

2012 SSA Rules Committee Meeting – Minutes

Waller Texas
November 3, 2012

In Attendance

QT John Godfrey
 XM Mike Smith
 UH Hank Nixon
 BB John Cochrane
 KM Ken Sorenson
 X John Good (volunteer)

Election of Officers and Committee Appointments

RC Chair	UH
Secretary	XM
Rules Writer	X
Rules Change Summary	QT
Pilots' Opinion Poll writer	BB
Pilots' Opinion Poll publisher	UH/QT
Pilot Ranking List	JOHN LEIBECHER
Handicap Sub-Committee Chair	DAVE STEVENSON
Handicap Sub-Committee	SEAN FRANKE
Handicap Sub-Committee	
Diagram contact person for Seaborn	QT

Future Schedule

Date	Action	Assignee
11/21	2011 Meeting Minutes to committee	XM/KM
11/30	2012 Draft rule changes to committee	X
12/7	Rules Change Summary to committee	QT
12/14	Committee responses back to Chair	ALL
12/15	Publish minutes on SSA website, Publish Poll results	UH/QT
12/22	Publish Rules Change Summary on SSA website	UH/QT
1/15	Blue book cutoff date - documents transmitted to Hobbs	KM/UH
May, July	2012 RC Election announcement	UH
Open 9/30	2013 Pilot Poll announcement	UH/KM
8/21	2012 Pilot Poll questions to writer	ALL
9/6	Draft poll to committee	BB
9/20	Poll to Aland for publication	BB
10/18	Poll closed	UH
Nov	2013 RC Meeting	UH

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Administration

1. Entry Fees/tow costs. Need to keep organizers from losing money while keeping costs to contestants in line. Are we active or passive?
Discussed whether to use free market concepts or leave the fees as they are.
Most of the 2012 contests made reasonable profits. No change.
KM and QT will publish financial summaries for 2012 on the web.
2. Address maximum tow fee? Moved to \$52 in 2012
******Max tow fee was increased to \$55 to reflect the increase in fuel price.**
KM to send message to organizers about tow fee as guidance. They don't need to charge the full amount - can get more if needed.
3. Organizer's checklist. Delete proof of ownership check box. Fourth request. Denise says A8 does this- John reminded again of request- UH
UH will continue to pursue this.
4. Add Flarm to equipment check box on entry form.- Organizer poll
UH will add to list for John Seaborn – Flarm, elt, Spot, and transponder check boxes.
5. Changing contest forms mid season was a major pain. Northcraft- Organizer poll.
We agree and the waiver will be fixed.
6. On waiver form have place in upper right corner for contestant name and contest number. 18M Nats- Organizer Poll.
Discussed
KM will look into it.
7. Define the waiver approval process. KM 6/6.
Waivers go to the contest committee chair (KM) and are approved by chair along with consultation with the rules committee (UH).
Interpretations of the rules go to the rules committee chair (UH), and are decided by same. (X) will write into the rules.
8. Approval of Nationals to be done by SSA Excom, not BOD QT 10/23
This is in process. We want site selections to be published 2 years in advance (JAN 2013 – all contests for 2013 and 2014 should be approved)
9. National dates announcement to be moved to January of prior year (i.e. 2015 sites announced Jan 2014). Let's shoot for May 2013 for 2014 contests. Get the word out that bids are due much earlier. QT 10/23.
See #8

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10. Scoring foreign pilots- is it time to score as regular contestants in Nationals? UH 2010. 2012 Poll shows 63% of pilots approve with 35% not approving.

****Foreign nationals will be scored as regular contestants – The highest scoring US pilot will be declared US national champion.

11. Provide for higher entry deposit after close of entry priority date (60 days) to encourage more timely entry. KS 2/26.

****The appendix for 5.4.2.4 will say that a surcharge can be applied to the deposit in full or in part.

****The max late entry surcharge will be \$100 for both regionals and nationals.

12. Allow online payment of contest deposits. SSA collects funds for distribution. Pay a small fee to SSA for service. Morgan Hall – Organizer poll.

KM/UH will ask Seaborn/Easton what's involved in adding a paypal option on the SSA website. RC supports this. We also need a mechanism to get the contest money submitted to the SSA to be sent to the organizer. The best solution would be to have a button that sends money directly to the organizer.

13. Put a Paypal button in the online registration system. In order to complete registration, the pilot has to complete payment of the deposit. Sarah Arnold- Organizer poll.

See above #12

14. Permit organizers to charge increased entry for pilots that show up without a crew. Suggestion is for \$50/day surcharge. Larry Knauer 6/4/12.

Discussed and decided that organizers may request waivers for additional fees. Caution that such a charge may cause pilots to expect specific services and assistance in return for the fee.

15. Allow competitors to upload copies of insurance and license as part of registration. Push all this as far upstream as possible so they can do it once a year and use for any contest. Morgan Hall- Organizer Poll.

(UH/KM) Will be added to the laundry list for Seaborn/Easton - to be added to the website. RC supports this.

16. Awards- retiring travelling trophies- . UH- maybe some funding to help support this could come from sanction surplus. KS started on this, UH and RC to follow through.

Done

17. Use of sanction surplus. Use to help with short falls? Some money used to support training camps. How about more active Junior support? Poll topic 2012

Will fund 90% of entry fee and tows (one time) for any junior pilot (26 or under) who applies, and will support training camps (and training at contests) with the sanction surplus. We are putting these funds to good use and are on track to do some good with these funds. With participation down we should be able to use

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these funds to boost participation. We'll give the current arrangement another couple of years, and if it looks like there is too much money accumulating and not being put to good use, we'll reduce the sanction fee.

QT will continue to serve as the contact point for these funds.

18. Allow delayed attendance/ arrival by pilots for contests where weather is iffy for the first day or two, provided contest fee is paid in full in advance. Iris Striedieck- organizer poll.

It's already covered in the rules.

(X) Will add a line in the appendix that physical attendance is not required to meet the requirements of registration.

Participation

19. Contest participation – KM study Total entries? Nationals up modestly.

Overall, nationals are up marginally, regionals are down marginally.

FAI handicapped classes seem to be a popular option.

The sense is that larger classes at contests are more fun (Seniors, Perry). We need to work with organizers to encourage larger classes, which can be accomplished by combining smaller FAI classes into a combined FAI class.

Training camps and contests, which include training as a part of the contest, are also very popular.

20. Barriers to participation – Poll comments

No new barriers

Nationals Options

21. This item is a development of topics 21 & 22 from 2011. Various possibilities were polled. First option is to leave as they are.

See below

22. Split Sports into Club and "Modern FAI". 71% of pilots polled approve of this option. FAI wet or dry? 52% approve of this option.

**** Assigned tasks are allowed in both classes.

(X) has the details

****To split the classes there must be at least 12 pilots in each class, otherwise it reverts to a one-class sports class contest.

2 classes, .898 scratch handicap of the glider, or larger for the Club Class

No water. The CD is expected to use good judgment and not call Assigned Tasks if the glider handicap range is too large.

This takes place effective 2013 at Mifflin Sports Nationals in May.

We need to get the word out and note pending approval of the Board.

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23. For small number classes, use limited handicapping such as done in Std for 2012. 75% of pilots polled approve.

Continue limited handicapping for Standard Class as was done for 2012 – LS-4 or better handicap

No changes to other classes

24. East-Central-West Nationals – poll option F. Mixed handicap vs. pure. Note that purpose of Nationals. 63% of pilots polled approve of this option.

2014 Bids

15 meter at Caesar Creek (maybe add Std to Caesar Creek)

Open Class and FAI Handicapped Class – Montague

18 Meter – Minden

Sports/Club at Hobbs

No move to East/West Nationals yet. Work to locate one handicapped Nationals accessible to each coast. RC is moving forward to implement an FAI-combined class in 2014.

25. One national contest at which all team selection happens. 35% of pilots polled approved of this option. 40% do not approve.

Future potential Continental Championship may fill this role

26. A few higher ranking “super regionals” to qualify into Nationals like 24 described above. 58% of pilots polled approve of this option

It's not happening.

27. Allow co-location of up to 3 nationals. Total limit is 65, 12 slots reserved for each class, then fills by ranking.

It's allowed under current rules, and could be addressed by a Continental Championship.

28. Contingency plan for low entry nationals. BB suggests if less than 12 in the class at time of end of preferential entry, automatically handicap within the class. More contingency plans so we don't get last minute waiver requests (Minden 2012).

Commitment is renewed to not change the rule requiring 8 finishers with at least 40% of the winner's score. If possible, co-locate a “weak” contest with either an FAI combined contest or an adjacent class. No hard schedule deadlines set for when concern that a particular contest might not have 8 entrants triggers some action.

Sailplanes/ Equipment

29. Flarm- poll data and comments. Review current estimates of adoption. 40% of Poll responders flew with Flarm in 2012. Consider if, or when Flarm may be mandated. Define criteria for consideration of mandate.

Will not be mandated at this time. We're still evaluating range issues, antenna issues, and lack of a logger. At present, most pilots are adopting FLARM

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without mandate, and rental program is working. Will not consider mandate until all components are working and we determine that voluntary adoption is not adequate.

30. Flarm as tactical tool/Stealth. Poll, UH various messages, QT 7/3, KM 7/3.

Will leave whether or not to use Stealth Mode as an open item.

31. Revisit the prohibition on the in-flight use of electronic devices that report weather data, since we cannot police their use. Weather depictions are now commonly available on cell phones and GPS navigation receivers. Cell reception in flight is of questionable use, however this may change with time.

No consensus to drop this prohibition.

32. Use of cloud flying instruments. This capability is in some new instruments. To address this, procedures have been created to ensure non-approved capabilities are not available during the contest period. Lots of comments on this were made earlier this year to RC and on RAS. 2012 Poll supports retention of existing rule 68%

Poll supports retaining the existing rule.

33. More types of data are becoming available for potential use in the cockpit. Current rule contemplates this and do not permit this information in. This includes possible use of many kinds of 2 way data. Flarm implementation is noted exception to this long standing policy. Poll for 2012 asks specifically how RC should address this topic ie. proactive vs. reactive.

We will continue to monitor current and future technology and emphasize the prohibition of data into the cockpit present in the current rule.

34. Flight recorders- Adopt same list as OLC? KM 10/23. UH would note that up until a couple of weeks ago this would have meant all Cambridge legacy recorders would not be permitted.

QT will evaluate this further. Any OLC acceptable flight recorder is OK for regionals. We need to make sure this does not create an additional burden on the scorer

No change to nationals

Start/ Finish

35. Starts- Review start height penalty. QT/BB

No change

36. Ask Guy Ford Byars to automate selection of best start.

****(Scoring formula change)

Task penalties that are devalued under the present formula will no longer be devalued. They will be fixed penalties. In the interest of simplification of the rules, this will allow the determination of the best scoring valid start.

(X) will work with Guy on this change.

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37. Finish- New rule for 2012 providing for distance points only when more than 200 feet below the bottom of the finish cylinder has had some negative feedback. Review 2012 poll results and consider actions to refine, or eliminate this rule.

Poll showed 47% favor retention as currently written, 40% do not favor retention as written. Pilots do not favor increasing the near miss band (37% yes, 44% no). Pilots do not favor elimination of the rule (49% no , 38% yes). Split evenly on strengthening the low finish penalty if associated with eliminating the rule.

Poll does not support a change. No change from what was used in 2012.

38. Guidance for contests at airports that are open to non-contest traffic, require that a cylinder, not a line be used and minimum finish height should allow a regular altitude for pattern entry. For 800 foot pattern entry, that means 1000 foot finish at 1 mile. QT as communicated in BB agenda items.

Also provide guidance for finish height at closed airports. BB

****Guidance for minimum finish height will now be 700ft. and 1 mile and if moved out further will go up at 200ft/mile (X).

Contest organizers should take into account local air traffic and landing possibilities

39. Create a provision that permits a pilot who gets a finish to land off of the airport if safety considerations justify. BB 9/6

Much discussion, no change.

Tasking/Flying

40. At mixed contests, where airport configuration safely permits, give precedence to national class relights by inserting as soon as possible into launch sequence ahead of regional class pilots. BB

****Rule 1.6 in Regional rules – We will add “re-launching” if practical. (X)

41. Drop a day should not apply to pilots who leave, don’t fly, or don’t go on task. Ionia showed many contestants getting worst day adjustments on days when they did not fly or had left the contest. Not the intent of the rule. BB has proposed language.

**** Rule will be tweaked by X and BB.

42. No Water days- provide better guidance to CD’s regarding the intent of this option. KM 10/23

No change.

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43. Team Flying. Should we allow use of radios in regional contests? What guidelines should be in the rules? Do we make available in all regional contests or by organizer choice? Poll supports pilot to pilot communication in regional contests with 73% favoring.

****Default for regionals is that pilot to pilot communication using aircraft radios is permitted. Eliminate part of rule 10.7.2.9 that says “this specifically prohibits team flying”.

Pilot to pilot communication (team flying or mentoring) should not be done on the contest frequency (ie. 123.3). Alternate frequencies (such as 123.5) can be designated for those purposes.

CD has to work out procedures appropriate to size of each contest.

Organizers will announce by preferential entry deadline – team flying allowed and which classes. Pilot to pilot communication allowed. Ground to pilot communication not allowed.

Scoring

44. Regularize altitude / distance penalties across start, finish, turn point, airspace? BB
no change

45. Should we use FAI rules/scoring? KM 10/23.

This would be appropriate for a Continental Championship Contest and the US Team Camp.

Class Issues

46. 20M 2 seat class – Mostly this seems an issue for USTC. . Do we find any other place for them to race but sports class? Separate score sheet at opens? Super regional?

They will be able to fly in the enhanced Sports Class and the mixed FAI contest - contemplated for 2014.

47. Club Class- Class growth- progression. – Have we seen any?

See above 22.

48. Class specific seeding for Club Class when scored within Sports

Not applicable because they now have their own class.

49. Handicaps- BB suggests that we use scratch handicaps without weight modification if scales are not present. Reason is complaints that some pilot declarations of weights are “as reliable as movie stars”.

No change

50. At mixed FAI, adjust handicaps for weight if it is a dry contest and scales are available. BB

No change

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51. If scales are not available, no ballast may be added other than to adjust CG. BB
Already in the rules (tail ballast)

52. Need to develop a handicap list for use at contest where water ballast is used in which aerodynamically equivalent gliders of differing empty weights have the same handicap. BB
UH and QT will evaluate.

53. Handicapping- Some discussion about the bigger picture issue of how handicaps should be established. Could/should we use OLC, FAI Handicaps? KM 10/23
UH and QT will evaluate.

54. 13.5 M class. – Mostly this is a USTC issue. One contest was held promoting this class in 2012. Should we schedule 13.5 super regional or national? Should we schedule?
There are already 2 13.5 meter contests scheduled

55. Review the sanction status of 1-26 nationals given differing rules including airspace.
Not an issue – 1-26 rules already conform with SSA sanction rules

Errata

56. We need to tweak wording to re-clarify that bug wipers are allowed. Dropping World Class last year buggered this. (X)

Safety Topics

57. BB safety report.
Read and accepted

BB recommendations:

BB will write article in Soaring on low altitude thermalling, off field landings, and safety talk emphasis.

Relight procedures should be formalized by CDs: minimum altitudes and patterns

Finish height – we decided to raise guidance and keep current rule – see above

Consider drop a day scoring

Hard deck exploration – this could be allowed by waiver

Mid-air – there was a mid air at the Worlds in Uvalde even though both pilots had FLARM – (FLARM is not a cure to mid airs). Safety talk emphasis on FLARM use, and limitations.

Assigned Tasks and out and return leg hazards

58. Critical Safety Checklist. Add organized retrieve to this list. Additional BB Topics
BB to do

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Communication With Pilots

59. Getting Our Message Out