

2011 SSA Pilot Opinion Poll Results

October 22, 2011 9:42 AM

Percentages usually do not add up to 100% because multiple selections can be made on many questions. Also, some questions are not answered by all survey submitters.

Analysis Categories		All
Summary of detailed data representing All respondents.		182
1	Handicap Classes In 2011, regional contests were allowed multiple handicapped classes by waiver. These classes could be defined by handicap range, with overlapping handicap ranges encouraged, or by pilot skill/tasking level, and water ballast could be used. Several regionals used this format to form mixed FAI classes. (The proposed rule is item 12 here .)	All
a	Should we allow multiple handicapped classes as a permanent part of regional rules?	Yes 152 84% No 24 13%
2	Satellite-Based Weather Systems We currently ban (6.6.4) "any device that allows in-flight access to weather data." Satellite-based weather systems now cost \$1,000, are in wide use in powered aircraft, and offer some potential safety benefits. ADS-B units will soon provide another source of weather data.	All
a	Do you use a weather system, banned in contest flying, during your non-contest cross-country soaring?	Yes 9 5% No 173 95%
b	Should we remove the ban on weather data reception?	Yes 60 33% No 119 65%
3	Task Length Are tasks too long or too short? The rules encourage longer tasks: "The minimum time is supposed to be a minimum, not a target." "Tasks should make as full use of the available soaring weather as is practical." Nonetheless, many contests seem to call tasks substantially shorter than these guidelines. On the other hand, pilots say they prefer OLC flying as it allows longer flights. (Note: This is a general question, not a referendum on specific contests this year!)	All
a	Overall, at Regionals, would you prefer:	Longer 75 41%

		Shorter 5 3%
		NoChange 99 54%
b	Overall, at Nationals, would you prefer:	Longer 62 34%
		Shorter 5 3%
		NoChange 102 56%
4	13.5 Meter Class The FAI has ended the PW5 (world) class and created a 13.5 meter class in its place. We need to consider how to form a viable class for such gliders, other than sports class. This question is designed to assess participation. Please answer here only about what you would likely fly, and offer general opinions about what is a good or bad idea in the comments section.	All
a	Would you participate in a 13.5 meter class, with no handicaps?	Yes 19 10%
		No 149 82%
b	Would you participate in a 13.5 meter class, with handicaps?	Yes 29 16%
		No 140 77%
c	Would you participate in a handicapped class consisting of all gliders with performance below club class (say 1.0)?	Yes 47 26%
		No 122 67%
	Comments:	49 27%
5	Team Flying Many pilots have suggested that we experiment with radio usage for team flying and mentoring, with some controls and limits. For example, all communication must be on a common frequency (say, 123.5), no use of secret codes, and display good sportsmanship. This is allowed for regionals by waiver, but only one contest has tried it so far.	All
a	Would you like to try such radio usage in a regional contest?	Yes 98 54%
		No 81 45%
b	Radio usage has been banned because it was felt that pilots would be discouraged from coming to contests if others were communicating by radio. Would you feel this way?	Yes 57 31%
		No 120 66%

6	Participation One of the rules committee's main goals is to increase participation in all glider contests. Please let us know what the major obstacles you perceive to your flying more contests. Some potential issues are: time, length of contest, distance, location, contest schedule (say, tues-thurs vs. sat-sun nationals), contests scheduled at the wrong time for you, costs, including contest fixed fees, contest tow fees, and personal costs, crew, tasking, safety, class structure, or other parts of the contest experience. Please also let us know what other ways contests could be run differently that would lead you to participate more often. Some potential items are more social events, mentoring programs or "ground school", provision for crewless pilots, different tasking or handling of iffy days and so on.	All
	Comments:	110 60%
7	Safety Comments Did you observe any incidents or safety issues that the rules committee should know about?	All
	Comments:	72 40%
8	General Comments Please add any general comments that will be helpful to the rules committee.	All
	Comments:	65 36%

Return to the [2011 SSA Pilot Opinion Poll survey form](#) to check your input.
Return to main [survey page](#).

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

2011 SSA Pilot Opinion Poll Results

October 27, 2011 12:36 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.

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Comments:

All seem like good ideas, especially "c". I just don't have easy access to a qualifying plane.

Although I don't fly in that class, I think the FAI missed an opportunity to make a popular class. I think the best we can do is run a low-performance handicapped class, as per 4.c. 13.5 should have been able to collect existing lower performance ships and allow fast features such as water ballast, through handicapping. 13.5 will fail and I can't see any manufacturers pushing new designs. On the other hand I do see the merit of getting into racing inexpensively as one-design had intended.

Answers based on personal preference only.

As far as I know only a handful of current contest pilots fly 13.5 meter gliders. I would ask those ssa members who own 13.5 meter gliders if they would fly a future SSA sanctioned 13.5 contest.

At Region V North we had a PW5 competing and it held its own with its handicap. There is no reason PW5s can't compete in sports. Sport class is flourishing and we keep coming up with ideas to siphon off participants. Leave sports a "run what ya brung" class and we will keep having a blast.

Dead on arrival.

Don't have a little glider, don't plan to buy one.

FAI did this to avoid how stupid the PW-5 fiasco really was. Just ignore them. We don't have enough of these gliders to fuck up contests for everyone else, ie guys flying Cirrus and above.

FAI has too many classes. The US should not have or participate in a 13.5 M class.

Handicapping this is likely to be a real no win situation.

I am not involved with this area.

I answered No to 4a but in reality it is "maybe". I might consider going to Dallas for the 13.5 meter nationals in 2012 if there are no handicaps. However I would be more likely to just fly as a guest with the 1-26's or try to find a loaner 1-26 in order to have more even competition. Or even find a regional sports class contest to go to. Actually I think I would be more likely to use my limited vacation time to spend time at Uvalde rather than placing last place at the 13.5m Nationals. On the other hand if the 13.5 meter nationals are handicapped I will wake up early the first morning that registration is open to get my name on the list. Handicapping would open up the potential for the 1-26's to fly their contest within the 13.5 meter class, allowing for them to choose a 1-26 champion and for those pilots to compete for a spot on the US Team. I would guess that 1-26's make up over half of the current US fleet flying with less than a 13.5 meter span at this moment and with handicaps this class could prove to be very popular. Without handicaps the competitive gliders are very rare. Basically the Silent and Sparrowhawk.

I believe the advent of multiple handicapped tasks will go a long way toward encouraging 13.5m glider owners to participate in contests, as that gives contest managers the flexibility they need to adjust classes to accommodate the actual contest glider distribution. If 5 or more 13.5m gliders show up for a contest, it would be a pretty natural thing to declare a handicapped class just for them. Personally, I would love to have the 13.5m guys in their own handicapped class, as I recently flew against a Cherokee II at Llano, TX and had a heck of a time beating the guy ;-).

I don't have access to a <15m or <1.0 handicapped sailplane. But I think a <1.0 handicap class would be interesting to get new folks in who can't afford a higher performance ship. There's a lot of cheap gliders out there in this range that folks could start racing with.

I don't own a 13.5 m glider, and my club doesn't have one. So, I have no interest in this class.

I don't plan on flying in the 13.5M class so I will reserve comment. I currently fly STD (or sports). I might consider flying in a handicapped club class as stated in 4.c. It has potential for a more consistent and fairer contest than our current sports class, bring in older ships, and perhaps generate more interest in organized contest flying from those owners. I've seen many times in sports class where, on certain days, the poorer performing ships absolutely can not complete the task. I would call that unfair (and poor tasking).

I don't think we need a separate 13.5 meter class.

I doubt this is a viable alternative class because of the availability of relatively low cost, older gliders with superior performance (Cirrus, Pegasus, etc.). Why would anyone want to purchase a new glider with less performance? This class doesn't make sense.

I generally participate in 15m regional, national and sports class National contests so I'll pass on commenting and have the gents who have a dog in the hunt drive the comments and future direction (if any) on this issue.

I have lobbied since 1995 that simply splitting the Sports Class into (3) performance categories (example: HC<1.0 / HC1.0-1.15 / HC>1.15) would improve participation. A Sports Class "handicapped version" of a 13.5 Meter Class does not make sense to me.

I may be misinterpreting the question... If there were such a class, and a glider available, I would really enjoy flying it. An appropriate handicap seems the way to go.

I prefer a 13.5 meter handicapped class

I think we need to try and field US teams that have experience in the classes and tasks relevant to the World Championships. If we want to play by our own rules, that's fine, but we needn't do it under SSA sanction or resources - this can be done in venues like the GTA series.

I voted no on all three of the options to question 4 because I do not see myself owning a ship that would compete in the 13.5 meter class. If I did own such a glider - I would probably vote yes on b and c

I've flown in three World Class nationals but feel it was unsuccessful in practice. Promote the Club Class as an entry level contest at low cost.

Impossible to handicap such a wide range of gliders

Kind of hard to answer since I don't have 13.5 meter airplane. But answered as if I did.

Maybe you could chop sports class up into several divisions. Arrive at an overall winner along with several division winners. Club class (Aluminum Division), 13.5 meter class (Bronze Division), high performance (Carbon fiber Division), low performance (depleted uranium Division). Sports class is the key to encouraging more contest participation. The other classes require a much more expensive aircraft, and a lot more pilot skill than most people are going to be able to come up with.

My LAK12 cost me 12,500 dollars. It gives me an honest 50:1 glide. There is *no way* I will pay likely a lot more money to fly a thing with 13.5 meter wings.

My answers to questions 4a-c are based on the hypothetical situation that I would own or have access to a 13.5 meter class or sub-club class glider. In reality, I would be unlikely to own a short-wing glider and would probably not recommend one to my club. That said, I am absolutely in favor of a short wing class for those that do prefer those ships.

No comment. 15/18m glider

Not now. Perhaps in the future when my dollars turn to dust, and i can no longer afford a high performance glider.

Not sure I understand this issue... What are some of the gliders that might be flying in this contest? Will it include experimental and ultralights?

Perhaps I'd consider this: our club has an L-33, which I have taken to a contest in the past. It didn't do that well in regular sports class, but it would be fine with other ships of similar performance.

Questions 4a-4c of only marginal value as this survey is restricted to those currently on the seeding list. It is quite likely that those owning or having access to qualifying 13.5M gliders have not previously competed but would now be interested in doing so.

Some form of handicapped Club Class "B" is long overdue.

The 13.5 meter class is too small in glider availability.

The 13.5m class MUST have a handicap. Otherwise, someone is going to create/modify a sailplane to crush everyone. For example, clipping an ASW-27 to 13.5m. Similar to the clipped ASW-12 back in the day.

The US should not use the 13.5 Meter class. We should ignore the IGC and not support or sponsor this class. It provides no benefit other than moving toward the individual class for everyone. We all

get a gold star! Kill this now before it starts. This is just a continuation of the all ready bad experiment of the World Class. Have the balls and show leadership to stop this now! Tell the IGC the US respectfully declines to have this class.

The World Class idea failed and the fall back position is the 13.5 metre class. With the amount of participation in the PW5 Nationals (since its inception) it can be seen that it not popular. Instead, run multiple club classes to keep the performance of all gliders closer together. Try .8-.9 .9 - 1 >1 Allow a little leeway on the range limits so organizers can divide the classes based on what gliders are registered. For example a Jantar at .99 might need to go into the > 1 range to split classes more evenly

The only hope for a class that will attract sufficient numbers is a large handicapped class.

We already have too many classes. Adding another would be counter productive. Sports class should be utilized for these gliders.

We don't need a class to replace the PW-5 class. There are too many classes already and the PW-5 class contest(s) were not well attended. There is no reason to believe that a 13.5 meter class would be any more viable than the PW-5 Class, which because of the poor attendance wasn't.

We just really need a true European style Club Class. A sports class contest that pits a Libelle against a Antares is never going to be fair.

Why not...but maybe this is just too much. Sports class has affordable gliders...new 13.5 M ships would be more expensive...so its not price. Maybe further delusion. But if I caught on...why not. Probably will not however per cost...

Why not?

You're going to get some skewed data from this question as any of us that own 15m or greater ships are going to answer NO. Probably should have flagged this one behind a "Do you have or have access to a 13.5M glider?"

c) yes - if I had such a glider

the problem with world class was IMO poor performance. 13.5m will likely be the same in this regard.

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Comments:

At the 18M's at Hobbs, we had only 13 pilots show up for some of the best weather Hobbs has served up in years. It would have only been 12 if I had not been "coerced" to pack up my car/trailer and head out at the last minute. For me, the biggest obstacle to overcome was in taking the full two weeks away from my demanding job to attend the race. It has become more and more difficult for me to get away, and I don't think that my situation is unique. Folks working for US Corporations simply don't two week vacations anymore. In a discussion about this at Hobbs, I made this point, and the answer I got from an older, retired, competitor, was that it was not an issue, because "look around" there are only a few pilots here that work traditional jobs for a living. He was right.. Out of the entire contest, I was the only pilot that had a Corporate job. All others were either self employed, retired, or in one case, an airline pilot. If we want to attract more pilots who may have more traditional corporate jobs and commitments, I have a suggestion for consideration. Reduce the length of the US Nationals to 7 competition days. Practice days can be Sat and Sunday with Comp day 1 on Monday. Comp Day 7 would be on the following Sunday, and we could agree to keep the following Monday as a

Reserve day. This schedule would allow pilots to limit time away from work/home to one week, plus one or two days of the following week. One week, plus a day or two, is a whole lot more palatable than two full weeks! This is probably the easiest barrier to remove, and I recommend that we try this in 2012.

I believe that more mentoring and provisions for crewless pilots would help newcomers get more interested in contests. This would also raise the skill level of all participants for the events. Good Social events are a big help - for example - look at the popularity of Perry and New Castle Perhaps experiments with 3 day contests over a weekend would help reduce the strain on pilot's time, budgets, families and the like. However, I do not favor holding a given contest on two successive weekends. This makes it too easy to drop out. A contest is a major effort for the host club / organizer and the site has to have certain attributes. There are not terribly many sites and groups that can offer what is needed for a great contest. Thus, while there might be some great places for a new contest venue, many of the good sites in the country are already hosting events. I do not think very much can be done about distances and locations without some major new infrastructure support. Given the above - I think the best way to improve contests is by attracting more, enthusiastic pilots. Thus, my comments about mentoring, possibly shorter events that might attract more entrants and provisions for crewless pilots.

I would like to see shorter contest with more break days regional 5day contest with day off in the middle for safety and crew participation.

1) I would like to see 7 days Regional Contest. I am not going to drive 1000 miles to another region for 6 days scheduled and 2-3 days of flying due to weather 2) I would like to see longer tasks. It is not worth to go to a contest to fly 2.5-3 hours a day. In Europe folks fly much longer tasks. 3) When I come for a contest I hate to see short tasks just because people need to come back for a social event. That is what happens. Tasks are scheduled around social event rather than the other way around. 4) Local retrieval crews would be nice E.g crew less pilots pay into a pool to retain a few guys to help in case of land outs. This could be very popular. 5) By the way I don't think Sat-Sun Nationals would help for long distance travel. You need to take more time from work to travel for 2-3 day each way. The current system is much better. Of course folks not intending to travel far would prefer the Sat-Sun solution.

1. Cost 2. Insufficient time off from work. 3. Distance (requires even more time off from work and money to get there and back.) I've flown contests at Perry and Cordele, and fully enjoyed all the times at the sites. They are the "local" sites for me, even though New Castle is the closest site. But I'm not going to fly a contest at New Castle. My ship's performance (ok, the pilot's performance) isn't high enough to keep me comfortable flying there in a contest situation. As a crewless pilot, I would like to see organized help in things such as returning a car from the far end of the runway to the trailer after the car was used to pull the glider to the staging area. It's usually a long and hot walk back to the grid. Love the cookouts at Perry and enjoy going to restaurants in Cordele. Camping out at Perry has always been wonderful, even though Al and Rhonda has moved the tent campers away from their front yard to behind the hangar. And I enjoy the air conditioned room in Cordele.

1. Unqualified pilots unprepared for the terrain they are flying over. 2. Contest periods are too long.

1. Distance for nationals. Time for East and West Nationals. 2. Too many classes, time to settle on about three classes and focus on those. Club (sports), 15M and 18M are viable, the rest are not worth keeping. A 18M ship was second in Open this year! 3. Contest before school is out (~June 10th, is hard on pilots with families). Do we really need May nationals? These are unfair to those that live in colder climates and have no time to train in the Spring. 4. Lack of competition in the US. Too many pilots lack skills to really race so contest have become "dumbed" down for these pilots. Reduce the number of classes and increase the good pilots in each class. Make it an honor to race in a quality contest.

1. Push variable fees more at contest where Wx is not always great. 2. Target new pilots by giving them a chance to finish the task and some chance to place instead of zero shot. 3. Retired guys fly a

lot (=higher skills) and have time to travel to contest (win win). New pilots are usually working guys who have to use precious vacation time to go to a contest with zero shot to do well. Answer = multiple sports classes separated by rank and HC.

As for my own contest flying, (vacation) time is the biggest limitation. The second-biggest limitation is distance. The combination of both of these factors means that many Nationals are simply too far away to be practical for me to attend. If I want to fly a Nationals every year and still have a "normal" job, I have to buy a ship that is competitive in at least 2 classes (so that I can always make it to a National on my side of the country - which I define as anything within a 2-day drive). As for general participation in contests: In Region 8 we've had reasonable success with the "Dust Up" event, a 3-day non-sanctioned Sports Class contest designed to introduce pilots to contest flying. I would urge the SSA to do more to promote similar events around the country. Also, many non-contest pilots don't understand the vast difference between OLC flying and real contests; and I think many mistake the OLC as a "replacement" that provides a similar experience without all the travel and expense. The OLC is great in its own right, but more needs to be done to highlight the differences and showcase the uniqueness of Regional/national contests (the atmosphere, camaraderie, the challenging tasks, the dedication to soaring for multiple days in a row, etc). Lastly, when choosing soaring sites it seems that lift strength or weather are the primary factors. There is nothing wrong with this but in today's society, with social/family changes over the last 30 years and with an increase in all of the "entertainment destinations" around the world, it behooves us to think about being more "family-friendly" with our contest location choices (at least with Regional contests). It may not provide a dramatic bump in attendance, but if SSA members can pitch Regional contests as a flying vacation for themselves and also a vacation for their spouses/families, the odds that they can attend a contest go up.

Based on conversations with non-contest and former contest pilots, I hear that complicated rules (necessarily so, sometimes) intimidate or annoy many so much that they won't race. I don't find the rules annoying so much as I do the pilots who make gaming the rules their primary strategy. I just want the CD to call a task that is a straightforward race, not some game of minutiae.

Contest distance is a big concern for me and some others I know. I think participation is down mostly because it's just too expensive for most people. Driving a trailer long distances, paying for hotels and contest fees are not cheap. One trip to the Nationals can cost \$2500 to \$3000, not to mention the investment in a competitive ship. And I don't know what can be done to help the situation. Everyone's feeling the pressure. One suggestion I have is to scrap the East, Central, West site selection process. For example, I know many who question choosing a pilot for Uvalde at a mountain site like Logan. Same for choosing a pilot for a mountainous WC site from Uvalde. We're forced to have a contest in a place with terrain and conditions unrelated to the next WGC. And, does the EWC do any good anyway? Remember Montague from 2009? Standard class had only 10 pilots. Cordele this year had only 16, including 3 guests. I know it's difficult to impossible to always choose a site based on the next WGC, but getting rid of the ECW system would better the odds and not force use to go to places that are far away from where most competition pilots live. I'm not entirely sold on the East and West Nationals yet, but it might be worth a try. Maybe combine 15m and Standard Class with a realistic handicap. Overall a challenging situation for all involved.

Contests should be fun. Very few of us are interested in participating on the US team. Participation in nationals is down because a national contest is set up to grind out a national champion, and all but the top three or four pilots are cannon fodder. A well run contest is a thing of beauty to watch. A contest run by well meaning, but disorganized people is especially frustrating to be around. Finding some way to help the disorganized would encourage repeat participation. Cross country camps prior to a contest, and a solid mentoring program for new pilots during the contest would be your best bet to lure OLC pilots into the SSA contest schedule. CD selection is critical to having a fun contest. Devising a way to provide constructive feedback from the contestants to the CD, and developing a CD mentoring program might help.

Cost and the time to travel as well as compete are my obstacles. More contests in the center of the county would help a little but not much else you can do to help.

Cost and time-off are major factors. Cost includes travel time. However--it is expensive to set up a contest and have the proper facilities---internet, phone, meeting space, etc.

Cost is to me the strongest driver. Everything is becoming more expensive therefore pilots have to make choices. Obviously length of contests is another factor. This days is difficult to be away from work for a long stretch of time.

Cost of hotels generally limits me to contests with reasonable camping facilities. Electric is a must in summer, showers a plus too. Outside of that, contests with good social events get my first choice.

Costs, Availability of Crew/Retreive if necessary

Distance and location.

Distance is always the problem, followed by contests at places where there are little or no social facilities for the crew. Then the weather extremes in the Southern Contests.

Distance is probably the major external factor for me. However, the real reason I'm flying fewer contests is that I've lost the enthusiasm I once had.

Distance to events is huge. Time off is another big factor for me. Contests that are reachable and completable within 1 week of time off work would probably be more inviting to participants. So that means essentially within 1 day, even if it is a long one, of driving and that end on Saturday. From Central California I can reach Oregon, Nevada, Utah and AZ within 1 day of reasonable long travel. Farther than that radius and it gets rough and you start needing to take multiple weeks or partial weeks off work.

Distance to the contest and whether the contest overlaps the school year are the biggest issues to me. It must be between late May and mid August.

Distance. Closest in last 10+ years was 500 miles away. I don't like going where I don't know anyone else, particularly crewless.

Economically, the middle of the middle class has been driven out of competition soaring. If this can be changed, we're talking decades, and it's nothing to do with contest rules or policy. Short of paying people to show up, the environment is about as welcoming and newcomer friendly as it can be made. Exception: rules that require or give advantage to the use of expensive gizmos. Exception: unlike the old pre-web days when we published only the top 5 or ten cumulative scores for a regional, everyone goes under the microscope now. Some egos are more tender than others and I suspect that one reason for OLC's popularity is that you don't have to publish your bad days.

Entry and tow fees are getting a little expensive. The SSA or SRA should consider developing a CD training and certification class.

From my point of view, from the one contest that I went to last year. It really was not a lot of fun the entire week. Everyone is so stressed about the weather, complaining about something or someone. The task was cancelled early for a couple of the days due to scattered thunderstorms out on course. This is after everyone had launched. After the tasks were cancelled, I flew locally for an hour or so and the weather cleared out and I flew the task. I go to fly and a 2-3 hour task for the day when you have 4-6 hours of flyable conditions...what a waste of a good day. When the contest is over, first place gets a small trophy and 2/3 place gets a t-shirt????? I might try another contest someday but I doubt it will happen.

Great questions but doubtful that easy answers apply. Running a contest is rarely a profitable exercise, so i don't have any doubt the costs are very reasonable. Contests with more social events are more enjoyable but... for me personally I attend to primarily enjoy a 5-7 or 10 day period of racing with my

fellow enthusiasts, the après racing socializing seems to come naturally. I very much enjoy the dinners etc. but would not want the socializing aspect to delete a full day of otherwise decent racing.

Have dropped out of flying contests because I prefer flying tasks that I choose instead of flying tasks chosen by a contest director. I prefer flying for state records and flying OLC. Contest flying also encourages and rewards taking higher levels of risk to be competitive than I am willing to take.

Highly organized provision for crewless pilots. I don't see any way around the costs. I don't see any way around the distances. Length of contest needs to be long enough to make the trip worthwhile.

I agree with all of the above stated issues as drawbacks to organized contest flying (vs. OLC fly at home field and be at home every night to flying in a fun place of your choosing at your leisure and post when you want). Personally, the greatest obstacle for me in flying more organized contests is time off from work. I am lucky to have 4 weeks vacation and I can devote 2 weeks to contests. The other 2 are to wife and family. I don't have the luxury of dedicating an entire summer to contests like teachers, retirees, or some business folks. My guess is that this is a fairly common issue. The second drawback, as stated in your intro, is the overall cost of being on the road for weeks. All alternatives are spendy except for camping on site (not including RV's) and there you trade off comfort for cost.

I am a beginning contest pilot, but "mentoring", "ground school" and the like aren't really issues for me. When I have had questions, I've never had any trouble finding someone to ask, and nobody has been anything less than 100% helpful. I don't really think we need to formalize this more. On the other hand, as a relatively young person (<40 years old) with a family, my major obstacles have to do with the time commitment for contests. Basically, many contests are too far away (requiring long drive times), last too long (one week away from work is really pushing it), and may have less-than-optimal schedules. I'd prefer a contest schedule that would allow me to leave work on Friday, drive to wherever on Saturday, practice Sunday (and maybe Monday), then fly the contest Monday (Tuesday) through Friday, drive back home on Saturday, then have one day to recover before going back to work. This implies a "contest radius" from my home of 300-400 miles max, and a Monday-Friday contest schedule. Ideally, the contest would be situated somewhere with something interesting to do for my wife. Finally, availability of a crew is a big problem. Not really sure how to solve this, but having a contest in a wife-friendly location would be a big help. This implies somewhere other than some forgotten burg in the middle of the desert :). I'd trade epic soaring conditions for reasonable soaring in a location my wife might have a prayer of enjoying any day. Going 100 MPH with your hair on fire under continuous 7-knot cloud streets is great fun, but the possibility of landing out without a crew sucks more than enough to compensate.

I believe all contests must have one ultimate goal, to prepare a pilot for participation in World Championships.

I didn't attend an SSA race in 2011 because of safety considerations. I'm awaiting wide adoption of PowerFlarm.

I don't normally have a crew, so I limit how many contests I fly in during a year. Distance to contests is another factor because of the travel time involved, which equates to how much vacation time I use for a contest. Closer contests would allow me more available vacation time, so possibly I can fit in two contests instead of one. I don't care for the shorter tasks that are called at region contests and I am thinking of flying at Ely or another site next year where I can fly really long flights.

I enjoy going to contests because most of the organizers already make major efforts to make them fun. Schedules of Sun-Fri or Mon-Sat are fine for Regionals, weekend contests over several weekends do not make sense to me and organizers would have to ramp up their efforts twice which is not efficient, lets not do those. Contest and towing fees have gone up in the last years far outpacing inflation. With the current economic challenges it is no wonder that participation has fallen for most contests. Crewless pilots should have better ways to organize the retrieve function.

I feel the contest are being run perfect and require no change. Everyone (pilot, contestant or crew)

should continue to pitch in and help and enjoy the experience. At New Castle I volunteered to cook breakfast on the last day and enjoyed every minute of the cultural experience, new friends, great stories...

I flew in 12 contests this year (would have been 13 but the Fairfield contest wasn't held), so the only obstacles I have are scheduling overlaps ;-). I'm convinced that the problem with participation is NOT the way contests are set up, but in the difficulties faced by newer pilots when trying to learn cross-country flying in the first place. We need more XC camps and XC training programs specifically designed to get people flying XC. [SOAPBOX ON]: We need to recognize and exploit the Condor simulator as a tool for introducing and popularizing XC soaring. Experienced XC pilots should be encouraged to learn Condor and then to use it to mentor XC pilots over the winter months, as I have been doing for the last two years. [SOAPBOX OFF]

I fly three contests a year. The cost to me is usually just under \$1000 per contest for a regional and \$1200+ for a national. Three is about all I can budget for. Other pilots who are married and have children like me must have trouble affording multiple contests. I am in favor of rule changes that allow pilots to compete with older, less expensive gliders. I am thinking of the combined FAI class, etc. I am against more expensive equipment in the cockpit. Even if not required, if it gives a competitive advantage everyone feels they need to buy it. Many of the proposed changes are driven by the those who want to compete internationally. Team flying, external weather data in the cockpit, etc all drive up the complexity and diminish pilot satisfaction with cross country flight. Why are we trying to make these changes? US Team pilots can practice these skills on their own. There is also the problem with having enough vacation time. No answer for that one.

I go to every contest within a 1 day drive.

I have flown in 35 annual 1-26 Championship contests, which is the only contest in which I can reasonably compete. If Regional meets exclusively employed tasks such as the TAT, I would gladly participate in more contests. However, tasks that require a fixed distance such as Assigned Speed Task will discourage lower performance glider pilots. If contest hosts intend to attract these pilots, then they should include mention of the task types in the announcements and should make an effort to contact groups such as the 1-26 Association and the World Class Division members of SSA

I have never had a dedicated crew -- I rely on other pilots -- usually we agree on being each other's crew when we arrive at the contest. This works because usually at least one other member of my club is at the contests where I fly. This might become more of a challenge if I start flying further away, and an official provision for crewless pilots might be very helpful for me.

I love to fly in contest - although I admittedly suck at it! The main obstacle is the distance to get to a quality site like Parowan, UT and the cost associated with it. Making some provisions for crew-less pilots would be great. One idea could be to have a small number of drivers which would pick up the pilot so that he can organize a self-retrieve. Since I don't get to fly more than one or two contests a year, ground schools for the use of SeeYou Mobile and other nav-systems, SPOT or even refreshers of the contest rules would be great. The contest scheduling should be done in view of the school's summer break. Many pilots with families cannot attend contests if they are not within the summer break. Taking the family to a contest may spark the interest of the younger generation. Look at contests in Europe - rarely will you see a bunch of geriatric geezers like you do over here.

I think you have listed all the reasons/obstacles that I can think of. I think the idea of holding "racing school" lessons every morning at contests is a great way to engage potential new contestants. It gets them up to speed more quickly and also gives them an "in" with the experienced crowd as relationships develop with the presenters and the students. Above, I answered yes to longer tasks, but of course that is with the caveat that it does not result in substantially more landouts. The tasks still need to be fair and achievable given the forecast weather conditions for the day. Part of the reason we see shorter tasks is grid and launch time chewing up several hours. I have no suggestion to improve this, but recognize that it is a different beast than launching at home at 11 am and going on course. There is no way around the time required to launch a grid and open the gate.

I would like to see contests that require two pilots to fly a glider. Either on alternate days or each pilot fly the glider two hours on the same day.

In general, good contests are available and most years I fly several. Generating more entry-level contest pilots is the biggest challenge to the sport. See comments in the last answer to this questionnaire. In relation to generating participation by new pilots and offering encouragement to compete, I have complaints about the 2011 Logan 15 meter Nationals I believe that poor judgment was shown in selecting that site and in the contest task calling. My letter to the rules committee of 8/2/11 provides the details. That is, however, the only contest I've flown in 15 years or so of competition where I felt the site selection and task calling were seriously wrong. Because of the dwindling number of contest pilots, combined class contests are likely to be necessary to maintain viable regionals. I'm not sure how long the Standard Class Nationals will be viable. But that seems to be the result of changing tastes in gliders.

Is the contest site safe? Some soarign sites are great for record / pleasure flying but dangerous for competitions.

It would be nice if the spouses had some type of organized event (such as wash gliders day!). Seriously, my wife loves meeting others and would like a little more organization that allows her to meet new friends at the contests. I don't know if it is practical but if you could get a portion of your tow fees back on a "no contest" event that would soften the blow. I like the fee schedule where you pay a set fee and then a per tow addition. I would be glad to participate in giving flight reviews or orientation flights on no fly days or late in the evenings. This year we had an ASK21 at Cordele but it stayed tied down all week. That bird should have been flying media and prospective students!

It's a weather dependent sport. Run the contests at the times that best suit the sites selected. Try not to overlap the Nationals (Easier said than done) Utah Seemed saturated from a contest timing and location perspective. Had the weather been better at either of the 2 contests it might not have mattered

Lack of vacation time to fly more than one contest per year.

Lazyness.

Look at the Ephrata, WA events for a great model regarding, management, location, social, safety, friendliness, etc.

Main obstacle is limited vacation time. Distance is a problem when it eats into vacation time just getting to and from contests. To that end, contests ending on Sunday night are extremely difficult. (Flew Uvalde this year and much prefer Tues-Thurs for Nationals.)

Major Obstacles: distance, contest fees, crew Areas for contest improvement: Detailed contest area briefings (e.g. strategies, tactics, tips, techniques, hazards, risks, etc. for flying the contest area within expected conditions for the week); organized crew pools for crew-less pilots

Major obstacle for me is distance. To drive from the east coast to either Montague or Ephrata would take too much extra of the limited time I have for contests.

Major obstacles : distance and length of contest. Would like to see more local 5-6 days, split two weekends competitions.

Make contests more FUN for everyone, not just pilots. Social events need attention as well as rules... Get the word out that this is FUN, not just for glassholes, and participation might just follow.

Money is the key reason I only fly 3 contests per year. I feel very lucky to do that. Having a crew is great but the extra cost hurts. One more contest is possible if I could leave my crew home for that

contest without feeling I put an undue burden on the contest management.

More and shorter contests, close to home would help me. It takes a large investment in time and money for pilots with regular jobs to be able to complete. Personally, I am limited to one regional contest per year simply due to the time commitment. Increase the social and educational aspects of contests would certainly be a plus for regionals. KS and others have done a great service at contests I have attended by helping train competition pilots.

More attempts to mentor new pilots through cross country camps. Emphasis on social events and promoting family participation. A better economy.

Most contests are in excess of 1000 mile away. I am in region 7. There is a good chance of going to a contest and spending a whole week without flying. The more consistent site are quite a ways away. I would be very interested in week of mentoring. I don't think the week of the race is the best time.

My biggest issue is finding crew. Contests are not cheap, but you get to do a lot of challenging soing in interesting places with good support. Get what you pay for.

My biggest problem is time and disance. Getting more than 5 days vacation in a row is a problem. If held close by a split regional would be great.

My main obstacle is personal costs and, to a lesser extent, time away from work. When I figure out how to make more money and be able to take more time off work, I will fly more contests.

Nationals site selection broken - unattractive sites picked repeatedly because nobody bids to host smaller classes, this is driving folks away from racing. We should have larger handicapped contests at attractive sites on both sides of the country.

Nationals take too much calendar time and are thus undersubscribed. Sat-Sun Nationals would be less instrusive on other commitments that pilots have - like working. I think more social events and other time for interacting would encourage broader participation. Events that do a good job of this are tend to be more popular - examples are New Castle, Perry, Mifflin.

Need Club Class Regionals ! Wing loading should be pilots choice, not organizers. Pilots should take care of water ballast and be ready for grid time. Quit with "no water contest" and quit with "no water day" except soft field conditions.

Need more variety in contest locations.

New Castle R4S has costs that are over the top. Charging 17 dollars per meal is outrageous. For a family of 4 that equals 68 dollars. Add that up for 6 nights and that's 408 dollars. Thats just too much, especially when all the cooks are volunteer. I think club meals should be capped at no more than 10 dollars. Many of the towpilots there were upset that as they volunteered to tow for FREE, they didn't even get a FREE meal in return. Two of these guys used a week of vacation and didn't ask for any money, but felt unappreciated as they didn't even get a leftover meal offered to them. That's rude. Also, when I was attending the contest, we had 2 valid contest days. And there were 2 days where I flew, but it was not a valid contest day. I was told that my standard contest fee included "six contest tows" and since I flew on cancelled days, I had to pay an extra 48 dollars for each day. So essentially I flew 4 out of 6 days, and ended up paying 96 more dollars than if I flew 6 contest days like I did at Perry. This made me stay away from the contest this year. I just think if you pay a set fee that would include 6 tows, it shouldn't matter if it's a contest-day tow, or a cancelled-day tow. At the sports class nationals, there was not a bonfire or some sort of central gathering social event during the evening. Everyone ended up going in opposite directions and it sort of killed the evening fireside chats to share about the fun you had that day. New Castle and Perry have an evening fire. It's cheap and brings people together. Every contest should be encouraged to have something like this. It was dissapointing that the sports class nationals didn't more social avenues.

Obstacles - Contests east of the Mississippi generally have a low percentage flying days, making them less attractive to attend. To Improve - Consider reducing costs by reducing or eliminating the SSA sanction fee.

Of course staging a contest is a major undertaking - but posting/publishing dates well in advance can only help attendance. If the dates are tentative, post them as such, we understand! I'll be choosing vacation for 2012 within a week or two and so far nothing is being posted that I can plan to attend...

One of the factors in contest participation for me is a venue that is enjoyable for my crew (who is my wife). She much prefers a location that is pleasant for her and OK for soaring for me instead of a location that is unpleasant for her as the crew but superb soaring for me. For example, the Senior Contest at Seminole Lake and the Perry Contest meet these criteria. Hobbs does not meet her criteria. However, she is usually willing to go wherever I want, but with some coaxing.

Overall Cost has been my biggest obstacle and prevented me from flying contests for about 4 years. Much prefer Potlucks or Donation only social events as opposed to expensive banquets and meals included in the Registration fees. I need to option to keep things as inexpensive as possible.

Perry is a great example of what a contest should be. Need good tasking in a safe environment with good WX and good social events.

Personally, the most serious deterrent to flying more contests is the amount of time that I can get off from work. A secondary concern is cost of lodging. All of the other factors are subordinate to these two issues. I flew two contests this year. I would likely fly six if I had the time off.

Provision for crewless pilots at least to allow. I have not participated in other contests mostly due to my own limitations on gear I have for being at a different airport. Tie down and tow out gear. Plus I am spoiled where I fly out of now.

Region 6 North was a good success. A key would be better media, promotion and exposure for the events. Sponsors? Corporate sponsors at regional s? A campaign for this, a leader to go out and sell it. Would lower costs and increase exposure for pilots, sport, etc. This has been done very poorly so far...in the US especially.

Regulate contest dates so that two contest in the same area do not draw down entries from one contest or the other. This happened at some contest in 2011.

Rule on financial statements. I haven't gotten one from a contest for probably 10 years. Either enforce the rule, or drop it. It really should be MANDATORY that the contest organization send SSA a financial statement on the contest. How else is the Contest Board, who sets the fees organizations are allowed to charge, have a clue as to what it costs various organizations to run a contest? Fee setting with very little knowledge of expenses is a recipe for disaster. Don't like "off site" surcharge. Can you tell me what the heck it was for? If my club runs a contest at another field, can we charge an extra \$50 per entrant? Even if it is just on the other side of town from where we normally fly? Standard tow fee established, but how many constests didn't get a waiver to charge more? If the rules committee doesn't know how much tows cost at various places, they can't set a reasonable fee. Of course, if you set it high, everyone will charge high and nobody will want to go ot the site. Open Class Weight Limit. Just an FYI, the one who said "I don't think there is any real advantage to the higher weight" told me at Uvalde after watching a heavier than him 22 run away from him at Uvalde now believes there is a real, distinct advantage to the higher weight and wing loading. Not asking for re-consideration, just letting you know that it is real, and it should be worth considering some sort of gross weight rule adjustment for Open Class Only sailplanes. Such as had been proposed previously (850 if your airworthiness allows it, but only for gliders with no other class they can race with ballast. In other words, don't permit an ASG-29, V2, etc to ballast up to 850 KG, because they can race 18 meter, but let older Nimbus 2, 3, 604, AS-W17, older 22s and 25s, etc. ballast up if their airworthiness permits

it). Not interested in handicaps, because there is usually only one person happy with the handicaps. And that is the winner. All the rest think they are not fair. Did not like the Saturday through the following Sunday for the Nationals at Uvalde. Saved one day of vacation, lost one day of flying, and had me drive 700 miles home to go to work the next day. With the old schedule, I drove to the contest on the weekend, flew both practice days, the contest, went home on Friday, and had a weekend to recover before returning to work. To have comparable time off after the contest would have actually required one more day of vacation for one fewer flying day than the Tuesday through Thursday schedule. Nice idea, but in my opinion, not a good tradeoff. Will do it again if that is the schedule, though. Had a great time at the contests I attended this year. Looking forward to flying and crewing next year.

Schedule

Set good tasks, use weather in full, No MAT

Speaking for myself, I only am able to get enough time off in the summer to do 1 contest per season. I guess the major obstacle would be my work schedule.

Split regional are a good concept. The downside, of course, is if it better to stay at one location than making the drive twice. Sat to Sun Nats is also a good idea.

THE ECONOMY!

Tasking is almost exactly the same as I fly at weekend: OLC. Turn-area and MAT tasks are a close approximation to free flight (OLC), supplemented with clock (computer) watching. What the heck happened to assigned speed tasks (REAL racing)? I do not believe that the present generation of CDs aren't capable of designing AST tasks. Why aren't they doing that? The old arguments against are mostly invalidated by the introduction of the 1-mile turn radius. Let's get back to racing!

The 2 weekend format used at Chilhowee this year worked well for me

The biggest complaint is the high fixed contest entry fees, that include tows. A pilot may pay for 6 tows and only fly 2 days. As a contest pilot I would prefer the low entry fee and pay for tows that I use. If you ask any glider pilot in my club, they all have the same comment. We are very discouraged by the high entry fee. We would prefer pay as you tow and a low entry fee. I have recently have been involved in a new contest in the North East, and we kept the entry fee down to \$160, and pay as you tow, pilots seemed happy with this and the operation made money. I would love to fly in the 15m nationals next year, but the entry fee is expensive, and I would rather use that money for tows at my local airport.

The cost is an issue for most people I have talked to, but there is nothing we can do about it. What we could do is: 1- Require that SSA istructors have at least a silver badge (as in Europe) to change the training culture. 2- Each contest pilot should committ to mentor at least a new xc pilot at his or her site and report at the next contest (under general topics). 3- At every contest we should spend few minutes time to talk about this issue. It might energize us to do more when we go back to our own club.

The main issue for myself flying more contests, is the distance. It is really hard to justify driving huge distances with the potential for poor conditions. This puts many contests out of reach.

The only limiting factor for me is time off to attend and weather. Shorter contests or even contests spanning to separate weekends within a 2 to 3 hour driving radius would be preferred.

The only things holding me back from participating in more contests are family and business obligations - not too much the RC can do about that!

The pressure to fly on iffy days has likely ended my contest participation. That is my decision based

upon my own personal limits and not intended to suggest CD's are making poor decisions about flying.

The two biggest obstacles for me are time and money. If I had both I would fly as many contests as Frank Paynter!

This year region 10 was cut short. this was 1 reason i did not enter. I would like to contest days start on Sunday and end on Saturday. The Saturday before the start is practice. The Sunday at then end is for travel. Also, consider allowing the regional to extend by a day the contest. Again most regional pilots are within a days drive and most I think would drive back home at night on Sunday. If a pilot is going to spend the \$\$\$ to get to the site then Let's make full use of the days available. Most pilots are within a days drive and the die hards will be there if they really want to compete.

Time away from home can be a problem; I do like contests where the accommodations are reasonably priced (i.e. camping, showers, & kitchen available).

Time is main issue for me, I prefer Sat-Sun Nats. Sat-Sun scheduling allows me to participate using one week of vacation vice two vacation weeks for the Tue-Thur schedule.

Time. I flew four regionals and one nationals this past year.

Time/distance. With 4 weeks of vacation, two regionals or one nationals is about all I can ask my family to put up with. A far away nationals (more than 2 days of driving) means taking additional vacation - which isn't in the cards. Costs. No issue for me. The difference between trying to run a regional on the cheap vs having the right support and infrastructure seems pointless. It saves a pilot maybe 100-200 bucks, which in the grand scheme of our sport is a rounding error. Fun. I think having a good competition with a reasonably large number of competitors and somewhat ambitious tasking is "fun". Contests that routinely call 2 hr AATs even in good weather means using only 1/3 of the available soaring day. Calling a 4 hour task once in a while means starting when it is good enough, though maybe before the absolute best part of the day. That means more decision making and less start gate roulette. Also believe that merging 15m and standard to get more than 5 or 6 ships in a class contributes to competition and fun.

Too many rules. Try "OLC rules" contest. Social events? Really? We have them already. Also - our Regional attendance increased when we went "no water" for all classes.

Vacation time and travel distance.

We have lost our heros in contests and we are not selling contests. It used to be that Soaring carried indepth articles on George Moffat, AJ Smith, Dick Johnson and the National Championships. Not any more. We are failing to make contest flying an important next step in ones soaring experience. Just like the "we don't need no stinking Badges" group there is a "we don't need no stinking contests" group. Lets get back to making contests important again through marketing. In training - how about a national training center in Hobbs who would offer several training products including US team sponsored contest training?

We need more support from the ssa for regional contests to help promote.

We should reduce the number of traditional contests and move toward more of an OLC type of contest structure. We should develop a set of rules for a U.S. OLC that is challenging and would count toward pilot ranking.

currently a motor glider can not fly over an airport and crank it's engine and receive bonus points for a land out. It has to actually land. It should! Rules are made for a reason. I have been to several contest where the rules have not been used. I talked to the CD who said that the rules are just a guide line! This is unfair and discourages participation. We don't need more cookouts, just reasonable task calls and safety.

my main constraint is travel time and vacation time. I went to the Region 10 contest this year because it addressed these two issues well for me. It was within a 1 day drive of home and since it was tuesday-saturday with practice sunday and monday i was able to only take minimum vacation days.

need more xcountry camps to encourage more participation. Cost of the entire contest is getting higher and higher.

provisions for crewless pilots

shorter contest, less cost,

the biggest obstical seems to be the lack of coordination of contests. When there are overlapping contests in the same general region, i.e. East, Central,West it dilutes the participation. SSA or SRA should monitor this and deny contests that will conflict. It is generally save to say that a west contest will not dilute an east contest.

travel distance to national level contests > 1000 miles is not interesting

very few of the changes to racing will increase participation. They will merely change the nature of racing for better or worse.

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Comments:

A couple of times, I saw cd and task advisor unprepared for how to deal with a day that wasn't quite as strong as expected. Think we should help by giving some guidance on this front in the CD handbook.

Although I don't believe it had any serious negative safety impacts in this case, I observed a Regional & National contest being held simultaneously this year. I believe that the logistical complications of doing so created an environment where safety could have been compromised. I would urge the rules committee to consider whether Regionals & Nationals should be allowed to be held simultaneously at the same airport. I am loathe to suggest anything that may cut down on the number of contests each year, but at the same time I think it is worth considering - in order to improve both the safety and success of each event.

Another contestant made a 50 foot low pass right over me as I was rolling on the runway. I thought for a second or two that he was trying to land in front of me. He then pulled up into a crowded pattern without a peep on the radio. We need to ban any low passes when a finish circle is in use and establish radio procedures to include: 1. Radio communication check at rope hook-up. 2. Call when entering the pattern (entering down-wind to runway XX)

As with previous years, competition accidents seem to reflect poor execution of the basics. Field selection & poor patterns continue to be the main glider-breakers in comps.

Being sent out on task, on a day that is not conducive to contest flying is one of the worst things that a CD can do. The CD's goal orientation to get in a contest day, combined with the average contest pilot's drive to finish the task, can be a dangerous combination on a marginal day.

Did not observe anything RC should know.

During the 2010 Sports Class Nat.'s, the fleet was launched despite deteriorating conditions and we

ended up with about 20 gliders fighting for a spot on the 5mi long ridge. I sympathize with the CD trying to get a contest day in but the day should have been scrubbed earlier. There should be a 'mutiny' rule allowing the contestants who are experiencing the actual conditions and may disagree with the CD and advisors to overrule the CD's decision.

Emphasis should be placed on avoiding task legs that require head-on flying.

FLARM implementation in contests is a must.

Flarm need to be mandated for future contests. All National contest now 2012 and 100% in Regional Contest within two years 2013

I don't think holding a Regional Sports Class contest co-located with a 15m Nationals, particularly at a site with a difficult technical ridge climb out off tow, was a good idea. The performance mix and skill mix flying close to terrain in a congested area of marginal lift was pretty scary at times. Adding in towpilots tugging gliders through the middle of this made it worse.

I have attended three contests with midairs (one fatal), I was on the task committee at one of the non fatal mid air contests, and place zero blame at all three contests but I also believe we could have paid more attention to the tasking potential of conflicting in and out course routing, easier said than done as our sport has inhearent risks no matter the tasking, but more guidance could be helpful.

I have not seen anything at contest that would be considered a rules issue. I have however seen pilots make bad judgment calls that could be perceived as a safety issue with the rules...

I have seen some very bad flying while joining a thermal at Perry. Another glider through careless entry procedure almost hit me in a very busy thermal. Another one at the same contest a pilot did a low pass over the field at 90 deg over a landing glider. Very dangerous! I would like to see steep penalties issued for dangerous flying (verified through log files)

I have sent a separate letter to the committee on this point

I observed a near miss saved by powerflarm. I hope it continues to grow in numbers.

I think CD's should avoid, if at all possible, turnpoints requiring a 180 degree turn to next turnpoint,finish,etc. Last year's mid-air at Uvalde comes to mind. During the Seniors', I've witnessed 2 near-misses and an incident (collapsed gear) of returning gliders trying to land over a glider that had just touched down in front of them. Many of us have seen a Utube of a tragic collision of 2 P-51's on a runway at Oshkosh. In all occasions the incidents could have been avoided had the second aircraft landed short of the first aircraft or landed considerably longer than the first aircraft.

I was at the Logan R9 which was held along with the 15m Nats. I am sure readers of this are very familiar with the fall out during and after this contest. I personally feel that TA blew the a lot of what happened out of proportion and I agree with BB's assessment made later. The weather didn't cooperate and was largely responsible for the shortcomings of the contest. I think BB's suggestions were right on. An interesting Wx observation is that we had beautiful weather but not great soaring conditions. This is uncommon in the summertime in most pilot's experience and lead to over-calls and over-confidence. With TOL at 10K some terrain was dangerous to overfly whereas with TOL at 14K it would have been a no-brainer.

I was involved in a near miss head-on collision on a MAT day with steering point approx 8 miles from the finish. The other ship was approaching from the NW, I was approaching from the SE. Just before I entered the cylinder, I saw a ship ahead and slightly left, pull up into an evasive right climbing turn. He was initially below the horizon relative to me, and I did not see him. Further more, I was probably looking at my instruments more than normal to determine distance and glide information. In any case, steering points can create needless risks with pilots approaching at high speeds from all points of the compass, at an altitude likely too low to successfully bail out. I recommend a rule that would

require all pilots to make a radio announcement when approaching the steering turn to the effect of "Call Sign - 2 miles Northwest Steering turn - Inbound - 3,200 ft" I believe such a rule would have likely allowed me and the other pilot, to avoid this near miss.

Keep the observers away from the grid while launching!

Logan made me pretty nervous on days when you couldn't climb much above ridge height, which was most days. There were mass landouts due to poor conditions generally and tasking that was too long for some days. Once you account for the long time required to launch the fleet, time for pilots to claw their way up the side of the ridge and the fact that the days could end unpredictably and abruptly it made for a bit of a crapshoot. Motoring up and down the ridge hardly seemed like racing. Not sure it's a rules issue except for min task time and a better way to check whether everyone has had an opportunity to get to the start.

Logan would have benefited from 3000' tows this year. The tasks would have started earlier and the % of finishers higher. It often took 45-60 mins to reach start height.

Luckily, not this season. I still like the Flarm rental idea...

Minimum requirement of silver badge or xc camp attendance may be insufficient for some locations; Insufficient training and organizing of ground crew volunteers;

My biggest concern is multiple days of long flight times. (Take-off to landing) It can happen a lot and produce fatigued pilots. Fatigue=>Mistakes=>Accidents This worries me the most because the average age of our pilot is significantly older than it was. Pilots are not the "spring chickens" they once were.

N/C

NO

No

No, incidents or safety issues.

No.

No.

No.

No.

None observed

None.

Nope, and we didn't even have Power Flarms, Gasp!!

Not at the 2010 regionals in Llano Texas that I remember.

Not specifically, but keeping an eye on things outside the cockpit (in my opinion) is paramount. Further electronic devices that work against this (ie gps weather updates), that draw attention to something inside the cockpit without true relevance should be carefully considered.

Not this year. However, in the past, I've had close calls with other ships. One flew over the top of me (less than 10 feet) and stated he never saw me (I believe him). Another time I was thermaling and a

ship almost hit me. He never saw me, his head in the cockpit. I'm hoping that PowerFLARM will minimize these instances.

Nothing that hasn't been discussed with the contest manager and rectified.

Over tasking in unlandable areas. Tasks should be stopped at any time if conditions dangerous. Why not more speed tasks?

Ridge running (Logan for example) presents a significant opportunity for head-on's, especially at the blind corners and passes. Contest organizers might consider creating a mandatory pilot meeting with videos and slides for a thorough area familiarization prior to launching the first practice day. Logan is a great and technical soaring site but does present some challenges for a contest with a high number of entrants. I have never flown the Appalachian Mountains or over densely forested areas. The same comments would apply at those sites as well.

Rules committee has done an excellent job. I commend their actions taken to insure a safer contest environment. I encourage future "tasking for dummies".

Self launch gliders should not perform their initial climb in an area where other gliders are being towed.

Serious towing issues at Uvalde. We need better briefed tuggies, ideally FLARM-equipped, or we're going to have a mid-air... Two VERY close calls with tugs this contest.

Stop changing tasks in air. The only change allowable in air should be to a task that has been previously defined on the ground. Avoid tasking that puts gliders on head-on courses.

Strongly suggest that we find a way to get FLARMS in all the towplanes for the Worlds. This is our problem to resolve to keep those guys safe. There was a lot of good communication at Uvalde this year, and there will likely be twice as many towplanes there next year. So, the radio may get completely jammed up, and a very important call might get stepped on. We had a couple of times where the towplane headed towards the center of a gaggle instead of going by to the side of it. Made me very uncomfortable when a towplane came right at me and when another pulled me right into the middle of a thermal (all the gliders I saw were above me, and none were talking with my FLARM). A little reminder to the towpilots to not go to a gaggle would be good. Get us close, and let us glide over to it.

Task should not be changed in the air. Should be no more MATs without TPs like at last Fairfield contest.

The 2011 Sports Nats saw gaggles occasionally compressed in small bands between rocks and clouds. Had the number of entrants been larger, we would have been lucky not to have had a mid-air at some point. Please urge CD's not to task such that gliders will be meeting each other head-on.

The Logan contest which I was a participant in had a lot of us question the aggressive task setting in an intimidating part of the country. Many people left because of that. The local pilots had too much influence on task setting. Line finishes should be prohibited at all contests and cylinder finishes with minimum finish altitudes (already the rule) should replace them. Once FLARM is available for a couple of years, it should be mandatory in contests.

There has been a lot of talk about tasking head on, Use of flarm excetra, TATs Do not provide any safer conditions when the weather is good in 1 area. I think we should stop using it as a safety catchall.

There were at least 3 broken gliders at the Logan 15m nationals this year, and a contributing factor in all of these incidents was the design and implementation of overly ambitious tasks in marginal (for the site) soaring weather. It was clear that the contest task committee, CD, and task advisors did not

understand the limitations of their own site, and assumed way too much site-specific skills and knowledge on the part of the contestants. Tasks as called encouraged (and in some cases required!!) risky behavior on the part of pilots. In researching this issue after the fact, I discovered there is no SSA guidance for CD's - its all up to individual CD's as to how well, or how poorly site-specific limitations/challenges are integrated into task calling and implementation. The SSA and/or SRA needs to create and publicize a set of guidelines for CD's (what I call the "CD Handbook") to incorporate all the things that Charlie Spratt did as a matter of course, and our new crop of CD's does somewhat more erratically. I have drafted such a document for my own use, as I have been volunteered to CD next year's Region 6 South contest at my own home club.

Too many pilots making bad choices prior to off-fields this year. Was not the contest fault but why are these pilots flying into unlandable terrain low?

Turnpoints needed to have rules placed that encourage more "known quantity landable areas" as turnpoints. If there's a model airplane field that is perfect for landing a glider in. Then why the hell, is the CD giving us Lat and Long coordinates to navigate to incase we get low.....why not just add it to the worldwideturnpointexchange website. It's just that simple. Keeping secrets of this decrease safety. For example, at New Castle, why isn't Three Barking Dogs airstrip in the turnpoint database? It's a welcome spot for gliders, and located in an area where there are no other turnpoints listed. Why isn't the big fields at McCoy falls listed as a turnpoint? Instead, the actual New River McCoy falls is located 2 miles away...what good does it do to have glide navigation into a river? Why not revamp the turnpoint to be over the field 2 miles south that is a known quantity where gliders routinely land there. Personally, I'd rather have glide navigation on my gps directing me to a field, than a river. Instead of having a special meeting to explain where all the safe places to land out are, then just add them to the turnpoint database and make everyone's soaring that much safer.

Two contests I was involved with this year had accidents involving gliders striking pedestrians. Fortunately, neither involved disastrous injuries, but a few centimeters in the wrong direction and the outcome could have been different. We need to encourage high-visibility clothing/beacons/something to make ground-pounders more visible. At the same time, we've got to remind glider pilots to be on the lookout.

Two very close encounters in contest flying this year. One head on. FLARM can not come soon enough.

Under powered tow planes could become a safety issue. Being towed by a c172 or a citabria on a density altitude day is no fun.

Under-powered tow planes

Wide range of length of downwind leg prior to turning base at the contest finish field. This becomes a safety issue for a low performance glider on downwind behind a high-performance glider. Especially on MAT tasks, a final mandatory 'steering point' should be called so all pilots (in a class) are approaching the contest finish from the same direction. Radio calls could be made mandatory at this turnpoint, four miles out, and finish.

Yep - that bozzo, in a Duo Discus at Logan, circling the wrong way while 5 others were topped out before the start.

Yes, one pilot who is too aggressive in thermals and you know who it is. When KS talks to you about being too aggressive, you have a problem.

Yes. See my letter of 8/2/11 to the rules committee concerning flying in thunder storms and other poor tasking at Logan. As I noted in that letter, I think we need a rules change to mandate review of contest days where unforecast weather makes the day's outcome a matter of luck. Such a rule would also have positive safety effects by discouraging pilots to press on in spite of dangerous weather. I have previously written the contest committee to suggest modifications to the "safety finish" rule by giving the CD authority to expand the 5 mile radius, and I'm happy to see the change to 10 miles. I would go further, however, and give the CD discretion to expand the radius further if safety concerns warranted it.

Yes. I observed another pilot that was using a hand held radio in his glider because he was having issues with his panel mounted radio. The hand held got bumped off frequency and we didn't hear any radio calls from him in a very busy pattern. He also passed me very close on the right side on final glide without any radio call to let me know he was there. He was so close it would have been VERY easy to into him. I spoke with the CD about this and he just said things like this happen and didn't take any action or even mention it in the next day's pilot's meeting.

low/ fast finishes at reginals, nothing said to pilots about danger to others. they should be penalized.

no

no

no

no

no

no..

not at this time

:

Comments:

One last comment - Recommend that we ban MAT tasks.. Too much luck, no similar IGC task, way too much heads down computer time, increased collision risk. Too much advantage to local pilots. I appreciate the good work and dedication of the Rules Committee!

Thank you for your time and dedication to the sport.

15 minutes is often not nearly enough time to get in position for a start. That rule started when there was a start line at 1000m above the airport. With high, large, remote start cylinders some adjustment is needed to allow late launchers a fair start. Rules allow CD to adjust that time. Maybe a little stronger encouragement / guidance to calculate what's a reasonable time to travel from release point to start point with expected lift would help.

A Sports class nationals or Club class nationals needs to be in the summer months when school is out of session. Typically this type of racing is attractive to a younger pilot, who has kids, and has a lower cost, lower performing glider that fits well into the sports or club class. If there's a nationals that is during the school year, then it will NOT be a large turnout.

Allowing motor gliders to compete with pure gliders is unfair. I would propose that this practice should

be banned or add severe penalties for motor use such as forfeiture of all daily points if the motor is used after launch. A compromise would allow pure gliders to ballast up to the heaviest motor gliders wing loading in that class. The rules allow fixed ballast but this is usually an unsafe practice not to be encouraged. Ballast tanks are designed for the purpose so should be used.

Concerning 5 Radio usage during contests. I really like the idea of more radio communication during contests especially when mentoring new pilots. However I am concerned about too much radio chatter. Perhaps limiting to Sport Class only would be an option. Am sure other ideas have been considered and would be interested in what other kinds of limits and controls are being considered.

Consider extending some contest dates to include 2 weekends . (5 working days / 4 weekend days)

Convince John Cochrane to give a discussion on the rules and make it available as a webcast. Maybe we could e-mail in questions before he puts together his 'death by Powerpoint' or whatever he would give to us.

Costs are Prohibitive especially for young non family Supportive youth.

Daily contest reporting; I've been fortunate enough to have attended quit a few contest where the content and timely daily reporting was exceptional, (sometimes twice a day reporting) and a stated delight of many of my soaring and non soaring family and friends who eagerly waited for every report. The Charlies – Spratt and Lite as well as John Goods entertaining reports are the examples for all to strive to achieve. The addition of including access to Spot traces have also been a fine example of how we can entertain and inform and lead others (pilot and non pilot) into the unique joys of our obscure sport of racing. Alas, these gents set a high bar, I have noticed a substantial decline in; timely (old news is no news), informative (tell the days racing story), entertaining (a little human interst humor is ok) and appropriate(non-bias) reporting in the last few years of my contest participation. I can tell you this decline in timely (etc.) reporting has lessened and in some case eliminated the interest of people who used to be very excited in following our sport. I'm not sure with all the duties the contest organizers have on the daily plate, how to best address this issue positively and appropriately, but if the SSA can assist in this cause it would be beneficial to the future of our entertaining but somewhat difficult to comprehend sport.

FLARM!!! With the FLARM gaining popularity it needs to be reminded and reinforced to everyone that its a SECOND set of eyes. Not in any way a primary means of seperation. At the JWGC this year it was a problem of people who had FLARM to stop looking outside... Which works until you find someone with out a FLARM, or a badly mounted unit... It happened... It was a few close calls.

FLARM, after proven in the field, should be required at all contests!

Get rid of Sport Class. Bring Club Class "A" and "B" to US.

Have you considered a two seat 20M contest. It would be a great way to bring in new participation. It would probably need to be handicapped.

I do beleive that CDs have totally abused the use of AATs and MATs. During a National contest I participated just once out of 10 days an AAT was called. Watching the news form the Pre-Worlds I also noticed the abundance of AATs and MATs I do beleive the CD called an AAT once... why? they reported excellent WX... so honestly I don't understand... is it just because it is easier? look at the last world level contests and see how many AATs they fly... I'll bet it is at least half!

I don't understand 5b question?

I enjoy the comraderie at the contests and will probably continue to attend when I can. Keep up the good work. I know you all are under-appreciated, so a big THANKS for all you do.

I have flown several contests with Frank Paynter. If Frank says he was sent out on task over

un-land-able terrain, he probably was. The very public over reaction to his report comment by the contest organizers was uncalled for. If contest organizers are going to be this sensitive to implied criticism, add a report review feature to the website so that they can review/approve it prior to putting it up for the rest of us to see. I meant what I said, but I didn't mean to say it; is a pretty common problem for glider pilots, and most of us could use an editor. Task Length. Encourage the CD to adjust the task length to suit the weather available that day and the consensus of the pilots in attendance. I don't know how to handle this in a rule, guideline maybe, too many variables for a rule. Radio Usage. Tough question. 65 glider pilots talking on one frequency is going to lead to chaos. Splitting the classes or teams out to several different frequencies is going to lead to safety issues. Good luck with this one.

I have fun at regional contests. I fly these to check out how my personal flying compares to others and other learning experiences. These contests show me areas to improve and I know that I am achieving some of the best flying I can accomplish looking at the conditions. This knowledge will allow me to achieve other goal flights.

I like the current rules that encourage starting out the top of the start cylinder

I love soaring! Thanks for all you do to further the sport.

I probably would not team fly, and would not use radio in contests except for safety related communications, but OK with others practicing team flying.

I stopped going to 18m nationals regionals because it is not fun competing with a 18m standard class sailplane.

I support FLARM for all contests

I think the split regional (regional scheduled over consecutive weekends with non-flying days in between) is a failed experiment. The split limits the field mostly to close local pilots. Might be a good idea to use experienced but non-competing pilots as task advisers whenever possible. This is to avoid biased recommendations to the CD. I hate to be task adviser when I'm racing. Racer's want to race, especially if they are behind and need to make up points. This leads to calls to fly on days when we shouldn't. I have made a couple of bad decisions as a task adviser, almost certainly because I needed more flying days to try to move up. Please urge CD's not to put gliders on tasks that have gliders meeting head-on. Maybe the rules committee is not the place to register this, but I think there is probably overlap between rules and contest site selection folks. I applaud efforts to encourage new racing sites. However, maybe a site should have a proven track record of successful regionals (plural, as in several regionals) before it is awarded a nationals?

I would like to propose a fledgling class in competition. Shorter task lengths combined with a mentor program at regional contest, this would include (Weather briefings, racing lectures, safety briefings and the general contest items presented by the CD). The spirit of competition is being lost with the aging pilot group already flying contest and the youth is most likely intimidated by the concept, why not make the landscape more accessible and desirable to new contest pilots? More pilots flying contest equals more pilot advocating for the sport! I would be willing to head a committee on this subject.

I would like to suggest two improvements that can help reduce penalties and frustration at the margin, while not changing our starting & scoring strategy at all. These rules suggestions are intended for regionals. Nats attendees are expected to be able to cope. 1. Change the two minute below gate top rule to one minute. All the same benefits, half the aggravation. Two minutes is endless in the gate and overkill for eliminating excess kinetic energy starts (when combined with the 100 kt gps ground speed limit). 2. Bring back the option of a roll time start. Newcomers (and not so newcomers) do occasionally screw it up so badly that they don't get a valid start at all. When this happens, I suggest we give them their roll time and the least advantageous point in the start gate. It's still a massive penalty, but at least they get to see their distance points on the board. I saw one guy pack up and leave this Summer after a nice flight turned into a zero due to an NVS.

If handicaps are to be used, then an annual handicap assessment should be conducted by the rules committee based on competition results. OH and Higher quality T-Shirts !!! Beefy-T are the Best :) S9

In the wake of the 2011 Nationals at Logan, a few individuals did a lot of squawking about the event, the staff, and the site. I have a lot of thoughts that I would like to pass along to the committee about this. A longtime contest pilot recommended that I email Ken Sorenson with these thoughts, and I will do so in the next 2-3 days.

It may be necessary to hold regional / area contests every year, and national contests every other year.

It will be impossible to police the use of weather information in the cockpit unless you take away all cell phones. If access is available for all pilots, then it is an equal playing field. It will not be long before ClearNav and LX et al impliment a way to project NexRad images on the screen. This technology will enhance safety as pilots can navigate away from hazardous weather far before reaching it. If there is a line of storms such as we have in the Rockies, we can elect a safe landing spot before.

Keep the rules simple. One of the main complaints I have about scoring is that very few really understand it. On an average day it is difficult to relate to the score received.

Keep up the great work. I already can't wait for next season!

Less is more. Make changes to rules only with very good reason, especially scoring or in-flight rules. Costs of maintaining and upgrading flight computer and scoring software is becoming ridiculous. I would recommend a biannual (alternate year) cycle for anything but emergency changes or administrative changes.

None.

PFLARM is a must!!!!

Please keep the gadgets in the cockpit down to a minimum. If weather is expected to be a safety issue, we either shouldn't fly that day, or the CD should monitor weather and transmit in the blind on 123.3/123.5 the weather safety issue to all pilots. No Satellite wx in the cockpit, please. FLARM should be for collision avoidance only. FLARM connected to a PDA running tactical soaring software capable of overriding Stealth/Competition Mode and thus processing other than ownship FLARM data should not be allowed.

Question #2, this just promotes more time with pilots head in the panel!!! Most contests are such that one can look out of the cockpit and see the weather. Question #5, I would answer yes to this in Sports Class Regionals but not any other contests.

Rain days...You all know that contests are weather dependant. I Would like to see a option, which would allow the contest organization to slide or extend the contest (at thier descretion) a maximun of 2 days so we could get the required contest days in. At online registration, you could have a comment that this could be a possibility.

Re: Radio I'm all for team flying at regionals, or even nationals, as an important tool for developing our international team. Those pilots involved should be scored as guests (including those listening in/coaching/advising, etc). If we're trying to appeal to those recreational pilots who currently aren't flying contest b/c they miss being able to chat with their friends, I'd be okay with it in the Sports class, but not Club and not FAI.

Regarding the team flying and radio comms: the reason I voted NO above to question 5a is because it is unrealistic to expect that *all* teams communicate on a single frequency. I was contest manager

this year, and I have flown internationally experiencing the detrimental effect of not knowing how to team fly. I was ready to try this in R10 this year, but when I realized that the waiver allowed the use of only one channel, I changed my mind. 123.5 is bad enough the way it is. I would personally like to see discrete frequency assignments to the different teams. Family-type walkie talkies could easily provide that, and it will more accurately simulate how the rest of the world flies competitively. I am heading down to Argentina next January and once again I will have this disadvantage affect my placing as it has happened before. I also firmly believe that this has a tangible detrimental factor in the performance of the US team overseas (I am not part of that team, I represent another country.)

Regional Sports class could be an enticing opportunity for rookies instead of an easy medal for sand bagging experts. We could allow multiple Sports class fleets separated by HC and Pilot Rank. Thanks for your time contribution!! I assume you guys get 99.99% crap and little gratitude. We really benefited from your guidance this year. ~Bruce

Simplify, simplify, SIMPLIFY!!! (And, thank you for the work you do)

Sports Class handicaps should be similar to FAI handicaps, with max weight of the glider without wings water ballast as in glider manuals.

Team flying should be encouraged. The US Team should teach team flying techniques and help pilots understand the attitudes and choices necessary to be successful. Pilots interested in team flying should practice at contests, but without the radio. It would be interesting to see if they can be successful. Mentoring should be allowed.

Thank so very much to each of you.

Thank you for all you do for soaring and contest flying.

Thanks for all your work. Loved the meeting we had at Perry. I learned a lot.

The Super Regional in Moriarty worked well with two handicapped classes. The Modern and Club classes make sense at the same venue. It solves performance disparity issues and tasking challenges. The Sports Class should have these two sub classes even on the National level.

The idea of handicapping is a good idea with bad "unintended results" Handicaps are seldom fair and we have often encouraged this inequity for "participation" or social engineering reasons. They generally have poor results. 2- Handicaps change the way we race and not for the better. The best way to win is to have a good ship with a good handicap, then follow the fast guys letting them find and center. Is this really the future of racing? Keep FAI classes as they are and improve handicap/ sports class/ club class with fairer values. The two are separate ideas. **THE ONLY PLACE FOR HANDICAPPING IN FAI CLASSES IS TO COMBINE TWO CLASSES INTO ONE IF THERE ARE LESS THAN FIVE ENTRIES IN A CLASS.**

The most serious problem is how to encourage more contest participation, and I don't have an answer. Multiple class handicapped contests are a step in the right direction. Perhaps pre-contest cross-country camps such as the one planned for Caesar's Creek in June 2012 is another. Also, there are some areas of the country where we don't seem to generate many contests, and mine (Illinois) is one. We have not had a regional here in several years. I confess to feeling guilty that I have not offered to help staff one, but the fact is that I prefer to compete with the time I have available to soar. There is little glory and lots of hard work in running contests. We should be grateful to the people who do and try to find a way to encourage more participation in that process. I don't know how.

The multiple handicapped class rule (available by waiver this year) was a clear winner. Several of the contests I flew used this to great advantage, especially when there were last-minute problems with having sufficient numbers of gliders to form separate 18m, 15m and/or standard classes. This rule should be made permanent, with some implementation guidance provided to CD's. The rules

committee should modify the rules to specifically state that a CD can cancel a task AFTER the gate opens. I know this is implied in the "in the interests of safety rule", but every CD I have talked to (the only exception being CD Richard Schafer at the Llano, TX contest last year) has answered "NO" to the question "can you cancel a task after the gate opens?".

The problem with allowing radio communication to support team flying is that few gliders are equipped with more than one radio. Encouraging more pilots to ignore the requirement to be on a common communication frequency can only reduce safety. If team communication is allowed it should only be permitted if that communication is made with a system that is not the radio assigned to 123.3. "System" in this context should not be assumed to be an aircraft band radio, there are other way to share team information.

The regular "safety Box" for pilot comments is a good idea. Perhaps it could be expanded by contest management by listening for or searching out specific safety issues that pertain to today's flying and making sure they are covered the next day.

The timeline for rules changes should be accelerated. The participation in racing is changing quicker than the rules process can react. Changes to create a handicapped FAI class and updates to the Nationals site/location process should be fast-tracked before it's too late.

The turnpoint database is plastered with cautions: "Warning - seek official data". But this database IS used as official data. I suggest: 1. Eliminating the columns that list airport identifiers, because it certainly implies that the airport is the turnpoint. and/or 2. Transitioning "airport" turnpoints to official - i.e. FAA/state data.

There should be an open accounting of the status and use of the sanction fee "rebate" that is for use of the competition organization that controls it. One use of this fund should be for subsidy of new contest sites or organizers that lose money. It would not be given to organizations/sites that have run more than five contests. Two 2011 contest organizers (there may be more) that deserve help are Parowan R9 and Chilhowee Sport Nationals.

There sure is a lot of fussing about the rules for a small trophy and a tee shirt.

Time to completely rethink the number of classes in the US, East and West Nationals and team selection. 1. We need less classes to increase participation and improve quality. 2. East and West Nationals to remove the time and cost issues of competing at a nationals. 3. Team selection is out dated based on only one class, all pilots should be ranked across classes. On radio use for team flying, I think it is good idea but need to figure out how to keep all pilots safe. Too much radio traffic and we will all turn the radios off. This will make safety an issue.

Too many pilots are flying contests without a crew. This puts pressure on the organizer when the weather falls apart unexpectedly.

We need more "fun" contests and short term contests 2-3days. Additionally, sanctioning shouldn't be such a cost deterrent. It adds roughly \$50 per contestant to sanction a contest, even if you're already doing all of the right things. CD, Safety, meetings, reporting etc... Aside from adding up points, I don't see much value to the competitor of a sanction versus non-sanctioned contest. Assuming the non-sanctioned is well run. I've toyed with the idea of turning our spring contest into a sanctioned event, we are close in how we run it already, but it adds cost and overhead that makes it a hard sell to club members and volunteers that are the backbone of the contest. I'm a newbie at this contest thing, but the amount of work required to put one on is amazing and probably one of the largest deterrents. Just dealing with registration and insurance and trying to figure out if you're legal and doing the right thing is a serious hassle. Anything we can do to ease that pain will increase participation.

Weather data in the cockpit is a chicken and egg thing. At the moment, there are no soaring devices that have this capability, probably because of the bans. I think once devices are available in the

soaring community we will adopt their use. For example if the weather were displayed on a ClearNav screen or other common flight computer then the ban can be lifted.

You have a thankless job, thanks for your participation.

none

overall, they are doing a good job.

Return to the [2011 SSA Pilot Opinion Poll survey form](#) to check your input.
Return to main [survey page](#).

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