



Soaring Surveys

2014 SSA Pilot Opinion Poll Results

October 25, 2014 7:39 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.		157												
1.0	Demographics	All												
1.1	Which National Contests did you fly in 2014?	<table> <tr> <td>15M</td> <td>10 6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18M</td> <td>18 11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sports/USClub</td> <td>11 7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sports/USModern</td> <td>10 6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Open</td> <td>6 4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Standard</td> <td>1 1%</td> </tr> </table>	15M	10 6%	18M	18 11%	Sports/USClub	11 7%	Sports/USModern	10 6%	Open	6 4%	Standard	1 1%
15M	10 6%													
18M	18 11%													
Sports/USClub	11 7%													
Sports/USModern	10 6%													
Open	6 4%													
Standard	1 1%													
1.2	How many Regionals did you fly?	148 94%												
1.4	Are you likely to: a) Fly more contests in 2015 b) Fly fewer contest in 2015 c) Same number	<table> <tr> <td>More</td> <td>66 42%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fewer</td> <td>19 12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Same</td> <td>70 45%</td> </tr> </table>	More	66 42%	Fewer	19 12%	Same	70 45%						
More	66 42%													
Fewer	19 12%													
Same	70 45%													
	d) Please tell us why.	128 82%												
1.5	Do you own a Flarm, or did you rent a Flarm for your contest flying last year?	<table> <tr> <td>Rent</td> <td>12 8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Own</td> <td>98 62%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>None</td> <td>45 29%</td> </tr> </table>	Rent	12 8%	Own	98 62%	None	45 29%						
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2.0	Last Start Time (LST) Background: In 2014 the rules allowed a "last start time" to be used. Starts after that time would be valid, but would use the last start time rather than the actual start time. The last start time could be equal to the start gate opening time, as done in the Grand Prix, or the last start time could be later than start gate opening time, allowing pilots flexibility in their start time, and aimed more at getting the gaggle out on course.	All												
2.1	Did you fly in a contest in which the LST was used?	<table> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>6 4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>149 95%</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	6 4%	No	149 95%								
Yes	6 4%													
No	149 95%													

2.2	If so, did you like or dislike the experience?	Like 6 4% Dislike 5 3% Neutral 35 22%
2.3	If a contest class were to use a Grand Prix style LST on most days -- last start equals start open - would you be more likely to attend the contest or choose that class?	More 11 7% Less 51 32% Neutral 86 55%
2.4	If a contest class were going to use the looser LST - LST half hour to an hour after the start open, on days that the CD and task advisers think it's appropriate - would you be more likely to attend?	More 21 13% Less 29 18% Neutral 100 64%
3.0	Overflight of little restricted areas Background: In 2014 the RC allowed CDs to permit overflight of restricted areas.	All
3.1	Did you fly in a contest in which this provision was used?	Yes 7 4% No 147 94%
3.2	If so, please enter any feedback for the RC. Were procedures clear, were there unexpected problems, should we continue to allow such overflight?	12 8%
4.0	Standard class Background: In 2014, the Standard Class National was cancelled for lack of participation, after years of slow decline. We are considering steps to further the integration of standard into 15 meter class. We are also considering limited handicapping in 15 meter class, in order to bring in older gliders as well as standard class gliders. Almost no new 15 meter gliders are being developed or sold. Also relevant, in 2015 there will be the first US club class contest, separate from the sports class, and club class will include modern standard class gliders. Please check all that you support.	All
	a) No change. Standard class gliders may compete in club class, in sports class club or modern sections, and in 15 meter, 18 meter and open class contests, though with no handicap in the latter. No handicapping in 15 meter class. b) Standard class gliders receive a fixed handicap benefit in 15 meter nationals. (Regionals used 2%, but the value will be revisited and could be different for east vs. west contests.) c) 15 Meter nationals adopts handicaps, with a lower limit, with no adjustment for water ballast and dry weight. (This has been the practice in Standard nationals for the last few years, which used handicaps down to 0.94.) d) Don't care, I don't fly standard or 15 meter.	a 51 32% b 42 27% c 59 38% d 30 19%
5.0	Scheduling In 2014,	All
5.1	Were you unable to attend a contest you would have otherwise attended because of contest overlap?	Yes 12 8% No 133 85%

5.2	If so, which one?	14 9%
5.3	Based on the current schedule, are there any 2015 contests you will not attend that you would otherwise attend because of schedule overlap? (Please try to be honest about your chances of attending. We all dream of flying more contests than we really do.)	47 30%
6.0	Undersubscribed classes in Regionals It often happens that regionals do not have enough gliders to fill the advertised classes. For example, not enough standard gliders may show up to create a separate class. Then, standard and 15 may join in a mixed handicapped class. But some 15 meter pilots may object, they signed up for "pure racing." Similar situations have happened when there are not enough 15 meter gliders or sports class gliders.	All
6.1	We would like your opinion on how this should be done. a) Form the closest FAI handicapped class, standard+15, 15+18, etc., even if a pilot in the other class objects. b) Form the closest FAI handicapped class, standard+15, 15+18, etc., only if all pilots in the other class agree. c) Form mixed classes with fixed "class" handicap (e.g. 2%, possibly different for East/Weak vs West/strong) but no glider specific handicap. d) No change allowed to other classes. Gliders in the undersubscribed class may fly in other classes that they qualify for (Standard in 15, 15, in 18, anyone in sports, etc.) but without handicap, or go home.	a 92 59% b 11 7% c 19 12% d 25 16%
7.0	US Club class team selection The US team seeks your input on how to handle motor gliders and sustainers for team selection in club class. Background: 1) The US team list specifies which gliders a pilot may fly to receive credit towards US club class team selection. The current list is defined by "within the handicap ranges of 0.898 (LS6C) and 1.115 with no two seat or motorgliders eligible." 2) The IGC maintains a list of gliders eligible to enter the club class worlds. See www.fai.org/igc-documents . The IGC allows gliders with motors. Gliders incur a handicap penalty for extra weight, so in practice only fairly light pilots are able to fly gliders with motors.	All
7.1	Do you favor allowing pilots flying gliders with motors to qualify for club class team selection, by removing the words "or motorgliders" from the US team definition?	Yes 84 54% No 64 41%
8.0	Tell us about 2014 experiences related to <i>fairness</i> (good or bad).	53 34%
9.0	Tell us about 2014 experiences related to <i>safety</i> (good or bad).	53 34%
10.0	Please include any other comments on rules or procedures.	54 34%

Return to the [2014 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](#).

Two
none
none
none
one
one
three
three
two

d) Please tell us why.

Club participation restricts freedom of movement.

2014 was an off year

2014 was limited due to work crises and the lack of a sailplane until late June. I expect to compete in 1-2 Regionals and possibly a Nationals in 2015.

3 weeks is all the time off I can spare

4 - 5 contests in one season is plenty for me. If the Open Class and 18m Nats were not scheduled at the same time and location for 2015, I would be flying both. Also, the Sports Class Nats are at the same time, therefore I do not have a nationals to my 20m 2-place Arcus. :o(

Because I don't fly enough and it's a shame to let my glider sit on the ground.

Because I like to. Also got shut down because of incident.

Because now I have an OFFICIAL ranking. It seems a bit "stuck up" that an experience contest pilot cannot fly in a national contest just because they are currently not ranked. What is the basis for this? If an experienced pilot is flying regularly, proof by OLC for example, why is the ranking the ONLY qualifying measurement? I recommend that committee look at adding additional qualifications for competing and I recommend/suggest the OLC be used in some way. I would have flown in the Texas Sports Class Nationals in 2014, but I was unranked. Just so you know I'm not just whining, i offered a suggested additional measurement. Thanks for your consideration. Sad, though that because of a ranking a pilot was not able to compete. Kinda like for lack of a nail....

Between the PAGC and the Canadian Nationals being held in the West I most likely won't have time to attend another contest.

Broken plane in 2014, and several schedule conflicts on my end of things.

Business conflicted this year with regionals I usually fly.

Can't take the necessary time off to fly in a national.

Changed jobs a year ago - lack of vacation time. Otherwise would like to fly 2-3 per year. Just currently cannot get the time to do so.

Children have graduated and moved out of the house. There is more time for soaring activities. I participated in the Region 8 contest and the Nephi OLC event in 2014 and am likely to participate in two regionals in 2015

Contest flying is fun; it hones my skills, and pushed me to attempt flights I might not otherwise do.

Contests have been bogged down with rules. There are days in a contest when a task is called and we shouldn't even be flying. Too many contestants entering contests without ground support (read crew). Safety. It seems we can't get through a year without an accident at a contest.

Cost

Cost and time required for 2 or 3 days of flying in typical eastern contest. Lots of fun, and enjoy seeing and talking with everyone, but it is just not worth the cost.

Cost is too much to justify multiple contests and the time commitment away from work and family is hard to plan for. One ontest is my limit. I hope to get the time and money to compete in the Club Class Nationals in Hobbs.

Costs (financial and time) to travel to a site and not always getting to fly more hours than it took to travel there!

Costs/ weather/ time

Crewing and supporting junior pilot in 2014, I will participating myself in 2015

Dates and Alberta location of Canadian Nationals conflict with my regularly scheduled regionals and 18 M Nationals in Hobbs

immediately following Canadian Nationals (2 western contests) will use up just about all of my available racing time in the summer.

Family and work restrict more contest participation.

Family commitments

Family constraints on time

Fewer time constraints.

Flew one non-sanctioned event, that I managed and directed. Likely will not hold the event next year. Participation was very low and the amount of effort and personal time required to manage and execute a contest is too much. It requires taking vacation from work, but is far from a vacation.

Getting a new glider

Hope to have the time to fly more contests

I am constrained by job responsibilities and budget.

I am very busy with family responsibilities right now.

I did not fly ANY races this year because I was concerned about the "Regatta Start" safety (danger of drag racing through a funnel with a bunch of zealots, like in sailboat races, only at 5000ft).

I didn't fly contests in 2014 due to wife's illness. Her recovery will allow me to race again.

I do not want to fly nationals with my old glider and I had no Regionals flying opportunity. Perry is a No No (too many gliders)

I expect my employment situation to preclude contest flying other than as a guest at the Seniors, which I also flew in 2014 (not a choice in the previous questions).

I flew a contest in Canada last year. They use the US rules, except that distances are measured in km.

I fly the contests I enjoy.

I had conflicts in 2014 that kept me at home.

I have a new glider that I like to fly.

I have limited time available from work, and travel time must be factored in, so always look for Nationals and Regionals within a practical driving distance.

I have more time in 2015

I hope to fly more sailplane time than last year as I spent more time in power for the first year in many.

I like flying an event with friends. I like to measure my progress and learn new techniques.

I need to improve my points and I usually fly the Seniors as a team which has a penalty. So I need another contest flying alone.

I prefer to not make the long drive to other regionals.

I retired, moved and had a grandson this year. I expect to have more time for contests next year.

I try to fly all contest that are within one day's drive of home.

I turned 80 this summer.....one regionals is all I want>

I was the CD in the Region 5 South contest when they did not have any other pilots to step up. I plan to CD the contest again but will fly another regional or National that my schedule will allow.

I will fly more if I can. 2 is what I can handle for now.

I will get in 3 contests this year. I try to do 2 or 3 each year.

I will have more free time for personal soaring

I would like to attend Hobbs for a National contest. I would like to begin an FAI ranking.

I'd prefer to fly in a contest than fly an OLC flight. But I have limited time to take away from home and expect to get more hours of rewarding soaring by going to soaring hotspots, like Ely and Uvalde, than by attending a contest with iffier weather.

I'm a snowbird Canadian and I use up all my 182 days Nov through April

I'm old

Illness.

Job and School

Job will allow me to fly more contests.

Limited time available. Can only dedicate one week for soaring contests.

Limited time off, no crew, few contests within 1 day drive

Location, Location, Location

Lost interest for the near term only due to extreme personality conflict with Sean Fidler.

Managing Sports Class Nationals

More availability

More time

More time available

More vacation time and free time.

National schedule did not work out in 2014 2 nationals and 4 regionals in '15

Nationals are too far away.

Need to change some rules. Do not force Flarm on US glider pilots.

Not enough vacation time.

Now have more vacation!

Only 1 contest in 2014 due to med conditions and 5 week wife vacation.

Only have enough Vacation to fly one contest

Open and 18m nationals conflict (same time/site - Hobbs)

Open class and 18's are combined in 2015. That is the only reason.

Personal conflicts limited my flying this season

Personal schedule.

Plan on being retired next season

Preparation for International Competition.

Probably not doing Seniors as a guest again this year. Doing FAI Chihowee and may not have time to also do Perry back to back the following week..

Real life kinda got in the way of contest soaring this year... it happens.

Retired and now have the time to fly contests.

Retired, have more time.

Retirement gives me more time for contests.

Same - this number is dictated by time & financial resources

Same or fewer. Depends on contest scheduling. In the Pacific Northwest, there are two contest sites within a one day drive (one way): Ephrata and Montague. Within a 2 day drive (one way): Logan, Nephi, and AirSailing. Due to work constraints, I need a minimum of one week between contests. For those of you who still believe that Hobbs is "West Coast", I live a one hour drive from the coast - Hobbs is a three day drive (one way).

Schedule is better for nationals. I hope to do Hobbs and Elmira

Schedule this year put most of my possible Nationals on the West Coast I went to the Nephi XC event from the East Coast and that was far enough.

Schedules permit

Seems about right.

Still working (to support flying habit) and vacation limitations with adult children that require vacation to visit

They are not all on the West coast

Time Cost

Time

Time - the problem is always just not enough time!

Time and cost are limiting factors

Time and location. I live in the North West and most of the contests are too far to attend. Maybe when I am retired there will be enough time

Time commitments limit the number of events I can attend

Time limited, nationals located a long way from home.

Time off work constrained

Time/Distance.

Turned off by last contest experience. Will fly XC camps instead.

Two is about right for me.

US team

Vacation maxed out on racing already

Work and family time restraints.

Work commitments and cost of travel.

Work commitments make it difficult for me to attend more than one contest per year.

Work related commitments

Would love to fly more contests but have limited time.

because I want to fly more!

competition builds XC skills That's my goal. Want to try other regions too

cost and time

depends on the locations and dates.

fun

hope to fly 1 contest per year

limited number of contests in the western US - Hobbs is NOT western US despite the claims of the east coast people

retired

the 20 meter class at Nephi did not allow singles (nimbus 2) I did not want to fly sports in it against modern ship like a 27 which the nimbus can not keep up with even handicapped

this year was my first flying contests, so i chose one which is local to me to try the format. I'll likely try other contests next year.

travel, time, poor contest locations

vacation working out

very little vacation time.

would like to fly more, schedule demands limit participation

3.2

If so, please enter any feedback for the RC. Were procedures clear, were there unexpected problems, should we continue to allow such overflight?

such overflight should continue to be allowed at the discretion of the CD.

Actually, I was unaware of the rule, but I did fly above a restricted area maximum altitude by accident, and rather than being disqualified, that particular flight advanced my overall standing considerably. Obviously, I am in favor of the rule. It simplifies flight planning, and so long as it does not create safety issues, I think it makes sense.

Do not allow overflight of restricted areas.

I think overflight should be allowed.

In Canadian contests, we have always allowed overflight of restricted areas or Class C airspace and have had no issues. It is the pilot's responsibility to stay clear of closed airspace. I have never understood the restriction in the US rules to legally over flying airspace.

No Comment

R4N No problems. Continue allowance.

Side Note: As a UAV pilot by profession who flies in Restricted Airspaces, I would urge the rules committee to stray away from pushing the limits on restricted airspaces. I report enough close calls and airspace incursions on a weekly basis without the encouragement of overflight by competitive strategy. Stay away from restricted airspaces.

Worked fine for me.

Yes, we should continue to allow such overflight.

popup TFRs are a problem in the western US. CDs need flexibility to allow overflight.

yes provided it does not reduce fair and safe competition

5.2

If so, which one?

15 m nationals - too close to "home" region 9 to do the drive

Ceasar Creek Regionals

Cordele and Minden

Hobbs chooses their dates independent of other events. I chose to fly Montague.

Montague 15 meter Nephi OLC

Nephi

Nephi was scheduled during airventure at oshkosh.

Normally, I fly 1 -2 contests due to overlap. This year I flew 3 due to better scheduling (from my point of view).

Open

Overlap for practical purposes, rather than actual dates. Too close together in general to get home, decompress, work, reload and go to the next one.

R9 and 15M nats - not enough separation

Standard Class Nats at Hobbs

Std, 15M and 18M were all too close to do 2 of them and remain employed.
no problem last year but 2012 Cordele conflicted with CCSC regional

5.3

Based on the current schedule, are there any 2015 contests you will not attend that you would otherwise attend because of schedule overlap? (Please try to be honest about your chances of attending. We all dream of flying more contests than we really do.)

15m

18m Sports

Caesar Creek Sports National and 18 Meter at Hobbs

Cannot really give a clear answer right now. Not too keen to go as far as Hobbs this coming summer. Might go to Elmira, but not decided.

Club and sports

Havent planned those yet

Hobbs, NM overlaps with the normal dates for the Region 8 contest. Its not purely the overlap; but the combination of the overlap *and* the long drive to Hobbs make it unlikely I will attend Nationals there.

I know of six people who have indicated that they will fly Club class rather than Sports Class because of the schedule conflict

I would fly both open and 18M contests if not run simultaneously

I'll wave at the guys at Ceasar Creek on my way to Hobbs. I am not bothered by the overlap at all.

Irrelevant. Too far to travel to any of the overlapping contests.

My new goal is to race in Club class Nationals. But would like to Sports Class I have the time this coming year.

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

No (but regionals are not scheduled yet in my neighborhood)

No, I only have time for one contest

No.

None

Not because of overlap, but rather because of school year issues

Not enough posted to know for 2015

Not many scheduled yet, may skew your results...

Not sure yet, haven't seen the full schedule of regionals.

Open and 18m nationals conflict (same time/site - Hobbs)

Pan Am at Chilhowee overlaps with Perry

Ref question 1.4, I had plan on attending the 18m located at BHSS and the Sports Class at CCSC. Now, with those co-dated, I will most likely attend Sports.

Region 5N vs PanAm GC

Schedule is too incomplete to determine this.

Sports Nationals and 18 Meter Nats

Sports class and Club class are scheduled at the same time for 2015! I would prefer to be able to attend both.

Sports- it overlaps with 18/Open Open and 18M are concurrent-WTF? This will limit open entrants considerably.

Too soon to tell. The contests that are less than a 3 day drive (one way) are not on the calendar.

Yes ~ Open Class Nats. I was planning on flying the Open Class & 18m Class Nats. Really! I do realize it's a struggle to find organizations and sites to run Nationals each year. I hope we do better in the coming years and not schedule Open Class and 18m Class Nats on top of each other.

Yes, I would have attended SCN at Caesar Creek but it overlaps with 18 meter Nationals.

Yes, Standard Class Nats at Elmira

Yes. Would have attended both Club class at Hobbs and Sports class at CCSC.

no

no

no

no, but scheduling club and sports at the same time significantly reduces the chances of attending either due to non-flying schedule conflicts

none

they need a 4 day contest

8.0

Tell us about 2014 experiences related to *fairness* (good or bad).

In terms of fairness in general, microscopic interpretations of overly complex rules aren't traditionally considered "fair" by Americans.

10 mi. safety finish 60mph for last 10 mi. cosy me points. If this had happened to Gimmey, it would have cost him the contest. I was way!! above 60mph glide path.

A mild comment on a couple of days at the 18 meter nationals, where the CD - for some good reasons declared the day "a no water day." There were a couple of self-launch gliders which retained the advantage of a higher wingloading over the rest who were down to minimum weight. In earlier days, I do know that there were some gliders which became marginal in handling on a rough day, but modern gliders are much more benign.

All good experiences for 2014. Was a little concerned about the strategic benefit Flarm can give over a pilot without Flarm.

Allowing one single pilot to attempt and complete the task resulted in a non-devalued day. I think that the rules claimed that 100% of the competitors completed the task so it got full value. I believe this is a bug in the rules. While I was impressed that the pilot actually flew the task the one day sealed the win for him.

As cd in the sports class Nationals I thought the rules worked well, safely

Devaluation adds a lot of complication to the rules. It's unnecessary and it often seems to result in weird consequences. We fly our club contests by using Winscore, then normalizing the Winscore results back to 1000 if a devaluation occurs. I think it's more fun that way and we ultimately give up very little in the matter of discerning who flies better.

Difficult year at a lot of contests weather being the culprit. I chose not to take a second tow on the last day of moriarty r9 after a long wait and longer grinding around waiting for lift. This cost me but it was my choice. So fair under difficult conditions.

Everyone should be able to get a fair start, including the last person to launch. Fifteen minutes to start after launch as a guideline works well in Eastern locations and the Midwest, especially at lower density altitudes. When you are operating at high density altitudes, the tow itself takes quite a bit longer and it can be difficult to connect low, while the majority of the contest pilots have long streamed out of the gate. I understand the pressure on the CD to open the gate, especially if there is threat of weather problems at the end of the day, but it should not limit the competitiveness of the last person to launch. Lastly, the "roll-call" should not happen while someone is on tow since it is unsafe for a pilot to be focused on anything else other than towing at that time. The Long MAT is a great task. Use it as much or more than now. 1 TP MAT is a horrible task and overly favor local knowledge of turnpoints and lift sources. I would rather be allowed to fly OLC style with a minimum time in that sort of situation than be confined to specific turnpoints. Furthermore, the task rewards finding the shortest triangle within gliding distance of the home airport that going to 11 turnpoints results in coming back at minimum time. This is not an interesting type of flight nor a great skill to reward and does not warrant driving all way across the country to go to such a contest. At the very least, with 1 TP MATs employ the no-repeating-turnpoints rule on a given day to make it a less bad task.

Fairness is important, but the days of large contests seem to be over. To continue in our sport, we must be inclusive and get more people involved! Having former national champions and members of world teams fly and compete in sport classes seems crazy. They typically win and make the sports class a class where the winner is usually second, and third.

Favor allowing water ballast to equalize wing loadings in 18 meter class in no water regionals. Motor gliders flying 100# heavy very unfair.

Fine by me.

Frank Paynter eviction was bad

Funny you all should ask.... After the "Nephi experience", I am thinking that we should drop all score adjustments. When somebody has a great day, is it fair to take it away because other people did not? Now I am thinking that you get what you earn. Period. Whether you have a great day or a crappy day, you get what you earn, nothing more, nothing less. Get rid of all score adjustments.

General concern about situations like Nephi regionals where only several pilots are able to start on course and those finishers receiving full points. A situation like this really deserves some form of devaluation.

Good but painful.

Had no experiences significantly related to fairness this year. I do think there is a fairness issue with motorgliders in competition. I suspect that motorgliders provide some advantage with respect to pushing faster and lower without fear of breaking the glider in a landout. However, I voted to allow motorgliders for club class team selection because I believe the electric motorgliders have the

potential to reinvigorate the sport and I would like to see them proliferate and become more affordable.

I am always uncomfortable competing with Gliders with Motors. I had a Ventus CM and it gives you a mental advantage to keep going and press the button when you had enough. In Dry Contests particularly with 18 meter, it gives a performance advantage since climb rates are not affected with a less than 100 lb motor package. I would prefer to carry 10 gallons of water to even up the weight advantage in 18 meter.

I don't think gliders with an engine should be allowed the 25 point airport bonus. They have an advantage in that they can press on into conditions that I would not attempt because they have the option to start the engine even if they never use it.

I fell out of first place on a weak last day that should have been devalued. Several pilots that did have a scored distance due to a remote start, just landed back and went home without turning in a trace. Determining contestants by using the number who took a tow, would eliminate this unfair situation. If this proposal is adopted, an unsportsmanlike penalty should be added for attempting to determine if enough contestants will abandon the task to make it a no contest day. This should prevent any head-count activity over the radio to see if it will be declared a no contest day.

I felt that my near-miss with TA in Minden was handled in a fair and balanced manner from start to finish. I deeply appreciate the time that many people devoted to understanding and analyzing what happened and providing a fair solution. I was surprised TA didn't follow through and accept a bit of remediation. Instead, he left soaring, but that was his decision and not the responsibility of anyone else involved.

I fly sports. No issues.

I run a sports class contest that is handicapped, but I don't really care for handicaps. I don't think they really work all that well. Or maybe I don't know how to fairly use them with regards to turn area tasks. The high performance gliders always want a big enough turn area that they can run farther to make up for their handicap. I'm not sure that is actually fair to the lower performing gliders since the high performance gliders can potentially tap into that performance to reach new areas of stronger lift. In our area, energy lines form and often have significant gaps. The ability to jump those gaps can really make a difference in overall distance. It might be a task calling problem more than a handicap problem, but I think more guidance on fair task setting would be helpful. Additionally, motor gliders and sustainers should have an additional handicap. The reduced risk of land out inconvenience allows people with engines to take different risks. Yeah, they need a landable field as an option, but if they arrive there at 1200agl and don't find anything they can always fire up the motor. If a pure glider takes the same risk, they will be landing. So the risk is actually much higher with no motor.

I was at the front of the remaining grid 3 times this summer when rain showers and significant weather changes stopped the launch for an extended period. Each time I was sent up in the first wave after the delay, a de facto sniffer, and all 3 times fell out with the entire first wave. In all 3 cases, no adjustment to start gate opening was made to let the sniffers have a fair chance at starting with their class. In one case I used the reflight procedure, landing before the last 1/3 of my class had been launched. But there was no way to get across the active runway to get back in line. So I relaunched an hour after my start opened. This is within the rules, but the options to give the "sniffer group" a fair chance to launch and start with their class are also within the rules.

IN combining 8.0 with 10.0, the treatment of BHSS by the Board from the Chairman on down to the Site Selection committee regarding the 2015 18m site selection being moved first to Texas (which they in turned canceled out) and then to Hobbs reeks of flaws in our Leadership and total lack of moral compass. Punishing BHSS for mistakes made by our Leadership that the entire Society would have forgiven and understood in which those issues could be corrected moving into the future leaves me absolutely shocked. The Leadership arrived at a point in the decision road and they purposely selected to financially harm BHSS in excess of \$6,000 for no other reason than that they could. It was a malicious decision. Not one person a part of that decision has answered the question...why?

Improper Handicaps

It was all fair and safe

MAT task allowed me to win a contest day I probably should not have. The timing of DJ as he hit the last assigned turn made it very difficult for him to use the remaining time efficiently. I arrived 5 minutes later but had a turn point the perfect distance away and finished right on time. This occurred on day 6 Minden 18 meter nationals, FYI. Similar thing happened in 2013 at Bermuda High with DJ. Really think we need more ATs and a lot less MAT at nationals. The timing element of these types of tasks (especially MAT, but also AAT) is an incredibly important moment for all pilots, and even though one may have flown a great task to that point in the task, a mistake in the time/distance calculation can destroy that result (or allow other pilots who have flown less efficiently to "get lucky.").

Moriarty Day 1 Standard Class results should not be possible.

Motor gliders are a contradiction. But, they're a growing constituency in racing. You need to integrate them into the race, preferably with simple handicaps as it is currently done.

No fairness issues at the two contests I flew.

No issues.

No issues.

No personal experiences out of the ordinary

None good or bad that I can relate

On days with obviously good weather, the fleet should be launched as soon as weather permits so that the start gate can be opened as soon as possible. It is unfair for the late starting class (as happened at Region 9N Nephi) to begin a 3.5 hour task after the gate opens at 3:00pm when obviously soarable weather began around 12:00. For reference, it took just over 1 hour to launch all 3 classes at Region 9N.

Perry and Cordele were completely fair

R10 North. Well run, impacted by weather. Good format using low performance and club classes. That allowed all gliders to fly,

especially young experienced pilots. And those without \$\$\$\$ ships. It did limit the maximum handicapped gliders. I was unable to fly my Ventus. I would think this format works but should allow all gliders to compete under handicaps. It would have been nice to see an FAI sports class in this regional.

R5N used the wrong handicap for the ASG-29 15M :(I wish that it really made a difference. A German pilot substituted a 8s log to avoid an airspace penalty in Finland. It was not noticed in time to generate a penalty, unusual behavior like this should get an unsportsmanlike penalty.

Rule 10.6.3.3.2 allowing motor gliders to start their engines after aero tow is too restrictive in requiring that start be within 2 miles of the home field. Often the only sustainable lift is quite distant from the home field. This rule requires the motor glider to leave the area of sustainable lift and return to the home field for the motor start, thus enhancing the chances the motor glider pilot will either forgo the start or get uncomfortably low attempting a start as required by the rules. A post tow start of a motor glider engine is a major requirement for safety. See 9.0 below. The start should be allowed either within five miles of the home field, or better yet, anywhere in the Start Cylinder. In the case of a site with especially difficult conditions for initial climbs, the start should be allowed in an area near the expected initial climbs. The time period for such a start should be extended to 20 minutes after release. Allowing the post aerotow start to be at any altitude above 1000ft agl is a good change. 10.6.3.1.2 Requiring a Task Claim form for a test engine run after aerotow is overkill. A checkbox on the sign in sheet is adequate.

Some how, we need to get CDs to better embrace the idea of a fair and safe day which means we could have a task where the gate should NOT be opened; even after everyone is launched. This was a problem on one of the last days at the Nephi Regionals. Most likely, additional info and examples in the SSA Rules Appendix would probably cover it. Using the Nephi contest as an example would be a good start. Sometimes due to the changing weather, not all classes at a contest will have the gate opened and I think that is ok from a fairness and safety standpoint.

Standard class was dissolved at Mifflin. I could have flown in Sports class, but preferred 15m due to more challenging tasks. However, flying 15m I would have been at a 5% disadvantage due to no handicapping. The CD polled the 15m pilots at the initial pilot's meeting, with the result that the other pilots graciously permitted handicapping.

The R9N at Nephi had a major weather change on the last day due a storm moving in. This happened with one 18m glider left to launch and all the 15m class. The last pilot in the 18m class was clearly disadvantaged but graciously said he a fair shot (even though he didn't) and then the 18m task was opened. That probably shouldn't have happened but with that pilot giving it the go ahead things went forward. Note that this didn't involve me directly and didn't affect the standings. It was bit sketchy to have the other 4 18m pilots in the air near (10 miles +/-) the start waiting for the last launch (probably 45 minutes or so) as conditions were challenging. When the task did open we had to dash into the start cylinder and start low since there was nothing going up for 10 miles. This meant that we either connected low on course or landed out 10 miles from the airport as we were too low to return to the field. Also, you are probably well aware of the fairness issue surrounding the scoring of the 15m class that day when most of the field didn't get away but the 2 that did completed the task which resulted in a 1000 pt day ala Moriarty.

There are too many classes and not enough pilots. Open (with handicap) anyone can fly, Sports (with handicap) anyone can fly. 18 meter only, 15 meter only

There is always pressure on a CD to get enough days in for a valid contest. Sometimes the limits of safety are pushed. The weather was not always fair to us this year.

This only glances upon fairness, but i think that launch order for the first day should attempt to put experienced people near the beginning / end - these are always more stressful positions, and especially for your first contest launch. While a random order is of course fair, if one tries to encourage new pilots, perhaps a bias in this aspect is a good idea, Full disclosure - this of course comes due to me being in this position exactly (launched last), which did not end well - i.e. i had to relight; i was asked by the CD whether it was ok to still open the gate (when i was pretty much on downwind), but did not want the responsibility of keeping everyone circling because i couldn't stay up - as a complete newbie, i wasn't about to force other people.

We are rushing toward handicap racing. I feel this is a terrible idea. The issue of fairness is very difficult. At present the handicaps used are just not realistic. For instance I flew for hundreds of miles with GL at New Castle on the ridge day. We were equal. yet this is not shown in the handicap. I feel it is common that older ships are very advantaged by handicapping. Witness Sam Giltner a few years ago in his LS-1. He was easily able to follow the newer ships, keep them in sight, use their thermals, then kick ass on handicap. I do not know how to improve the fairness of handicapping. I suspect it is not even mathematical (as with Giltner) but we are not even having the discussion. We are having more and more handicapping. I really hope we stop this trend until the handicaps actually reflect truth. At present they are not even close.

What's fair about racing gliders?

all fair

n/a

none

seems unfair that some guys get to use flarm radar to find circling gliders when low, others are not using that data stream because we haven't spent the money on the newest electronics especially in sports class that is supposed to stay competitive at reasonable costs.

9.0

Tell us about 2014 experiences related to safety (good or bad).

182's are not tow planes suitable for towing FAI class all up wing loadings! Recommend that they be limited to Sports class, dry gliders, etc.

Agree with TA decision. Difficult but right thing to do. He was frightening at times, but is by NO MEANS the only pilot right now who is frightening to fly with... I hope we have our eye on others..... Should we publish which pilots are on the probation list or have had warnings? I think it would be comforting for us to know.

All safe

BAD- Having the top of the Start Cylinder above or at cloud base.

CD's are doing a better job of setting gate tops below expected lift top. This reduces massive gaggles just below gate height and/or at the edge of cylinders. We should reinforce this trend via the CD guidelines to encourage always setting top-of-start at least 500' below cloud bases or expected climb in blue conditions.

CDs should be advised to avoid task legs with likely head-on possibilities.

Flarm is awesome--talk it up!! However, it is just another sensor to provide additional safety related info. Remember: this extra sensor should not take away from the copious amount of data from your other sensors--namely, your eyeballs, your ears, and your other situational awareness clues (timing, etc.) Anyone who uses Flarm, especially the relative altitude display, for maintaining altitude deconfliction awareness while flying in gaggles--is setting themselves up for a possible mid-air collision. Eyeballs are the primary sensor in gaggles! Radios, flight nav, and Flarm are all secondary sensors when gaggle flying--to be used very sparingly. Flarm's most useful feature in gaggle flying is identifying potential conflicts from other gliders when entering or exiting the gaggle.

Flarm-only Nephi Olc xc camp was great--pilots at contests are definitely adopting this move without a rule, but a requirement seems appropriate in the near future. I'd prefer stealth mode.

Good

Got "Flarmed" heading into a turnpoint during the AirSailing contest. Made an immediate right turn then looked over my left shoulder and saw the other pilot doing exactly the same thing. Neither of us saw one another until we each turned. We had been head on at the same altitude.

I experienced dangerous Gaggle flying in a regional involving relatively low time contest pilots. This was not raised publicly by anyone, and guys just did not know the basics of pre-start gagging safety: * don't cut in front of another glider * don't stay in the blind spot of a glider (right on his tail) * don't switch repeatedly between two closely adjacent thermals * BE PREDICTABLE We should have made an effort to discuss this and listen to what others thought. New pilots will gladly toe the line if the "leader" of the contest makes it clear.

I experienced two instances where PowerFlarm alerted me to gliders that were potential collision risks, which I had not seen prior to the warning.

I felt that safety was given a high priority

I had a near miss when another glider passed over me from behind at less than fifty feet separation. I was climbing in straight flight at the time.

I have had at least two encounters with other gliders that were undesirably close when the other pilot should have known better, especially since these were flarm equipped aircraft. Both pilots in question are very highly ranked and were on the US Team. One did not abide by right of way rules on ridge (ie: right wing to ridge has right of way) and forced myself to duck underneath while he overflew on top of me and the other forced me out of an established bank in a thermal because of his aggressive thermal entry. Given the SSA's commitment to safety especially with respect to proximity flying of other gliders, I believe it should be reaffirmed that right of way rules and guidelines apply to everyone equally, no matter how many points are on the line or the contest experience of the given pilot. Secondly, while flarm is a good tool and a great advancement in contest safety, there should be an established policy as to how to deal with an imminent collision threat. For instance, it could be that both gliders should turn to the right. Since flarm does not tell you what to do, we need to establish a protocol how to deal with a potential collision situation. Also, it ought to be reminded to task-setters to avoid setting tasks with acute angles less than 40 degrees, especially along a wind-line. Otherwise, it motivates pilots to return along the same energy line they came, causing a more likely head-on collision scenario. Finish sectors are great. It is fantastic that the coffin corner situation has been done away with at contests. The minimum finish could be a bit higher... everyone is going to the same point so why not have a finish high enough to always guarantee a safe pattern?

I remain in support of removing the requirement that a pilot land at the home field after finishing. I understand the ability of the CD to designate alternate landing sites but as evidenced by Perry 2014 this is not a practical option on short notice such as two gear ups simultaneously.

I saw no dangerous or unsportsmanlike flying at the two contests I flew in (Region 5 South and Sports/Club nationals). The Sports/Club nats was intensely competitive, but flown with exemplary sportsmanship and consideration by all the competitors.

I think aging pilots are more of an issue than anything the rules committee can control. Other than that, you guys are doing well. There are a lot of contests and the safety numbers are not bad.

I would prefer that FLARM is required for all contests.

Land owners with weapons that are showing up when a glider lands in their field. Happened in Cordele and the Seniors.

Launching a fleet in weak conditions is always a problem.

Make PowerFlarm Mandatory at least at Nationals!

Mandatory Flarm has to happen. My experiences at Nephi in the OLC camp and the R9N was that it was absolutely necessary. We have to have everyone equipped especially at a crowded event. Even a vigilant pilot would not see over half of the alerts I received.

Mostly good except for sitting on the ramp, ready to fly, rain storms moving in but no launch by CD. We sat in our gliders getting rained on for about 1/2 hour! Then, after the rain passed the CD restarted the launch. The sun was out but the ground was wet so experienced pilots were relighting left and right. I decided not to fly under those circumstances. Very disappointing.

Nephi OLC required 100% FLARM which made flying 65 gliders a total non-event from an air congestion standpoint. Contests should be strongly encouraged to mandate FLARM.

No issues.

No personal experiences out of the ordinary

No safety issues at the two contest I flew.

None

None that I can specifically relate

Perry and Cordele--no safety issues that I could see.

Please do not use my name or e-mail if you mention these comments in anything that goes beyond the rules committee. I was disappointed that the finish height was lowered at Perry. It is one thing to have a low finish height at a site where it matters, but in the flatlands I don't see the point. While everything worked out ok I was number 6 or 8 in the pattern one day. If the two gear-up landings had occurred then instead of later other gliders would likely have been damaged while 6-8 other guys were trying to find a safe spot to land. An extra 200' would have given everyone a larger safety margin to deal with the problem. I was disappointed that at a mature site like Mifflin there were still errors in the database (e.g. Mill Creek marked as landable). Bad data in contest waypoint databases seems to be a frequent problem. I understand it was extensive efforts by mainly one individual in 2013 that made the Perry contest safer by cleaning up errors in the airport/landout database by removing 1/3 of the entries that were incorrect. It is hard enough for a beginning contest pilot to deal with everything else going on. An airport/waypoint database they cannot trust reduces safety (and fairness, favoring those with local knowledge). I encourage the SSA to do everything it can to get contest organizers to confirm that all the data in their waypoint database is correct well before the contest, so there is time to get feedback from experienced contestants and to get any fixes posted in time for the contest. Part of my personal safety checklist will be to avoid any contest where I have doubt about the contest database, unless flying in the same glider as a pilot that has local knowledge. Overall I felt safe flying at the Seniors, Perry, and Mifflin, and commend the SSA volunteers for the work they did, but wanted to point out the above exceptions where simple changes could improve safety and would also likely increase participation by not scaring off beginners with jam packed landing patterns and contest databases with airports a couple miles from their actual location, etc.

Power flarm helped me alot but we need to get everyone on board

Powerflarm is clearly a big plus for safety. I favor mandating Powerflarm for all SSA sanctioned events. Secondly, I would also favor requiring operation with a correct FlarmNet registration so that glider call signs are indicated. The latter adds to safety as it improves situation awareness when one is trying to keep track of the gliders that are nearby and needing to correlate visual sightings to PowerFlarm indications. Moreover, having true contest IDs on the screen adds quite a bit to racing enjoyment.

Region 3 Dansville was very well done with regard to decisions of sending pilots out on course on difficult days.

Rule 10.6.3.3.2 The overriding reason for doing a short motor glider engine run after aero tow is that a short run improves the probability the engine will start if needed when on task. It is well known that failed engine starts at low altitudes often contribute to accidents. I participated in two contests this year (Mifflin and Minden) where the two mile requirement would have been very unsafe due to the distance of initial climbs from the field. Thankfully, the procedure was adjusted at both contests to allow for this problem. As the probability the engine will be needed is higher on weak days, the time period for such a start should be extended to 20 minutes after release.

See comment 8.0

Some competitors are using their smart phone apps to show near real time radar weather charts and artificial horizon app that allows flying in clouds. One 2-man crew flying Duo Discus clearly did this on at least 2 MAT days. By the last day of the contest, several other pilots joined in the fun.....two of them said they "iced up".....only way to ice up is to fly in the clouds with temp at or near 32F. The rules are quite clear on this being illegal, question is how to enforce the no smart phone accessible in flight rule? I recommend a mandatory briefing on how unsafe flying in clouds can be with all pilots signing off + encouraging reporting any pilot observed entering a cloud. Many pilots are using smart phones for legitimate purposes and taking them totally away will be met with irate contestants. Tough nut to crack, but if we do nothing I predict we will be filling body bags soon.....maybe several body bags! We all now what can be found inside clouds: + Icing + Disorientation + Mountain tops + Other sailplanes + Passenger carrying aircraft

Sorry to see Frank go.

Suggestion: Push for a voluntary low speed limit before starting right up until the actual run at the start cylinder. If everyone flew around at 60kts or less, closure rates would be so much slower than if gliders were flying around at 80kts. Could make a difference. Something to think about.

TA situation was really bad. It was also completely the right thing to do. I had two close encounters with Paynter- neither pleasant. I was heartened to see strong action taken on this issue. I think Flarm is not nearly as strong a safety tool as advertised. It is however a serious "leach tool" and changing the way we race. I hope we can discuss this issue and increase the use of a "US Stealth mode" for contests. Flarm leeching is now a part of racing. Do we wish to even discuss this?

The US 3000' cloud base task start guideline feels really good compared to some of the days in Finland. The use of generally

large turn areas in the US helps avoid some weather and landout situations found in Europe. The WGC rule requiring a continuous decent after the 150m finish generates some interesting approaches after a hot final glide.

The decision to remove TA from contests, was the right thing to do. It was a difficult decision, and the after the fact kibitzing, with derogatory comments aimed at the ones that had to make the tough call was unfortunate. The easy thing to do would have been to do nothing, and then attend the one or two funerals that could have resulted. This is a dangerous thing that we do. Not everyone can do it, and not everyone should do it. And all of us that can are subject to betrayal by slight degradation of our minds and bodies. Hopefully someone will tell me when to quit flying because I'm a danger to myself and others before I prove it with a crash.

The rental flarm screen was not readable with polarized sunglasses, had to tilt head to read the screen.

Thermal behavior continues to be a concern. Most pilots are careful and thoughtful. Some are not. There is no easy way to solve this problem, but it needs continued work.

Use all the available runway. That means moving the grid back to the end of the runway.

Very safe experiences.

We had a good safe contest. Nobody was a jerk in the gaggles. I had to call someone out the year before.

continue safety topics every morning. These are invaluable.

good safety experience at AirSailing contests for 2014 and 2013

no adverse comments about contest management, but a pilot who shall remain unnamed exhibited less than stellar judgement landing on the taxiway, flying 50 ft over people towing gliders to their trailers - on more than one occasion.

none

10.0

Please include any other comments on rules or procedures.

1) Remove changes in the handicap based on turbulator tape. 2) Allow bug wipers like all other countries around the world.

6.1 How this is handled should be up to the contest organizers. In the contest information section, they should be required to state how they will handle under subscribed classes, whether it is choice a, b, c, or d. That way people can choose. For example, I will not attend a contest where I will be flying against a Diana II or a Duckhawk in my SZD 55 with a 2% adjustment. (choice "C") 7.0, 7.1 Use the same rules as the rest of the world.

6.1: It seems as though this question is asking should a vote be taken in the other class and if so, does it have to be a unanimous vote to pass or a majority. Majority rule or sports class.

A seminar on Flarm usage during a practice day would be invaluable to pilots flying with the system for the 1st time.

As for the combining of standard/15 meter creating an FAI handicap class, I view this as creating another Sports Class. Unless there is no Sports Class within the contest, then consideration could be made but it should be stated within the contest listing. Otherwise, you race what you brought & should not expect to receive a handicap if you have a standard class glider. This should be know up front so upon arrival to a contest it's not assumed that the class will be handicapped. Another consideration is that if a contest is going to be a dry contest then the listing a "no water" contest should be stated, thus eliminating any potential problems.

As we are all aware, the number of people participating in National contests has been on the decline for a while. There are many reasons for the decline. I know for me, when I was working, it was a serious problem getting 2-2.5 (the 0.5 weeks is possible travel time) weeks continuously off. That much time off does not really fit in today's high tech working world therefore I did not fly a nationals every year. I would like to propose the following for ONE class for the 2016 and 2017 Nationals to see if we get more pilots to show up (Rule 4.0 >> PERIOD OF THE CONTEST does not currently allow this). This is the same schedule used at the UK Nationals: Practice Days: Friday & Saturday Contest Days: Sunday - Sunday (8 possible racing days) Grand Prix style start is a very interesting idea, but I think, it only works in smaller regional level contests with 15 or less sailplanes. Possibly, 10 or less sailplanes depending upon the skill level of the pilots. We should limit the number of sailplanes in a contest which can use the Grand Prix style start.

CD's are not following task type guidelines - it would be nice to have more Assigned Tasks!

Certain contests are popular and well attended. "The Seniors" is one example. The contest is held with predictably good soaring conditions and (semi) low-key attitude. Perhaps (only perhaps) the concept of "class" racing is no longer as popular as going somewhere to have a good experience - perhaps even for non-flying family members. Perhaps, (only perhaps) a class contest should permit and encourage others to attend even if they are not flying that type of glider. (With awards for those best performances outside the designated class.)

Choosing appropriate contest classes to colocate at one event and the scheduling of events to maximize attendance and good weather/experience is essential. Contest scheduling should not be done by pure administrators (well meaning though they may be) but by people who understand the weather patterns at the site in question and the implications for contest conflicts - SSA committees (Rules, USTC, Sites) MUST cooperate for the best possible results especially since US team members are selected at the National contests. There are no longer enough contest pilots within each class to provide depth on the team bench. Fewer, handicapped classes with a meaningful pilot ranking scheme is essential for us to improve attendance and competitiveness. Team selection can also take place from a properly defined ranking scheme - or a separate team trials contest.

Communication is important about events in competition and the committee needs release its findings publicly (to comp pilots anyway) to reduce the gossip and speculation. The issue surrounding TA was unfortunate but appeared that it was needed based on personal experience as well as what "I hear". Further, there was a protest that we all were aware of regarding 7V filed by TT. While I realize there are privacy issues we need to know what is going on, why and the action taken. Speculation about these events only makes them worse. Fun season. Thanks to the committee.

Could a weight penalty be established for motor gliders in the Sports Class?

FLARM used for leaching a bad concept. FLARM should be used for collision avoidance only.

Flarm usage is intended for collision avoidance but now had capability to enable leaching which encourages gagging. This makes me not want to use flarm if it encourages other gliders to follow me.

Had a lot of fun flying in one of the Grand Prix races at Seminole Lake and wanted to fly more. It's real racing when all start together, take separate paths through the sky, but somehow end up arriving at the turns within seconds of each other. It is real racing when everyone is straining to somehow get away rather than struggling to stay with a gaggle. No small attraction is the fact that it simplifies scoring marvelously.

Hobbs in NOT in the western US. On the RAS there is a posted complaint about Hobbs choosing dates in 2015 that overlap CC's. Why did Hobbs do that? Last year Hobbs overlapped a couple very popular contests/events with predictable results. Also, if you want to kill the STD Class just continue putting the STD Nat's in places that crews do not like, and on dates that overlap other more popular contests/events.

I continue to believe that the 10 day duration of national contests is not serving the sport. I suggest that national contests should be shortened to reduce cost and improve participation.

I look forward to flying club class. I believe this can be done at regionals without much extra work by the organizers. If my employment situation does not develop as planned, I hope make Hobbs for club nats.

I still think allowing 15M ships to fly with their flaps locked in the standard class makes sense.

I think any finish hights lower than 1000 ft are foolish. Does it take any more skill to finish at 500ft? No... it just takes more daring. Why make the final glide so stressful. Yes, I know old timers are good at it. But hey, don't we want some new blood in the sport? I've been around a long time, and 500ft is very intimidating to me, even with ClearNav guidance. Why do we reward bravery instead of skill? Why do we risk \$100K+ machines when a simple change in the rules would make a tremendous difference. Another advantage of a higher finish is that it gives a group of landing gliders more time to sort out who's landing when and where.

I think motorgliders have an unfair advantage over pure gliders. (I realize their race is over when they deploy the motor, but having that option allows them to choose routes that a pure glider pilot would reject eg flying over un-landable terrain in weak conditions) They should be restricted from competition in all but the Sports class, or they should be a separate class all together. Similarly, gliders with two pilots should not compete in any class but sports class. Two heads are better than one. Alternatively, they might assigned a handicap to compensate for the advantage.

I think that contests with more pilots benefit everyone for many reasons. I love the Seniors. The opportunity to meet and learn from many very talented pilots would be lost if we were divided into small groups of glider defined classes. But folks want to race within their class---here's a thought...Invite everyone to the party up to the limit determined by the hosting club. Run a sports class handicapped contest BUT allow class racing within the contest. Use area tasks that allow all to fly and be judged against everyone but allow scores to be tabulated also by class. Hold two such contests per year, one east one west. Hold them in places that are family friendly and places where many pilots have "always wanted to fly someday". Open to all classes, enrollment by first to fill the minimum of say 10 gliders per class. Then additional pilots as per host's limits or preferences. You would have well attended events that would be designed to be fun, welcoming, safe, and build community within our sport. Events such as this could be run like the Seniors with social and learning opportunities that would encourage both new and veteran comp pilots. Thanks for all you do for the rest of us. I know your job is often difficult and at times unpleasant.

I think there is a growing need for something like a "CD's Bible". Completely separate from the rule book. Some expanded guidance, maybe put in story form, both positive and negative, to pass on experience and help illustrate how to think about and deal with some of the intentional gray areas. Like tasking, launch and start management, use of advisers, dealing with "problem pilots", emergencies, etc. There used to be something like that, but maybe it got out of date and dropped.

In a small-population, dwindling sport like competition soaring, steps to maximize participation by combining classes and using handicaps are a good initiative. They should be pursued. The Rules Committee is clearly on to the problem. Good work. Finding a way to encourage another super-regional like the Seniors for mid year or perhaps late in the year (September, for example) would also be desirable, although if held mid-year it might take participants away from nationals, which don't need any further reductions. Only Fairfield and New Castle now fill the end-of-year niche. I've flown in both, but they are often problematic in terms of weather and New Castle is a technical site not easy for newer pilots. I have no bright ideas, but suggest a focus on generating a September national level super regional.

In last years' Regionals (Region 6S) we had some strong advocacy for a separate Club Class, However there were not enough people signed up in that class so in the final month we eliminated that Class. However, there was some advocacy for that to the point that we ordered a trophy and scrambled at the last minute. In the end, not enough wanted to fly a Club class and we did a lot of work for nothing. I would recommend there be a time cutoff prior to the contest (ie a month) for Class allocation. On the other hand, I guess we could do that now on our own.

In light of pursuing more participation, why not incorporate some measurements using OLC as qualification?

Keep club class true. Do not allow modern or standard in. I would much rather fly against club class gliders in my venerable ventus b. I cannot compete against loaded up 27/29 or yonkers and itthe is frustrating always coming in third or fourth.

LST: I was extremely disappointed that the 2013 rules committee added LST instead of Regatta start. You added add a page of new rules when a paragraph would have accomplished the requested purpose. Simplifying the rules: I see no progress in towards this stated goal of the RC. You guys are in a position to do this. New blood on the RC won't be as able to simplify because they won't understand the history. Standard class: don't continue the usage of the arbitrary 2% handicap rule for standard into 15m class. Use a limited handicap range. I think the merging of classes at contests will be specific to the pilots involved, so why try to solve this at the RC level. Let the contest committee decide how to best solve their problem.

Lever B!

Motor gliders should be given points to the point they landout airport or otherwise. If they start their engine then only points to the

last made turnpoint. Dump the throw out a day rule from the rules.

Much too many rules & procedures. Too confusing especially for old guys like me.

Only 3% AT's in 2013! Common guys :-)! We need to challenge ourselves a bit more. Can we adjust guidance to see that number increase to at least 15-20% at Nationals and 10% at Regional's?

Our current handicap system has no basis. I would like to see the handicap system evolve into something that takes actual glide performance and speed into consideration instead of an arbitrary value. I am VERY excited to participate in the first Club class nationals as it compresses the playing field and puts common gliders on a nearly level playing field. I believe this contest will yield some interesting results. Get more juniors into contests. This sport will die unless the average age at a contest begins to drop. I need this sport to survive to and through my retirement.

Please start discussing why handicaps are not what they are advertised to be and how to correct them. Above I stated GL is as good on the ridge as an ASG-29 after 360 miles. Why is he favored in Handicap? Why is a discus 2 or a 28 favored over 27's in light air when we know that under 70KT they are the same? Why do handicaps not reflect this? Why cannot handicaps consider the Tactics of lower performance ships forcing the new designs to lead and find lift and take most risks? At all levels of handicap, lower performance ships have this advantage yet we never discuss this. A well flown older ship will win most of the time in the east because of light conditions. An 18 meter ship in a handicap contest must fly "with his hair on fire" to get away from the older ships. If we want handicap racing to be good racing, we must address and cure this. Why is handicapping presented as a way to "even the playing field" when one class cannot get 5 entrants, yet it was allowed to morph into FAI handicap class where it is advertised in advance that all classes will be combined regardless of participant numbers. (CCSC the last few years have been FAI handicap class regardless of registration numbers.) I really like class racing as it has always been. The designers try to make the best ships and people buy them based on success and /or design tradeoffs. Handicapping is a way to try to introduce one design racing to soaring. The problem is that it just does not work and becomes overly complex. I for one will continue to attend contests where I can race without handicap against a minimum of 5 ships. I attend a handicap race as an absolute last resort. I also feel that pure handicapping will destroy our sport. When the smart move it to buy a refurbished '20 and Kick ass with it due to handicap, there is very little reason to pay 6X for a new glider. This means the Glider manufacturers are on a short life limit. Without new exciting designs, pilots get bored ten years after the new designs stop the last bored pilot will do his last race and turn out the lights as he quits. SAD. The flat assumption that handicapping is the answer to dropping participation numbers is not proven. It is proven that I (and perhaps others) avoid handicap racing at all costs. I recommend the following. 1- Invent better handicaps which address the objections stated above. At present we do not even discuss that it is a problem! 2- Limit handicapping to Sports and Club class where it is an integral part of the class. 3- If you cannot fix the problems with "FAI Handicap" class- scrap it. I will argue that- A- Std pilots can usually fly at no disadvantage in light conditions. Allow them in the 15 M class even up if conditions are light. Then allow 2% when strong. B- Push Std class handicap racing "down " to sports class instead of "up" to 15M. When 15M is in danger of non participation like Std class- re examine the decision. B- There are MANY new 15M ships! I have sold over 40 ASG-29's in eight years. Most have multiple tips available. Most people buy them! 15M class is actually a reasonably robust class at present. 18 Meter is very robust. Leave them alone. John Murray

Question for the next pilot opinion poll: Should the SSA turn over National Contests to the US Team Committee with the exception of the Sports Class Nationals. The Team Committee would choose the sites, tasks and rules to advance the performance of US pilots in World Gliding Championships.

See 8.0

Sports Class Gliders are handicapped by glider type, and weight adjusted. This is done in the FAI-combined classes as well. But in the FAI combined classes, ballast is permitted. Handicaps then should simply be glider specific with no adjustment for weight. In addition, since the OLC has become so popular in the US, the rules committee should consider adopting those handicaps. They seem to work around the world, and it would surely make things more efficient for the Handicap Committee.

Start time reporting should be required for all nationals contests.

Thanks for all the hard work.

Thanks for all your hard work, and putting up with people complaining.

Thanks for the survey and collecting the data for all of us!

Thanks to the committee for their work. Special thanks to KM and UH for all their years of dedicated work.

The LST idea is a great one. Having a "window" of say 30 minutes is a great way to increase "racing" and diminishing start gate roulette. 30 minutes gives enough time to start, get to a thermal and then restart if it doesn't work out. With respect to "Grand Prix" racing starts, I believe in limited contests with 10-15 competent pilots it could be very interesting. However, for most contests I don't think this would be a good idea unless everyone is on the same page. I hope someone will try out the Window idea at a contest I am at next year.

The biggest barrier to growth in contest soaring is the lack of true beginner's venues. Note the success of the Nephi 2014 OLC event -- 60 gliders showed up! I support more open format events like these, and I think the SSA should promote them as well.

The minimum task length (task time) needs to be removed and do not force usage of Flarm.

The one contest i attended seemed to lean too heavily towards a 1 mandatory turnpoint MAT - i think this is a bad idea, especially

for new pilots, since it doesn't challenge them - it's too easy to want not to take risks and stay close - i expected a contest task to send me somewhere where i wouldn't go unless forced! Of course, that gets into whether contests should not only be a measure of xc ability (which an MAT is) but also actually encourage xc, which i believe this type of MAT does not.

The problem with mixing Standard and 15 m is that the Discus 2 and LS8 are better than their handicaps and allowing them to fly in a 15 m class with a 4% handicap makes it very difficult for the 15 m gliders to win their own class. Recall that Baud Litt won two days in the 15 m class pre-worlds in Uvalde flying his LS8, and when I had an LS8, it was pretty easy to keep up with the 15 m gliders. The 2% fixed handicap is better than the normal handicaps, but is still too much. When racing, the lower performing glider can artificially boost his performance by following and never having to centre a thermal.

To me the decrease in contest participation is all of the silly rules that the RC comes up with. Playing with the definition of Start time is a good example. The LST start time is confusing & worthless. Starts from a Start Cylinder is another example. Start time started out to be the last exit from the Start Cylinder. But now, if a start is out the top the pilot is allowed to re-enter the Start Cylinder and the subsequent exit (without being under max start height for 2 minute) is not counted. How about applying that rule to pilots who go in & out at the edge of the cylinder in a thermal. Applying the same rule would have the start time as the first exit from the cylinder & all subsequent exits would not be counted. The scoring is too complex. Used to know the daily winner before the day ended. Now sometimes we wait until the next day, or later. Sometimes even the excellent WinScore program misses, maybe due to scoring complexity. By splitting the Sport Class and the Club Class the Nat contest with the highest participation has been split into two moderate to low participation contests. Would have been better to have both classes fly together in Sport Class and let the highest scoring Club Class pilots be Club Class team potentials. One pilot might even be both Sport Class & Club Class champ. This would allow 1 big contest rather than 2 smaller contests. The Club Class keeps being re-defined. In 2014 the Discus (by performance, a modern sailplane) was allowed. In 2 years we will probably see the Discus 2 & the ASW-28 allowed. Then in 4 years what is next; the ASW-27 & the Ventus? In 5 years the Club Class will probably go the same way as the PW-5 contests; hard to get 10 entries for a Nat contest. And the list goes on. I think the RC would enhance participation by stepping back 10 to 15 years.

Trim these endless rules and you'll get more people interested. I haven't filled out much of this survey because; Hey come on! Does anybody actually CARE about this stuff in all this detail? In the US where no money is won or lost over who wins, where nobody in the country outside of a tiny percentage of SSA members even knows the names of winners, could it possibly be less important? Cut the legalize and you'll get more people who want to participate. Do I believe that will happen? No. The people in charge can NEVER fix the problem because they are the problem.

We have the Standard Nationals in the east and their is a contest. Two Standard Nationals have been cancelled out west. Even though we want to be fair, is it better to have a contest or just schedule one in the right region based on tradition?

We need to decide, either mandatory start time report or not. Too much room for confusion if we leave it to CD discretion. (I could not tell you whether Montague was mandatory or voluntary) Never seems to be enforced. I like hearing start times but do not think ti necessary. Ground can follow most of us with Spot, Delorme or the new phone app. .

We need to do all we came to promote contest flying even if that goes against some of the "purest" objections to handicaps.(yes they need to be improved) First the Open then Std. class withered away and the 15m may someday follow. Smaller contest participation leads to finically unviable contest and fewer contest opportunities. Those with the mindset to "kill the FAI class" need to come down from their isolation towers and look at the status of our sport. It is dying and we need to do every thing possible to revive it before it is too late. We have to find a way to encourage those folks out there with older 15m and Std. gliders to participate in a meaningful way and that is FAI type racing not the Sport Class go fly around for three hours and come back type contest.

Why will the rules committee never allow pilots to land anywhere they choose after crossing the finish line? It would rarely happen but could keep someone from having to land on a runway with two gliders blocking the runway at the same time such as the collapsed gear incident at Perry. This has come up multiple times in the discussions at perry and it appear that 90%+ of pilots are in favor of this.

none

Responses for each text type.

Value responses:	0
Short responses:	148
Medium responses:	61
Long responses:	300

Return to the [2014 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](#).