complexity of equipment: Ive gotten discouraged the past few years due to the many things that can go wrong with todays full-race equipment: loggers and flight computers are the two biggest ones. I work with computers every day but am nervous about all that can go wrong. If I werent computer savvy, I wouldnt be able to fly competition. Knowing Im a loose wire or failing battery away from zeroing a day is depressing and demotivating. 4. The relentless expense to stay competitive and compliant. Im lucky; I have a competitive glider. My current obstacle is a backup logger. I have a handheld I bought for less than \$100 that was legal a few years ago. Now its not...because it might be possible to cheat, though no ones ever done it to my knowledge. So its rely on my FAI logger (failed 3 times since 2001), or borrow a backup, or ask for a waiver for my handheld (graciously granted again this year for regionals). Were going in the wrong the direction. You dont raise the price of admission if attendance is declining. I think the Rules Committee understands this but the mood is very different sitting around the campfire at New Castle vs. sitting at home in January looking at the schedule and realizing, with a sinking feeling, that youve gotta fork over \$600 or \$1000 for another logger or make arrangements to borrow one...and hope it has its security seal intact...and that you can load your ID into it...and that it wont exhaust your battery. End of speech.

1. Glider Ownership - the clubs are not all set up equally to develop competition pilots. I had to have the means to own my glider before I could participate. 2. Contest Schedule - Limited amount of time and money means I have to be choosy where I can go. Did not fly a contest in 2008 because there wasnt one near enough. Can the SSA work on developing the Regionals, so that everyone has a chance to go to a contest within x distance of driving miles?

1. Rules & scoring are vastly too complex. The never-ending rules changes, especially in the pursuit of mythical fairness are preposterous. 2. Handicapping in Sports Class has become far too detailed. It has now become impossible to compare flights on any given day between ships of nearly identical performance. 3. Ever-increasing costs. See response to 4.5

1. Simplify the rules! They are way too complicated at the regional level you will get many more beginning racing pilots to compete if they can use OTS gps units for scoring. No one can understand them yet alone figure out if they have a problem or if their score is even correct. 2. Go back to finish gates or use more Grand prix style racing get the people on the ground back into the racing.

Adding the 18meter class, with a high price of admission, has further diluted and fragmented an already small pool of pilots. Paradoxically, the popularity of OLC has detracted from formal contest flying. Its a great addition to our sport, but anyone on the fence about driving to a site and spending the \$ for a contest now has an alternative. (I read on r.a.s a derisive comment about contests being just for pilots who only want to fly 3 hours a day.)

Available time to spend in practicing and attending contests Cost to buy a decent glider Availability of decent role models and mentors and the local level to show non-contest pilots the way Local fun contests (like ASA) that get people started

Complex racing rules

Contests are too long and too expensive. Shorter contests would cost less to attend and require less vacation time. As it is now, very few working people can afford the time off to go to a national contest. If they go to a national then they cant also go a regional contest. I would prefer regionals as 5 days and nationals as 7 days. This simple change would increase participation and allow more younger working folks to attend contests. It would also be easier on contest volunteer staff.

Contests in excess of 7 days. Need for crew. Need for ELT (even though its been waived a lot it still keeps people from inquiring further). Complexity of task rules. Some regionals fill up according to ranking - this just isnt right - if a newbie cant even get into their own regional, how do they start? Where this happens regularly, these regions should try to hold more than one contest (e.g. North/South, Spring/Fall, etc.).

Cost

Cost

Cost Time Commitment Percieved elitism Competition needs to be seen as more inclusionary

Cost and in the immediate years the poor and declining economy.

Cost and time away from work.

Cost and time. It is easier to just go fly, than to compete. PLUS, we all compete via the OLC, and I can fly on my schedule, not he contests.

Cost and travel time.

Cost is the largest barrier. The cost to young people is unreasonable. Even the Harris Hill juniors are unable to continue flying during the college years. Youth programs generally and program to match young people with older glider owners would get more people to the cross country level. Once they are cross country glider pilots they are likely to be members for life. This can also be said about pilots starting later in life.

Cost of a competitive glider. We should make better use of handicapping, in all classes, to level the field and allow pilots with older gliders to participate with a fair chance. Otherwise, they lose interest.

Cost of first rate FAI class sailplanes. Lack of retrieve crew.

Cost time commitment.

Cost(sanction fees, stealing not used tows money)

Cost, poor weather. Lack of youth pilots (cost). The sport is poorly marketed, needs more people trying it out and a clearer path from flight training to contests.

Cost, time and distance. We are so focused on selecting the USA team pilots that we have forgotten that the other 99% of racing pilots need to be paid attention to as well. We want contest that are close (a days drive max if possible), fun, well attended and competitive. There are too many classes. Why not just reduce us to kindergarten and give everyone their own class and a prize. We are nearly there now. Dilution does not make it better. We need to stand up and say enough and reduce the classes back to about three total.

Costs. To be able to compete on a level playing field in anything other than a Club or Sports contest requires an inordinately large financial investment. The complexity of data loggers, file processing, etc., seems to intimidate pilots that have never done it before (and many that have done it, struggle with it also!). How can we simplify this chore?

Current economic situation.

Driving time. Family amenities at the site. Cost of both crew/family per diem, and keeping up with the technology. Can you say Clear Nav?

Economy, time, distance to contests.

Emphasize the family friendly venues with water, hiking, fishing, floating, flight instruction nearby.

Expense and time.

Expense and time. The rules are intimidating. Our GTA series of races get people started and hook the prospective pilot, so some are willing to spend the time and money.

For whatever reason, we aren't attracting new people into the sport that could become contest pilots. Most of the pilots who have been in soaring for a long time have decided what their participation is going to be - whether it is local soaring, cross country, or contests. I think that what Karl and Doug have been doing with the 2 place gliders is the most promising for increasing competition pilots. I would like to know if either of them know how many rides have decided to try competition after experiencing it in the back of the DUO.

For younger contestants in particular, it is difficult to take off enough time from work to participate. Participating often means that the only family vacation for the year is a soaring contest. Making soaring sites more family-friendly would help a bit. For example, Uvalde, which is a great soaring site, was never a popular destination for my family in August.

Free time by pilots & free money to fly contests. That is part of why I don't do as much contest flying although I would love to do 2-3 contests a year.

Having contests at sites where the soaring is poor or little to no organized social events. Having to take 2 weeks vacation to fly a Nationals. Make them Sunday thru Saturday like they do in the UK. That way even if it takes 2 days to drive to the site us worker bees only need to take 7 days of vacation instead of 10.

I can see a few. One of the most important is the fact that most of the non-competition pilots look at competition pilots as a self proclaimed elite. Also they tend to believe that most competition pilots are daredevils and contests are NOT safe. This is an easy thing to correct I believe, since education and articles introducing the joy of competition soaring as a way to improve XC skills can correct this... Cost and distance are also a major factor. In my case I have to drive no less than 500 for any regional. 2009 was lucky for me because the Nats were just 500 miles away... so gas, motels and specialty time become an issue. Maybe shorter contests?... more frequent?... smaller regionals...

I did not like the Super Regional ruling and did not compete in Parowan because of it.

I feel strongly that the Sports class as it is currently set up is cutting off some entry into competition. There doesn't seem to be any way to make it competitive - it's dominated by heavy, high performance gliders. Potential new entrants to competition, who are generally flying older, lower performance gliders can't keep up with the high performance ships. In addition, because of the large cylinders that are usually selected to accommodate the range of handicaps, any inexperienced competition pilots won't be flying in the same air as the experienced pilots in the hot ships. So they have limited opportunity to learn from the experienced comp pilots.

I missed this season due to open heart surgery. Having a good number of contests in the local area is key. We had the Standard Class and 15 Meter Nationals on the East Coast in a 15 month period (5 hours from my home). The West Coast is just too far to go.

I think contests are an excellent flying experience. However, the cost/benefit ratio is unfortunately high on the cost side. Not much way to change this as the cost of a competitive ship cannot be realistically reduced. Another cost is the cost of attending a contest where you sit in the rain for a week to maybe fly one or two days. Hard to change this either.... So - in short - I don't have much to add here....cause the nature of competitive flying depends on variables that are not really under the SSAs control. Combine the above with fact that competition directors and contest directors are human and sometimes do not make the correct choices and you have a sport where you have to have great patience and humor to understand why it is fun.

I think for most people the biggest obstacles are time and cost.

I think many new pilots (and returning pilots) are overwhelmed by the technology requirements of competing. For those of us who have matured with the technology the pace of change was much slower and easier to learn as it changed. There is nothing from a rules point of view that can ease this burden, but it might be effective to hold seminars at contests to help with the learning curve. A 30 minute talk each day for the new pilots might help them.

I think you need to be retired, independently wealthy or both to seriously compete on the national level. I know you can spend less money by camping etc but the time commitment is a killer for me.

IMHO, the FAI classes are getting too expensive for many pilots. You now have to have an ASG-29 or a V2c or similar to be at all competitive in 18m and there just aren't that many people willing to shell out \$150K for a glider (I'm certainly not). Even 15/std are \$100K or so for a new glider. I believe the Club class is a great way to get more people racing, as it combines the best of Sports and FAI classes, without breaking the bank. We need more Club Class/Sports Class regionals. I say this, even though my current ride (V2bx) won't fit into Club class (yet).

If you exclude utterly unpredictable but frequent poor weather in the East then irresponsible task setting heads the list. Few of us wish to be sent out on an unrestricted MAT (which is no task at all) in marginal weather with the high probability of landouts. Almost as annoying is the habit of keeping everyone hanging about until an obviously marginal day is finally canned.

Ignorance.

In our club there is a general lack of interest in cross country flying. It's like they paid to join a golf club, paid for instruction, and then only use the driving range and practice green. They don't care about going out on the course. For myself, going out on course was always appealing, amazing and challenging. Do you create that interest or does it just dwell in some people?

In the early 70s a great deal of effort was expended (Soaring symposia, by Byars and Holbrook) that resulted in a massive increase in the skills of pilots and the number of participants. In my own club I have been working for 3 years to increase XC flights. I created a XC-SIG (Special Interest Group) to promote XC flight. In the first year (nothing done yet) we had 6 XC pilots in the OLC. The next year we had 12 then 18 and most recently 22. We have also had 4 new pilots fly in the regionals and several more excited about trying it next year. I think that a concerted effort from the SSA racing community to encourage new pilots through seminars and local support can really improve the numbers. Recently there was an internet conference (out of Boulder CO if I remember) that was wonderful to attend. I really think the Internet can facilitate this effort to grow racing again.

Intimidation, of the lower time pilots, rules and glider disparities, available time, and commitment.

It is an oversimplification, but I think the pool we are pulling from is simply not that large. At our club, there are just not that many pilots who have a combination of the equipment (not just plane, but trailer, flight computer, etc.), the experience, the vacation available, and the personal drive to tackle it. I suspect the key lies not in changing the rules, the costs, etc., but in actively promoting, supporting, and mentoring XC pilots within clubs and at FBOs, to increase the pool we are drawing

from.

Its the economy...!

Lack of a national and regional strategy to promote cross country flying. That is Multiple cross country camps. With more XC pilots you will have more Maybe a mentor an XC pilot program. Imagine if every racing pilot mentored one pilot next season and worked with them on XC skills how many we would have flying in regional races in two years? Allow Team team flying like the europeans do.

Lack of an airplane to fly Lack of sufficient flight experience Contest flying seems to be getting a bad rap from fly around the airport pilots

Lack of club racing,our club is about to disband since we are down to 10 members and do not have enough funds to keep going. Only 3 own their ships, one is 87 and stopped flying.We need a national plan for more soaring clubs so younger poeple can get in the sport.

Lack of confidence and mentoring is the biggest barrier which can be overcome. Having been an organizer and CD for the GTA series, I can see how much is required to get a newbie into racing!

Lack of encouragement from clubs and lack of assistance in getting started in cross country soaring

Lack of new pilots. All the current problems being experienced in our sport can be traced back to this root cause. If we keep ignoring this problem and believe it is not the contest fraternitys responsibility we can only expect ever decreasing participation. All we are doing at present is trying to pour a salve on the symptoms. More participants in the sport, more contestants!

Lack of vacation time Travel distance required Cost In tht order.

Length of contests; travel time and distance; bad weather experiences at nationals when two weeks are committed for only 2-3 days of flying. All nationals should be in central US, period.

Long travel times. Ever increasing expenses. Young people look at shiny \$100,000-180,000 gliders and give up before they start. They dont understand that pilot is the key the key on a glider. In sports class they dont see a chance facing the expensive white fleet. Someone needs to think hard and create a true racing class for people who can not spend \$100,000. I talk to people, perception is the key and that is what people think. I gave up on to be Club Class because I can spend that kind of money, but I was very close to giving it all up and one day I might just do that. I sold my glider to a guy in Australia who bought it to fly in Club Class. He said it is the fastest growing class in Australia and he is many times Australian Champion including in Open class. Maybe there is hope for us to. I would like to see someone on the rules committee who does not own \$100,000 glider. Please think what needs to be done.

Money and a contest-ready ship.

Money, time and weather Attending a Nationals probably now costs \$2500 or more and takes two weeks. Then, when the weather is not good, like it was for a lot of contests in the east this year, it can have a lasting effect into the following years participation. Then, no matter what you say, it is a clubby atmosphere with all the regulars hanging together and the newbies feeling quite intimidated. Many of the pros work hard at trying to make first timers and lower ranked pilots feel part of the group but the feeling is still there. Maybe more could be done by contest organizers to overcome this.

Money, time, chance of winning.

My biggest hurdle was the (incorrect) notion that it would be extremely hard to fly in a contest environment. Another problem (not one I had, though) is people getting the necessary time off from work to fly a contest.

Our Club(Sky Soaring Inc) hosts a Memorial Day weekend Contest for Beginners to get new people interested in flying Contests. The premise is that it is run very much like a Regional but we are more flexible and try to keep things lowkey. We have two tasks each day, one for beginners and one for the advanced pilots. We pair new pilots with mentors and make the entire experience a learning opportunity. We also have a lot of fun. The real barriers are cost(a ship that is suitable, equipment, getting time off work, travelling to Contest site, etc). The perceived barriers are the individuals thinking that they are not good enough or experienced enough to compete. Our local Contest tries to introduce the novice to what a Contest is and how it is flown to get them over that misconception. I hope this idea catches on.

Perhaps too many pilots think that they aren't competitive. So, regionals could include camps for newbies plus Sports Class Rules with more entry level tasks for them. They could have their own class and trophy. Have some of the top pilots that are participating to give the camp talks. We could expand on the DJ briefings that he put together and has shown several times. I would be willing to help and to add to the briefings. Similar to what we are doing in GTA but add the concept to the Regionals and Nationals to get them up to max participation. Limit this class to 10 to say 15 participants and increase or decrease based on participation by the other classes. This group of folks could use whatever logger they want. WE

Pilots entering contests for the wrong reasons.

Rules interpretations and changes. Cost!

Rules overly complicated, sometimes even for scorer. Occasionally do not know daily winner for 2 days. Expensive to attend contest, even a regional. Less overall interest in contest flying. Similar to less overall interest in obtaining FAI badges. Many seem to be satisfied with OLC.

Simple stuff: Non-contest pilots frequently complain that the cost and complexity of flight logging equipment keeps them out of racing. They voice the same complaint with regards to badge and record flying. Assuming that we aren't seeing altered flight logs, we should embrace inexpensive logger options. Requiring ELTs will keep many at the low end out. In the same vein, let's keep the common sense approach with regards to ELTs. Encourage organizers to keep ELTs optional unless the site conditions demand it. I also hear complaints about the complexity of the rules. There is a lot to be said for trying to keep things simple. Not always possible, but a good principle to keep in mind. Not-so-simple stuff (and probably outside the jurisdiction of the rules comm): Encourage cross-country/racing culture in clubs. Too many clubs have draconian restrictions on use of club equipment for x-country or contests.

Some really good soaring sites, such as Perry, New Castle and many others are far from hotels, restaurants etc. Without RVs and/or campers it is difficult to stay for up to 10 days.

The amount of time needed for a contest. I would like to see shorter contests

The biggest barriers are 1) free time, 2) money, 3) equity in racing (will I really be in a class where my ship is competitive, or will I be cannon fodder?).

The classic regional and national contests are just too time consuming for younger pilots and with unpredictable soaring conditions, may lead to a week with great fellowship but little flying. When you look at the participation in the OLC, competition flying has actually increased and would increase at a much more rapid rate if OLC flights and other virtual contests counted toward pilot ranking. Add short weekend contests and we actually have an active competition program already underway but not recognized by the current ranking system.

The cost of participating in any contest is increasing while the disposable income of the average John/Jane Doe is declining. The other barrier - at least for me - is the distance to travel and a not so generous vacation bank. Attending only one National contest wipes out all my paid time off.

The current state of the US economy. However, the biggest barrier is that the SSA is not a marketing driven organization so we cant expect demand for soaring to grow since we dont know how to compete with other sports and interests.

The long drives that make the time commitment for a nationals to be 2+ weeks - this is not realistic for most pilots.

The rules are far too complicated. Scores are no longer comprehensible.

The still is a lack of a real entry-level class. I recently competed in the sports class in a regional competition. All but one of the 18 gliders entered was a modern, high-performance fiberglass glider. All except the Airforce Academy entrants were flown by pilots with many years of experience. Here are some thoughts on creating a real entry-level class: 1. Sports class (or some other entry-level) tasking should be easier, perhaps much easier, so that it is within the reach of less experienced pilots. 2. Common of-the-shelf GPS loggers should be allowed in an entry-level task, removing the barrier of purchasing an expensive logger. 3. Abbreviated contest lengths should be considered for an entry-level class. One idea would be to hold a normal six-day contest, but allow entry-class pilots to count just their best three or four scores. This would accommodate those who can only afford a shorter time away from work. I think it is inevitable that changes that make an entry class more attractive to new pilots will make it less attractive to experienced competitors. I feel, however, that it is a necessary price to pay for increased participation in contest soaring.

The tasks that we fly do not allow much learning by watching anymore. No teamflying is permitted. Radio communication is not permitted. Everybody is out on their own. High registration fees including all tows.

The time and crew commitments needed. Its very difficult to find a crew for an entire contest.

The traditional gap between post-license training and beginning cross-country soaring. If more pilots could be guided across this gap, then perhaps more pilots would be in the pool to begin contest soaring.

The world has changed since the 1950s days of Ozzie and Harriet. Many families have dual wage earners, and dragging a spouse and kids to someplace like Hobbs is less and less appealing. Even supportive spouses struggle to get corresponding vacation time. So, I think we need to consider de-centralizing contests more and more, utilizing approaches like the GTA races and the BGA Ladder in the UK. People need to be able to plan soaring around their lives - not the other way around. A second issue I hear at my club is cost. Even a low budget regionals (i.e. staying in a tent) is more than \$1,000 when you figure in all the expenses. I think theres a price-point for a no-frills regional approach involving smaller turnout (say 10-15) without a big banquet, only using local towplanes, no giveaways, etc.

There are a bunch. your own percieved skill levels too low(dont want to embarrass yourself), limited experience in landing out, courses are laid out to challenge the top pilots which can really intimidate lesser skilled pilots, upper classes are dominated by those with the best equipment(\$\$\$\$), contests require 2 weeks of vacation (some of us have to work), lack of mentoring programs(dont know what to do), stupid, complicated rules concerning data recorders(why cant pilots use inexpensive Garmins)

Time Cost Weather Lack of training/experience opportunities i.e. local 2 or 3 day contests at clubs and operations

Time Convenience Cost (and compressed earnings) = relative expense issues Instant gratification easily available in other cheaper activities Increased job and career pressure - see time. High skill levels required to succeed - large cash investments needed. See cost. OLC has given a competitive outlet that fits into people schedule much more easily as opposed to contests. Improved forecasting means pilots only fly on good days and will pick the best days to maximise their flying time (not their

flying skills)

Time and Money! Also, our sport is decreasing in numbers. If it were not for the Sports Class, regional contests would be a thing of the past. Our SSA does not do a good job of advertising. This could be a money problem but our sport is largely unknown. Gliders are expensive and there are fewer used gliders because new ones are not being imported. Many have gone to Europe because of the exchange rate. Flying has decreased overall in power also. Young people have too many other options and pressures to work harder and take less time off. This is the same problem they have in Europe. The core glider pilot is getting older.

Time and cost (And Time equals cost and vice-versa). By the way, the only races I've flown have been Region 5 North and South. Both have been well attended the times I've flown them.

Time and costs.

Time and expense required to participate.

Time and money are at the top of the list. The lack of large blocks of free time, especially, is what is thinning the herd at all levels of soaring. The natural aging of the older generation of contest pilots is going to leave a void hard to fill. Time and money are what constrain the thirty forty and fifty year olds and time probably more than money. Today's Dad, a 30, 40 or 50 year old has got a full time job and his weekend is filled with family activities. Some of these guys can't even find the time to play golf. They go to a kids soccer game instead. Learning to fly gliders is just out of the question. Today's Dad is not even a glider pilot, let alone a cross country pilot, let alone a contest pilot. Now try finding a Mom or even just a wife who wants to use her free time serving as crew. Times have changed. Soaring is for single guys or empty nesters with understanding wives. Working with what we do have, maybe 5 or 6 thousand guys and a couple of dozen girls who even fly gliders occasionally, the best hope of increasing contest participation is at the club level. These are guys who already know how to fly and could, in theory, take the next step toward contest flying -- like getting a silver badge. Thinking of these guys as the pool we have to work with, I think the barrier for them is either inadequate resources at the club level or maybe even some resistance to the whole notion of cross country flying coming from other club members or old guard leaders in the club who don't want to put the equipment at risk or inconvenience the majority by allowing a few members to keep the ships flying over the traditional one hour level. My suggestion is to try to seed some clubs with contest pilots. Get some weekend mini contests going in the clubs, short tasks around areas with airports and great landing fields. Maybe get something going on the OLC for club class only so these guys can post and compare themselves to guys just like them who fly in the same environment but elsewhere. The data loggers would have to be cheap and portable. There are probably efforts something like I am trying to describe going on at various clubs throughout the country. The SSA might be able to publicize these efforts and increase awareness or even foster competition.

Time availability. A lot of contests are a long ways from Texas.

Time away from job and family. Fear of looking stupid. Not really knowing the tactics for a given situation/task. Not being asked. By which I mean simply that an invitation, in person, is more likely to receive a positive response than an announcement of a schedule.

Time constraints Money constraints

Time off from work. Expense keeps going up. Younger folks find other things to do.

Time off from work; Cost to travel; All are barriers. Some kind of variant using the OLC system to encourage racing for speed rather than distance out of pilots local airport might encourage more to participate in contest soaring.

Time required to attend National contests is the main issue. Today's world demands more from pilots regarding work and family commitments, not allowing the luxury of taking weeks off at a time to

compete.

Time requirements. Lack of smaller regional feeder contests, at least in the west.

Time, Cost and Driving Distance

Time/Money/family obligations

Too complicated, too old fashioned, too much technology required, too competitive for the average pilot to consider even as a learning experience.

Too expensive in time and money. Rules are horribly complex.

Too much driving versus flying. Contests are being scheduled during periods of poor weather for logistical reason like school out - Harris Hill this year, Hobbs most years.

Traditionally, contest rules have favored high wing loading gliders (even when not carrying ballast.) Sports class has had success despite the issues of handicapped values.

Travel costs and time off availability - Splitting across weekends certainly helps the locals but discourages everyone else. It also REALLY drags it out. One of the best things about a contest, from a learning standpoint, is that it is a concentrated period of flying with few distractions. Splitting over multiple weekends takes away from that advantage.

Very few beginner contests. Cost in time and cash to get to the favored sites. Difficulty in finding crew. Perceived complexity of rules. Perception that very expensive gliders are required, especially destructive to sports class.

Very talented pilots dont ever compete because they think that it is beyond their ability or expertise (wrong). Incidentally, and since you didnt provide space for 3.0 or 3.1, ALL motorized planes should be banned from sailplane competitions. These so-called MOTORgliders are not sailplanes, and their pilots are not mentally flying a sailplane. Please, PLEASE stop the participation of these things in our contests, unless they de-activate the motor and thus fly a real glider. No exceptions. MOTORGLIDERS ARE NOT SAILPLANES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

We do not have middle age pilots. A lot of older ones who are slowing down. Very young ones who cant afford the time and money to have the equipment. But we lost the middle age due to lack of recruitment at the young age a while back. We just need more 30-40 year old pilots.

Weekday time off to participate. Split weekends should help this, but only for those within about 200 miles of the site. People are most happy when they have something to complain about. I would fly a contest, but I have to buy a logger. There are some darn cheap options, but some require you to do a little work or learn some stuff. People arent as willing to learn as they use to be. Now, they have to be taught everything.

conflicting schedules (all contests seem to be in a few week period) Bad weather resulting in too few flying days or forcing to fly on very marginal days

cost

time off and willing club members to participate with

topless wing runners from the local hooters would increase participation.

4.5: Comments for questions 4.1 - 4.4

(4.4) yes: radio use, inconsistent penalty enforcement. Also Jacobs and Striedeck at start gate, Chester 15-meter nationals way back (they were caught and penalized)...

1. Simplify the rules! They are way too complicated at the regional level you will get many more beginning racing pilots to compete if they can use OTS gps units for scoring. No one can understand them yet alone figure out if they have a problem or if their score is even correct. 2. Go back to finish gates or use more Grand prix style racing get the people on the ground back into the racing.

4.1 If you make it possible for the cheaters... it will happen. Happened with cameras, it will happen with loggers. Im not smart enough to figure it out, but there are a lot that are. 4.4 Radio Comm initiated by pilot to crew that was a discussion of status of other pilots in the interest of safety. However, normally ive seen very good sportsmanship.

4.1 For nats we should use approved loggers, but for regionals we should allow all the way to COTS.

4.1 If you exclude the SN10 I will cease participating. 4.4 I have observed pre-arranged team flying in regionals.

4.1 We should require IGC loggers. The cost of a backup logger is not significant compared to the cost of our sport at the national level. An SN10 could be allowed as a backup IF the CD supervised the download as I do not believe that the file can be manipulated inside the unit. Also, there are the in-betweeners such as the Flarm that is IGC approved up to Diamond badge but not world records. These should be allowed. 4.5 Cell phones now can pick up Nexrad and airport metar data and units such as AV8OR can have weather download. These should be allowed. Being able to get a complete weather picture is a safety issue and we cannot prevent people from downloading it on their cell phone unless we ban cellphones with will not happen. If we get FLARM, which we are working on, we will be able to see other gliders. Would this constitute team flying? FLARM should be required in contests, especially at the nationals.

4.1: IGC approved FRs are cheap insurance. 4.4: I have witnessed OUTRAGEOUS radio comm cheating in Nationals comps in the past, revealed by use of scanner on crew radio. This was some time ago, however the offending pilots are still competing. The will to cheat is certainly present.

4.4 Have observed files not being turned in because they would show that flight had entered restricted or other closed airspace. User claimed that file could not be downloaded. This carries its own penalty in that 0 points are given for that flight but avoids the penalty points. Somewhat academic in that 0 points for the day is a huge penalty.

4.4 Many years ago during the hey day of large nationals, I strongly suspected that pilots were collaborating on VHF radio alternative frequencies. Dont think that this is so much of a problem now that massive gaggles are infrequent with the use of independent thinking and TATs. In general, I would say No to questions 4.4 particularly with respect to banned equipment and preferential treatment.

4.4 Specific incident occurred over 10 years ago

4.4 world team members practicing team flying during nationals

A careful review of the log and of the trace on the ground can detect cheating.

A person whose ego would lead them to cheating, probably wont fly worth a crap anyway. Is there really a problem with cheating? Very few of the pilots I know would even begin to have the skills to manipulate the log files.

Although I have not had any concerns over the validity of log files, it would get very messy if someone were accused of tampering. At Regional contests we want to encourage participation and remove barriers, so should allow any log file submitted in .IGC format. At a National-level contest, the

pilots take things more seriously and IGC-approved loggers should be the norm simply to eliminate protest potential.

Any perception that competitors at national level are sufficiently obsessed with winning that they would try to cheat is another turn-off to new potential competitors. If the rules suggest this is the case, the perception is fostered.

As long as the user can provide some method to demonstrate that her/his log is secured... that should be enough. To be fairly honest and having IT background myself, it is not trivial (for mortal users) to cheat these devices... I do believe however that this is a sport where the honor system must prevail. Having said that I believe that tough penalties should exist to anyone caught cheating... like permanent banning from record and competition flying!....

Assume the best about people because most won't do the above. Those that do will eventually be found out even if we don't do all the above things.

At the 18 Meter Nationals, in Ephrata, the CD allowed one motor glider pilot to keep his artificial horizon in his instrument panel. The pilot simply told the CD that it was disabled, yet the National rules clearly state that it must be removed, which it wasn't. Rule 6.6.1. I am seeing more Blackberrys which can be used in-flight to check pre-programmed websites which then makes it very easy and fast to use.

COTS units or COTS plus logger unit (Winpilot, SeeYou, GNII etc with secure file logging) should be allowed for all U.S. contests and badges. Let the FAI deal with world records but don't tie us to their expensive approaches. Both secure and COTS units are subject to manipulation and the pilot who really wants to cheat can find a way with either unit. For example a simple hidden switch on the GPS antenna or simply disconnecting it will cause the GPS unit of a secure data logger to lose signal for up to 5 minutes while the pilot violates airspace and then turns on or reconnects the antenna when clear of the airspace.

Comment to 3.1 My motor glider Ventus2cm is heavy and flies like it has 1/2 water compared to my old Ventus2c. In order to use my engine I must deploy it at 1000 feet AGL in order to insure a safe landing if the engine does not start. Therefore my saves are at a higher level than with the 2c and light air days are very tough. I feel that the engine is a disadvantage, but my wife loves it. I don't fly over unlandable terrain without enough altitude since my engine may not start and I will die. Perception should not be used to make rules, facts should have MG done better than others?

Even the perception that cheating is relatively easy and could be happening is damaging.

Fear of cheating is way over-emphasized and is extremely hard to do in a contest environment. Enabling more use of less expensive (but less secure) loggers may help more to participate.

For Nationals, I don't feel it is unreasonable to expect pilots at this level to have a sealed logger.

Has the issue of logger security been proven to be a recurring problem, or is this a solution looking for a problem?

I am not sure of the technical details or security, but logs from programs such as XC Soar are now allowed on the OLC. Would it be possible to allow this type of log for those who do not wish team selection?

I believe I have seen use of water ballast by one pilot in one no-water contest. Generally, I don't think cheating at contests is a serious issue. In 15 years of contest flying that is the only instance I can think of. It could be happening without my knowledge, but I doubt it. We fly for fun. What is the point of cheating? Reducing the costs of contest flying (even without the ability to get seeding points for national and international contests) is a reasonable compromise justifying low cost, non-secure loggers.

I believe that any IGC log that has a validator should be approved. Basically, if the OLC will accept it (even with a blue V) then it should be acceptable for normal contest scoring. However, I have no problems with the current rule that those being considered for a national team position MUST use an IGC approved logger.

I believe that most of us fly for the fun of it. Whoever needs to cheat to ruin this fun for themselves may cheat.

I believe that there has been radio communication between pilots on an unauthorised frequency.

I dont believe that cheating is a major problem. I also dont know enough about programming and flight log files to know how long or how hard it would be for someone to tamper with one.

I dont think cheating is a problem. But if it is, the solution is extraordinarily simple: secure loggers, end of problem. Hmm... now that you mention radio communications... We have a serious problem in the US and that is the active discouragement to team flying. I have been to many regionals, and done quite well at times. I have also flown with success at national level in this country. That said, I have suffered significantly while competing overseas due to the complete lack of team-flying skills. Look at the score sheets... who wins consistently? The good team-flyers. France, Germany, UK, Poland. I have had this conversation with folks infinitely more experienced than me (e.g. George Moffat) and they agree that this is a serious issue. For US soaring to flourish anywhere other than the US I suggest that a change is needed in that respect.

I have never seen anyone cheat in 25 yrs of flying. Peer pressure , fear of being caught and the difficulty of doing this in time to meet the documentation interval all work against this being an issue.

I have seen a missed turn point(GPS)by a top pilot, ignored! I have seen a bad photo defence by a top pilot, ignored! I have seen a low finish penalty by a top pilot reversed and points given back after the CD came back from a short stay in the hospital. This CD is no longer with us.

I have seen another pilot edit their .igc file prior to submission a few years ago. I was amazed at how easy it was to do. I think in this one case it was not a big deal. I think since then winscore has added some security checks that might detect this but Im not sure about that. Why do we keep giving preferential treatment to pilots with old CAI recorders?

I have witnessed a very highly-ranked pilot treated deferentially by a CD. To add insult to injury, this same CD dismissed without any justification a protest relative to the first sentence of this comment. The result was that lower-ranked pilots felt discrimination. Any dismissal of a protest should be well-explained to all contestants.

I have witnessed illegal radio usage and electronic weather devices in cockpits. I PHONE APPS.

I know that some pilots team fly, which is legal if they do not communicate. I suspect some go as far as share information on a discrete frequency.

I noticed that team flying seemed to be more prevalent this year. I imagine it is extremely difficult to detect off frequency radio usage so why not do as the europeans do - just allow it. I do believe it gives an advantage to the people who are participating in the team flying but until there is an effective means of preventing it I cant think of what else to do.

I suspect some may have flown heavier than technically allowed

I suspect some unethical use of radio and or weather data, but I would not say it is widespread.

I think our insistence on special loggers is creating a significant barrier to contest soaring participation (see above). I cant imagine what would motivate a contest pilot to cheat in this way. Im

pretty sure its not the prize money.

I would hope that this sport would eventually be more self-regulated as is the sport of golf and the consequence of cheating remains high.

IGC approved loggers arent that expensive. Why take a chance that someone would try something underhanded?

IMHO, there is no reason to back off on the current flight log security requirements for national competitions. I havent seen any evidence at all of any attempts to manipulate a flight log, but Ill bet you would start seeing it not too long after removing the All Flights/All Badges requirement. A Volkslogger or a EWMR is less than \$1000, or less than 1% of the cost of a modern racing glider. Regarding any other kind of cheating or favoritism, I tend to see behavior in the other direction - i.e. pilots who go out of their way to point out mistakes that, when corrected, reduce their own scores/standings.

It is going to get harder and harder to ban access to electronic information such as weather. We are going to be in real trouble when someone is hurt/killed and claims that this information could have avoided the accident. It will become a safety issue.

It is very easy to alter an IGC file to avoid a height penalty or to hit a barely missed cylinder. Many pilots look at the file in their computers prior to turning it in. While I have not witnessed any such manipulation, I suspect that it can and does occur...

Ive witnessed pilots in cloud prior to the start.

Keep the answers confidential, but I think wed ALL like to know if even one person has seen or suspected cheating in our sport. Im completely oblivious to it if its happened here in the US recently.

Keep the time requirement for submitting flight data to the scorer short, or strenghten the physical chain of custody at the contest airport???? Though if someone wanted to modify the data while still in the air, they could create a process to do so maybe.

Limiting loggers to those carrynig IGC appvl will, again, add to the cost & complexity of racing. See response 2.5 #3

Most of our pilots can barely download their loggers. Those who have the will and skills necessary to cheat will find a way regardless of the rules. The cheating Ive witnessed is of two forms: in the camera days, some pilots received full credit for outrageous TP photos. Sometimes other pilots protested, often not. More recently, scorers have worked with pilots to get them credit for flights they actually made but for which there were small problems (e.g., a broken security seal, a non-approved backup logger). I dont view this as cheating in the classic sense (i.e., breaking the rules to advance ones position unfairly), but it is a violation of the rules.

Off freq comm used to be quite frequent. Use of inflight cell phones should be available for safety reasons including texting crew of imminent landing and location.

P3 here. Ive made my position on this very clear. Preventing cheating (which I do believe is a legitimate concern) is a relatively easy exercise. I believe that far-and-away the greatest risk is somebody wanting to get rid of one or two pesky fixes in prohibited airspace or eliminating that nasty little start height penalty. These issues can be managed by a)requiring downloads of COTS units to be done in the presence of the scorer (i.e. in the scoring shack) b) using one of the units that has an associated security algorithm or c) having the trace downloaded by the scorer. Obviously, we want to minimize the impact on scoring, but the more we rely on a technology solution to avoid this, the less we adhere to the goals of COTS. In terms of manipulating hardware, there are few people who would be capable, fewer still who would have the desire, and finally many ways to catch this after the fact. My offer to run with this stands, but it needs to be organized and given a proper charter by the RC.

Q 4.1 While it may be ok to require loggers to qualify for IGC approval the loss of a physical seal during a contest should not result in loss of points. The Cambridge 302 has been known to give spurious security failures. Q 4.4 Violation of legal cloud separation requirements is common at all contests that are not blue. Giving penalties for flying legally within 400ft of airspace makes no sense when a blind eye is turned to flying in the base of clouds. No, I dont know how to enforce this, but it is cheating, and a serious safety issue.

Radio comm. Also, not exactly along this line, but I have a real problem with pilots flying over red line. I will not do this(prefer to be safe), and threfore I am at a disadvantage!

Radio commuication between pilots. CD not penalizing a pilot (perhaps a friend?) but saying the next pilot to commit the same offence will be penalized.

Radio communication

Reduce the cost of required equipment to play and perhaps more will participate. Implement a reduced land time to file turn in policy for any Non IGC approved file (30 mins?). This could be similar to the weight-in policy currently in place for the top 5 finishers. If a Non IGC approved log is in the top five their log needs to be turned in within x mins after landing the next day?

Security tape placed over ports/panels by CD/designee should assuage all concerns (this may require CD/designee to perform or observe transfer of data).

Soaring is like golf - the participants fly by the rules and for the most part, do not knowing violate rules to better their position in the contest. When a pilot violates the safety of other participants, the CD always handled that problem to my satisfaction.

Suspect team radio use, live weather feeds

While I dont believe that cheating is going on, secruce loggers are getting less expensive and many SN10 users are driving the instrument with approved loggers, so requiring FAI approved logger is probably a good idea for National and Regional contests.

While not willing to name names, there have been a few instances where I strongly suspect organized team flying has taken place. Can we stop non-verbal team flying? I do not know how, but it is easy enough to come to an agreement between pilots to folow a team strategy without using the radio or other means. And on another issue, using inflight Wx data is just a matter of time before it determines who wins/loses the tricky days.

Who cares? Cheaters are all caught in the end. If cheating to win in our sport is so important to an individual that person needs help not a penalty. I can understand cheating for financial gain but cheating to get ones peers approval is just a sickness.

With respect to 4.1, allow COTS and SN-10 if Official Observer with triple diamond badge signs.

i am aware of extracurricular radio communication, but not concerned. the biggest concern is having enough pilots show up for the contests. pilots focused on bending the rules are only fooling themselves.

motor gliders are heavy and are not competaive on weak days. they never win so penalty not necessary. i have both and never us motor one in contest.

radio communication (Q4.4) to gain an advantage is an issue. Hard/impossible to enforce - could use non-aviation band radios, for instance. Also have seen preferential treatment.

the IGC syatem is pretty good cheating by manipulating files is difficult for most, except the computer

experts and there are a few, but to do this at the contest sight with little time available to do this would be quite challenging.

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?

A (low) finish line should be illegal at active GA airports. In fact, having a finish altitude below pattern altitude (and within the airport traffic area) should be illegal at active GA airports (Hobbs is not an active GA Airport, for example) unless the airport is NOTAMd closed except for the contest usage.

CD demanded that all landings be made long to keep runway clear. A low time pilot flew off the end of runway and destroyed his bird. Recommend all CDs be rated pilots! JJ

Changes of task should be no later than 15 min before starts. Creation of new task should be no later than 30 min before starts. No 1 TP MAT tasks please, we should know gliders aspected path. 1 TP MAT is same dangerous like PST.

Changing tasks in the air is dangerous. Please stop doing it. Restricting pilot communication is also dangerous. Pilots often turn off their radios after the start or they are too afraid to use them even for safety.

Contests in some areas, (eg Reno, NV), should require transponders.

Ensuring that the rule regarding launching the fleet within a certain period ( 1 hour I think ) is complied with . I participated in a contest this past year standing on the hot runway moving my sailplane forward slowly to the take off point for almost 2 hours before t/o due to insufficient tow planes ( on several days ) . Very unsafe from a pilot overheating/dehydrating point of view before t/o.

Flying above red line!

Flying on very marginal days may place pilots at the extreme limits of their ability to be safe. This is an inherent problem in glider contests. That pilot can of course opt not to fly but the pressure is on so many probably push beyond where they should. Elmira this year saw some of this in my opinion. RE Club Class above, no place to put an opinion but I am not in favor of diluting the current Sports Class

Gliders at cloud base above 10,000ft where minimum legal separation is 1,000ft below.

I have seen tasks declared with the grid full and towplanes warmed up. Its a bit late and I am sure some pilots will not push off and wait for launch, even if they do not feel ready.

I think a local crop report should be included in all contest packages. Contest level pilots do understand how to land off-field, but they may not be familiar with the crops in the fields at a contest far from their home. When we have local weekend events we make sure to brief all pilots on the local crops (because some of them are very damaging, e.g. tobacco) before anyone flies. Having off field landing as a suggested safety topic is great, but depending on that to warn pilots of dangerous local crops is too late.

I think the 500 foot finish cylinder is an excellent addition. However, pilots need to be advised that, while it allows more latitude in the subsequent pattern than a line finish, it does not create a situation that leads to standard patterns. This point is especially important for new contest pilots.

I would insist that CDs use a nearby steering turnpoint for all cylinder finish gates. The multiple direction finishes when using a small finish gate (i.e. 2 miles or smaller), especially when a MAT is called in sports class, is one of our last remaining truly dangerous situation IMHO.

It continues to be risky in thermals and FLARM should be considered seriously as a requirement for

contest flying, especially at the Nationals. The unit cost will be about \$650 and also functions as a primary logger or back-up logger.

Marginal towing (density altitude plus tailwind => dodging semis on the highway off the end of the runway). How about suggesting strongly that forecast take-off density altitude is included in all weather briefings - to keep this in peoples heads ?

NO

New transponders on the market are smaller, lower cost and have much lower current consumption. The reasons for not installing a transponder are gone now. All cross country gliders should now have one so that we do not have a glider collision with public air transport. The best avenue for beginning such a transition in the United States is to require transponders in sanctioned contests.

No

No.

No.

No.

No.

Nope.

Nope.

People circling opposite all others in gaggles. In one recent contest we spoke with the pilot in question he said that he favored only turning one direction and that was the way it was! It was scary at times.

People keep flying in the clouds before the start when the CD does not take the time/trouble to set the start height appropriately.

Pre-start gaggles at or above cloudbase - illegal, stupid, unfair, and dangerous and easily resolved by

setting the start gate height below cloudbase. Changing the task in the air, a safety breach presided over by the Rules Committee who have it in their power to end this absurd practice.

Safety seems to be paramount with the contest organizers where I fly. The only safety related issues are the thankfully rare cases of poor thermalling etiquette/skills. Even that has been less of a problem since the one geezer who tried to kill me every year retired from racing.

Setting start circle heights high so that essentially everyone congregates at cloud base before the start (this led to some very intense gaggles at Cordele this year, marginal weather causes this) CDs should be highly encouraged to use a start gate height lower than cloud base or top of lift so that starts out the top are usable option.

Some CDs continue to use finish lines rather than 1-mile 500AGL cylinders. I understand fully that finish lines are more fun for spectators and pilots, but there is a reason we went to the cylinder - we keep killing pilots with the finish line. The next one we kill will likely lead to a lawsuit, where our own policy of preferring a 1-mile cylinder will be used by the plaintiff as prima facie evidence of malfeasance, and maybe grounds for criminal charges. Another issue is the resistance to expanding the safety finish cylinder beyond 5 miles (with a commensurate increase in altitude). There is no logic to this, and there is every reason to not motivate pilots to press on into a thunderstorm to get to an arbitrarily set 5-mile line.

The Safety Finish can, in fact, act as a dangerous magnet to attract pilots into the 5 mile finish area (2007 sports class nats at Caesar Creek). This rule needs to be modified to allow the CD to determine the radius. Once the safety finish is invoked it should remain in effect for the rest of the day regardless of the current weather to give all pilots an equal task opportunity.

Why do we require a high energy finish at 1000 while we encourage/require low energy returns to the field at 500 due to the 2000 standard contest tow? For many sites in the west, 2000 is just too low, and this is affecting lower performance sports class ships, perhaps with less experienced pilots, the most. Either the drop point needs to be restricted to within 4 sm, or the release altitude needs to be raised proportionally as the drop point is further out. If the drop point drifts further away during the tow, then the release altitude should be raised to be fair. Yes I know that the launch will take longer, but this is a safety issue.

Would like to see the safety finish be flexible enough to be expanded to 10mile or possibly even larger. We have Turn Areas at 30 miles to be able to avoid storms, how about bigger than 5 miles to avoid a storm at the home field?

Yes. The CD should be allowed to expand the safety finish when weather conditions warrant. Ive been in two contests where the safety finish was activated, pilots treated it as meaning the finish was accessible with a five mile circle, when in fact it was very dangerous due to an active thunderstorm in the area. Giving the CD the authority to expand the safety finish circle when safety concerns warrant, with an increase in minimum required height for a good finish, would provide a means to avoid this problem. This is a serious accident waiting to happen.

i think the start circle rule should allow starting anywhere in the circle to spread things out. At Montague I had two near misses. The issue of bumping through caggles is a non existent problem.

no

no

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?

1. Allow a longer period and higher deposit requirement for contests. Too many no shows. This makes it very difficult to plan for a contest and to at least break even. 2. The scoring system is broken for devalued days. We now see pilots with speeds of twice or more of the other pilots only getting 10% to 15% more points. The minimum points for speed should be lower in those cases. I agree with Steve Koerner on this. From Rec.aviation.soaring: Over the last several years I've found it quite annoying that I cannot read the rules and understand the US scoring formula. The calculation of US scores has become encumbered with so many correction factors, devaluation factors and the like that mere mortals cannot relate soaring performance to score results. It did not use to be that way. Day 5 preliminary scores for the ongoing US Standard class nationals at Montague are showing that the current complex scoring formula generates ridiculous results. The winning performance was a 217 mile flight at 72.50 mph (congratulations David Greenhill). The second place speed of 61.30 mph received 85% of the winners score for a speed which was 15% slower. So far, OK. Then a bizarre compression comes into play for slower finishers. The seventh place pilot flew a mere 67 miles at 23.33 mph and received 76% of the winners score. That's absurd. He flew only about one third of the speed and distance that the second place finisher flew yet scored a mere 70 fewer points. We need to completely scrap the present over-elaborated scoring equations and get back to a scheme for scoring that is both simple and understandable. The simple scoring protocol of yore may have produced minor inequities at times; but, there was never anything as crazy as the scoring we're generating right now at the US nationals.

1. Trash the current devaluation scoring schemes. It is necessitating too much complication in the rules. 2. Disallow adjusting sunset time. Racing should be allowed to true sunset. 3. Remove 500 ft padding to airspace above. 4. Require AST tasking except when T-storm potential is high. 5. Eliminate MAT task which is now rarely used.

1. Average pilots score after 3 days at the unofficial Cordelle contest was larger than the 6 day official contest at Elmira. Conclusion: Cordelle should have counted. 2. CDs consistently still do not make TAT max lengths long enough (especially when large parts of the circles go over unusable task area which severely limits actual max length available). Scoring correction for pilots doing max distance is a poor bandaid and is not the answer. The should be 130% in the rules is not strong enough, move the 150% length guideline into the rules from the guide to the rules and say something about usable task area. 3. The first half of Ephreta, the tasks were too short to be of nationals calibre. The 4 hour standard task time should promoted more. Maybe have anything less than 4 hours devalued. The days were long enough that even 5 hr tasks could easily have been called. One pilot took a photo flight at 9 am to find 3 knots and we didnt launch till close to 1pm that day. 4. We lost at least 1, possibly 2 days, at Cordelle by calling the day off early. One day was called off before pilots meeting, only to have a good day appear. I think, at least at the Nationals level that every contest should have a poll taken that has the pilots rating of CD actions. These polls should be reviewed by the people selecting CDs for future contests. 5. The minimum start height penalty of 25 points should be removed as too severe. Just make it linear like finish penalty. 6. Scoresheets should be published with start and finish times and heights etc. Leo has done this but cant post it unless Winscore fixes something, please contact Leo and get the changes made. 7. Start cylinders should be mostly in areas of usable task area. At Ephreta, the cylinder was only partly in the good air and this forced a lot of climbing outside cylinder and this meant that a lot of people knicked the cylinder at one optimum point (creating some unsafe conditions). The reason given that the start cylinder was there was that it always has been. 8. The rules guide should discourage tasks with legs that are out and returns. At Ephreta we had one task that was like a O&R and then Out again. They were large circles but most people fly centerline and I know of two close calls that day. Head on cruising with another glider at 110 knots is very unsafe. 9. Rest days should be removed, a leftover from straight out distance days. Both Montague and Ephreta had rest days on incredible soaring days. Ephreta was done just to have July 4th off while the 5th was predicted to be less soarable and in fact we lost the 5th as it was not a day because of weather. 10. RE: Open Class Day 5 and Standard Class Day 5 at Montague and the question of who should receive maximum distance points. John Good has already sent his thoughts to the rule committee but I would like the Rules committee to review my thoughts about Johns thoughts: I really believe that your (Johns) rescoring as though it were a WGC is not a valid comparison. The tasks called in a WGC would require a slow finisher to generally fly about the same distance as a fast finisher, whereas we have tasks where a finisher could fly as little as 25% of most other people. WGC

does not use MATs where a finisher can fly about 25% (see Open Day 5) of the distance of the best finishers distance. It is one thing to get max distance points if someone flies 33% of the speed of the best finishers speed if he flies close to the same distance, but 33% of the speed AND 25% of the distance is just wrong to receive max distance points. I also believe that, for properly called AATs, a similar problem can exist. Max distance set to 150% of expected winning speed and min distance set to 50% of winners speed, gives a possible min/max ratio of .33. I strongly believe that for all finishers in all types of tasks that your distance points should be multiplied by (your dist/ best dist). I believe that this would change contest strategy for the better. I believe start gate roulette will be lessened. I believe that people will end up using more of the day to complete their tasks. It was frustrating for me to see that in Montague, everyone would generally wait a long time to start, and then they came home early just because the CD called a 3, 3 1/2 or even 4 hr task when the days went on for hours after people landed. Just slicing out the best 3 hrs (or the tasks min time) of the day for the winning flight is counter to finding the best pilot. Especially in the nationals where going to the worlds means competing during all parts of the day. The final irony in the Open day 5 was that the finisher with 25% of the best finishers distance also devalued the day by coming home for his relight. Dale Kramer

3.1 = either some kind of penalty, or don't score them to where they start their engine. Score them to a point which is a reasonable max L/D glide to an approved landing point (where they would get an airport bonus or such). That would equate them to the pilot who is only willing to land at approved (bonus point) locations.

3.1 Although there might be merit in the above arguments, there are also some disadvantages: 1. Much more difficult to make a low save safely. Granted, this could be arguable, but I think that most pilots will operate the way I do: In my previous non motorized sailplane, I would plan and fly a landing pattern in such a way as to cover as much new ground as possible and have successfully and safely made low saves from just a few hundred feet. In the motorglider, I have to commit to starting it much higher. On several occasions in the last few years, I have started the engine only to enter a thermal a few seconds later. 2. Unable to dump ballast in weak conditions. As for the argument that a self retrieve results in a more rested pilot: Should we provide a penalty to the contestant with a motorhome? This person can sleep in a comfortable bed while the crew drives home from a long retrieve. I think we could come up with many more scenarios where a wealthy or well connected contestant can gain advantages during a retrieve.

A worst day issue is a Regional issue and not a rules committee issue, isn't it? Try to return the rules to race by and not control by. Many have simply stopped coming because it's much easier and affordable for them to not only have fun posting their flights on the OLC, they can also be home at night, choose the weather they wish to fly in and see how they are doing against the top guys in their area. Why should they now go to a contest and spend a lot of money with no chance of winning. On the OLC, the USA shows 940 pilots. The top 100 appear to have the largest grouping of more than 30 flights per pilot. After you drop down from the top 100, the number of flights per pilot does start to drop off. Regionals and Nationals are expensive. The money saved by not going to a contest will pay for many home aero tows. The OLC doesn't have scoring formulas that are hard to understand, along with minor and major penalties. The world economy is in hard times and for many they don't have the extra bucks to play with. Even new sailplane orders have dropped off. Most of you are doing just fine and I, again, say thanks for your time.

At regional contests, there is a tendency for the CD to make turn areas very large for the FAI classes, eg 30sm. This takes away from a race type format and makes it more like cross-country and OLC flying. There has been a general move away from AST. FAI contest pilots like a race format. Having one large area (25mi) is ok to make us think. Also, the MAT is being used as a bail-out task rather than a thinking task. Finally, THE MAJOR SAFETY ISSUE AT CONTESTS, in my opinion, is CDs creating a task in the air before a start. This causes head-down programming and requires mental energy that is needed in a crowded start gate. This never occurs in Europe. The CD should give a primary task and two alternate tasks at the pilot meeting. If a day falls apart, a new task could be called BEFORE the launch of the class. In this case, 30 minutes need to be allowed for equipment reprogramming and task study before the first launch. At Region 9n, the class was launched and as soon as the last glider (me) was launched, a new task was called while I was still climbing off tow!. There was not an excuse

for this as the day was clearly overcalled before the launch.

Before encouraging worst day adjustment at a regional please score a full past year of Regionals using worst day adjustment and publish the results so interested parties can see how the standings would have changed if the rule had been applied. I accept it may not be fully valid as some pilots leave after a landout but its better than no data. The current rules allow me to carry more than one logger and to set the sampling interval differently on each. It would not be cheating to submit the slow sample rate log if the fast sample rate log had included an airspace or start height violation but the long sample rate log did not. If there were no violations the fast sample log would yield more distance so I'd submit that one. Should the rules require a specific logger sample rate for contests? Thanks for all the work that goes in to this survey! Andy (GY)

Do the rules need to address the option for a CD to declare a days scores to be dropped due to a pilot or pilots not getting to make a start. Though not at Parowan, the echoes from it impacted other contest participation. Also, the option to cancel a day after starting should be clarified as to what can be done and what is the procedure.

Eliminate \$150 deposit required of organizers. Make TAT primary task. Eliminate AT. Poll pilots on spending of sanction fee fund.

For Sports class if possible a weather handicap. Out west a rock can score better than a Nimbus 2 in sports, but on a weak day the Nimbus 2 will get around. Thas not good if you own a N2 and live out west! Visa versa. I think it is done in England.

For the club class Worlds, I think restricting past World competitors puts the US team at a disadvantage. The rules and selection procedure should allow the best and most qualified pilots to go to the worlds.

I am against penalizing motorgliders. I fly one and from my experience, the pros and cons even things out. for instance, my heavy wing loading is a disadvantage on a weak day. I never assume the engine will start, never! The requirement to start the engine right off tow and to return to the launch area and altitude is task saturation at the worst most crowded time. When done on a weak day or with a low overcast it can be positively dangerous. I also see no evidence that pilots of motorgliders are winning more races. Do the scoresheets show that occurring? A motorglider reduces the risk of damage or injury if it starts. Should we be penalized for making the sport safer??

I favor having a club class nationals, but I think there needs to be more than one regional club class event per year before we can support having a national level contest.

I flew 8 contests this year, (9 if I get to Fairfield next week), and I was pretty pleased with the way the rules are set up these days (with the exceptions noted above). Interestingly, only two of these (Perry & 15m nats) were ballasted contests and all the rest were dry. IMHO, water ballasted contests do nothing at all except cause everyone more grief. Also interesting was the rarity of speed tasks - I think I only flew one or two the entire season. I also flew in two contests with combined classes (Region 10 had combined 15/18) and Ionia (R6N?) had combined std/15/18. This worked out well, I think, although I think the current 2% differential between 15 & 18 is too small, especially at higher wing loadings. A fully ballasted ASG-29 or V2C is going to be more than 2% faster than a fully ballasted V2b or ASW-27. I would think the handicap should be 2% for a dry contest, and 4% for a ballasted contest. The current 2% for 15/std should still work, as both these classes fly in the same wing loading range. Of course, I could be a wee bit biased ;-)

I found the club class questions confusing. In general, Im concerned that the Club Class is diluting the Sports Class at a time when its already hard to assemble a good field for national and regional contest. I dont see the case as having been made for the existence of yet another class.

I race a Duo Discus. I cant race in a club class. If there was a two seater class, I would race in it. The problem is that there arent enough two-seaters to make up a class. If club class is scored in our sports

class contests, why cant a two seater class also be scored? I dont know how the 2 seater class is working in Europe or elsewhere.

I think you should poll all the SSA members about what would get them interested in racing and think outside the box a bit on what possible ideas. Such as (after witnessing how the offering of an easier task class (B class in GTA) has led to some pilots getting into racing that would otherwise probably not participate), Id like to see the response for an offer of an entry level class added to Sports Class for first year racing pilots. It would be akin to an orientation race class and a pilot would only be required to do one contest in this format (but could do more than one his/her first year). There seems to be this mentality of doing what weve always done with regards to racing, but then again, the SSA is not a marketing organization so its hard to focus on totally new ideas rather than just continuously looking at re-engineering what we have always done. Id also like to see more fanfare made of winners at races via SSA e-news and the magazine.

I would just like to reiterate my strong support for the Club Class. I participated in the Club Class event at Cordele and enjoyed it immensely. I support a separate Club Class nationals. However, my support is predicated on Club Class NOT harming Sports Class. At regionals, if there is not enough participation to support both a Sports and Club Class, I think we should default to Sports Class, running a combined class with separate scoring for Club class, if possible. The Sports nationals should have separate scoring for club class for team selection as we do now.

I would like to see the RC create a Winscore Forum and Advisory Group to assist contest scorers. Having watched the process closely last year at a regionals and the prior year at a nationals where an inexperienced scorer was at work, I can say with great certainty that there are many booby traps in the program (nothing wrong with the program - just that the complexity in the rules is such that not everything can be fully automated). I would be willing to bet that there are at least 2 or 3 substantive errors (i.e. changing either daily or overall placing) when a person unfamiliar with the program is running it. This advisory group could be as simple as a contact list and email forum (e.g. Yahoo Group) which might allow a scorer to reach out for help before or during a contest.

In contests ,like last one in Cordelle we should call it North American Comp. This would increase our and Canadian pilots IGC ranking. Also Club Class nationals would increase our pilots ranking. Those are cosmetic changes but very important according to new IGC world championship rules. No water rule is no Diana 2 and no Duckhawk rule (discrimination) There is so little participation of real 18m glider in Nat, and same in open, that would be fair for them to fly combined handicapped open class nat.

In relation to point 3-Rule 6-3-3-1 the pilot of a motorized glider must always provide for safe altitude in order to start the engine. Failure to do so results in severe damage to the glider in an inappropriate landing site. A pilot of a motorized glider is looking for a landing site and must make his decision of starting the engine avoiding landing much earlier than a non motorized glider pilot that may regain altitude on the same site. In addition many of us can not have a crew and a decision to avoid a possible landing is very real. A Penalty may further discourage participation.

In scoring of AAT and MAT tasks, there is an issue with scoring of completed tasks with very short distances. The scoring equations, e.g. Rule 11.6.8. for Regional FAI classes should be changed by replacing MDP with  $MDP * DIST / BESTDIST$ . Comment on Club Class: the tension between Club Class and Sports is awkward. My current thinking -- and I am open to persuasion -- is that if we are going to run Club Class, we should run it as the IGC Club Class with IGC rules and glider eligibility, not as some Americanized fusion with Sports.

In the past I have seen CDs use the multiple start circles incorrectly at Perry. Ive seen them just try to divy up the start cylinders by class [to keep things simple], irrespective of which direction each class is heading for their first turn. This has meant on a high wind day we exited out the side of the cylinder downwind of the airport and if you got low there was little to no chance of getting back to the home airport without landing out. The points are 3-4 miles from Perry with the intention that you use the short side, as in cross over Perry on exit. What the CDs has does was put us out the long side 8-9

miles from the home airport.

Item 3 Rule 6.3.3.1 A rule to address a perceived advantage seems silly. I dont fly a motor glider, but I also dont see a problem. Do the score sheets show a significant difference between motor gliders and pure gliders? What about weak days or days devalued by landouts? Can you even find one trace where the motor glider deviated significantly from the rest of the crowd? A better arguement would be to penalize motor gliders at no-water contests, since their wing loading is greater than their peers. At least there you have hard numbers (and a precedent for manipulating scores based on weight - sports class.)

Just keep the rules clear so we all can understand them.

Key suggestion for club class vs sports class that hasnt been offered- 1 combine sports and club into sports class. 2 allow all gliders 3 allow AST in sports class 4 pick club class team from sports class 5 backdate qualifying sports class nats results in non- club class gliders for club class team one class, one team, best pilots win. good entries, better competition, better US team performance. this divisiveness and special interest direction that has been taken has helped no one and is killing our sport. There just arent enough competing pilots to justify proliferation of classes like this.

Lets open the SSA to ultralight gliders and let the FAA decide which kind of glider can fly in U.S. airspace by simplifying the current rules which state: 6.1.1 A sailplane must have a valid airworthiness certificate issued by the civil aviation authority of the country in which it is registered. It must comply with applicable US Federal Aviation Regulations and meet all the requirements of the class in which it is entered. And changing it to: 6.1.1 A sailplane must comply with applicable US Federal Aviation Regulations and meet all the requirements of the class in which it is entered. We have an opportunity to grow the sport through ultralight gliders. Their lower cost, simplified regulatory requirements and lighter weight are real advantages to many new pilots and offer another path to glider ownership and participation in the sport of soaring.

Minimum speed points. At Montague, we had a day that gave Rick Walters about 89% of my score with a credited speed that was 38% of mine. Might be good to consider adjusting the scoring for a case like that so that you dont get points ratioed straight from the winners to yours until you hit minimum speed points, but instead do a ratio of min to max speed points and where your speed falls in the range of speeds. This would give a bit of a boost (probably not deserved, though) to everyone else that finished, other than the winner. Very frustrating (and unfair appearing) to have someone get so many points for having, for all intents and purposes, landed out in the middle of the race, when the rest of us were out for the rest of the day (most came home early because we ran out of turnpoints and ability to still get home before the rains hit).

Motor gliders rules should allow for large 5-10% penalty for having a motor enabled during a regional contest that is not for only motorgliders. This would allow and encourage Motor glider pilots to disable or remove their motors for regional or nationals and even the playing field. Thanks for puttig out this survey every year it is a great way to get input on the racing scene!

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

No, but I would like to express great appreciation for the job done by John Seaborn and Doug Easton in automating the online contest functions.

No.

On the club class team selection and contests, we should not do anything which would deter participation for entry level pilots. Hopefully, this class will help to push people into the FAI classes. We already have a problem with declining numbers of pilots at contests.

Our scoring system undervalues good consistent soaring days. This results from scores being closely spaced on good days, hence a contest is not "won" by good flights on consistent days but "lost" by mistakes or bad luck on more challenging days. The rules have made attempts to counter this by a nearly incomprehensibly complicated set of "correction factors". The scoring system has been a subject of controversy for at least the 40 years I have been soaring, and we don't seem to have it much better than before. It is more complex, but then we have computers. I think it is time to consider at least testing other concepts of scoring. Other options include "a win is a win" such as sail boat, or auto racing (NASCAR) which award a defined point spread between successive placing, whether speed or landout (in the case of autos a crash).

Parowan 09 pointed out the need for at least some visible guidance to the CD as to what constitutes a fair opportunity to compete.

Pilots signing up for more than 1 contest and then not showing up. This caused the canceling of a Regional this year. Also, Region 9, had 50% of the pilots signed up, not show up. This is a financial burden for the organizers.

Please set the club class eligible list once every 5-10 years. Please create some stability and only change when either period lapses or there is FAI change. What has been happening in recent years is really bad. First Standard Class glider were in then they were out by vote of majority now you folks want to bring them back. You are asking the same question over and over despite the fact people already voted on this subject. This is very annoying. Create North American Championships so pilots from U.S. get better FAI ranking so we never have a situation when the second team selection does not qualify for the worlds or a good U.S. pilot is not accepted for good European competition.

Proposed Rule 43 Contest organizers will not schedule a contest during a week with more than one rain day. Proposed Rule 74 Glider pilots shall refrain from complaining about the drought in public. God bless you guys. Being on the rules committee is a thankless task. Thank you for your contribution.

Protest committee that only had one rated pilot on it, met and threw out a day where half the class finished. Recommend protest committee be composed of all rated pilots and racing sailplane pilots if possible! JJ

Question 3.0---Currently sustainers are already being penalized, since they lose the 25 point airport bonus, unless they land-out and must be retrieved. Self launchers of course, can land, get the 25 point bonus, re-launch and come home. Maybe the handicap should be on the self launchers only.

Question 3.1 is a bit one sided in its wording. As a competition pilot and the owner of a motor (turbo) glider, I have noticed that the motor results in some competitive disadvantages as well. First, wing loading is heavier (0.75 lb/sq ft in my glider), which although it may be an advantage in good conditions, it is a disadvantage in weak conditions when attempting a save in 0.5 kt lift. And we all know that contests are won or lost on the weak days, not the strong ones. Second, when an engine

start is necessary, for safety reasons it must be attempted at a higher altitude (800 ft agl minimum) than the altitude one is willing to try to thermal for a last minute low save (400ft agl?). Needless to say, all low level engine starts must be attempted over a landable field, just in case.... Ask me how I know. The real advantage of a motor is the ability to avoid outlandings thus avoiding the need for a hard to find crew, and the potential damage. But we dont get an airport bonus either, which I believe levels the playing field enough without an additional penalty. For me the real value of the turbo is the ability to go cross country at my home field on marginal days without fear of outlanding, which is great practice for competition soaring. Tim Welles

Question 5 comment: If drop the worst day is tried, it would be very interesting to see a double score sheet, i.e not dropping the worst day and dropping the worst day and how that affected pilots standings. What do other organizations in the world do about this and have they tried it? I voted yes but am only a moderate yes in that this will make a lot of work on the scorer and will have to have some major tweaks to the scoring program.

Re lower/higher performance gliders in club class competition: allow gliders outside the official handicap range to participate but: lower performance fly at the lowest official club class performance handicap higher performance be further handicapped to negate performance advantage on the really marginal days when l/d is the deciding factor

Ref: Question 3 MOTORS 1. Hot motorgliders need their own class but failing this concept, Other competitors should be allowed to ballast up to thier wing loading or about 100#, whichever is heavier. This ballast can be jettisoned. I feel that this concept or similar would be much better than the proposed 1 or 2% handicap. (although less practical)

See ya boys!!!! Have a margarita for me.

Soaring is inbred. Im one of the old timers now so I can say this. We tend to think mostly about the current crop of competition pilots who already have gliders and equipment. I cant conceive of trying to get into competition now from a dead start. Its complicated to learn how to soar successfully and then there are the expense and complication of acquiring and setting up the equipment and then learning the rules and... If I had a solution, Id voice it. Id just caution against complaining that soaring, especially competitive soaring, is shrinking (read: dying) when our Rules are one (OK, only one) reason for this. We can do better. You guys are smart. You just have to redefine your charter so its as important to make contests accessible as it is to pick the world team. Call it cost/benefit analysis. Everything in life involves tradeoffs. Lets make them more explicit in the Rules process. If a new rule is likely to cost money or increase complexity, its gotta be REALLY good to justify it on the basis of increased fairness.

Some additional input on engines. Overall, I don't think mine gives me an advantage as I have to abandon thermaling a few hundred feet higher to support a reasonable engine start, but I suppose it may give some pilots some advantage. I'm sure you've heard all these arguments. The real issue I hope the racing committee seriously considers is why single out engines for a handicap? If the goal is to level the playing field, why not handicap/penalize other areas also? Having a full-time crew is a huge advantage; I suspect this is a greater overall benefit (vs. those of us crewless) than an engine; and both are options a pilot can choose. What about the age/model of the plane (non-Sports class) - this can make several percentage points difference and we wouldn't have to guess since we actually know the handicap. Having the latest flight computer, or multiple flight computers vs. someone with just a basic PDA - a large advantage. How about a penalty for pilots with motor homes who can avoid the daily commutes and get air conditioning right next to the flight line? Yes, some people will have more toys, or more expensive toys. I obviously don't really suggest or support adding handicaps for any of the items above, only pointing out if we really want to level the field, then we should start with the biggest differences and/or deal with all the key differences. If it's just a matter of majority rules, well of course the majority will likely favor a penalty for the minority. But the answers might be different if the question was posed more broadly listing all the key differences (my examples above, for a start) and whether we should institute another layer of handicaps for a range of items (so everyone's ox is gored). I suspect pilots would be less likely to support it when seen in this

perspective. I don't have a problem with handicaps; but if used, I'd like to see them truly level the field, not pick on one particular aspect of differences.

Team flying should be allowed in USA competition. Weather radar info should be allowed in competition

Thanks to the Rules Committee for the time and effort expended - its appreciated.

The 850 kg rules change to Open Class was implemented hastily and without the unified support of the pilots who regularly compete in the class. In terms of participation, it is a huge mistake that is weakening an already struggling class. The rule change was made without consulting the active open class pilots who regularly compete in the class. Allegedly the rules committee sought our opinions -- but at least four Active Nimbus 3 National Competitors were not contacted in any way. Many open class pilots (especially those who fly nimbus 3s) are **STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THE RULE CHANGE** and have **RESPONDED TO THE RULE BY NOT COMPETING IN 2009!** 850kg for the Opens will severely weaken the already small class. The result of the rule change is to effectively force out many regular open class national competitors (steve mclaughlin, steve leonard, dave coggins, steve nichols to name just four who are **TOTALLY AGAINST THE RULE**). Personally, I feel that the rules committee has not represented the sport of soaring (or me) well in this instance. **WHILE THE 850 KG RULE REMAINS IN EFFECT -- I WILL NOT COMPETE IN AN OPEN CLASS NATIONALS.** If pilot participation at soaring contests, serving the SSA membership and strengthening the Open Class are goals of the rules committee I urge you to reverse the 850 rule change or implement an option for Nimbus 3s to compete at 850 kg too. Everyone knows they were built strong enough to fly at that weight (and above) and frequently did so during the history of past contest soaring.

The fee structure as regards to late entry surcharge and cancellation refund policy as a tool to help organizers deal with planning, but that is probably on the agenda already.

The rules are getting way too complicated, so much so that its impossible for a contestant to know how well theyve flown until the official computerized scores are calculated. Please make things simpler! I also object to the increasing use of nanny rules, such as high or distant finishes, extra margins from restricted airspace and CD determined sunset times. I doubt that any of these are based on objective evidence of problems. These are some of the reasons Im no longer competing in sanctioned contests and participate in OLC instead. Im sure Im not alone.

This is purely personal, but the fact that almost none of the US competitions are IGC ranked prevents me a selection in my National Team. This is apparently also the case for the Canadian pilots. As the USA is organizing, by far, much more high level soaring competitions than any other country in the World, wouldnt it be possible for the SSA to negotiate a fair or a global IGC fee for all its competitions. Apart from maybe helping me a bit, this would increase the US seeding at the World competitions and attract more foreigners to participate in the US competitions.

We have too many Nationals. The Club Class is yet another example of a few self-serving pilots wanting a Class that they can qualify for US Team status. The rest of the World doesnt fly Sports Class, we do, so what?. The Club Class is a subset of our Sports Class, we should just have one class - Sports -and not have this silly artificial limit on what gliders you can fly to qualify for the US Club Class Team. Raise the entry fee for Nats. It shouldnt be in the rules to begin with - only that the organizer has to fix the amount at the 60 (or earlier) day deadline. If you start sanctioning a separate Club Class Nats, it will kill the Sports Class Nats and I doubt participation will increase.

Weighing of gliders at Regional events. I have seen many overweight (fatso) pilots get into their fully (over)loaded (including fuselage tank) ASW-27s, and then proceed to use their greatly heavier wingloading to their advantage (as this model will do). They are waaaay over gross. At least the threat of an on the grid spot weighing to assess a penalty might modify this behavior. Recommend all Regional contests have scales available for the cd to use, and allow spot inspection of wing ballast amounts for sloshing and fuselage ballast tanks for fullness.

Where are the rules for the planned sub-15m class ?

Yes, in case you didnt catch it before, please demand that if MOTORgliders want to participate in sanctioned sailplane events, their motors be totally de-activated.

Yes, we definitely need to eliminate the minimum days requirement at US Nationals. I have been to the last three 15 Meter Nationals and two have been ruled no-contests due to insufficient days. This is unacceptable given time commitment of two weeks and the associated expenses involved. Not a very good ROI on time or money. I would favor eliminating the 4 contest day minimum entirely! If we only fly one day out of 10, that is enough to crown a champion, in my opinion.

Yes. I firmly believe we should adopt the international rules for our competitions. It strikes me as quite ridiculous to fly a different set than everyone else flies and it makes it that much more difficult to prepare for and effectively compete in the WGC when we do not have the same level of understanding (and practice with) the international rules. We follow internatoinal rules for record flying, right? We need to get past whose rules are better and simply fly the internationally accepted rules -- starts, tasking, scoring, and finishing. (ok, perhaps we stick with our version for the 500 ft finish one mile out -- Ill concede that one as I know it was a hard fought issues that is near and dear to the hearts of many.)

no

no

no

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