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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.0</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>What National contests did you fly in this season?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sports Class Nationals, Nephi, UT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard Class Nationals, Midlothian, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15-Meter and Open Class Nationals, Uvalde, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Club Class Nationals, Dansville, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017 1-26 Championships, Waynesville, OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18M Nationals, Groveland, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20M Multisect Nationals, Mifflin, PA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1.2 | Do you plan on participating in the 20M Class Multi Seat Nationals planned to be held in Albert Lea, MN? |
|     | Yes 17 9% |
|     | No 160 85% |
### 1.3 How many Regional contests did you fly in this season?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.4 What Class of glider do you fly?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18M</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15M</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20M-Multiplace</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.5 Do you own, co-own, rent or borrow the glider you race in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Own</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrow</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.0 FLARM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Does the glider you typically fly in contests have a FLARM unit?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Do you think that FLARM should be mandatory at National contests?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Do you think that FLARM should be mandatory at Regional contests?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Should the FLARM Stealth mode be allowed at US contests?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4a</td>
<td>Please comment on the use of FLARM Stealth Mode.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Please provide other views you have on the use of FLARM in contests.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Tracking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>What type of tracking equipment is used in your glider?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>InReach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CellPhone-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.0 New Technology/Communications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>BasedTracker</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Have you had the opportunity to use cell phone weather applications in the cockpit?</td>
<td>34 (18%)</td>
<td>152 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Does your glider have an artificial horizon, Turn and Bank or other software feature enabled that provides attitude information when not in competition?</td>
<td>33 (17%)</td>
<td>154 (81%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2a Specify type of artificial horizon if you have one.</td>
<td></td>
<td>37 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Is your glider equipped with a transponder?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Is your glider equipped with ADS-B Out?</td>
<td>22 (12%)</td>
<td>164 (87%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Do you intend to equip your glider with ADS-B Out within the next 2 years?</td>
<td>67 (35%)</td>
<td>105 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Please comment on any available technology that you would like to be newly allowed in aircraft as per the contest rules.</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td><strong>Adopting FAI Rules</strong></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over time, US soaring rules have evolved to be significantly different from the FAI rules (FAI rules Annex A to Section 3-Gliding) that are used for WGC and Continental Championships and are the basis for National rules for many countries. The factors that in many ways affect US pilots differently from pilots in other parts of the world include the great variety in the geography and weather encountered in US soaring, the relatively low density of racing pilots in the US and the distances between them as compared to their European counterparts.

There has been an ongoing discussion in the US sailplane racing community about switching to FAI rules. While similar to US rules in many respects, wholesale switching to FAI Rules could significantly change the way contests are flown. Examples of differences include:

- The use of a Start Line or a Start Ring vs the US start cylinder. In addition, FAI rules do not currently put a limit on start altitude (although it can require a GPS fix below a certain altitude after the start gate is opened and before making a valid start).
- Allowing radio communication between pilot team members and also allowing communication with ground support personnel.
- Racing Task (RT) turnpoint radius is set at 500m and no additional distance credit is given for flying into the cylinder as opposed to the US' Assigned Task turnpoint radius of 1sm with distance credit given for flying into the cylinder.
- Finish Penalty of 1 point/m for finishing below the minimum finish height vs the two-tier graduated penalty in the US.
- FAI rules include only two types of Tasks, the Racing Task (RT) and the Assigned Area Task (AAT). A change to FAI rules would result in the elimination of the US Modified Assigned Task (MAT).
- Differences in the scoring formulas whereby the penalty for landing out may be not as severe as in US scoring provided the finisher is close to winner's achieved distance.
- Differences in devaluation based on percent of pilots completing the task whereby lone landouts score less than under US Rules and lone finishers don't score significantly more than the long landouts. This means that pilots striking out on their own can face a smaller upside points benefit and greater downside points risk compared to US Rules.
- No Airfield bonus for landout at a designated airfield.
- Common use of "Direct finishes" to a relatively straight-in landing from a lower finish height than US rules.
- Mandatory mix of task type - not less than 1/3 of AT and not less than 1/3 TAT, regardless of weather.
- The use of the Metric system for scoring. (i.e. km/hr vs mph for speed achieved, meters vs feet for altitude and km vs miles for distance).
Note: The US has made a proposal to change FAI scoring to address some of the scoring differences described above. The proposal may or may not receive final FAI approval.

**Arguments for switching to FAI Rules:**

- Bring US Rules more in line with the international soaring community for better integration between the US and the rest of the world.
- Reduce duplication of effort associated with maintaining entirely separate US rules infrastructure.
- Improve compatibility with non-US manufactured soaring instruments
- Allow the use of SeeYou as a scoring program and integration with Soaring Spot, etc.
- Allow pilots selected for the US Soaring team to prepare for international competition using the rules they will fly under.
- Better enable all US pilots to have an international ranking.
- FAI Rules have provision for Local Procedures, which can be used to mitigate features that are impractical or objectionable in the US soaring environment, including many features that are used as arguments against the change to FAI rules (e.g. the 2012 WGC held at Uvalde used a US finish cylinder under Local Procedures and the 2015 Pan-American Championships at Chilhowee used English units except scoring).
- Most other countries in the world, representing a wide range of flying environments, use variations on FAI Rules for their contests without difficulty

**Arguments against switching to FAI Rules:**

- Use of the Metric System for scoring will decrease satisfaction and participation.
- To a greater extent than US rules, FAI scoring formulae encourage gaggling as a tactic.
- US pilots tend to be much more spread out geographically and often fly crewless as opposed pilots in other countries. Team flying and and allowing pilots to use ground communication for tactical purposes would disadvantage those pilots that can’t take advantage of those capabilities and thus might further reduce competition participation.
- Using FAI rules would eliminate the Modified Assigned Task that has been shown to be a useful option, especially when the pilot group has a large variation in skills.
- Requiring a mix of 1/3 of each task type, (RT and AAT) and eliminating the MAT may result in a significant increase in land outs.
- FAI Rules eliminate various US Rules that promote safety (e.g. energy-limited starts, left turns in the start cylinder, higher minimum finish heights).
- Not giving distance credit for turning inside a racing task turnpoint tends to concentrate gliders turning at the turnpoint edge and can increase the chance of midair collision.
- Poor US pilot performance in International competition has little to do with not practicing under FAI rules.
- US Rules have developed a set of long-standing, formalized safety innovations that are lacking in FAI rules (e.g. energy-limited starts, minimum finish heights, MAT tasking for weather, credit for distance inside AT and MAT cylinders). Most of these would be lost in a wholesale move to FAI rules.
The Rules Committee is soliciting pilot feedback on four distinct approaches to the question of using FAI versus US Rules in US soaring competitions, arranged from closest to "pure" FAI Rules to closest to "pure" US Rules:

- **APPROACH 1**: Wholesale adoption of FAI rules without significant modifications to account for some of the differences listed above. This would be running US contests like a WGC as much as possible.
- **APPROACH 2**: Move to FAI Rules, but use the FAI provision for Local Procedures (and other changes similar to those used in other countries for their Nationals) to adjust FAI rules to fit the flying environment for US contests vs WGCs (e.g. English vs Metric units, more US-like start/finish heights and procedures, no juries or team captains), or where specific FAI rules might risk enjoyment or participation (e.g. prohibit team flying, ground crew assistance).
- **APPROACH 3**: Retain US Rules, with encouragement to CDs to use existing rules that are more similar to FAI rules (line finish, task mix) and some rule changes where appropriate (e.g. smaller turn cylinders on ATs while retaining credit for distance inside the cylinder for safety).
- **APPROACH 4**: Keep US Rules as separate from FAI rules.

Please note that any approach to making a significant change to the rules governing US soaring competitions would likely take several years to accomplish fully due to the infrastructure changes that could be involved. The following questions refer to the ultimate goal for US rules.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Approach 1</th>
<th>Approach 2</th>
<th>Approach 3</th>
<th>Approach 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Do you favor APPROACH 1 - a wholesale adoption of FAI rules without major modification?</td>
<td>18 (10%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you favor APPROACH 2 - adoption of FAI rules with use of Local Procedures to implement features that are of high importance for US racing conditions and pilot preferences?</td>
<td></td>
<td>84 (44%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you favor APPROACH 3 - retaining US essentially &quot;as-is&quot;, while implementing CD guidance or rule elements that make US rules more &quot;FAI-like&quot;?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42 (22%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you favor APPROACH 4 - retaining US rules as separate from FAI rules with no changes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 If you selected Approach 1 or Approach 4 please do not respond to questions 5.2.1 through 5.2.10 as your answers to Approach 1 or Approach 4 imply your answers. Skip to 5.2.11 regarding eliminating the Sports Class.</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Do you favor dropping the MAT task type?</td>
<td>Yes 72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5.2.2 | Do you favor requiring Metric units for task setting and scoring (e.g. meters, km, kph and m/s)?
|       | Yes - move to Metric
<p>|       | No - stay with English units |
|       | No 67 35%  |
|       | Yes 49 26%  |
|       | No 92 49%  |
| 5.2.3 | Do you favor the use of a start line instead of start cylinder? |
|       | Yes 37 20%  |
|       | No 32 17%  |
|       | Optional 73 39%  |
| 5.2.4 | Do you favor unlimited altitude starts (versus altitude and energy limits e.g. the 2-minute below the max start altitude rule)? |
|       | Yes 54 29%  |
|       | No 88 47%  |
| 5.2.5 | Do you favor moving to a FAI finish cylinder with a 1 point/meter penalty for finishing under the minimum finish altitude? |
|       | Yes 104 55%  |
|       | No 35 19%  |
| 5.2.6 | Do you favor permitting pilot-pilot communications for team flying? |
|       | Yes 77 41%  |
|       | No 64 34%  |
| 5.2.7 | Do you favor permitting pilots to communicate with support crews on the ground? |
|       | Yes 61 32%  |
|       | No 77  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.2.8 Do you favor adopting 500m turn cylinders for Assigned (Racing)Tasks?</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.9 Do you favor eliminating credit for distance made inside the turn cylinder for Assigned (Racing) Tasks?</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.10 Do favor adopting FAI type scoring formulae?</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.11 There has been discussion that The US' Sport Class National Contest waters down participation in other national contests. The FAI does not have a Sports Class. The FAI uses the Club Class to allow lower performance gliders to compete. Should the US eliminate the Sports Class Nationals to match the FAI and encourage more participation in the Club Class?</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.11a Please provide your comments regarding eliminating the Sports Class.</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.12 What do you consider the positives of moving to FAI rules?</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.13 What do you consider the negatives of moving to FAI rules?</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.14 Please provide any general comments on the subject of the US moving FAI rules.</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.0 Start Rules

There has been some discussion about the new rule implemented in 2018 regarding starting out of the top of the start cylinder. Specifically, opening up the start to include the full cylinder (rather than the front half), combined with the 'best start' rule implemented several years ago.
makes it possible for pilots to take a start by exiting the back side of the cylinder and getting another start exiting the front of the cylinder. In this circumstance the pilot would be given whichever start earns the higher score under the current rules. This can create some ambiguity and workload for pilots who want to know during the flight which start will be used (for managing minimum time on task, for instance).

| 6.1  | Do you favor retaining the rule that allows use of the full start cylinder as well as the 'best start' rule? Please select your preferred solution.                                                                                       | KeepBestStart | 103 | 54%  
|      |                                                                                                                                                                                      | ReturnToFrontHalf | 46  | 24%  
|      |                                                                                                                                                                                      | EliminateBestStart  | 32  | 17%  
|      | **•** Keep the 'best start' rule with full cylinder available (2018 rule).                                                                                                        |                  |     |      
|      | **•** Return to the 'front half' rule (2017 Rule).                                                                                                                                   |                  |     |      
|      | **•** Eliminate the 'best start' rule, and revert to using the last start from the full cylinder for scoring (original 'start out of the top' rule).                                       |                  |     |      |

| 6.2  | Did you observe any start behavior on the part of pilots attributed to the 2018 rule change that you considered unsafe or unfair?                                                           | Yes | 15  | 8%   
|      |                                                                                                                                                                                      | No  | 155 | 82%  

| 6.2a | If you answered Yes to 6.2, please describe the unsafe start behavior.                                                                                                             | 25  | 13%  

| 7.0  | **Finish Rules**                                                                                                                                                                   | All  |     |
|      | In 2018 the penalty for low finishes was modified to double the difference between minimum finish height and actual finish height before being considered a landout (from 200' low to 400' low). This was the most preferred option in the 2017 poll. | All  |     |

| 7.1  | Do you believe the rule as now written is:                                                                                                                                     | TooHarsh | 39  | 21%  
|      | **•** Still too harsh on low finishers.                                                                                                                                          | AboutRight | 123 | 65%  
|      | **•** About right.                                                                                                                                                                 | TooLenient  | 16  | 8%   
|      | **•** Too lenient on low finishers.                                                                                                                                             |                  |     |      |

| 7.2  | Did you receive a penalty for low finish in 2018?                                                                                                                              | Yes | 17  | 9%   
|      |                                                                                                                                                                                      | No  | 159 |     |
### 2018 SSA Pilot Opinion Poll Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes as an optional task format within a regional contest.</th>
<th>Yes, but only as a dedicated contest format where all tasks are of this type.</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Do you favor allowing this task format as a task type within an SSA sanctioned Regional contest, or as an overall contest format?</td>
<td>113 (60%)</td>
<td>15 (8%)</td>
<td>46 (24%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>AllTasks</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Please provide your views on this task format.</td>
<td>76 (40%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1 Do you favor adopting the European Handicapping system?</td>
<td>114 (60%)</td>
<td>56 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(This system is currently use for OLC flights.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>66 (35%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.2 Comments on changes desired to the current US Handicaps.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.0 Would we have better participation in US National Contests if the length were reduced?</td>
<td>75 (40%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8.0 Variable Length Handicapped/Grand Prix Tasks

There has been a request to allow a handicapped task length tasks as a format for use in Regional contests. The format is an assigned task where the turn cylinder radii are set to increase with aircraft handicap. The idea is to create more head-to-head racing across gliders with different performance by requiring higher performance gliders to fly up to as much as 5 miles closer to each turnpoint than lower performance gliders (typically 1-3 miles, depending on task configuration). This format also can use a Grand Prix start where all gliders start at the same time. The format has been used in the UK and the US with good feedback.
10/21/2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would you favor reducing the length of US National contests to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7days</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8days</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9days</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NoChange</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please comment on shortening US National contests.</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please comment on ways to improve participation in National Contests.</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contest Organization</strong></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you favor allowing the use of electronic signature to sign contest registration forms?</td>
<td>Yes 177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Contests are now using electronic media (i.e. text messages and Apps such as &quot;WhatsApp&quot;) to directly communicate with participants during a contest. Do you support encouraging Contest Managers to take advantage of this capability?</td>
<td>Yes 156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please comment on using electronic media for contest to pilot communication.</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should Contest managers formalize the way crewless pilots are handled during landouts? For example, should a crewless pilots list be part of the contest organization whereby crewless pilots become responsible for retrieving other crewless pilots that have landed out? (This could potentially reduce the workload of the Contest Retrieve Desk).</td>
<td>Yes 138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2018 SSA Pilot Opinion Poll Results

| 11.3a | Please comment on whether Contest Manager should formalize crewless pilot operations. | 84  
|       |                                                                                   | 44% |
| 11.4  | Please provide comments on improving Contest Organization.                          | 28  
|       |                                                                                   | 15% |

### 12.0 Motor Gliders

| 12.0  | Motor Gliders                                                                       | All |
| 12.1  | Airfield Bonus Rule 10.10.3.4.1 states that for a motorized glider to claim an airfield bonus, the motor must be started no lower than 1000’ AGL from the airport elevation. Do you feel that this is too restrictive and should be changed to a lower altitude? | Yes 55  
|       |                                                                                   | 29% |
|       |                                                                                   | No 119  
|       |                                                                                   | 63% |
| 12.1a | Please provide comments on motorized glider airfield bonus minimum altitude claims. | 83  
|       |                                                                                   | 44% |
| 12.2  | Please provide comments on other Motor Glider issues.                               | 31  
|       |                                                                                   | 16% |

### 13.0 Other Comments

| 13.0  | Other Comments                                                                      | All |
| 13.1  | What ideas do you have to make contest flying more attractive to new participants?   | 76  
|       |                                                                                   | 40% |
| 13.2  | Please provide comments on other issues you would like the Rules Committee to consider at the 2018 meeting. | 39  
|       |                                                                                   | 21% |

Return to the [2018 SSA Pilot Opinion Poll survey form](http://adamsfive.com/a5soaring/survey/surveyresults.php) to check your input.

Return to main [survey page](http://adamsfive.com/a5soaring/survey/surveyresults.php).

If you have problems or questions contact the [survey administrator](mailto:).
October 21, 2018 12:00 PM

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

| 2.4a |
| : |
| Please comment on the use of FLARM Stealth Mode. |

I do not have strong feelings about use of Flarm Stealth Mode. As long as all pilots have the same level of information available, fair competition can be achieved.

I am not that familiar with the stealth mode of FLARM. The collision avoidance use of this technology is valuable to the sport. The tactical use of the system to “mark” competitors, get information that is not available to all competitors at the same time leads to a gaming of the race. Starting late and catching up to a gaggle that contains the leaders can be seen as strategy. Marking the leaders on FLARM, starting a little latter, catching them over the first 100km and staying with them to beat them....that’s leeching. Technology leeching (just what I described) needs to be stopped.

A stealth mode that masked the glider ID and the ICAO code would be best. Seeing other gliders at a greater distance than Stealth allows is beneficial from a situational awareness and collision avoidance standpoint. But there is no need to know who is flying the glider.

Allow it

An 18 second warning bubble is not sufficient to allow other reasonably executable safety maneuvers that can prevent conflicts, especially in high density traffic conditions.

As I understand it, stealth mode limits the range for collision warnings. I want all the time I can get to visually find and avoid another glider.

As long as collision avoidance alerts are available, it does not matter to me whether or not others use Stealth Mode.

As long as collision avoidance works within a mile of another glider - that’s all we need.

Beyond the anti-collision function of Flarm the other capabilities are a detriment to the sport.

CD Choice
Defeats the intended use, however, wish they could come up with a way to avoid giving a pilot info on rate of climb. I personally do not use it, other than for avoidance but understand "Moffat Minnow" effect.

Don't damp down the software, changing profiles back and forth would be such a pain too! Flarm works great don't screw it up! FLARM Stealth mode should NEVER be prohibited in ANY contest!!!

Flarm has become far more of a tactical tool then a collision avoidance device. Stealth mode, in combination with delayed tracking, nullifies most of this.

Flarm should be used as safety tool not leeching tool Stealth Mode should be at pilot's discretion

Flew the Elmira Nats with stealth. Worked fine. It's nice to get the tactical info if stealth is not being used. Remember the days when the experts insisted there was no value to such info?

Generally speaking, I think many (most) pilots do not understand the difference between "regular" FLARM mode and Stealth mode. It is my understanding that any true collision risks are still reported in Stealth mode, but further out targets that don't meet collision criteria are suppressed. Therefore, the concern about "reduced situational awareness" or "reduced safety" seems spurious. It doesn't help that the FLARM developers are not very transparent about the logic/impacts in Stealth Mode.

I am not deeply versed on specifics of the 'Stealth' mode, however for those competitors that feel a need to disguise their presence (and remove a potential advantage to others), operation in stealth mode IF it does not diminish the collision avoidance intent of FLARM would certainly be acceptable.

I believe Stealth Mode reduces safety.

I believe that maximum range is important for situational awareness.

I believe the use of Stealth Mode eliminates its "safety application".

I can't afford a FLARM but I believe that how to use it must only be a pilot decision if it's not mandatory per FAA.

I do not know stealth mode

I don't find leaching as serious in US Contests as I have heard in World Contests. So I do not see a problem with either. I usually turn my Flarm Radar off because it causes me to follow other pilots rather than follow the best lines ahead of me.

I don't like that the FLARM Stealth Mode has side effects and reduces range in an apparently empirically determined way. I don't like that the FLARM protocol is not open.

I don't like it.

I feel some people obsess about seeing others at a distance, I find it a distraction and prefer to fly my own path in contests.

I have not flown in a contest with all contestants in stealth. If I would get the same warnings I would be in favor. I don't think it should be used to find contestants and climb rates.

I haven't found normal FLARM mode to be effective at least at the range I have been receiving to greatly influence contests.

I participated in the Elmira contest where stealth mode was in play and I don't believe that it reduced the anti-collision aspects of FLARM. It did reduce the leaching tactics ability of FLARM and I believe stealth should be the standard mode for contests.

I preference Flarm without stealth mode at contests, but think organizers should have the option to specify Stealth as Prohibited, Mandatory, or Optional
I strongly feel that the tactical utility of FLARM detracts from the spirit of the sport. Stealth mode has little or no practical effect on the safety function of FLARM but reduces the tactical utility.

I think Flarm should be used as a safety device for collision avoidance. Stealth mode is an option for doing this.

I think it reduces safety. It is not necessary because all pilot have FLARM, so no pilot has an advantage. Everyone can see everyone else - that is a huge safety advantage. It also reduces landouts - which also enhances safety.

I think the extra information one gets from knowing where the other gliders are on course is not in the spirit of soaring. I think that flarms are another widget in the cockpit that are a safety distraction when they are used for tactical information.

If FLARM is not mandatory, then using it in stealth mode should be OK too. BTW I mistakenly clicked on "no" on question 2.2 "Do you think that FLARM should be mandatory at National contests?" and can't blank out the answer, but since I don't have experience with a national contest I shouldn't be answering that question.

If flarm is not mandatory then stealth mode should be allowed.

If it decreases safety by decreasing range of detection, it should not be used. However, if there is no change to the detection range and only prevents massage of the data to determine climb rates, etc, then I would be in favor of it.

If someone does not want to broadcast their location, contest ID, and climb rate to others nearby they should be able to have that option.

If the main goal of Flarm is to improve safety, then this is still achieved if some or all pilots use stealth mode. An alternative would be to have a mode where only rate of climb is turned off, since this is the most useful competitive information provided by Flarm.

I'm in favor of choice when it comes to stealth mode but having said that it should be one way or the other not half and half. Either way everyone should be on the same setting for a contest.

In the name of safety, Flarm was pushed prematurely. Yes, safety is paramount, but safety is no longer the main reason CONTEST pilots use Flarm. It is now obvious that Flarm has become another tool used to discover position and climb rates data for other gliders and to extract a competitive advantage. The net result of this trend is not an enhancement of overall safety: 1. Flarm-savvy pilots spend more -- not less -- time "heads-down" trying to extract information from a tiny screen on the panel than pilots looking out of the cockpit. They look for relatively remote ships (sharp contrasts to paying attention to those in the immediate vicinity, a far-more-likely threat). 2. Flarm causes pilots to coalesce from many directions towards Flarm-derived "best-climb-rate" indications, exacerbating gaggle density. Flarm is a good concept, but in practice, it contributes to skill erosion, including safety-related skills such as looking outside the cockpit.

In this respect contests should mirror WGC.

Is FLARM and safety device, a competitive device, or both? If safety is the only concern then Stealth Mode. If a competitive device then no Stealth. If both then full FLARM in Regionals and Stealth in Nationals?

It defeats the purpose of FLARM. If we want the FAA to mandate something silly for gliders in the future, go down this road.

It increases collision risk. The manufacturer recommends against. There is no compelling reason to compromise safety by allowing the stealth mode.

It is an unnecessary complication. The information "advantage" that normal FLARM mode might convey is of limited practical use, and has not stopped top pilots from continuing to win through the use of their own soaring skill.

It is good to know who I'm dealing with in traffic situations so I can decide to exit the area or not. Makes me feel a bit safer.
It's a safety hazard that also subjects the SSA to potential litigation and is not actively supported by the manufacturer, who recommends against its use.

It's not set up optimally, but "open" Flarm and the resultant electronic leeching looks bad for the future of our sport.

Just No

Largely indifferent to it in either respect.

Manufacturer does not recommend stealth mode. From an organizers stand point if something happens that open FLARM mode may have prevented the liabilities are huge. I have spoken with lawyers about this situation and what liabilities may there be and the best response I got was 'if this situation is mandated let me know I will give you a stack of business cards to have at the registration desk'

Mostly harmless.

No experience using stealth mode.

No strong opinion as I've not used in this mode. I understand the issue (I think) but that is a tactical level that I usually don't play at. I'm maxed out trying to work what I've got.

No strong opinions. The product should be used for collision avoidance - not for competitive advantage or disadvantage

No to Stealth mode use in contest because this mode does NOT have the same quality of traffic recognition capabilities as non-Stealth mode as described in the back of the Flarm Manual. Also, live Flarm data for all contestants is available during WGCs.

Pilots can choose stealth mode but it should not be mandated by the organizers.

Pilots should have the ability to use the mode of their choice when it comes to FLARM. Once we start to regulate Stealth Mode, we might as well require that everyone have the same range and height settings too.

Properly used, Stealth can reduce tactical use of Flarm while retaining the intended safety benefit. Heads down time is an active hazard.

Reduce leeching. Still gives collision warning.

Regular FLARM at all contests

Requiring FLARM in stealth mode is the only way to satisfy those pilots that are convinced the pilots that use FLARM use FLARM solely for leeching.

Stealth mode defeats the situational awareness value of Flarm, which is the major part of its value.

Stealth mode does not affect warning range or safety, contrary to r.a.s. mythology. In international contests, Stealth mode is optional and is a tactical choice left to pilots. We should do the same and leave it to pilot's choice. However, we need to educate our pilots as to the fact that Stealth mode does not affect warnings.

Stealth mode doesn't appear to be sufficiently developed to adequately address safety while restricting performance information of other competitors

Stealth mode should be mandatory. FLARM used for collision avoidance purposes only.

Stealth mode should mean that ONLY threats show up.

Stealth works where it needs to in order to avoid mid-airs. FLARM leeching is minimized.
Still unclear if collision avoidance is diminished in stealth mode; if not, should allow organizers to stipulate stealth mode
The ability to use software to see who has the strongest thermal from a mile or more away is undercutting the sport and rewards
head down time and leaching instead of finding your own thermal. I strongly prefer that flarm only be used for safety not leaching.
The more info, the better.

The use of FLARM stealth mode while advantageous to some leaves out the "learning" provided to other pilots. Why not enhance
the "learning" of less experienced pilots to "follow" or "leash" onto other pilots and learn their decision process?

There is no reason to go Stealth it takes away situational awareness
There is so much else that a pilot has to keep track of when flying and even more so when contest flying. Using FLARM to determine
if a glider ahead on-course is climbing well adds to this workload. Being able to see what they are doing also seems a bit un-
sportsmanlike. I am all for being able to detect or see thermals ahead as is now done by watching soaring birds, clouds and other
gliders. But to "listen in" on their rate of climb might be considered snooping.

There must be some tweaks to the software that would allow us to maintain safety but not leach so much with the software. For
example, in stealth mode do we really need to know the climb rates of gliders? Helps way too much to decide thermal selection and
aggressive flying if the climbs are good ahead instead of figuring it out yourself.

This should help to get more contest pilots to install and fly with FLARM
Yes - allowed for those who wish to use stealth, but most certainly not mandated such that all must use stealth mode. Can we please
put this question to rest!

You can't escape gaggle flying, especially on the blue days. Half the time you move to another glider's thermal you miss the lift
anyway. With the range limitations of FLARM it's very difficult to maintain contact unless it's visually maintained. If you want to run on
your own, it's easy to do so Stealth Mode seems to be inconsequential anyway and seldom a factor.

never used it, but respect others preference
would bring back farm to a primary anti collision device instead of a tracking device and might limit head down time in the cockpit

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Please provide other views you have on the use of FLARM in contests.

(5)
Adds a lot to safety but may tend to encourage pilots to relax. One problem (encountered in last two contests) is FLARM devices with
poor transmission. The pilots see other targets but they're not nearly as visible themselves. May be bad "A" antenna or some other
reason but they don't know they have a problem until a bunch of pilots start complaining (yes, I informed both pilots of my
suspicions). Not suggesting mandatory "certification" of installs but perhaps some mechanism for rating/reporting particularly good
and bad FLARM targets so we're not left asking each other "did you see me?".

After flying in several WGC's where all pilots were Flarm equipped, I do not feel that the technology makes a meaningful difference in
the outcome of the competition results.

Any tool to aid in situational awareness is a good one!
Considering how much most pilots spend just on their instruments these days, the cost of a FLARM is relatively minor - require either it or ADS-B.

Currently, FLARM has gone from a safety device to a targeting radar system. How many times in Uvalde did the day winner say, "I saw them on FLARM and they had a good climb". Add ADS-B and now you have a much longer range for data collection. FLARM following can be fun and should be encouraged in Regionals as it can help bring pilots along making leaching simple. In other ways, it takes leaching to a new level. It depends on what we are trying to measure in contests.

Encourage it
Encourage use for better SA of non competing traffic.
Everything possible should be done to eliminate FLARM as a tactical device. It needs to revert to it's original purpose as a safety device.
FLARM for all contests: safety first.
FLARM is a good safety tool. As a pilot who has had a mid-air at a US contest, I fully support any and all tools to enhance the safety of the sport.
FLARM is a great toll with controversial impacts in the racing scene. There is argument that it provides a tactical advantage to some while on course, but I argue that a Motor or Sustainer does the same thing, however that argument never makes it to the polls. Let's start restricting the use of Motor Gliders first, then talk about the restrictions related to FLARM.
FLARM is a wonderful addition to safety.
FLARM is now categorically a Tactical Leaching Tool (TLT) - period end of statement. Anyone who pretends otherwise has not flown with FLARM in a large contest. Combined with ADS-B coming out, the nature of racing is changing in a HUGE way. There was a pilot at the Standard Nationals in Texas with full ADS-B, and pilots could see him from many, many miles away.
FLARM or other situational awareness aids are a great think - in theory. In practice, FLARM provides important safety benefits in a number of situations such as approaching thermals, cruising under cloud streets, and the situation it was originally designed for: mountain flying. It is not so helpful, and sometimes is distracting in crowded thermals. FLARM could be better if it was a mature product and not the "eternal beta-test" product it seems to be. Always requiring significant computer skills and help from IT nerds to keep it working.
FLARM started off as a good idea to prevent midairs. It is used mostly now to located thermals and better pilots ahead.
FLarm enhances situational awareness, especially in stressful situations like gagglng with multiple gliders when under time pressure. I believe it increases safety, and should be used in contests.
Flarm is a critical tool for situational awareness when flying with other gliders and aircraft. I've flown in large European contests with significant gagglng and in smaller regionals. It remains effective for all there situations and should be mandatory in SSA sanctioned contests.
Flarm is a good concept, but in practice, it contributes to skill erosion, including safety-related skills such as looking outside the cockpit.
Flarm is now used by some pilots to look ahead and gain a compete experience advantage over those who do not do this. This is certainly not the reason for making flam mandatory at contests.
Flarm was originally brought into the sport for collision avoidance but it has morphed into a tactical tool that changes the sport. I
don't like how it makes it easier to leach off others. Soaring was a sport about reading the sky and day by day making tactical decisions but Flarm makes it more about who can leach and play the game the best...

Flarm with OGN in Worlds changed our sport, Flarm should be safety tool not tactical tool

Flying contests without FLARM is dumb and unsafe. Flarm devices should be available for rental and should be maditory.

Folks are often spending too much time watching the Flarm

Glider Contest pilots fly closer (in thermals) than any other, save the Reno Air Races. We have had mid airs so FLARM can help, but cannot replace Mod 1 Mark 1 eyeball. FLARM is minimally helpful in a thermal, that's where the eyeball comes in. FLARM is most helpful when gliders on apposing tracks and will direct the pilots attention to that block of sky.

Giders without FLARM should not be allowed in contests, especially nationals. They add too much danger to other pilots.

Good idea, generally.

I am a HUGE proponent of contests having flarm. That said, the reason why I said no to regional contests is it might be too a large barrier to new pilots trying out contest flying. With the PowerFlarm rental program aging badly, the SSA needs to address if a new program needs to be considered and worked on...

I am more likely to attend a mandatory FLARM contest

I am strongly against using Flarm as a tactical/competitive aid in contests I believe its use in this manner is ruining the sport by putting the emphasis on gagging and leeching. This is inherently unsafe and does not fairly measure a pilot's soaring skills.

I believe FLARM should be strongly encouraged at all Regionals, required at all Nationals, and perhaps required at any SSA-sanctioned event (of any kind) when there are more than a set number of participants (20? 25? 30? somewhere in there).

I believe it is very worthwhile. I'd like everyone to have one, but I wouldn't make it mandatory in regionals for cost reason.

I can't afford a FLARM but I believe that how to use it must only be a pilot decision if it's not mandatory per FAA.

I don't own a FLARM. I rented one for the R 8 Contest and it was a nice safety device.

I don't think it's appropriate to mandate software/hardware that doesn't use public standards and is only available from one or two vendors. I understand why people think leeching is bad. I think the downsides of leeching are less important than the safety benefit.

I had quit contest flying until Flarm came along, I had 2 very near mid airs, Flarm fixed this. I like Flarm, I don't follow others but I like to see who's around, less lonely!

I have a mode S transponder which is seen by ATC and commercial aircraft

I have been in 3 sailplane contests. I never felt it was a problem that other gliders were nearby. It never felt crowded in the air. In gaggles I would just move over to another lift area if I thought too many were joining. FLARM seems like it is not needed and it is very expensive for something used infrequently.

I love it.

I personally have not found much information from the FLARM that would assist with "leeching". I think the overall usefulness of that sort of information is not a significant factor in the success of the higher placing pilots.

I should have put the money in a Transponder.

http://adamsfive.com/asoaring/survey/surveyresults.php?FmemberID=541699&FmemberLastName=nixon&action=LISTTEXT&supress=no&FsurveyID=RulesPoll18
I think FLARM is a great tool for safety, but I don’t believe it should be used as a tool for a competitive advantage.

I think making FLARM mandatory at contests should be up to the contest management. In a 10 aircraft 13.5 National or a small Club Class National it may not be the right decision. In a 60 aircraft contest, all in one class, it makes better sense.

I voted yes for Flarm in Regional, but am really undecided. By mandating we might discourage some new entrants and we need all the participation we can.

If all are using FLARM in non-stealth mode, the playing field is leveled. It does change the tactics, but so does any technology.

If you have a mid air the contest is going to be asked why Flarm was not required ..... 

In Utah we often compete in areas where ridge running is available. FLARM capability in providing advance warning of opposite direction aircraft as well as nearby aircraft traveling in the same direction is very advantageous.

In the two regional contests that I participated in, the main collision danger seemed to be in pre-start gaggles, where FLARM would not help AFAIK.

Increases safety and enjoyment of racing. More and more pilots are getting ADS-B Out which can't be turned off or put into stealth mode. This will overwhelm stealth mode considerations so mandating stealth mode will very shortly be a hopeless endeavor.

It began as an anti-collision system, but this aspect is now minor compared to its tactical role.

It cost is modest, its safety benefits are high. It should be mandatory. Not a close question.

It helps in situational awareness, especially in close gaggle flying.

It is essential in large contests (I have experience in WGCs and PAGCs) and Flarm should be mandatory in US Nationals.

It is fun to see where other people are so that you can gauge your own progress, of course not so fun when you see you are losing!

It is important that ALL contestants are Flarm equipped. It's the one without that will hit you..

It should be highly encouraged but not mandated, especially at Regionals. Don't make any new rules that create an impediment to racing especially for those on lower budgets or who are new to racing. I use a club owned ship to fly regionals.

It should be required

It's an anti-collision device, we continue to have collisions. Hard to argue against using it.

I've flown three WGCs with FLARM. Why should we inhibit here?

Peer pressure seems to be doing the trick as far as adoption goes. "Mandatory" is a strong word that implies surveillance and consequences for technical difficulties as well as non-compliance.

Pilots should be encouraged by peer pressure to install Flarm for safety reasons. Any serious competitor will have Flarm in order to "see" other gliders for tactical reasons.

Regular FLARM at all contests

See above.

Should you wish to expose the real reason for any FLARM popularity in contests try making stealth mode mandatory. Tactical use of FLARM should result in unsportsmanlike penalties.

http://adamsfive.com/a5soaring/survey/surveyresults.php?FmemberID=541699&FmemberLastName=nixon&action=LISTTEXT&suppress=no&FsurveyID=RulesPoll18
The constant Flarm alerts found in most contest gaggles desensitize the pilot's response. Once these alerts simply become annoying, Flarm has a negative impact on safety.

The ultimate face of soaring comps as seen at recent WGC's where Flarm monitoring by ground crews and pilots has replaced pilot skills will ultimately ruin the sport.

They add expense and pilot distraction, and I am not convinced they are a safety benefit anywhere except the starting gate area.

Too many false positives

We should strongly encourage Flarm use. Leave it up to the contest management to decide to REQUIRE Flarm. We do not need to do anything which might limit participation.

While it is safe, shouldn't be mandatory... what about ADSB?

Would like to see it mandatory in regionals. I realize this might be a barrier to some entering contest, but having flown at Perry several years, I think it is a big safety advantage

prefer stealth mode

safety always #1. But... the side benefit is that we can track the contests real-time. And that has a ton of commercial/interest potential for the sport.

see above

sometimes confusing or taking eyes off the canopy. But helpful in proximity alerts especially with aircraft out of view.

4.2a

: Specify type of artificial horizon if you have one.

Air Avionics/Butterfly
Air Glide S
Air-Avionics Display S
AirGlide Display S
Avare / XCSoar
Belite turn and bank.
Butterfly Vario
Butterfly Vario
Butterfly vario
Butterfly vario It is actually permanently lock out
Butterfly vario.
Dynon D2 Stratus 2
Electric Turn and Bank
Glider has the LXNAV S100, AHRS is available as a software key.
I have an LX-8080, and would love to enable the software feature, but understand it is not allowed. So I haven't purchased the software unlock feature.
I plan to use one in my next glider for safety purposes while flying in wave.
Installed an old T&B gyro in an empty hole, just for emergency use.
J8 not installed
LK800 software henerated
LX 9000
LX 9070 and Air Avionics
LX Nav LX9000
LX-NAV S-100
LX9000
LX9000
LX9000
LX9000
LX9000 AHRS
My S80 has the option to add it.
N/A
None
None
S80
T&B installed, I didn't turn it on this year, plan to remove it.
Trutrak solid state turn coordinator.
Turn and Bank gyro
XCsoar software feature.

4.5

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<th>Please comment on any available technology that you would like to be newly allowed in aircraft as per the contest rules.</th>
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<tr>
<td>(None)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allow attitude indication in competition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allowing technology to take over will ultimately result in no use for pilots at all. Computers can do a better job, and compete at a much higher level so human pilots will just be a nuisance. Ask the pseudo pilots in the NYANG at Syracuse. All flying is done with their Preditors from a bunker on the ground far away from reality. Their machines engage in Air to ground missions in far away places with amazing results. Is this what we want in Sailplane racing??</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any and all. RC should get rid of all equipment bans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anything that increases cost is bad. Anything that improves safety is good. Anything that decreases the value of experience and special skills in the cockpit is bad. Anything that helps new pilots come up to speed faster and maintain enthusiasm is good.</td>
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<td>Artificial horizon for the late day run into the sun with limiting visibility.</td>
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<td>As in the past, it is extremely difficult to police the use of this technology &quot;creep&quot;. We would need to institute an extremely harsh penalty to assure rule compliance.</td>
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<td>As new technologies arrive in general use in regular X/C soaring, competition should evaluate for safety (+/-) adopt as appropriate.</td>
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<td>Banning technology is a losing proposition. Mostly, I'd open things up as much as possible. The only reason to do it is in the short run if it generates a SIGNIFICANT tactical advantage (to the point that a large plurality of pilots are complaining) AND is REALLY expensive. That's not many things these days with most everything available on a cellphone.</td>
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<td>Cockpit weather</td>
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<td>Current weather, especially weather radar and lightning detection to avoid dangerous weather.</td>
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<td>Flux Capacitors, should be made mandatory in 2021</td>
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<td>How about some sort of tech that points out aircraft being flown by head-down tech addicted idiots with more video screens in the cockpit than a sports bar?</td>
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<td>I hope that soon an affordable ADS-B Out device will be available for gliders and that should be readily available even for competition use</td>
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<td>I like technology -- and I think I would use what is allowed. A display of weather (specifically bad WX) might be a good addition. Major problem is panel space. I don't think I like the FLARM ground station technology as being used in world competitions to help team pilots very much. However, it does not look like that technology will come to the US very fast (or soon). This technology would take a lot of fun out of our racing</td>
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<td>I think that the prohibition of communications between pilots is not enforceable in this age of cellphones, thus should be formally rescinded. Moreover, I think that team flying should be encouraged. Communications with ground crew is just as unenforceable. I am not sure whether getting information that way about weather or other contestants should be allowed. But with the advent of ADS-B-In (along with mobile-internet-based weather data sources) that horse has already left the barn.</td>
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<td>I think the policies and data on the SSA website about attitude information are obsolete. The official list on the website doesn't include many popular instruments that have attitude available. The comments on the SSA rules website about using a burner phone to avoid suspicion of attitude software use are silly. I don't think you have any sane means of policing whether or not someone has</td>
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an attitude reference in 2018. If the goal is to police cloud flying, a dash cam in every cockpit can do that for 20 bucks...and doesn't require honest pilots to forego a safety device.

I think you should be able to use weather apps in cockpit (SkySight).

I would like the FAA to adopt flarm-out in the ads-b out category

I would seriously consider adding ADS-B Out, IF I was flying in a higher traffic density area which I currently do not.

It is almost impossible to enforce removal of any new devices so allow it in the cockpit.

Limit the technology in cockpits during contests. Competitions should determine which pilot has the best set of soaring skills. Primary in this is the ability of the pilots to locate and utilize the best thermals in the sky using their own abilities NOT the abilities of others.

My next glider (on-order) will be equipped with cockpit weather (LX 9070) plus Trig transponder and ADSB In and Out

My next glider will have a ballistic parachute.. I am not sure if this is allowed in contests as a substitute for a pilot-worn parachute. If it is not allowed I would like it to be.

No need to prevent use of technology, let pilots use what they want

No technology should be banned in competition and no technology should be mandatory

None that I know of.

None we are already at the point where the pilot with the most bucks can spend the most buck to buy the greatest tech. Very soon we will have a situation were we will have rich pilots with no talent beating poorer pilots with tons of talent.

None!

Pellet varios.

Please don't introduce new electronic tool in cockpit we should look outside not inside. We can play safely with computers at home not in glider.

The less the better

The use of weather data would enhance safety.

There should be no restriction on electronics with the exception of two way communication for the purpose of cooperation between glider pilots.

We really need to try to keep folks from flying in clouds. It's an accident waiting to happen and we don't need the bad press.

When it eventually becomes available I think remote thermal detectors/imagers should be allowed in competition. This will be the biggest advance in the entire history of soaring and so it should be highly encouraged and not discouraged!

Yanking the turn gyro out of the panel for a contest is probably the silliest/dumbest thing I do in aviation. The instrument confers no competitive advantage whatsoever... let's get rid of this silly rule.

eyeballs

no new technology.

use of adsb out for tracking seems like a good idea. pretty rock solid performance, and fast update
5.2.11a

Please provide your comments regarding eliminating the Sports Class.

Anyone can fly any glider with a handicap. New competitive gliders cost a fortune now, and are limiting participation in the non-handicapped classes to only the rich people unless one can find someone willing to loan them a competitive glider. If you eliminate the sports class, then handicap all other classes so that older gliders can still compete and the contest becomes about pilot ability, as opposed to pilot wealth. If you don't handicap the other classes, participation will go down even more as the prices of new competitive gliders continue to go up.

Appropriately handicapping lower performance gliders could allow them to be more equitable scored. Eliminating Sports Class Nationals for FAI compliance would not seem to encourage more participation in Club Class- it begins to mandate it. Entirely probable that folks flying lower performance aircraft are new to the sport and simply delighted to be flying in a contest. Their principal goal is often participation. The 'class' is likely of much less importance.

As a former Club Class participant this doesn't make sense. I don't think sports class primarily serves club class gliders. It makes more sense to say you want to kill sports class to increase participation in the 20 meter two-seat class.

As long as participation in Sports Class Nationals remains strong there is no good reason to eliminate it.

BAD idea as this is the most popular class at present.

Bad idea. But the sports class nationals should never conflict in time or location with club or standard.

Club Nationals tends to level the field. Handicaps never work for all situations. Sports is OK for Regional contest.

Club class handicaps would make higher performance gliders less competitive.

Competitive soaring is in trouble because of declining participation, in part because the number of soaring pilots is declining generally, as are GP pilot numbers. The touchstone for me in evaluating questions like this is will it encourage or discourage contest participation. My impression is that it will discourage participation. I've flown a number of sports class contests, national and local. Pilots seem to like it. A wide range of ships can participate.

Definitely do not eliminate Sports Class. It has served the US Contest scene very well for a long time.

Do not overlap Sports Class and Club Class contests. Attempt to utilize sites geographically opposite one another (subject to bid constraints).

Do you mean eliminating it entirely? (No regionals either?) I would be against that. I can see the point of not having a sports-class nationals.

Don't know.

During Sport class contests let 2-seat gliders have their own task and scoring. (I mean: In addition to the 20 meter two-seat class contests). It is not fair to compete with a glider that carries four eyes and two 1/2 brains!

Eliminate club class. Select club WGC team members from those flying appropriate ships at Sport Nats.

Eliminating the Sports Class Nationals will focus competitors into the FAI Classes, thereby increasing attendance in them. The Sports Class Nationals is not useful to select Club Class team members because the handicap range is too wide and the rules do not allow Racing Tasks which typically comprise the majority of WGC tasks.
Eliminating the sports class nationals is different from eliminating the sports class. Eliminating the nationals might encourage competitors to fly other class national contests. No strong feeling either way. Sports class provides a means for new pilots to get their feet wet in competition, and more experienced pilots to compete at a less demanding level than might be expected/desired in the FAI classes. Without having researched the numbers, it appears that sports class sees significant participation. Keeping sports class under current rules and adopting FAI rules for other classes is an option. If that's too complex, then establish a "local procedure set" that retains sports class attributes that can be used until sports class pilots migrate to other classes or demonstrate continued demand.

Elimination of Sports Class would be ok because pilots have the alternative to fly in OLC type events which could become more prevalent. OLC safari camps are more relaxed and less competitive which seems to me what the Sports Class is all about anyway. Glider affordability for competition in Club Class is outstanding and by eliminating Sports Class would encourage more younger pilots to compete. Also, reducing the number of competitions and nationals, we would help attendance at the remaining FAI types of contests.

Elimination of Sports would reduce overall participation. It is a home for a meaningful group of pilots. Elimination would not promote Club. It would drive marginal participants out, particularly second level competitors and those without competitive ships. We should do nothing that hurts participation.

Elimination of sports class would make many gliders outside of club class and modern super ships noncompetitive

Given the large distances within the US, strategic placement of the Sports Class Nationals may allow pilots with all type gliders to have reasonable access to a Nationals even if "their class" is a long distance away. The Sports Class Nationals provides a venue for relatively new Nationals pilots to sharpen their skills before entering class-specific Nationals, which are tending to be more demanding, with increasing use of Assigned Tasks and more outlandings. Retaining the Sports Class Nationals likely improves participation. KM

Handicaps do not work across the large spread of performance seen in current Sports Class. At regionals, also eliminate sports class, but allow for multiple club classes with limited handicap ranges. In small regionals, you are stuck with a potentially large spread.

Have a combined sports class & club class nationals

I am a big proponent of the Club Class. However, my support for Club Class has always been predicated on NOT harming Sports Class. Yes, Sports Class has turned into sort of a monster class dominated by high end ships, but it keeps drawing in racers and everyone has a great time. Leave Sports Class the heck alone. Let's work on making Club Class more attractive. Hint: Races held at crappy sites don't draw many racers.

I believe sports class helps contest participation by allowing gliders not on the FAI Club class handicap list.

I could go either way on this one. As long as we keep the 20m I don't see any real strong consequence to eliminating the Sports Class Nationals.

I do not see a point in Sports Class Nationals. Its great for Regionals but doesn't have much meaning on a National level

I favor retaining the sports class

I have enjoyed flying in the Sport Class Nationals several times. It suits my interests very well.

I prefer sports class because it allows for more valid contests with fewer gliders. Also, I really enjoy flying with friends who have gliders in a different class.
I think it’ll increase participation in other classes

I think that the Nationals should select pilots qualified to enter International competitions. As the is nothing other than Club class at the International level, we should only Club Class at the nationals level. However, The sports class at the regional level is an excellent entry level format. which could continue to use the handicaps and AAT tasks that have proven useful to new racing pilots.

If Sport Class is eliminated I am sure that there would be a significant decrease in the total number of pilots flying in contests.

If no sports class should move more gliders to 15, 18, std class.

If you are trying to promote racing, elimination of Sports defeats your purpose. Sports allows any ship to fly. And there is usually some kind of Sports contest close to fly in. Think of the USAF kids that fly as teams in Duos and D2s. You would discourage their participation as they could not fly at the same contest. We do not have clubs like Europe where they have a lot of Club Class ships in clubs. Personally I would eliminate the Club Class instead. Just figure out how to mathematically generate a Club Class ranking from Sports contests.

In US it is important to have multiple contests available within reasonable driving range. Switching to club class prevents high performance gliders from participating and eliminates a possible venue. Present sports class rules allow club class gliders to be competitive. There is no real need to bar high performance gliders.

In practice higher performance gliders are non-competitive so Sports Class participation is limited. Better to go the Club Class route where handicaps for 18 m gliders are irrelevant.

In the west the SPports Nationals has become the Duo, Arcus or ASG 32 class. The 20 meter Nationals should be more attractive to these folks

Instead of Sports Class we should adopt OLC Nationals. In general this is the type of pilot who chooses Sports Class. It should be an introduction and transition to real contest flying.

It is not a sports class anymore, look at the big number of hi LD sailplanes and high experience pilots who fly the contest.

It's been a successful and popular class so why eliminate it? Perhaps could somewhat narrow the range of handicaps allowed, although I don't think that has been a problem in practice. And I fly a low-performance glider (handicap about 1.18) so of course would rather be able to keep flying it.

Keep it simple

Keep it to encourage racing participation

Keeping both Sports and Club Class Nationals "at a distance from each other" in a given year increases access to national levels comps where a pilot can choose. My guess is that any "watering down" effect is greatly proportional to the geographical proximity of the host sites.

Maybe... I tend to agree that having Sports and Club Class Nats might be watering down the participation in Nats. However, we need to keep in mind that it takes 3+ days to drive across the country from coast to coast. If we did eliminate the Sports Nats would it disadvantage someone from flying a Nats because their sailplane is not competitive in another class or its too far to drive?

No "but"... Should we consider sub-classes within sports (maybe 2 bands) for performance below a certain handicap and above? I agree there are just too many classes, but I'm also not sure that people are willing to drive across country anymore for "their" class.

So, sports provides a catch-all for people who want to go to a nationals nearby when sports is convenient.

No need to eliminate it - in fact, this is where we can ignore FAI rules. But in FAI classes we should try to conform a bit more.
No strong feelings

Not like you have guys flying 1-34s and other older planes in Sports Class now. People interested in competing will compete in whatever they can get their hands on. And the more they can get their hands on, the better plane and class they will compete in. If Sports goes away, the guy with something like the 1-34 or Ka-6 has NO place to compete. Not sure what difference there is between the two...

Ownership of certain glider types would eliminate participation.

Participation is our first priority. Sports nationals has lots of high performance gliders in it. Pilots seem to like it. Put in reasonable minimum numbers, then let the market decide which classes survive.

People enjoy it, high turnout.

Retain only if limited to low time or new-to-racing pilots as originally intended.

Sometimes Sports class allows me to fly in a contest when my FAI class is too far away.

Sport Class is good entry contest on National level for new pilots with older high performance gliders.

Sports Class MUST be kept as long as US Club Class prohibits motorized sailplanes, otherwise several gliders of the new light-weight self-launching generation will have no contest home. This would result in yet another loss of participation!! Best solution would be to open the US Club Class contests to (1) motorized sailplanes, and (2) larger handicap range than IGC Club Class, for example 0.85 to 1.2

Sports Class gives pilots who have not purchased the latest 18m or open class ship a place to fly without feeling their ship is at a big disadvantage. For example, what contests would a DG800 owner fly? Contest participation will decrease if you eliminate Sports Class.

Sports Class has just turned into a contest for people to go to who don't want to drive to the nationals they should be flying.

Sports Class is frequently dominated by experienced pilots flying late model higher performance gliders. This is contrary to the initial intent of the Sports Class, which was to encourage participation by less experienced pilots flying older lower performance gliders.

Sports Class is useless without a proper handicap system. Our handicap system is completely arbitrary and unfounded. In what world can a Nimbus 4 be placed on a "Level Playing Field" with a 1-26? In our current handicap system, there is no way. Now throw in the contest directors discretion to create a fair task that allows all gliders a fair opportunity to complete. The Club Class is nearly perfect and I say "nearly" because we still allow too wide of a range of handicaps. Adopt the IGC club class list and stick with it. There is no reason for and LS-8, Discus 2, or ASW-28 to be competing in the "Club Class", especially if they can qualify for the team and then not be able to compete in the glider they qualified in.

Sports Class is very well represented in the US. A number of pilots relatively new to racing, make this their first National. I would have to look at this more to answer the question. Don’t know how to save my survey, study this issue better and come back to the survey at a latter time.

Sports Class provides a way for less experienced pilots top fly in a National contest

Sports Class provides an opportunity for more participation irrespective of glider type or pilot experience. This is desirable for several reasons, including the gradual decline in participation and the geographic diversity of the US.

Sports Class provides entry to contests to those that don't have a Club Class legal glider
Sports Class tasking is extremely limited...

Sports and Club do seem to attract some of the same participants (I've flown both) - but I think the geographic issues would be of a higher dilution factor. I'd not like to see one eliminated. Let's say twenty participants for each contest as it stands. Would eliminating Sports result in a 40-pilot field for Club? My opinion is no. I think Sports and Club can co-exist.

Sports class Nationals should not be used to determine US Team inclusion.

Sports class has been one of the best-attended nationals many times, it would be dumb to eliminate it, especially from regionals. Couldn't sports class be a local variation?

Sports class in an unnecessary extra nationals. It's hard to support so many events each year and waters down participation in the "real" nationals.

Sports class is needed for gliders that don't fit well in other classes. Two seat gliders would not have a class in most regionals.

Sports class is obviously liked and needed. Hang gliding and paragliding both started a sports class years ago as a reduced-stress way of enjoying competition.

Sports class needs to remain for Regional competition, to keep the barrier to entry into contests low. Every pilot needs a place where they can "run what they brung". However, Nationals contests are intended to crown a national champion and select for the Worlds Team. If Sports Class is a "beginner" or "catch-all" class, then there's no need for a National Champion in this class. Club Class Nationals can instead be held, to select for the appropriate FAI / Worlds team entrants. This seems to be the primary purpose of the current Sports Class Nats anyways.

Sports class to me is like the Seniors. It's just for fun (so go ahead and water down the task calling if need be). Club Class Nats ought to be where team members are selected and because of that should be subject to rigorous tasking.

Sports never made any sense at the Nationals level.

Sure, Sports and Club overlap...a lot. And it's not like we have a ton of organizations complaining they don't get the chance to host a national contest.

The Sports Nats is the only Nats where all gliders can be competitive. Without it, racers are forever segregated by the class of glider they own.

The US needs to offer East and West Nationals for all FAI classes and drop the sports class. This would allow pilots to fly more contests each year in their class and reduce the need to drive so much for contest on the opposite side of the country. It would increase the participation in contests and improve the overall skills of Us pilots.

The US sucks at worlds, there's no excuse for training/competing to a different set of rules. If we want to win, we gotta start flying like they do. That means teams and using their tactics.

The club class would not allow all gliders to participate. The Sports class allows any glider to participate. I think this encourages many people to fly in a contest that would not otherwise do so.

The less populated countries are all using handicapped competitions extensively. Sports class nationals is still the most popular in the US. Geography / driving distance determines 90% or more of participation.

The only problem I have with Sports Class Nationals is that I feel the handicapping favors the heavy 2 place ships. Nephi was a exception this year, but for many years the 2 place ships dominate.
The question (5.2.11) above does not ask if the Sports Class should be eliminated. It asks if the Nationals should be eliminated. The Sports Class should continue as it was originally intended. A class for newcomers, as well as a class for those who no longer wish to compete for a U.S.Team spot. As such, elimination of a Sports Class Nationals would make some sense. The Sports Class should be more about the pilots flying as opposed to the class of gliders being flown.

The sports class is meant to be the entry and exit class, it should have no impact on team selection etc. Do I think the Sports Class should be eliminated, no. I don't think, however, that there needs to be a Sports Class Nats.

The sports class suffers from disparate glider models

There are a at least several gliders, that only really fit in the sports class, ie DG-400/17. Could fly in club at 15 meter, but would need to be really good conditions. Some other lower performance gliders do not fit in club also so sports should be maintained.

There are a dizzying array of classes and a tiny number of participants. I do not believe that is a recipe for success.

There is no reason for it as there is already a class for every glider type and performance

Too many Classes. Should keep Sports Class, 18 meter, 15 meter & FAI. Get rid of rest. As our numbers decrease we keep adding classes. Really dumb.

Too. It of a difference in handicaps makes tasking difficult.

Try to fly with an AW16 vs a Discus2 and you'll see that no handicap will ever compensate for way better Discus2 capability of crossing blue holes and joining thermals.

Two lower performance classes is one too many. As most agree, there are too many classes in general and this is basically a contest duplication for the same glider. Pick one.

Under the current system, Sports Class and Club Class National Contests are currently held (at least to some extent) on opposite coasts, meaning most pilots likely live within about a day's drive of at least one of these contests in any given year. This gives pilots with older, lower performance gliders a venue for competing in a National Contest without having to drive to the opposite coast. As a result, unless the Sports Class National Contest is replaced by a 2nd Club Class National Contest (i.e. we move to a system with East and West Coast Club Class National Contests), I suspect overall contest participation will decline. Sports Class is also imperative at the regional level to give new pilots a venue for learning to fly contests. While having a separate Sports Class National may water down participation in other national contests, my inclination is that it improves overall contest participation. I for one will certainly not be driving to the east coast to fly a national contest if that's the location of the only venue where my club class glider will be competitive.

We do not have enough participants in Regional s - Sports Class works of Regional s - we do not need a Nationals.

We had a Sports Class National at TSA that used a Modern and Club class category. Some pilots with higher performance gliders may want to stay in Sports rather than go to a different class National (I'm thinking of 18m, for example). They could not do this if the only option was Club Class.

We have too many nationals. Seven right now. I think we can handle one less and increase numbers.

We need participation and the sports class fills that need, but allowing the top competitors to fly there race ready Ventus 3 and the like should be discouraged either with higher handicaps or another method.

We need to eliminate at least one class.

Why would we eliminate a contest that is always well subscribed and includes any glider type that wants to show up? The biggest
problem with the sports class is the handicap for particular gliders. Of course, that has been the biggest problem with the sports class from the start.

Why would we want to eliminate the most popular contest that we have.

With club class and 20 m class there is no longer need for this class, with the exception of regional contests.

With so many things declining, don't kill a class that is steady.

Yes I know handicaps typically make it all even and a 1-26 on certain days can kick ass but.... Don't eliminate the class just define a more finite group of gliders that can compete in the class. Handicaps are not finite. Meaning and 18 Meter pilot has longer wings and mentally that give him the edge that he can glide farther. The 15 meter pilot will turn sooner and not take the risk he mentally is uncomfortable with. Handicap cannot compensate for that. Also a 15 Meter glider cannot compete with an Arcus in sports class. I don't believe handicaps compensate for that with of difference in performance.

get rid of sports nats stick to the FAI classes and increase participation in those classes as they are all that matters ... I'm sick of going to a sports nats and flying in my club class / us sports class glider and having to compete against Arcus and ask29s ... what's the class for, demeaning the lower class gliders or giving the upper cut one more place to spend their retirement allocation there's a place for my glider it's club class... we don't need to support another nationals

we have enough classes.

5.2.12

What do you consider the positives of moving to FAI rules?

1) Avoidance of confusion (I fly both the US Nationals and the Canadian Nationals each year) 2) Avoidance of some of the more draconian US Rules (low finish and minor airspace incursion) 3) correspondence with what the rest of the gliding world does.

1) Be like the rest of the soaring world. 2) Help prepare pilots for international competition. 3) Probably encourage more international pilots to come and compete in US contests.

1) Will let US pilot to compete and train with the same set of rules that are used in World competition, this in the long run will unlock and show true valor of US sailplane pilots. 2) Will liberate SSA from the burden of Competition Rulemaking and hopefully allow more human resource to work on try to reverse progressive shrinking of pilot base. 3) little things like Metric units will make all much more clear no more mistakes between Nautical and Statute miles.

A gradual progression to FAI rules will bring us in line with international competition practices while allowing time for the FAI rules to gradually adopt some of the best aspects of the US Rules, many of which are safety related (safety finish, distance credit inside TPs, better start procedures, airport landing bonus, scoring that does not overly reward gagging). KM

A small benefit to the minority of pilots that will go to WGC, at the expense of contest participation by the majority.

Alignment with world gliding

Almost none, IMHO. I guess the move to Metric would finally clear up confusion about Statute versus Nautical miles when it comes to turn cylinder diameters and other common rookie mistakes? :-P Otherwise the US rules encourage more initiative and broader decision-making, and are generally better suited to the larger task areas and stronger lift in the Western US where I fly. Finally, I will
point out that the US rules have been faster to adapt than the FAI bureaucracy, especially in the areas of safety.

Although I am in favor of many of the US changes to FAI rules. If all other countries are using these rules, we should probably too... I think all national competitions should use FAI rules, so I suppose regional contests should too.

Being able to use other scoring software. Otherwise, U.S. Rules (complex though they are) reflect the needs of the U.S. competition world.

Being more a part of the world stage.

Better performance and world contest level in the future

Better prep for our team, that said perhaps it should be more focused on nationals, and not Regionals

Better prep for worlds One scoring program to learn

Better training for international contests but I don’t fly in world class events.

Can’t think of any, given the probability that it would not materially improve the performance of US pilots in the WGC’s.

Common rule set and scoring tool seem worthwhile.

Commonality with participants in other countries.

Consistency and therefore familiarity U.S. pilots would have when transitioning between competitions in the U.S. and the rest of the world. More scoring and analysis options. Easier to compare pilot performance of U.S. pilots with the rest of the world.

Consistency, better starts, pilot ranking

Consistent rules.

Development of competitive US Teams


FAI scoring and metric environment (altitude still in feet) will better prepare US pilots for international contests. On the Canadian side, we are seriously considering a switch to FAI scoring with appropriate local procedures. We are already metric

FAI start height system is superior. At least one fix below a max height after the gate opens

Flown with both--prefer fai and seeyou scoring. Let’s go along with the rest of the world, with local procedures modifications as appropriate. We are vulnerable with reliance on Winscore support, which won’t last forever.

For AT tasks, I would prefer a line start and “tag and go” turns.

For pilots desiring to fly at the international level it will put them in a better position to compete.

From the list above -- 1) Reduce duplication of effort associated with maintaining entirely separate US rules infrastructure. 2) Improve compatibility with non-US manufactured soaring instruments 3) Allow the use of SeeYou as a scoring program and integration with Soaring Spot, etc. 4) Allow pilots selected for the US Soaring team to prepare for international competition using the rules they will fly under.

Get used to different strategies for International Comps.

Good for FAI classes at National contests. Eliminating one turn point MATs!
Having participated in 6 contests using WGC rules, as well as over 12 US Nationals, I would say that there almost no advantages to moving to FAI rules per se. If we want to better prepare our pilots for WGC competition, the only two key changes we should consider are: 1. Call longer Assigned tasks: Our pilots are deficient in gear changing and flying in declining lift at the end of the day. We are lazy as we follow lift lines to a large assigned area instead of having to decide how to deviate to specific turnpoints, fly around weather, and survive late in the day. 2. Allow pilot-to-pilot communications (“pair flying”). The rest of the rules regarding geometry of start, finish and turn points and scoring details are minutia not worth arguing about and our “geometries” are much safer than theirs!

Helps US teams get more used to the mechanics of FAI rules

I believe that US pilots selected for the Worlds will have a better chance to do well if they are qualifying to make the world team by playing the same game that they will be playing in international competition. An analogy to our present system would be qualifying for a Texas Hold’em tournament by winning at Five Card Stud. Though there are many similarities to the two games, they are both called poker, and require many of the same skills, the games are not the same. The Europeans qualify their pilots by playing Texas Hold’m. I feel it better prepares our pilots for international competition.

I see only one: It will help US pilots who participate in international contests. In my view that is a legitimate objective, but not one that warrants discouraging all other pilots by a number of FAA rules that limit flexibility in task calling and are not as safety oriented as US rules.

I think allowing team flying could help top pilots prepare for Worlds.

I think it brings the sailplane racing community together.

I think moving towards them would help our pilots in international contests. We definitely need to learn to team fly to be competitive.

I think there are some things we can adopt like the start line, turnpoint for an assigned task.

Integrate with international soaring community. Works with my instruments better. Eliminates MAT which requires lots of heads down time to program on the fly. We can use the AAT or the "Mozer AAT" as good substitutes if whether is dodgy or pilot skills vary.

It aligns our racing with most other (dominate) nations.

It makes it helps US pilots be prepared for international competition

It will grow pilots who are better prepared to compete on the world stage. More importantly, it will create a better defined "ladder" for pilots to climb.

It will hopefully make the US team members more competitive

It would allow Us pilots to fly using tactics that are honed and optimized on the same rules as the rest of the world.

It would allow us to move on. As a sailplane racing nation this rules discussion has been a big waste of time. We despair about US performance compared to pilots from other nations, and blame rules or pair flying or travel. But over and over again we get beat at home, under our own rules. It’s time to come together and figure out how to fly faster.

Joining the rest of the world - Soaring Spot, IGC Ranking list integration, playing the same game/preparation for WGC’s. Elimination of MAT’s.

Keeping it simple

Less adjustment for world competition pilots
Less hassles and time spent by our volunteers, plus more familiarity with the rules for our WGC team pilots.
Less stress for US pilots flying in world contests.
Minor help for US team members, however the skill level overall in the US is so much lower than Europe it is not the rules that are the big difference.
More in line with the world.
Moving US Rules closer to some of the FAI rules should help us US team be more competitive at the WGC.
Moving to FAI scoring formulas regarding speed valuation and day devaluation. Almost all other rules can be modified through "local procedures" anyway, and our US rules do a good job at providing fairness and safety, sometime much greater safety, in our US contest environments.
National contest should be run by FAI rules. FAI rules forces pilots to race and use the weather to maximum MAT is not the same as AST. AST is forcing pilot to use all skills to round TP, MAT is convenience and gives excuse not to take challenge and round TP. Rounding USA TP is not the same as FAI TP US pilots flying in FAI contests are losing a lot in TP rounding Starting in cylinder from any point or trough the top is total different game then FAI contest start line. US pilots are losing a lot from the start as they don’t have chance to practice FAI starts.
No comment. Way to many rules in general
None
None
Not familiar enough with them to make an informed comment.
Not having to maintain the US scoring program.
One outlanding will not result in a hopeless chance of winning.
Our pilots would get used to the way the worlds are flown and be better at it.
People will quit whining
Perhaps we will be more competitive in the international scene. Why do we keep having to do things the American way just to prove that we're Americans? Maddening. Customary units are dumb. Go metric like the rest of the world.
Pilots will be forced to adopt the same racing tactics used in international contests. As a result, I suspect moving to FAI rules will make the US team vastly more prepared for international contests. It's naive to think that all of the tactics employed to do well in US contests are directly transferable to international contests.
Puts greater emphasis on speed, consistent with WGC.
Reduced whining by some. Like the start line because a race should start and end at the same place for everybody.
Relatively few positives: 1. May slightly benefit those who aspire to the U.S. Team and world competition. 2. Gets rid of those despised MAT’s.
Scoring with SeeYou, etc. Posting scores via SoaringSpot
Sean Fiddler would finally shut up about it
Simple rules, easier to understand and safer. US rules demand more head in the cockpit than FAI rules.
Simpler start. Better team flying.
Simplicity and stability of rules as well as being aligned with the rest of the world.
Since 2015 I have flown 1 PAGC, 2 WGC's, and 1 National at a highly IGC ranked country, using the FAI rules. The tasking criteria and rules used in these contests made the experience a lot of fun to participate.
Soaring is a worldwide sport. Moving closer to the center-of-gravity a bit won't hurt.
SoaringSpot
Standardization
Standards used worldwide
Start line is simple and no altitude restriction will keep gliders from bunching up just below the max start altitude before the task begins.
Stay on par with the World.
Takes the class back to its intent of competition for pilots just starting the competition road. Face it, when the contest tasks are set it appears they are looking at the highly competitive ships abilities and not the lower performance ones. This tends to make the ones with older less competitive first glider owners not compete.
The 10 pilots in the USA who care about going to the worlds can get some additional local practice. Sorry to be so harsh but that's about it....
The major one I see would be putting more premium on going faster due to the increased spread of points. For example, today, it's 'okay' to finish a couple MPH faster than the fastest guys since the point penalty is (for example) 25 points assuming a 70mph day. Under FAI rules, there more incentive to optimize every decision given the greater points spread.
The same positives that metric has over SAE. Brings us more in line with the global soaring community.
There are only positives for a privileged few who can afford the time and sailplanes to aspire to world competition.
There is a tremendous software ecosystem built around the FAI rules that US pilots cannot use. Everything from flight computers in cockpit to flight analysis tools and results websites. That's just one thing obvious to me.
To be able to select team members who have flown rigorous contests under wgc like conditions.
Too much talk of US Rules versus FAI rules. I have flown both sets of rules and flown at the WGC. Face the difficult facts. Problems with poor US performance at the WGC's lies in poor pilot performance. Our pilots need to fly faster, more efficiently and make better decisions. We need a deeper pool of pilots and start them younger. The rules differences are really insignificant.
Use of Soaring Spot scoring. Having our top pilots compete at home under international rules for familiarization and training.
We will be in line with the international soaring community overall. Our pilots that want to compete at the international level will not be studying and trying to apply two sets of rules. Familiarity with the rules MAY improve performance at the international competitions for US pilots. We can use the same scoring system (SeeYou) as is used elsewhere which will help the scoring process (speaking as a 4 time contest scorer)
We'll start winning

Weak reason: US pilots would be more used to that environment but I feel it would be minor

World Competition Preparation. Let's all be honest here, we can send some of our strongest competitors to these competitions and rarely do they break the top ten. We don't practice the way that we are going to perform. It is a completely different game and strategy that we play by. It would be like picking our US Volleyball team from the winners of a tennis contest. Two different games with similar rules.

Would bring US more in line with the rest of the world thus reducing confusion and unfamiliar procedures for US teams at World competitions. US must, however lobby for and receive certain changes in FAI rules, not the least of which is receiving higher point score for finishing.

get in sync with the rest of the world. Getting out of the software business by eliminating the use of WINSCORE
joining the world giving US pilots a chance for development simplifying
metric system,
moving toward them will help keep the USA more mainstream in the world.
standardization
would make Sean so happy :-(

5.2.13

What do you consider the negatives of moving to FAI rules?

1) Would be some loss in the already dismal amount of participants in US contests. 2) The increase in gaggle flying.
A few safety-related issues, that i think we can handle with Local procedures. I'd keep left-hand only near starts, definitely keep altitude + time limited starts. See next box re that.
A large change may discourage some folks who are heavily invested emotionally and mentally in the old stuff.
A much poorer set of rules. Many pilots would lose interest in contest flying.
All the old geezers will complain for no good reason. Like this guy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5-s-4KPtD8
Anytime a change is made there will be some level of confusion and struggle to learn the new environment. That may lead to some reduction in safety for the short term. The point spread will decrease at the top of the score sheet, where luck begins to play a larger role in the total outcome. Reduced safety due to the nature of the rules encouraging gaggles.
As detailed above in the explanations: there are some FAI rules that could be construed as less safe than US rules. I'd favor keeping US rules in any safety argument.
As stated above by the survey text: - Common use of "Direct finishes" to a relatively straight-in landing. - no additional distance credit is given for flying into the cylinder -pilots striking out on their own can face a smaller upside points benefit and greater downside points risk.(encourages gaggles) - Poor US pilot performance in International competition has little to do with not practicing under FAI rules.
At Regionals level the tasking might be too strenuous for an aging glider pilot population.

Biggest concern is allowing communication with ground and other contestants. I find that scheme to be highly unsporting and inappropriate in soaring competition which is keen to measure and compare individual performance.

Certain flight safety measures the US rules enforce would be removed.

Change is always hard and I'm sure we will lose some pilots but it is for the better in the long run.

Competing may be more difficult for novice pilots.

Current scoring system lets you quickly see your performance as percentage of leader. FAI requires a bit more thought. Individual good performance get no reward from FAI rules, but gets something from US Rules. Landouts are equally as "fatal" in either system if you are one of the few who goes "aux vaches".

Decreased safety since FAI rules encourage more gaggling.

Disenfranchising new participants. We need to grow the sport of soaring and making contests accessible to all pilots is important. A pilot can learn more in one week at a contest with all the support and camaraderie than anywhere else and they don't even have to be there with the intent to race.

Effort and learning curve

Eliminates many safety features of US rules. Eliminates MATs. No possibility to improve safety in the future by rules change.

Eliminating the MAT, requiring a mandatory rotation of types of task, less safe finishes, failure to credit distance within the turnpoint and resulting clustering of gliders at one spot that encourage collisions.

Encourages more land outs which is not attractive to older pilots and crews. Encourages more gaggling.

Encouraging or causing more landouts and other features that might cause more damage to aircraft. This might cause insurance rates to increase. Some contest hosts might feel less comfortable with anything that is judged to be riskier or less familiar.

Every place there is a difference in the rules, I prefer the current US solution. I prefer keeping the competition primarily between individual pilots, not extended teams. I think this lowers barriers to participation, and increases pilot satisfaction. I prefer traffic separation at natural concentration areas over predictability, particularly when precision instrument flying gives a competitive edge (example turnpoints in assigned tasks). I prefer competitions that test soaring skills beyond wingtip to wingtip tactical flying. Distance soaring is more appealing to me than racing. Speed is merely a practical surrogate and one ingredient.

Everyone has to learn and adapt to them.

Everyone will have to learn the rules thoroughly.

FAI • Allowing radio communication between pilot team members and also allowing communication with ground support personnel. Above is only true during Worlds not in National contests. Implementing above rule in US contest will be negative for contests in US as only pilots with full ground crew and team partner will be flying contests Lone wolf or crew less pilots will be pushed out of such contests. If communication allowed then only on the same common frequency so all can hear

FAI rules are not perfect either. Local procedures can be utilized to fix various short-comings.

FAI rules encourage gaggling on difficult days much more than US rules. This effect cannot be effectively offset by local rules. Under FAI rules, on a task when there is any reasonable chance of landing out, the rational course of action is to join and stay with a gaggle, the larger the better. This will disproportionately be the case on days with weak, low condition when large gaggles are least
safe. The benefits of flying with a gaggle often lead to start gate roulette, which in turn often results in late starts and the associated land-outs at the end of the day. Increased gaggling in low, weak conditions, start gate roulette, and more land-outs all have the potential to decrease contest participation.

FAI rules force a lot more gaggle flying. Safety goes down. Also US sites are typically more open and can spread gliders out more with US rules

FAI rules generally hurt the mavericks and favor the team players. The results will become more predictable (powerful teams winning more) and maybe a little boring.

From the list above -- 1) To a greater extent than US rules, FAI scoring formulae encourage gagbling as a tactic. 2) US pilots tend to be much more spread out geographically and often fly crewless as opposed pilots in other countries. Team flying and and allowing pilots to use ground communication for tactical purposes would disadvantage those pilots that can't take advantage of those capabilities and thus might further reduce competition participation. 3) I am not in favor of encouraging landouts by the rules.

Having to re-learn everything I've learned over 30 years :-)

Higher risk in large gaggles

I dislike the current FAI scoring formula for reasons that have been discussed ad nauseum. I think we all hope that the US proposal is adopted in the next couple of years. Perhaps we could lead the way here...

I don't think that "team flying" has a place in a Nationals (in any country). It has a place where teams are competing - as in a WGC.

I see no improvement to US racing adapting FAI rules.

I think US rules are safer than FAI rules.

I think for places on the east coast similar to Europe an unlimited start height may be feasible but out west, I don't think we should be starting at 17,000'. We should keep a max altitude option. I think the biggest issue is the scoring formula. It is more severe and would deter new pilots with the penalty if they are much slower than the day winner.

Imposing the long learning curve on aging glider pilots.

It might make some pilots not fly a nationals due to their misconceptions about the what it means to fly under the FAI Rules. We do not need to do anything to limit participation.

It will not be popular with pilots who consistently win under current rules and have no WGC aspirations.

It's a change.

Large change set -- much effort for all concerned, not much in the way of benefits.

Losing some of the good US safety rules like: Start cylinder top, crediting distance flown in turnpoints. The scoring formulas that encourage gaggle flying. Losing the option of a MAT although I believe you could add it to the FAI rules

Loss of MAT task would land out more less experienced pilots. But, they should consider using OLC competitions to develop their skills first before coming to FAI competitions. AAT tasks can be engineered to give a fairly wide degree of flexibility for completion... not as flexible as a MAT... but good, nonetheless. The smaller 500m AT turnpoint radius could be argued to increase mid air opportunity. On the other hand... having pilots turning at different locations in a 1sm circle is conducive to glider coming in from unpredictable directions in a fairly compressed airspace. In other words, the smaller 500m AT turnpoint means glider turns at a predictable locations almost 100 per cent of the time.
Loss of the carefully developed improvements like energy controlled starts, MAT, and US cylinder finish.

Making it complicated
Mandated fractions of AAT and AST tasks.
Mass confusion for a few years.
Metric conversion after the flight
More gaggles (which would be an advantage for pilots preparing to go to the Worlds), and possibly more land-outs. Strict guidelines on task selection could invalidate an otherwise successful contest in the US due to weather issues. The adoption of FAI rules may reduce the ability of the US rules committee to change a perceived bad rule adopted by the FAI.

More gaggling, more leeching, less individualism. More risk taking. Higher accident and fatality rate under FAI rules.

More gaggling; safety issues with gagging, start lines, unlimited start altitude, and more head in the cockpit time; less tasking flexibility; more focus on air-ground communication with a reduction in focus on individual soaring skills and decision making; and requirement for more expensive gadgetry to be competitive.

No negatives. Let's start playing by the same rules so that we can practice by those rules and start becoming more competitive on the international stage. It is embarrassing that the US rarely makes it to the podium at international contests.

None, the mass land-out scenario that we are consistently warned off is a non event. At the Polish Nationals we had 2 such days, 90% of the pilots did not have crews. Only 2 or 3 sailplanes of the 70 had engines. Everyone pitched in and helped to get other pilots, it actually had a positive impact on a social level.

None, the only FAI rule that should not be used is the unlimited start gate. The rest are fine and it hurts the Us to not use them.

Not a fan of moving to metric system
Not good for Sport class contests.
People who don't read the rules will be confused the first year or two
Potential contest admin workload in transition.
Putting up with all the whining.
Reduced attendance at US contests.
Reduced participation. Reduced safety.
Resistance to change from Pilots
Resistance to change, even then for the better.
Retaining some of different ways (MAT and start cylinder) will be difficult with the SeeYou scoring instead of Winscore..
Safety and participation may suffer.
Safety issues like airfield bonus for landouts
Same as above
Some aspects of the FAI rules are less safe than the US Rules. Adopting rules which result in more outlandings will likely result in...
decreased safety and participation. Adopting rules which increase gaggling, which the FAI rules encourage, will decrease safety and may decrease participation. Appropriate use of the US Rules by CDs can bring a contest pretty close to the practices in use at an FAI contest. KM

Some of the changes may reduce safety.
Some rules in FAI would discourage participation by pilots that make contests viable.
Some scoring nuances are better in current US rules
Someone won’t like it.
Starting above cloud base is not a good idea.
Starts are less fair and less safe Gaggling much worse Finishes less safe Loss of the MAT
Team flying disadvantages those who don’t have team members to train with
The US has made some good choices for safety. The FAI rules haven’t gotten there yet.
The US rules have evolved over many years and I think they are OK as is.
The biggest negative is that we’d be throwing away rules that have been tuned for our soaring conditions, pilot population, and airspace/laws over several decades. We would also be giving up a large degree of control over our contest rules - subjecting ourselves to a coalition that will be considering European soaring conditions and legalities first and foremost. I have nothing against the FAI, but the practical reality is that we’d be bit-players in any rules-making process and would see very little advantage from doing so. FAI rules don’t provide remarkably better soaring, they wouldn’t give us any additional legal or regulatory clout, and they wouldn’t provide any relief from burdensome rules or equipage requirements.

There are significant changes in the style of flying under the FAI rules. I don’t think the type of flying the FAI does regularly is as appealing or as fun. Gliding is such a great sport because of the individual aspect of a pilot making his own decisions while flying his plane. I don’t think communication between pilots or to crew members is good for the sport, I also don’t think rules which reward leaching and gaggle flying should be pursued.

Tied to rules made by someone else, probably requiring new “local procedures” every time a new IGC rule comes up that does not fit us, and at the end many “local procedures” at every contest to fit our environments.

Too much talk of US Rules versus FAI rules. I have flown both sets of rules and flown at the WGC. Face the difficult facts. Problems with poor US performance at the WGC’s lies in poor pilot performance. Our pilots need to fly faster, more efficiently and make better decisions. We need a deeper pool of pilots and start them younger. The rules differences are really insignificant.

US rules are better and safer than FAI in many dimensions.
Unforgiving scoring for landouts, no control over rule changes

Unlike SSA scoring, FAI scoring formulas contain multiple glitches that have been known for decades, yet the IGC lacks the will to fix them. This has caused smart racers to adopt bizarre strategies to protect themselves from a flawed scoring system: (1)When it becomes apparent during the pre-start that the task is an overcall, pilots will hang around the start for hours until they are certain no one can finish, then head out in one big gaggle. Why? Because FAI scoring assigns high risk / low reward to any pilot who starts early in an attempt to actually complete the task. (2)If a pilot knows he is a lot (more than 25%) faster than the bulk of other pilots, he will gain more points on them if he slows down and delays his finish. Why? Because FAI rules score finishers with less than 75% of the winners speed as non-finishers. Instead of devaluing the day, non-finishers devalue the speed points of the winner. In America,
we should not adopt the deeply flawed FAI rules, but encourage the FAI to adopt the superior SSA rules. We are almost all very used to miles instead of kilometers. There is no need to have communications by radio beyond what we are currently doing. 95% of us are never going to a World Championship. Team flying is a good idea, but do it visually or by FLARM. Ground communication is too much of an advantage because it offers advanced tracking. We don't have enough frequencies open anyway.

We have much safer start, turn point and finish geometries than the FAI rules. We had a pilot revolt in Poland about the Designated Start rules. When I explained our Start Beer Can rule everyone agreed that it is much better. The scoring rules are NOT as important as they are made out to be by some. The fastest and most consistent pilot will win under any reasonable scoring system. I would hate to give up our freedom to make rules and have to defer to a slow moving and bureaucratic body as the IGC which meets only once a year and is populated by delegates who haven't raced in years, if ever, at the top level!!! We need new competitors. I feel US rules have slight advantage in that regard.

Will make us more a part of the international racing community.

Within days after adopting FAI Rules, we'll be chafing at the constraints of allowing a bunch of foreigners to dictate how we hold our contests. :)

Without the option of the MAT, the only task that is left for Sports Class is the TAT. I have little interest in participating in contests that encourage more congestion and reliance on ground communications. arguments and transition... people ... the human factor and motivations depending on the adoption of "local rules," it would be unfortunate to lose credit for distance made inside a turn cylinder. FAI-based rules have a negative impact on XC technique (gaggle density and the related problems). increased gagging, it is a virtual necessity. The MAT is an excellent task, the FAI has too often taken a NIH attitude toward racing ideas developed in the US. Safety is a secondary/tertiary concern to the FAI. loss of some good features of the US rules metric conversions none none nothing

5.2.14

Please provide any general comments on the subject of the US moving FAI rules.

5.2.1: Retain MAT task BUT restrict general use to the long MAT only, UNLESS weather leaves absolutely no other tasking option.
5.2.2: Type of units of measure have absolutely no impact on how the race is flown. If need be a race could easily be flown under full FAI rules using the imperial equivalents of metric parameters with no problems. It may be helpful to use imperial equivalents given the equipage of most US ships, the ability to change electronic flight computer units not withstanding. 5.2.10: In favor of increasing credit for finishing and sharply reducing devaluations - also applies to US rules.
A move in the right direction.

A well designed set of FAI local procedures will mitigate 90% of the transition pain.

Adopt the good aspects of FAI. Keep the good stuff from U.S. rules.

Adopting FAI rules only benefits a small portion of an already small pilot populace. The benefits to soaring in general, or even the majority of the contest pilot population, are unclear.

Another option is to bend the FAI rules more for regionals and fly a stricter version in the Nationals. This would be good prep for world competitions. There's nothing to say that we can't have a MAT or any other task in regional competitions even with FAI rules. "Requiring a mix of 1/3 of each task type, (RT and AAT) and eliminating the MAT may result in a significant increase in land outs." This is inaccurate. It depends on the calling of the tasks!

Any move to FAI rules needs to be implemented carefully with an eye towards safety and contest participation (i.e., using the local procedures provision). For example, for pilot participation reasons, it may not make sense to allow team flying in contests, or it may make sense to allow it by waiver only. Likewise, adoption of FAI rules should be carefully considered at the regional contest level, perhaps by allowing them by waiver only. In particular, FAI rules in regionals (particularly those related to scoring) may be counterproductive if one of the goals of regionals is to encourage participation by 1st time contest pilots.

Closer alignment with FAI rules makes it easier for US pilots to compete in World Championships. It may also give us more of a sense of belonging to the world soaring community. In sports like golf and tennis rules are substantially the same worldwide.

Don't do it it favors gaggle flying= dangerous

FAI encourages "pack thinking" and we don't have enough participants at any of our nationals to have a "pack". So the main thing that will happen is you will have bigger point spreads. Do you really think there are that many people in the US who will "come back to competition soaring" if we went to FAI rules? This would require the return of between 15 and 30 people PER CLASS to be able to get two packs per class at each Nationals.

FAI rules promote land-outs. Expensive and less fun.

From my perspective the FAI Rules have the following 4 general parts which I'm not sure is clear to many pilots: 1) Scoring ~ strongly encourages gaggle flying 2) Tasking ~ Nothing in the rules says there is a required completion rate. That's up to the CD/Tasking Team. It also recommends a 50-50 split between assigned and assigned area tasks. 3) Local Procedures which provides the contest management quite a bit of flexibility for everything, but scoring. 4) Ground support from the Team Captain There is a USA Scoring Formula proposal to change the FAI scoring formulas to help to minimize the need to gaggle flying which will probably be approved at the next FAI Meeting. It was interesting that quite a few of the team captains at the CZ WGC were in support of this change, but skeptical it would pass. There are also some items in the US Rules to promote safety: 25 airport bonus, max start height (this is in the FAI rules, but they rarely use it) which are good. Which need to be considered. If we did go to FAI Rules, we would need to remove a few things which are not practical in my mind: team captains and sending information from the ground to the pilot. I'm concerned if we did not remove these type of items, we would strongly discourage participation. We already have only about 50% of the pilots showing up with crews to contests.

I am for less rules. If we could keep US rules simpler than FAI rules I would for US rules.

I answered the detailed questions anyway, as your statement is illogical. I can favor keeping US rules, yet, if RC decides to go to FAI-modified rules I can have opinions on how to do that. I also favor keeping US rules, yet modifying some aspects in the FAI direction, as shown. In particular, if FAI moves to the US proposed scoring formula, we should adopt that instantly.
I believe it would help when our team members go to worlds, but not sure this is the only problem. It seems that other countries have a much more thought out and executed system for training world level pilots. I would also like to see camps where there was training for pilots to improve their skills, to compete better on a national and then possibly a world level. There was a camp near me a couple of years ago, but it was only for pilots on the team already. Some of us not on the team pilots would love to learn more and develop more.

I consider the FAI rule on turnpoints especially dangerous as it essentially causes everyone to turn at the same spot. Kind of like our old photo turns that concentrated everyone. The old photo way was the closest I have ever come to a mid air. 5.2.5 Finish cylinder at 1 mile with 1 point per meter might be a little too generous. Would suggest 1.5 points per meter. FAI scoring encourages gaggleng. Kind of like our old photo turns that concentrated everyone.

5.2.5 Finish cylinder at 1 mile with 1 point per meter might be a little too generous. Would suggest 1.5 points per meter. FAI scoring encourages gaggleng.

I favor eliminating all MAT tasks except the "long MAT" or "too-many-turn" MAT--they're a good way of dealing with handicapped classes with a range of pilot ability and glider performance. In general, we can accomplish much of what we're looking for without changing any rules, just encouraging more aggressive task-calling by our CDs.

I feel that we should adopt all of the FAI rules that affect the way a contest is flown or scored. The units are unimportant.

I had a long discussion with Baude Litt (LBL) about the Belgium proposal to the FAI for rules changes. Interestingly enough, the Belgiums would like to reduce gaggleng and the ability to follow with FLARM by making it very difficult for a pilot to know for sure when a competitor is really making a start. They are also proposing a very large finish cylinder. The effect of these changes, ironically, would make the FAI rules and concepts of racing much more in line with what the US Rules Committee has been trying to achieve.

I have been a Regional CD and find the MAT a useful tool "learning to race" type Regionals where pilot and glider differences in performance make an Assigned Task inappropriate but I want to give new competitors the experience of making specific turn points. I prefer approach 2 because it allows flexibility.

I think a partial move to the FAI rules would be good. But the encouragement to gaggle fly would not be great and ground to air communication does not seem fair. But since they do it in the worlds we need to develop good systems to communicate precise information to the pilots and this might be a good way to do that...

I think the metric units issue is a non-issue. Instead of a turn area radius being "10 miles" call it "16.09 km", what's the difference? Can report the day's results in both kmph and mph. Scoring is by relative speeds anyway, not unit-dependent.

I think there has been a bit of an exaggeration of why US pilots don't do well in international competitions. I believe (as the survey suggests above) that this has little to do with US competition rules. Most of the rules the US has created have been carefully crafted to enhance safety and enjoyment and they should not be dropped just to fit in with FAI.

I think we can improve.

I think we need to move towards FAI but I don't think a whole sale adoption is the right move at this point. I'd like to see the sport grow locally and I'd like to see successful WGC entries from the US. If FAI rules can enable any of that, great.

I'm not sure why this is a thing, other than frustration with US team results in WGCs. A change like this will not be a quick fix. Making the rules just like a WGC does not make the competition just like a WGC. It may actually raise barriers to entry, both on the pilot side and the organization side, depending on how complete the changeover is. This is a whole lot of work, for the RC to tailor the rules, the pilots and the organizers to read the new rules and figure out where the small but maybe important differences are, and the scoring / administration infrastructure. To get not much in the end.
I'm opposed because I think it will reduce or discourage participation and decrease safety.

I've flown with both rules and don't see the change to FAI rules as potentially reducing participation. It will give us an opportunity to fly with the same rules as the majority of other soaring nations and to have a reasonable opportunity to choose WGC participants that are better prepared for world competition.

I've found that it really doesn't make much of a difference - the good pilots do well in both environments and just adapt to the rules. They aren't really that different in practice.

If the US rules result in better accommodating the unique US flying environment and also provide a safer track record, why move?

If we do NOTHING I'm strongly in favor of at least allowing team flying. It's a massive cripple. For guys starting, like me, I need that team experience to learn and get from "I can stay up a good afternoon" to "I can make a tasking fast and reliable", is a massively steep learning curve, I need all the help I can get.

If we don't adopt these rules, we can forget about having a World Champion in the US... and if we don't like FAI rules, participate on the required bodies to change them... partner with other American countries.

If we keep tasking 2 hours of the strongest part of the days we will not get pilots to compete in the worlds during much longer tasks that include weaker parts of the days. We should continue to push the FAI to fix their scoring formula to not give the incentive to land out rather than make it home. Maybe even ask FAI to add MAT task. We should also push FAI to get rid of the flarm leaching just as Sebastian Kawa voiced. All the external technology is making a mockery of the championships. Our pilots don't get 4-6 weeks vacation or short driving distances like in Europe, our society and geography don't support the level of competition in Europe - these items are not going to change anytime soon and make trying to win world championships a waste of time.

If you are asking about the whole idea of moving to the FAI rules not just sports/club class. Only a very small number of US pilots fly in non US events so why should the vast majority have to deal with the loss of the items you listed above. This is a proposed rule change that impacts less than 1% of US competition pilots. And for What?

It would be interesting to run one Nationals class by a slightly safety-modified version of the FAI Rules as a test. This could be done by waiver and should be announced well in advance. KM

It's inevitable that we will need to transition. WinScore won't be available forever so we should have a plan to transition before we are forced to do so in a panic. Also, getting pilots on the FAI ranking list has been an endless whack-a-mole exercise, in part because we have to translate all our scores to FAI-equivalents, which seems to fail more than it works. Why make all this extra work and failure modes? At minimum we should set rules that permit scoring by SeeYou and posting on SoaringSpot with automatic (or near-automatic) submission for FAI pilot ranking. There are lots of intangible benefits of being FAI-based in our rules. It's not about improving our prospects to do better at WGCs. This is red-herring because: 1) It's not true and 2) If we know it won't help, why insist on adopting all the most onerous aspects of FAI rules with respect to contest flying in the US? Other countries don't insist on doing that. There are plenty of good reasons to adopt FAI rules as the base platform and modify the specifics to suit US National and Regional flying.

Just because Europe does it doesn't mean it's the way it should be.

Just do it!

Just don't. You are smart folks. Figure out how to have a WGC class that is an overlay on the current contest system. Encourage pilots to establish teams, co-score these folks with FAI rules, don't effect normal national results, have a minimum threshold to be in this WGC class. Get creative!! This has been too much of a black and white decision.
Let's join the rest of the world.

Move as soon as possible

Moving to the FAI rules will not make US Pilots more competitive.

My most serious reservation about FAI rules is the unlimited-altitude start. This disadvantages back-of-the-grid pilots on weak days, and it increases the likelihood of midairs: on blue days pilots "pancake" at the top of the BL trying to get that last inch. Under clouds they fly even harder into the mist.

Not sure I understand the difference between Approach 1 & Approach 2 in 5.1. If the FAI rules allow adoption of local procedures, what is the difference? While adopting common rules with the rest of the world is logical, we are fooling ourselves if we believe this will make a significant change in team performance. If our goal is to win in the worlds our pilots need to fly against those folks frequently under the same constraints (weather, terrain, ground support and airspace). If you want to beat the best you need to fly against the best where and when they fly more often that every other year.

Only risk is that suddenly we fly gaggles, but US pilots are more independent then Eu pilots. PAN AM and GP showed that US pilots fly on their own, check traces of GP Florida where only small gaggles formed and very often lone wolfs flew the task. Transition period will be distraction it should be started with Nationals first as large number of pilots flew FAI rules already, in addition it will be very good for team selection

Our rules are better, fairer, and safer. Having flown or captained six FAI Category 1 contests, I am convinced that our poor performance has very little to do with the rules (except for the prohibition of "pair-Flying"). Task calling is the single most debilitating factor to our development followed by lack of coaching and team camps, geographic spread, and most fundamentally: weak Junior and Club Class racing programs.

Overall, I think it's a tempest in a teapot. The tactics at worlds are just so radically different than the way we fly here. Yeah, the rules have some influence (see for example my comment about the points spread on speed days), but Team Flying (okay - that's a rules issue), flying more aggressive/longer tasks, flying more ATs, etc. mean we are just not competing on the same level.

People complain that the learning curve would keep US pilots away from contests. I disagree and believe if there were a reduction in participation, it would be short term. If you want to compete, you should be reading your class racing rules annually anyway.

Rather than another rule change, Use present rules and provide another score sheet using FAI rules to illustrate the differences for both regional and National contests for 2019. This probably can be done by using the raw IGC logs to generate the alt scores using See You or perhaps OLC software ?. Pilots and organizers could then have a better idea of the ramifications of using FAI rules....

Seems to mainly benefit the (very) small number of pilots who fly in world contests, at the safety expense of pilots who only fly in the US.

The "approach" choices presented in the survey do not reflect what I thought was the recent thinking. The approach that I thought was already being implemented was for the rules committee to gradually move to FAI rules without throwing out some of our best safety ideas. "Allowing" contest officials flexibility is fine but "encouraging" them to adopt FAI rules on their own will create confusion.

The US rules have served well for many years. I would encourage the FAI to adopt our rules, rather than the other way around.

The US rules have severely curtailed gaggle flying in the name of safety, thus they seem to encourage the "lone eagle" type of glider pilot. FAI rules are in large part the reverse of that. This results in USA WGC team pilots not having the kind of mentality or training that performs well in the FAI WGC kind of contests. If we want to produce WGC team pilots who will get the most points for the USA at a WGC, then we have to change to their mindset. If we want to keep stressing the lone eagle mantra in the name of safety, then the
USA should keep doing it's own thing. Two very different mindsets....

The sooner the better.

There has certainly been a lot of discussion about this issue in the lat few years. My primary exposure to such argument is via the rec.aviation.soaring newsgroup. I haven't had a lot of discussion about this with other pilots at the contests I've attended, so I don't have a good idea about how that correlates with the average tone of the racing community. Top of mind for me is: "is the US/FAI rules issue a drag on contest participation?". I'd say not. I'd like to identify and tackle (not easy) other factors that might have more return on pilot retention and participation.

This is a comment on 5.2.9: This question is phrased wrong - should read "Do you favor adding distance not actually achieved?" (Most pilots turn at the edge, but FAI scoring gives distance credit to the center of a turn circle.)

This is a non-issue. If WGC pilots cant adapt to the FAI rules in about 20 minutes then maybe flying the WGC is not for them. It's not that tough. The SSA Rules have provided some of the biggest innovations in competitive soaring and let's stick to these. In addition, do we want the FAI in charge of US competitive soaring?

Too much talk of US Rules versus FAI rules. I have flown both sets of rules and flown at the WGC. Face the difficult facts. Problems with poor US performance at the WGC's lies in poor pilot performance. Our pilots need to fly faster, more efficiently and make better decisions. We need a deeper pool of pilots and start them younger. The rules differences are really insignificant.

Try it, use local rules to keep the good parts

US Team performance at WGCs has little to do with rules. It appears that teams that do better have flown significantly more hours in the year or so before the WGC than US team pilots do.

Use a start line, make assigned turn areas small with no extra distance given. It is dumb that "assigned" tasks have variable distance and creates a big collision hazard in the turn areas. Small areas gets everyone in and out in a line quickly.

We would lose many advantages (for us) of the US rules for not much gain. Canada basically uses the US Rules with some minor modifications.

We're totally dependent on WinScore and on the small number of people who know how to set it up and use it. Anytime the Rules Committee makes a change affecting scoring, there's a risk of introducing bugs into WinScore. It happens. Years ago, I discovered several significant bugs when I rescored a regional at their request and I wasn't the first. So being able to use a standard scoring package seems attractive. But being forced to fly by the Rules set by an international organization seems like an exercise in frustration. The U.S. isn't always a good member of the United Nations and I expect we wouldn't always be a good member of the FAI Rules world if we signed up.

What are we waiting for? "Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." How many more years of doing poorly at the worlds do we need to realize we are not playing the same sport?

While we are on the subject, I want to bring up a concern over geography. Take Germany for example, a country that is about 3/4ths the size of the state of Texas. When Germany selects their team members from a pool of competitors for a contest in Poland, they are selecting from pilots who have experience in a similar geography. When the US selects competitors for an international contest, the competitors come from many different geographic locations. We tend to send people who are strong in the mountains to contests in the flat lands. We send Ridge Runners to thermal country. We are much too spread out. I would propose placing more weight on our regional contests and selecting from competitors who are strong in a region that is more similar to the international contest. This way when you compete in the spectacular conditions of Nephi, you don't necessarily qualify for the low-level-lift competitions in

http://adamsfive.com/a5soaring/survey/surveyresults.php?FmemberID=541699&FmemberLastName=nixon&action=LISTTEXT&supress=no&FsurveyID=RulesPoll18
Germany.
Would marginally help the US team preparation. Team poor results are not due to how we fly here.
Zip, Zero, Nada. And I'll be history in the not too distant future. Bottom line: I don't care. lol

6.2a
If you answered Yes to 6.2, please describe the unsafe start behavior.

6.1 the old rule was not "last start" but "last penalty free start". I favor a roll out and go start. Much simpler. Take best fix inside start cylinder as start point.

At 15M nationals pilots would start out the top of the back of the cylinder, then bump through thermals in the front of the cylinder creating conflict with gliders not on course yet.

At Seniors, one pilot plowed trough the center of 20+prestart gaggle and got rewarded with win of the day!
Bunching up in the top of a thermal, all trying to stay below the ceiling
Compressed bomber circling at the top.
Crowded at the top of the cylinder which reduces safety.

Didn’t see anything unsafe but think it's stupid to open up the entire start cylinder. It's not a race at that point. At least if we do the front half you’re in a 5 mile area.

Folks zipping through start gaggles from a back of the cylinder start
I did not observe any unsafe behavior, but I can imagine how it might occur For this reason, I like the 2017 rule (use front half) better. This provides enough room for contests with about 50 gliders

I like the change in the 2018 Start rule. However, I had many starts this past season where I was facing a head on collision situation right after starting through the back of the cylinder heading on course. Or, I was getting in position to make a start which required me to fly against the already started traffic. Not good... As much as I like the 2018 Start rule, I think we need to change it or remove it and go back to using the front half of the start cylinder to avoid a possible head on collision.

I started out the back a few times and my opinion is it adds unnecessary complication to the process. Also, if you’re starting out the back your time starts the instant you leave the circle but you’re pointed the wrong direction, so you have to instantly turn around which could be hazardous to gliders behind.

I used the new rule to start out the rear half of the cylinder at the Seniors. I saw no problems. It spreads out gliders and allows another way to try to optimize one’s flight. Its a good idea.

If there is a thermal near the top and back close to the start time I have seen and experienced some pretty crazing unsafe thermaling
It not unsafe, and if a pilot conforms to published rules his behavior can’t really be called unfair (anyone could have done what he did). But starting at the back adds complication with little benefit. Why make the best start strategy hard to grasp?

No going to comment on US rules
Pilots flying in opposite direction then others, all should start in direction of first TP I never saw any competition where competitor starts in opposite direction

Pilots starting at back did bump gagles inside cylinder. Perhaps if you want to claim a start at the back you can do so but cannot re-enter cylinder. Said another way: only the Last Start from the side is counted. We still need to keep BestStart for purposes of deciding Start from Top. 2017 rule was best and had proven workable. 2018 introduced uncertainty, as implied in the question preamble, as well as safety issues

Pre-start gaggle turning at max start altitude (- 50') and 120 knots.

Since you didn't provide a 4th option for 6.1...just get rid of the start cylinder, go to a 5 or 10 mile long line, and simplify everything for everybody.

Starting at back of cylinder and cruising through traffic in cylinder at speed.

The same old issue - flying into the wisps when cloudbase is at or below maximum start height. I never saw anyone go full IMC, but many guys are playing fast and loose with 500 below and/or "clear of clouds" depending on the local airspace. It's been this way for all 30 years that I've flown, so I don't know that there is a rule fix. Very few CDs think about the start height day in day out, so it's unlikely this will change other than by educating CDs (the rules already tell us what's supposed to happen).

Upon exiting the back of the start cylinder, I observed pilots turning sharply and crossing the thermal, creating collision risk

[not an answer to 6.2, but rather a comment on 6.1: Anybody who doesn't like starting from the rear of the cylinder can choose not to, thus avoiding ambiguity. Same as choosing to start off the side of the front half and then clipping the front half again - or choosing not to.]

i like keep best start. It keeps the front of the cylinder from getting crowded with start games.

speed through the start cylinder

7.3

If you answered 'Yes' to 7.2, please describe the circumstances and decision-making that led up to the low finish penalty.

A safety finish was called due to wx but by the time most of us got home an overcast moved in to kill the lift and final glide was a significant challenge. Finished a couple of hundred feet low while only other alternative was to land out for the safety finish. Got hammered on points-

Bled off altitude with speed too quickly. The weakness in the rule is the non-accommodation of total energy at finish rather than just altitude. A well designed finish procedure/scoring should not induce abrupt altitude/speed changes.

Eliminate all penalties for "low finishes" Rolling finishes should be allowed as a site option to be decided by the CD.

Encountered extreme sink on final glide. Know I was going to at the penalty height, so I tried to work a ridge to get above finish height. Unfortunately I lost altitude and finished 32' below the 400' limit. Made uneventful landing at airport.

Finish Penalty. Missed top of finish cylinder by 20 feet. My fault just thought I had more than I did.

I put a lower finish altitude into my computer than was listed on my task, severely penalizing me for the day
I received a low finish penalty due to my inability to properly interpret the information displayed on my flight computer. Lesson learned.

I was less than 5 feet low so it wasn’t a big thing. Just a loss of concentration at the very end.

In GTA (not SSA sanctioned contest) cut margin too close and lost more than expected altitude. About 60' below top so probably did not pad the margin good enough and hit a little more sink than expected.

It’s time for the finish penalties to go away.

My own fault. Paying too much attention to traffic at the finish and not enough attention to to projected finish height. I had plenty of energy to finish above min height until quite close. Was a very stiff penalty.

No going to comment on US rules

Strong sink during the last 4 miles erased my +300ft Mac 3 setting and put me low through the finish cylinder. "Hero to zero" in under 2 minutes with no options for lift or landout.

Thank goodness, the two nationals I flew used a finish line. No Mickey Mouse altimeter watching during the finish.

This "Low Finish" fear is a joke. We have ONE opportunity to make this a spectator sport, and we restrict it to ridiculous altitudes. Let's bring the low passes, line finishes, and show finishes back to the contest scene and start drawing more attention to this sport. What a boring racing scene this has become.

Unexpected sink on final glide led to a (I think) 25 point finish penalty. Decision to press on at MC=2 seemed to make sense at the time, thinking it was a temporary situation, but it went on much longer than expected based on experience earlier in the day. Good thing this was not a finish line at 50'.

Unusually sink and no lift on the last 10 miles of final. I started 1000 ft high at a mc4.

Very high finish height, 1500 agl. Fell below glide and could not find a decent climb. Judged that finish penalty was better than continuing to try to climb on last ridge 3 miles out.

While attempting to complete MAT, was forced to work lift low near finish cylinder. When this failed, took early finish. Later discovered had received tiny finish penalty, adding insult to injury. This had nothing to do w/answer to 7.1 as opinion of ANY low finish penalty was formed long before.

8.2

Please provide your views on this task format.

Variable Length Handicapped task is dangerous same as current MAT or assigned task where pilots are playing game to gain extra distance with high concentration of other gliders in very limited area Time in TP sector should be as short as possible. GP format - YES
A "Gran Prix" start favors the more experienced pilots; you need to be in the right place at the right time. Like the now extinct "speed limited start window" the more a pilot has experience with this, the more advantage they will have.

All pilots should have the option to use the all the airspace.

Allow the CD maximum flexibility to choose tasks to fit the situation.

At a regional it's more about the Nut behind the stick than the glider they are flying.

Could be tried for a period and re-evaluated.

Do not believe this would be a good format if you mix the task types. Too confusing to change back and forth on successive days

Excited to try it.

Further adds to the complexity of the rules and scoring. Jjjj.

Go for it! Formula 1.0 should be adopted by contest managers and CD as an optional format. This will certainly appeal to younger pilots flying club class ships.

Grand Prix starts and finishes are too dangerous, especially when mixing different aircraft types and pilot level skills. I have not and will not fly in them. Rules like variable turn point radii tend to bunch aircraft together at each turn point, which is dangerous.

Grand Prix tasks are good. Adding another task type will be a mess.

Grand prix only events plus full switch to fai rules. Simple and no infrastructure development required.

Have flown this type of task and it is fun and sort of keeps everyone even. The grand prix start was used and is also fun, but to keep it reasonably safe there needs to be a limit on the number of ships, say 15. Circles to be based on each ship handicap, making it hard on scoring to assign each ship a turn radius. Nevertheless a fun task.

I am interested in it as a concept but have not flown this type of task. I would like to learn more about the load on the CD and how the various turn radii are set and whether flight computers can be easily set to this. My friends in the UK have been very positive about this.

I don't like it. Exciting, yes. Encourages excessively risky behavior.

I fear this is an unnecessary complication but might be fun to try so I favor making it optional in Regional Sports only as a way to give newbie pilots a little taste of "real Racing" (aka Racing Tasks). The other so-called FAI classes need a lot more Racing Tasks in the mix so Regional pilots have a better opportunity to leech and learn from the fast pilots. I learned by leaching in Assigned Tasks and am sorry that we are impeding the development of our younger "regional" pilots by denying the opportunity to learn from the "top guns"!

I flew it at Truckee. It was fun. GP format should have a maximum glider limit. Without integration with a scoring program it would be hard on scorers, so that's a potential problem.

I flew one this summer and thoroughly enjoyed the day. It was nice to fly with other gliders and to know if I was in front, I was ahead of them.

I have flown in two Sailplane Grand Prix and have throughly enjoyed the experience. With a small contest, it would be fun to mix up the task types. I prefer this over a MAT.
I have never flown one of these tasks, but it seems like it might be fun.
I have only flown one GP contest and quite enjoyed it. I would like to see more of them but pilots should have a choice by picking which contest to fly in. Would be nice if it could replace a regional contest for one year.
I love this idea.
I think it might be fun along with a Grand Prix start.
I thought we were trying to simplify our rules.
I would love to try this handicapped distance. I suppose we would have to have all the tasks defined well before launch so that each glider type knew its individual turn radius. This would prevent changing the task in the air/or last minute due to weather changes.
If pilots want a handicap race, enter sports, club, or standard.
If this will allow AT’s in Sports Class, then let’s do it.
If you have a grand prix task format, you should reintroduce the last start time option so the CD can call a grand prix-like race, while still in the easy confines of US rules. (Reminder, CD sets last start time. Starts after that are valid, but pilots may start before that if they wish to avoid the fur ball.) Prediction: we will try it, there will be several snafus, we will move on. But if people want to try it, why not.
In general, I think this type of task should only be offered as a dedicated contest format. However, the format used at the 2018 Truckee contest (offered as a task on 1 day and the outcome of this task did not affect overall scoring for the contest) is acceptable and would provide more pilots the opportunity to experience this type of task without committing to flying an entire grand prix style contest. Consideration should be given to restricting the number of entrants in any grand prix style contest, particularly if a grand prix style start is used.
Innovation is always worth considering. It should be tried as an option to see how it works out.
Is this what the international rules do? Stop making up new rules.
It seems the current handicap system takes care of leveling the field.
It would likely work best in areas with uniform weather and terrain.
Just put it in the bag of tricks for the CD. If some contest org wants to run a contest with a single task format (any of them) allow them to do so. Rules don’t need to be pendantic about it.
Kiss. "Keep it simple stupid". No more new rules.
Let’s encourage CDs to try this out on practice days and see how it goes.
Let’s give it a try.
Let’s race. Will I have to do math with my task sheet entry into the flight computer?
Might be a very good idea.
Might be an improvement to Sports Class.
More Clutter.
No experience in this format so no comment.
Not enough details to offer meaningful opinion at this time.

Several years ago there was an SSA contest task where all pilots started at the same time. This was dropped after one year of use as it was the most dangerous part of contest flying. For Nationals with 60 pilots starting at the same time it was an accident waiting to happen. It was only due to luck that there were no accidents that year. With fewer than 20 pilots it might work long term. Should only cover a small handicap window to have any chance of being reasonably fair.

Sounds fun!

Sounds interesting enough to try it ..... 

Started flying something similar many years ago with the Bucks County Airforce. It works GREAT for gliders of similar performance and with relatively small groups. It could easily be done here since many regionals are trending to less than 20 participants (10 per class or fewer).

Talk to the Formula 1.0 Grand Prix organizers in Australia. Last year they adjusted the radius of each turn area equally. This year they plan to only adjust the size of the final turnpoint and have that area on the final glide. Otherwise the "slow" gliders just act as markers for the "fast" gliders after each turnpoint.

The Sailplane Grand Prix limits the field to 20 gliders and I think this should be the maximum for a grand prix start. The faster gliders will have to go deeper in turn area thus allowing slower gliders to turn sooner. No change required. The faster gliders will use the slower ones as markers.

The handicapped turnpoint seems sensible to me. Grand Prix starts? In regionals? With gliders of varying performance? Grand prix starts seem dangerous to me. I would not want to compete a regionals with Grand Prix starts.

The only unfair thing I can think of is that the variable radii rule might force higher performance ships into adverse Wx that the lower performance ships are allowed to avoid. The problem with this task is that gliders are forced to fly in different air. It could be an advantage or disadvantage to fly further towards the point depending on conditions. Rain, cirrus, blue hole are all problems that could disadvantage a particular distance. Would prefer an area task to accomplish the same thing.

The radius is different depending on my handicap for the day!? We need simpler more consistent rules, not more complicated ones. The only thing I can see that is that the automated "barrel" design, which is part of this format, could help to relieve that struggle.

They are ok if the number of competitors is limited. I don't think that using a GP task format would be a good idea for a contest with 40-50 competitors. This is a fun to fly format but it increases the danger of midair collision by a significant degree when the number of participants is not small. I think it is best suited for club racing situation where there is perhaps 10 or fewer participants. I personally developed and instituted this format many years ago for Arizona Soaring Association races and have flown it as much or more than anyone in the US. I don't consider the format appropriate for SSA sanctioned events due to safety consideration.

This is a great format for low end club class gliders to be competitive. Since this would be a GrandPrix style task, I don't believe this style of task should be mixed into a standard competition as it is a completely different style of flying. I do think these should be SSA Sanctioned.
This is an interesting option that I would like to see tested before adoption for an entire contest.

This is basically an inverse TAT. And the nice thing about a TAT is that it gives glider pilots more strategic options to fly to different parts of the cylinder to maximize lift or minimize weather effects - rewarding their tactical decision-making skills as part of their soaring performance. This "Handicapped Assigned Task" as-proposed essentially must be flown as an AT - rewarding pilots for flying minimum distance and encouraging them to fly "point to point". This increases the luck factor as pilots who hit lift on a direct course-line are rewarded and pilots who do not find such lift do not have much of a remedy. The TAT already provides a way for ships of varying handicaps to fly different leg lengths, and a "Lite" version of the Assigned Task doesn't provide any special advantage. Handicapping the turn cylinder radius on an MAT, however, might be an interesting option; and provide some more flexibility in task-calling for handicapped classes. But that is not what's being proposed here, as I understand it.

This is too weird

This may be too confusing for new contest pilots.

This task would be unfair in the event of weather encroaching on the turn cylinder potentially forcing the higher performance gliders to fly into an area of bad weather that the lower performance gliders could avoid.

Too much complexity and special cases to rules that already have too many conditional variations.

Unless there are very few gliders start traffic is fucking dangerous. As it has been in some GP starts!!

We have tried this at the Soaring Club of Houston for a Grand-Prix type race and it worked well to allow an assigned task for Sports Class. KM

Why not allow it as an optional task? The pilots will decide if they like it.

Works well in Europe

Would require meaningful work to set up in rules and scoring for questionable benefit.

[not an answer to 8.2, but rather a comment on 8.1: A 3-mile fudge factor is not enough to matter. The speed over the much larger overall task length is already handicapped, and if one wants to allow truly variable lengths then can use a TAT.]

lots of fun and low performance gets to stay with the group

what does this do to the migration back to FAI? Another task type we can't use?

9.2

Comments on changes desired to the current US Handicaps.

(None)

An ASW28 is NOT a Club Class glider.

Any reason not to?

Anything is better than our completely arbitrary system.

Before adopting this wholesale, it would be best to try it at a large Sports Class type contest by waiver, or double score a contest.
The Seniors would be a good test. KM

Before you ask this again, why don't you explain the differences. Then I would be able to give intelligent feedback.

Consistent with other nation's contest handicaps.

Current handicapping in the US is a best guess scenario. Better to comply with the rest of the world

Doesn't matter.

Don't really care. Again, it's arguing over something really irrelevant to the bigger picture.

Euro system is simpler but less refined than US and does not adjust for weight in many cases.

European handicapping system is based on max gross weight. More modern gliders in the handicapped racing classes in the US have a higher margin between weight with and without water, further handicapping those gliders.

Frankly all the single-value handicap systems suck. Going to the European one would be simplifying and not worse. It is absolutely obvious when you look at American club-class competition that the winners overwhelmingly fly gliders right at the top of the performance limit ... the handicaps don't levelize as much as would be fair ... if they did you'd see some hot pilots flying lower-performance gliders.

Go with IGC handicapping for Club Class, not OLC.

Handicap to be based on base glider, i.e Ventus 2 18M with engine should be the same as Ventus 2 18M without engine and then adjust handicap for weight.

Handicapping - in general the handicapping system needs update. They have not been revised in many years and the results of competitions need to be considered in revising handicaps.

Handicapping needs thermal strength and wind factors. This is a pilot performance measurement issue not a fail issue.

Handicaps are inherently difficult to set, but using a worldwide standard would seem to provide more scrutiny and thus a better opportunity to arrive at a number that works.

Handicaps as a whole are not too far off. There are some that need adjustment. The biggest problem in our system is the weight adjustment. It doesn't work for large weight changes. The formula should change. I propose trying a new formula (I have the formula) in several races. I also think that reference weights should be based on empty weight plus a fixed weight for a pilot and gear. This varies largely for different gliders making handicaps inconsistent.

Hard to vote on European Handicapping system without a direct comparison.

Hmmm.... Has anyone done some analysis to understand the differences between the 2 systems? Are we thinking about doing this to save some work? Or, both systems are so close why be different?

I am unclear how the European handicapping system works right now. I would need more explanation and study, in order to comprehend the downstream effects of such a rule-change.

I don't know how they differ so I cannot answer this question.

I don't know how the handicaps are determined in the OLC. However, I really liked the idea Peter Deane presented on handicaps two conventions ago.

I don't think changes to the current US handicaps are necessary at the regional level. However, our Club Class National contests
I recommend that significant changes to the handicap system not be implemented without a chance for pilots to provide input, and for that input to be considered. Proposals should include a reasonable analysis of the likely results of the changes on contest scores. I mention this because it was not the case with the 2018 handicap changes, which were rejected in large part because there was no chance for pilots to make comments or give feedback. I’ve been told there is pressure on the Contest Committee to address two shortcomings in the current system in time for the 2019 contest year: handicaps for contests where water ballast is allowed, and the issue where two sailplanes with the same weight and design may get different handicaps depending on whether the weight includes an engine. My concern is that, because of these pressures, changes will once again be made without a full analysis, or a chance for affected pilots to provide input in time to make revisions. While no handicap system will make all pilots happy, dropping any new handicap system on pilots without explanation or a chance to review it is likely to again result in pilot frustration, and feed into the idea that a “good old boys” network controls racing in the USA. Significant handicap changes have more effect on Sports Class scores than many rules changes, so it would seem fair to give us a chance to comment on handicap changes, just as we can comment on rule changes. Please keep the current system until any new proposal can be analyzed, and then provide a comment period for pilots, and be willing to repeat the process until there is a consensus.

I think it is better to use a system that is tested among more gliders like the DMSt/OLC handicaps. I would rather see our handicaps reworked but the EUROPEAN system is probably better than what we have now.

If change to FAI rules then change to EU handicap
If this system is deemed better than ours, use it.
If we are going to go FAI, then yes.

It is time to get on board with the rest of the world.
It's an unreasonable burden on the racing committee that the US should operate a separate handicap scale. There are just too many glider types and variants to deal with.

Keep it simple
Like I said the heavy 2 place ships need to be adjusted, they easily win the sports class all the time.

More clutter
My understanding is that the US handicap list is arbitrary based on a system that long ago was actually a mathematical formula, at this point the latest gliders are added to the via rough estimates and feel. Additionally we are now handicapping classes that may carry ballast, this is not taken into account in the US handicap system and changes the actual performance of the gliders.

Nearly all sailplanes flying contests in the US were not built here. Europe seems to run more contests so they probably have more data on European built gliders to create a more accurate handicap number.

No comment. Not familiar with differences.
No handicap system really works under very weak OR strong conditions.
No opinion.
No perference either way
No strong opinion on this. If handicaps are fair and everybody knows them - who cares?

None

Not familiar with the European Handicapping system

Not sure of the difference so no vote

OLC handicapping doesn't address weight - it assumes you can add ballast as you choose. We probably don't want that in Sport class.

OLC is very popular - HC numbers should not change depending on the kind of flying I am doing.

Our handicap system is too complicated (3 digit handicaps) with very small perceived incremental benefits to fairness. I would suggest that the top tier gliders in each class should have the same handicap i.e. (ASW27, Ventus 2, ASG29-15,Diana 2, - the same/ ASG29, JS1, Ventus 2C - the same/ Discus 2, LS8, ASW28 - the same/. Second tier gliders would also have the same handicaps i.e. (ASW20 (all models), Ventus, LS6, - the same). The present system is used in Sports Class contests (no water) as well as FAI handicapped contests (with water). The differences between the top Standard Class gliders and the top 15 Meter gliders is very small, especially without water. Non water contests favor the Standard class gliders' handicap relative to the 15 meter class gliders. I know this very well as I was the beneficiary as an LS8 driver for many years. Strong conditions that allow water favor the 15 meter class gliders over the Standards. The easiest (and maybe the best) solution would be to adopt the OLC handicaps.

Raise mine-

The Europeans have a much better developed Club class and also handicapped racing programs in all classes. Therefore they have valid statistical and experiential databases from which to develop the handicaps. Their handicaps are arduously debated and determined under the rigor of competition. Our system of four guys trying to do spreadsheet math on polars pales by comparison. Let's put the talents of our great volunteers in the Handicapping Committee to a better use!

The US handicaps seem to be OK as they are.

The world is better at determining handicaps then the US

There is more than one "european" system though.

To comply with other countries, not sure what the differences are?

Typo -- a single yes/no button that you can't turn off. People get way too excited about handicaps. Needed some explanation. The main issue is not the handicap but whether we weigh and bother to adjust for weight. I favor KISS, implied by your OLC comment -- we don't bother with weights and weighing. It will mean lead sheets in the cockpit though. When people understand that there will be lots of grumbling.

US handicaps are too precise for reality. 3 decimal places are not reasonable for the approximate nature of handicaps. Handicaps are also too heavily affected by weight changes. For example: Schempp-Hirth Ventus 2cx-18 W 18 853 0.845 Schempp-Hirth Ventus 2cxM-18 MW 18 1147 0.825 Schempp-Hirth Ventus 2cxT-18 MW 18 1047 0.835 Is the V2cM really a better performer than the 2cx?

We don't have sufficient infrastructure to support or maintain thoughtfully-generated handicaps it would seem.

We need to get back to calling a Std Cirrus a Std Cirrus. No adjustments for turbulators, added wing root fairings, etc. Instead of a “1-X/Y to the nth power” weight correction, why not square root of the weights ratio? This is what drives glide polar shifts. And you are supposed to weigh every sports class and club class glider, so you know their competition weight.
We should switch to OLC, period. It's the defacto standard and makes everyone's life easy.

What is the "European Handicapping System"? There are so many to chose from. And all are based on European weather (and tasking). The OLC system is simple, but I've not heard anyone argue its actually more fair.

Why duplicate the effort?

Would we get to provide input into the European handicap system? Would we still handicap adding winglet? I think the Europeans don't change the HC due to performance enhancements. Would they add all the US specific glider types?

Yeah CH invented handicaps, so what? It has seemed pointless to have our own handicap system ever since Europe ignored ours and went to using their own. Ours might be better (more accurate) but who knows? If you ask this question, you really ought to have included a link to a comparison between them - and arguments for why one system is better/more accurate than the other. Otherwise this question is just a pissing contest.

[There is only one Yes/no bubble in the question above!] The use of reciprocal handicaps (higher numbers for higher performance) is mathematically equivalent so does not matter. The computation of theoretical performance of each model is controversial, in both systems, but more so, recently, in the European system.

might as well have a single list

10.2a

Please comment on shortening US National contests.

(No)

2 weekends and a week works well. You can use the previous weekend to drive out.

5 to 7 days is plenty for determining a National Champion

A hard question. Just spitting balling.

A true soaring contest requires more days of varying weather to determine a true winner.

After thinking about it I decided to abstain from this question but cannot figure out how to do that using this survey. Sorry!

Allow 7 days in very strong sites. Allow 10 days too. Length 7-10 days. But even Uvalde can get 3 days of rain, like this year!

Although shortening the contest will require fewer vacation days (for those still employed), who will drive for 6 days round-trip, to attend a 7 day contest, where you will likely only fly 5 days?

An 8 day contest might allow a pilot from the other coast to be able to reasonably try and fly it (including the drive out and back) in a two week vacation window. Right now, a 10 day contest pretty much means taking 3 weeks off for someone who lives 2000 miles away.

An extra 2-3 contest days is not a driving factor in contest participation; especially when you consider how large the country is and the fact that many pilots have to drive 2-3 days in each direction just to attend a contest of any kind! The size of our continent and the distance between population centers is the core issue. If more Nationals participants are desired, than a better solution might be the (long-proposed) implementation of Western & Eastern division Championships. This would muddy the "National Champion"
waters and the US Team selection, but would immediately increase participation by making these large & prestigious events more-accessible to more pilots. If anything, a shorter contest may DECREASE participation, as people would deem it "not worthwhile" to spend as many days traveling to/from the event as competing in it! Using myself as an example: even with an upper-middle-class salary and generous vacation at my last place of employment, I could not attend even a Regional-length contest in the Eastern USA (as I live on the West Coast). The drive time was just a killer, regardless of the number of contest days.

Balance is flying days to travel days. Leverbee

Contests are 10 days long to get 4 scoring days. Some locations struggle to do so, other locations don't. Driving 3 days each way for a shorter contest lowers the reward ratio.

Contests are often weather restrained. Reducing the potential number of days limits the options to get a representative contest. National contest participation is already limited to those with significant means and flexibility in their schedules. Reducing the number of days won't change that.

Do it so younger people can participate.

Don't fly National so no vote

Driving 5 days for 7 days contest is waste of time

Eight day contests would allow 3 day travel time to and return from a contest site while still keeping the total duration for the pilot and crew at 2 weeks or less. This becomes a negative if the weather isn't conducive to flying.

Even more rain-outs!

For areas that have very good weather, then shortening the contest makes sense. Holding a National at a site know for poor weather, and reducing the competition length just doesn't make any sense.

Good idea.

Have National contest days, but shorter contests. Have more contests available.

Hits the young guys with limited vacation hard. A couple of regionals and a National and you're borrowing against next year's vacation accrual.

I am especially appreciative that the committee is entertaining the possibility of shorter national contests. Nine or 10 day contests are way too burdensome on contestants, crews and staff. I'm certain that I will have more likelihood of participating in a 7 day contests than a longer event. I sometimes drive cross country to contests -- my view on this matter is not affected by driving distance.

I am full time working person with family. 9 days contest with 4 day travel out west is big chunk of my vacation.

I am guessing that shortening the length of the contests might attract more entrants, but this is only a guess on my part. I have no idea if it would really make a significant difference.

I believe for a Nationals you should have as many days as practicable to give truly test pilots.

I can't help but wonder if this isn't a question where the retired folks will see it different than the ones who have a regular job with limited time off. This may relate to the general aging of the sport.

I don't think it makes a difference.

I don't think they definitely need to be shortened especially if they're central. if theyre coastal, for example East Coast or West Coast
maybe they should be shorter for pilots participating from farther away. Either way, I believe it’s difficult for someone to dedicate so much of our short vacation times in the US to only a soaring contest. Especially younger pilots with families. On the other hand if I’m going to travel a long distance for a contest I like to be there a while.

I find a 10 day contest to long. In addition to the potentially long driving distance (i.e. for an eastern pilot to go to a western contest or vice versa) spending 10 days in a motel is just not fun.

I only have vacation time and resources for about two events per year. Changing the length would not help much as most of the expense and time is the preparation and travel to the event.

I really like Tuesday thru Thursday. I take two weeks off, have Sat and Sun to get there (will get me half way across the USA), have a Practice Day, compete, drive home Fir Sat, and have a day to rest and catch up before going back to work. Other schedules end up taking more travel vacation, or getting home and having to take more vacation to have a day to recover. I like 10 available days. If the weather is good, you get to fly a LOT. If the weather sucks, well, you shot your whole wad of vacation for no flying.

I think we should try a shorter format. One downside is that after you drive thousands of miles it is nice to actually get to fly for many days before driving thousands more miles. Shorter should be an option.

I would guess a large number of contestants are no longer tied to a job so it is not a big consideration for them, other than too many days in a hot location.

I'm not ready for Nationals, but when I am, my day job won't let me take off that much time. It's effectively another seniors, cause the young gals and guys have to work their day jobs.

I'm planning on traveling to the Club Class nationals next year. It will take an minimum of 20 days to include the travel, practice, and contest days. Fortunately I can arrange to do that but a 7-day contest would allow it to be done in 2 weeks and three weekends.

If the National contests are to be used to select World team members then, if anything, going back to at least a 10 day contest should be the change. Longer contests reduce the luck factor and give the contest the best possible chance of being successful due to weather. It also makes the large financial expenditure of driving across the country to a contest more reasonable. Longer is better.

If the goal is to have the best pilot win, the contest should be as long as possible while retaining enough pilots to fly. A 10 day contest also is good preparation for a WGC.

If you shorten the contest duration then people who need to travel long distance will not come. I am not going to drive 4 days to fly for 7 days. Plus the weather is often unpredictable. Also, contest needs to start on Tuesday as it historically happened. Again if contest starts on Saturday there is no way I could get to it and back using two weeks of vacation. There was a reason why we had contests start on Tuesday. For people who need to travel long distance it is the only workable schedule.

If you want to draw in more people to national contests you need to achieve two things: 1) Reduce the length of the contest so that it doesn't cost a kidney and all of our annual vacation time to attend. 2) Pick attractive locations for the contest to be held. (I love racing in Hobbs, but let's be honest, it isn't exactly the resort town that my wife wants to go spend her vacation on the ground at.)

In the East there would be more cancelled contests.

Increases he risk of a 'no contest' outcome, particularly in the East. So not a great idea.

It depends on the site. Some in the west can reliably get 4 days in 7. In the East, like Cordele, you can get lucky to have 3.

It takes at least two weeks to compete in a Nationals and often that's the vacation allotment for most. So it may be time to rethink the length of the Nationals.
It's really hard to know if shortening the Nationals would really help participation. It is certain that it would make the contests less effective at selecting the best pilot and less effective for US Team selection, since longer contests tend to reduce the luck factor. A shorter contest is also more likely to be weathered out.

I'm using my hard earned vacation time to attend flying/contest vacation events. Can only break away from work for limited times. You want more participation? Make it so us working stiffs can attend. If you don't you end up with the same old gang over and over. Leave them long, you need the time to have a great contest.

Long drives are even less attractive for short contests.

Maybe shorter nationals would help participation... This is a tricky problem. When I was working, taking more than 5 working days off from work was a non-starter for my job and career. Period. Which I know is true for quite a few pilots I have talked with who are still working. On the other hand, if you have a 7 days Nats on the east coast, you might not be able to get a valid contest in due to weather. A shorter Nats could also help in finding contest volunteers. However, some contest management teams might want the option to run longer Nats to enjoy the soaring at a western site. We need to be careful to not put any guideline/rule in place which would deter some contest team from wanting to bid for a Nats. With those thoughts in mind, we should continue to offer the contest management team running a Nats decide the length of Nats at: 7, 8, or 9 days.

Mifflin was long enough. If it had been shorter, we would have not even had a contest! Rained nearly every day.

National contests often require two days of driving, so four days on the road. Weather often reduces the number of flyable days. Shorting the contest would increase the risk that attending would turn out to be a disappointing choice.

Nationals need to be long to find the best pilots.

No comment needed.

Optional. Set minimum to 8 days.

Our Nationals are already too short for our top level racers to gain the necessary experience to compete in WGCs. Our pilots have very little opportunity to fly competitively at top levels because one can typically only fly one National per year. So let's make the experience count.

Present competition schedule requires up to 2 weeks for both travel and competition. No problem for the retired/wealthy geezers.. another story for the younger professionals that we so desperately need to attract.

Reducing contest length would reduce Nationals to nothing more than another regional contest rather than a method to help choose a World team.

Shortening US National Contests may allow pilots with limited vacation time to fly an additional contest each year. Personally, with a 7 day National Contest, I would likely be able to fly 2 contests per season, whereas time constraints currently only allow me to fly in a single nationals each season.

Shortening US National contests would make them less "National". While it might increase participation from locals, it will reduce the incentive for racers to drive long distances to participate. It will also cause more Nationals to be invalidated by weather, especially on the east coast.

Shortening nationals isn't fair to pilots who drive a long way to compete. Time off work is about the same, but shorter contests have a higher probability of rainout and with fewer days, luck is a bigger factor in results.

Shortening would increase the risk of a "no contest" due to weather.
Shorter contest runs the risk of losing a Nationals on the east coast.

Shorter contests would not reduce or increase my participation. I like the longer contests, but don't feel strongly one way or the other. It seems that we have a lot of contests that don't make or barely make due to poor weather. Shortening contests will result in fewer successful contests.

Slight shortening of National contest length seems important... but no more. Too short a contest increases probability of weather cancellations invalidating a contest.

Some people have jobs, can't take that much vacations

Taking more than one week of vacation at a time is often hard for not Retiree

The contest isn't the issue - by the time I drive 3 days, I'd like to stay there as long as possible.

The first line in the rules states the purpose: Select a champion. Weather is an unknown, I've seen two nationals go "unofficial" due to less-than minimum # flying days. No champion. Also, longer race tends to discount outlier days (good or bad). Finally, WGC races are longer, and nationals are the closest event we have to the environemtn within which we aspire.

The issue is more related to contest sites unfortunately. In general an Eastern site has a lower chance of delivering good soaring days (therefore needing more contest days) than a Western site. But I don't know how to compensate for this

The key is to minimize the number of vacation days needed to be taken. If you want younger folks to participate, they don't have a lot of vacation and they do have other commitments. The days of families crewing are long past.

The large portion of going to a contest is relatively fixed. Time is the question. Younger pilots who have jobs and child-related time demands would benefit from shorter contests, but Regionals may be the right answer for the younger crowd.

The nationals have always required a significant investment of time. But that's the nature of national competition in a sport that's so highly dependent on weather. This year we flew 8 of 9 days at Midlothian and could have flown all 9. Last year we were lucky to get 3 at Cordele. Shortening the contest period risks more lost contests. I'll drive across the country for a big show. But not for what is essentially a regionals that could be weathered out.

The only effect I can see is I'll be less likely to travel huge distances to attend. But I don't currently travel all the way across the country for 10 day contests either. If they were short enough and close enough that I could do more than 1, that would be a positive.

The problems are much bigger than this. I'm the perfect candidate for nationals. Competitive glider (in 2-3 classes). No financial constraints. Reasonably competent (okay, that's arguable). But, with two kids in high school, a wife who also works, and a job that makes it very tough to take 2 full weeks off (much less 3 which would be required for a West Coast contest), I'm limited to what I'm willing/able to do right now. I'm reasonably typical of the few 40 something and 50 something guys.

The shorter the contest the greater the likelihood that luck entered into the determination of the Champion. I believe that participation is based on a given pilot's outlook regarding his chances of 1) doing well, 2) landing out, and 3) flying more days than spent driving to the site (and not necessarily in that order).

There are not enough official flying days in many contests to reduce the days.

There would be a risk of more contests lost because of weather. Participation in Eastern Nationals would no doubt decline because of this.

This is a marathon and not a sprint. We need to extended racing days to really determine the national winner.
This is best left to the judgment on contest organizers - they known local weather and pilot preferences.

This may be an issue driven by geography. In the east it is harder to string together enough soaring days for a national contest. It seems less difficult in the west. Thus, I prefer encouraging pilots who attend contests in the east to have a good chance to get in a bunch of contest days. Keep 10 days.

Though I voted yes, I can talk out of both sides of my mouth on this one. Will pilots feel shortchanged if the weather is not to their liking and the contest is too short to hit the good soaring weather.

Two weeks is too long and reduces a pilots ability to fly more than one contest a year.

We have enough trouble getting enough contest days in to determine a champion. Fewer scheduled days increases the risk of an no contest. Fewer contest days reduces opportunities for pilots to separate themselves

We need long contests to a) make them worth while and b) give us the best chance of getting enough days in (on the east coast at least)

What are the FAI requirements? We should be using those rules.

While I recognize the need to have adequate time to even out the luck factor, the 10-day requirement is very long. Note it is unlikely for me to place high at a national of any length, so take my opinion with a grain of salt.

better chance to get people with limited vacation time to participate

working people have a difficult time with 10 days.

10.3

Please comment on ways to improve participation in National Contests.

(No)

1) Offer financial incentives to first-timers (discounts on entry fees and/or prizes). 2) Split Nationals into East & West divisions 3) Do nothing and spend resources instead of increasing the general glider pilot & contest pilot population. Nationals Contestants will always be a small fraction of the pilot population, but growing the base of that pyramid will result in a trickle-up effect. Spending time and money on trying to push a small % number to a slightly-less-small % number is likely to be an inefficient use of resources.

1. Advertise low cost backseat rides in contests in general aviation, hang glider and paraglider publications. (Riders must show their USHGP, EAA or other organizations, membership card.) The pilot should explain everything about what is going on in his head throughout the flight. That ought to stir some good interest in these likely prospects. 2. For current glider pilots, create a step-by-step video on starting their first foray into cross-country flying. Include a check list to help them to feel more confident that everything will work out. Include use of low cost GPS moving maps such as XCsoar, Top Hat Soaring, etc. (Don't make them think they need a $4K instrument.) 3. Follow up with a step-by-step video of how to sign up for a contest, what insurance is required, what the tasks consist of (MAT, AAT, etc.) and some moving map video of a simple 3 turn contest course as an example. Also visualization of the start cylinder and finish cylinder rules.

1. Hold East and West nationals for each class so people do not have to drive so far. 2. Eliminate Sports class. 3. Use FAI rules. 4. 
Support Grand Prix racing as well. 5. Support local racing to build at the grass roots.
A lot has to do with location and proximity to pilots.
Allow east and west Nationals for a given year. The current approach of combining any two classes is wrought with errors, i.e. for 2019 the 18 meter and open classes are together. Not good.
Ask God to put really good soaring weather somewhere where we all don't have to drive more than 2 days:-) Seriously, there should be a focused effort to recruit "first time" National participants with express invitations to regional competitors who have not flown Nationals, fun recognition and mentoring of "first time" Nationals contestants and incentives to regular Nationals competitors to "Bring a New Competitor" to the Nationals (other sports give a rebate if you bring a new person). The "step up" from flying a Regional in your home area to a Nationals is much more intimidating than it needs to be - and we should be facilitating, recognizing and welcoming new competitors.
Better scheduling
Better sating by classes so pilots with 15/18 and 18/21 gliders have a nearby nationals every year and those who want to fly both don't have to choose between them. Same deal with pilots with Standard or 15M gliders being able to fly Sports or Club when their FAI Nats are on the opposite side of the country.
Better tasking that utilizes the whole soaring day. There is nothing more frustrating than getting a 2h task on a 4h-5h day.

Chicks and prize money
Club Class is the gateway to the future... use of FAI rules will help define an international "datum" by which new competitors can judge themselves by. There doesn't appear to be a clear pathway to a higher level of competition without "deep pockets". By promoting the club class, competitors have a dramatically lower $ investment hurdle to clear, and yet, still have a formal, international competition to aim for.

Consolidate classes as there are way too many.. this will require some serious work on handicaps. 15 and Standard Class Nats should be combined immediately.

Do not co-locate Open and 18m, Open and 20m 2-seater, 18m and 15m, Std and Club, Sports with anything. These pairings will cannibalize each other.

Don't hold them at Albert Lea. Or Ionia.

East coast and West coast Nationals. Most of guys I know, don't want to drive 3-4 days to only fly 4-5 days. To qualify for US team in a certain class, dudes should fly their own class at both East and West contests, in the same year or two consecutive years.

Eliminate other than Tue-Thu schedules. Tue-Thu allows competitors to travel a long distance and still only impact two work weeks.
Get more people involved in soaring. Kids these days don't seem to want to hang around the airport long enough to learn and fall in love with it (too short an attention span) we need to figure out why people don't like it as much and change it.

Handicap all classes.
Handicapping other gliders that aren’t lastest generation aircraft (like in Standard Class) is a good alternative. Have them at better soaring locations. Std Class at TSA was awesome

Having two classes at one contest that have overlapping glider types reduced the possible level of participation. Having the Standard and Sports Class Nationals at the same contest this year will reduce the participation for both classes. Any LS8 or D2 pilots that may have flown in both of these contests will now have to chose just one. This may not be the case but it is how a perceive it.

Here’s an "out of the bounds thinking" idea... Incentives from SSA to members who lease/loan out their gliders to juniors or new contest pilots.

Hmm, tough one only the best will fly in it knowing it is the best of the best. Limit the sports class to 90% national ranking max to participate.

Hold contests in places that have a greater chance of flying 8-9 days.

Holding three or four, multi-class, national level contest each year would be ideal. This would mean that a competitor would be able to reach a contest in a couple days compete and not use all their vacation time. The US has the significant disadvantage of the distance. Most other countries have a much shorter drive to competitions. The compounding problem is the cost of holding contest at the National level, both in venue and volunteers needed. This means that the suggestion above is highly impractical.

I like multi-class nationals and combined regionals-nationals. It's nice to have a lot of pilots/gliders in the air...and on the ground after the flying.

I think limited handicapping, as is currently done in Standard and 20m Two-Seat Classes, is beneficial for contest participation. It may improve contest participation to adopt similar rules for the 15m and 18m Classes to allow pilots with older gliders (e.g. ASW-27s, V2s) to compete with new generation gliders like JS-3s and V3s. Assigning experienced pilots to mentor new contest pilots and/or having organized sessions to discuss racing tactics, site specific considerations, etc. may also help convince more pilots to fly National Contests.

I understand that siting contests is very dependent on what sites bid for the contests. That said, we know that there are popular sites that always draw a crowd. Try to site contests at those places.

Increase overall contest participation at all levels.

Increase the number of sailplane pilots, encourage sports class participation as a learning opportunity. We seem to be growing racing classes fast while the pool of pilots is shrinking. Rules committee needs to take on the challenge of how they can help grow soaring via contest accessibility, mentoring or great new ideas.

Length of trip is probably more of an issue than length of stay. Being a large nation, there's not good solution. The recent system of having different but overlapping classes competing separately at different locations each year probably helps. Another approach may be two or three super-regionals.

Location, location and location. Don't schedule contests in a location that can not accommodate a class e.g. 18 m class in Seminole this year and the total weight restriction that was added. The way it was done was very political and without any consultations. As a result I did not fly a single contest this year and I am still thinking about participation in the future. This should never been allowed.

Location, location, location. More attractive soaring sites will bring more pilots. Unfortunately, soaring sites are selected where there is an organization that volunteers to run them and that may be in less than desirable locations.

Long travel will always be a handicap.
Mimic the Seniors

More assigned tasks. This comment applies to regionals as well. Many contest pilots, that no longer fly contests, have told me that one of the reasons they don’t participate is that we have too many TAT tasks where a pilot can fly most of the day (and sometimes most of the contest) without seeing many other gliders. They say that if they wanted to fly by themselves they could do this at home (and post to OLC) with much less expense, and little chance of spending their vacation sitting in the rain. One of the major benefits of racing is learning from other pilots, and seeing their techniques and tactics. Assigned tasks are much better for this. Another complaint that I hear (regionals) is short task setting where much of the soaring day isn’t used. As an aside, I don’t believe that rule changes will do much to lure many pilots into National contests. The kind of pilot that is interested in competition (especially national competition) will show up regardless of how we change the rules to attract them. By the same token, pilots that aren’t really interested in that kind of serious competition won’t spend the money or time to participate in a nationals. Nationals rules should be directed toward making the contest as challenging as possible to select the best pilots to send to international competition.

More of them

Not overlapping competitions like in 2018!!!! Get clubs involved. In training folks to get silver badges and getting folks into regional competitions.

Oh Lawd, won’t you buy me a JS-1C...

One idea: Do not combine classes (e.g. do not combine 18 meter and open class). This has the benefit of pilots being able to attend multiple contests. Also less pilots in line for a launch means more flying, which will encourage participation. For example, at the Open Class Nationals in Nephi a few years ago the Open class was always launched after Standard class, resulting in as much as an hour less flying and more sitting on the ground.

Promote 4+ weeks of vacation for American workers that currently labor more hours per year than medieval serfs did. Make sure the hyperloop can accommodate glider trailers so we can attend nationals that are thousands of miles away, or have multiple nationals per year.

Put unrelated contests together, and don’t overlap events. Maybe Open/15m, 18m/Club, and 20m/std, with a couple weeks between.

Run them in the best locations, best, most predictable weather, run them shorter, run them faster. If we add excitement to soaring, we will get more interest. We need energy!

SSA needs to create a committee dedicated specifically to this challenge. I would consider being a part of it...

Set tasks to use full potential of the weather, some pilots are not flying contest due to using just part of flying day. There are some pilots which enjoy contest flying and meeting other pilots, but are not true racers, have OLC class for such pilots in contest, rest of the pilots can have true racing. Preferential entry should be for racing class. It will help organizers financially as well

Shorten contest period!

Simplify rules, allow team flying, and reduce costs. Insurance is becoming problematic, perhaps a look at what insurance is REALLY needed to assure a responsible contest is in order.

Split them in to geographic regions. That will increase overall participation, but not so much individual events.

Start with more local contests and build the base. Some areas (notably Region II and Region III) seem to be disproportionately building the base of younger contest pilots. The only way to reverse this trend is to focus relentlessly on a larger catchment area.

Stop folks ageing :)}
Stop holding them at sites where flying 4 days out of ten is considered "good". Hold them at sites where you can expect to fly over 75% of the scheduled days.

The 18 M nationals CD was dead set on having a task longer then 4 hours when the weather did dictate so. When questioned the CD said that the contest was being held to prepare our pilots for the US team and the international competition. (suggested nationals task is 4 hours) What is accomplished by adding another hour? I don't feel the nationals should be directed just to the TEAM! It should be directed to all pilots. The mind set was if you don't like the longer task go fly a regionals. At the next regionals I attended the CD wanted to call a 4 hour task. (suggested task length by the rules.(3 Hrs.). Pilots should know what to expect when choosing which contest to attend and that the rule suggestions will be followed.

The major problem is supply, not demand, especially out west. Make it easier to run contests.

There is a major age gap in the contest scene and it is driven by schedule flexibility. It is certainly much easier for someone who is retired to attend a contest. Certainly they have earned that flexibility, but are we attracting the most capable crowds to our international qualifying scene? I would argue that there are a high number of college students, middle aged professional pilots, and other key demographics who are not attending these contests but could very easily give the current podium winners a run for their money. Why don't they attend? Because they have to balance family, work, and personal needs with the contest scene. I have said this year after year, the National Contest is too long and many people that want to attend simply cannot. I want to take a moment to point out one more key issue with the presentation of this question, and that is the community that is answering the question. This survey is presented to those who have attended a contest in the last three years. How is that representative of those who have not attended a contest but would like to? This question needs to be sent out to a wider audience in order to get the answer that you are looking for.

Ummm....

We could combine adjacent Classes and handicap as is done in many European countries. So if I have, say, a 15m glider I could enter the 15m or the Std Class nationals. Or with an 18m glider I could enter Open or 18m Nationals. Thus I could potentially fly in twice as many Nationals with one glider. This combination of classes also solves the geographic problem (we could offer a combined 15m/Std in the East and another in the West) I would fly at least one of these, instead of skipping my single class National when it is on the opposite coast

We have a system that pairs up experienced pilots with inexperienced pilots. Assign or pair pilots BEFORE the contest and exchange email addresses. Score the results on the performance of the inexperienced pilot.

Would appear hopeless. No interest in the youth community. Harris Hill has one of the best. Most do not continue in the sport. Not a spectator sport and not sure how to make it one. Very sad situation.

Would be better to have more consistent venues - same contest in the same place (a good place)- so people can plan plan. Also have West Nationals and East Nationals. Trying to get everyone on the country to one spot is impossible.

more use of assigned tasks might help.

not having flown one ... it's barrier of entry issues for me, and the number of days isn't my biggest concern. Never another Logan 2011! What a fiasco, and anybody with a brain could see it would be! Nationals need to be over safe terrain that doesn't give undue advantage to local knowledge. I would argue that Nationals should alternate years between some site in the west and some in the east, and that soaring might be well served to use the same, or only a very small number, of sites for nationals. Develop them, improve them from lessons learned.

schedule fewer
Please comment on using electronic media for contest to pilot communication.

All communication and documents should be electronic, including local rules and daily task sheets. Reduces waste and costs for the organizers.

Anything that reduces the workload is fine with me.

Are any CD's not already doing this? I have had great success using mass text messaging to communicate with pilots at contests. Have sent updated task sheets, grid sheets, etc. to all contestants by text and email. Every contest should have the daily documents available for download as well.

As long as it doesn't require any special apps... limit it to Text Messages or email.

As long as we all have good cell service, which is sometimes not the case in remote contest locations.

But understand that there are venues where cell coverage does not exist over the course.

Depends on what type of communication. Registration, ect OK. Task & competition - NO.

Do not make mandatory...

Electronic media is not mature to make official communications. Also, not all pilots have the devices that support electronic communication.

Faster, nearly every homeless person has a smart phone.

Getting in-air task updates by text message in addition to on the radio is a safety benefit and reduces stress. I would support a rule that requires in-air task changes be sent by both text message and radio, even though it makes more work for the already overworked CD.

Good idea.

Great idea. A system like WhatsApp is a lot more reliable and resilient than plain SMS text message. I don't favor making this mandatory, some folks won't want to adopt this.

Having tasks and any important messages delivered to the pilots electronically makes it very convenient for the pilots.

I am young so in favour of this type of thing.

I don't want my phone on while I am flying because 1) another distraction 2) if it is on, I will get non flying distractions like texts/emails/phone calls. 3) I want it in my pocket for a bail-out and can't reach my pocket when flying. 4) Accessible phone = loose heavy object in the cockpit = dangerous

I have attended several contests where this was used and it works great. KM

I tried this idea at the 2018 Standard Nationals using it to deliver the weather briefings. Problem was that there is still about 2-5 per
cent of pilots who only use a "feature" or flip phone. That means one has to send email AND an SMS text message. The content was a Dropbox URL link to a pdf. That wouldn't work with a flip phone. Also, Dropbox's commercial advertising policy added some annoying steps to people using it to view a pdf or other document types. So... take away here is... 1) Test the delivery service for reliability and ease of use 2) Use a reliable service. I used "Calling Post" $15 for contest to deliver SMS, email and optionally voice mail. 3) Find a way to have the pilot verify receipt to ensure critical messages were delivered and noticed. Another option would be to require a Smartphone that can use one of the social media messaging services like WhatsApp, Signal or Telegram.

I used WhatsApp this past summer during the CZ WGC and really liked it. The only problem I can see is the limit of people in one message. For the WGC, the list was only about 40 people receiving a message at the same time because it was only used by the contest management to talk to its direct staff and team captains. I'm not sure how the WhatsApp would perform for 80+ people when you consider the nationals contest management, pilots, and crews? Something to consider...

I was at the WGC in Leszno and Ostrow Poland. The use of Whats App for communication (registration, Scrutineering, task opening etc.) worked very well really reduced work load of everyone.

I'm all in favor. This guy probably won't like it: https://deadhomersociety.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/bartthegeneral2_thumb.png?w=512&h=384

If a good system of text messages can be organized for every contest it is very handy. But if each contest organization is trying to figure it out it can turn into a mess.

If a task is task is changed or confirmed on the line a roll call should be mandatory. Not a text!

If electronic media is to be used, there must be excellent wireless/cell connectivity for all contestants and crew at and near the contest site. This is not always the case in our remote contest areas.

If our average participant age were below 60 it would be easier :-)

If you are speaking in terms of the FAI events we participate in, these electronic communications go to the team captains. I think OK for US contests, but keep it simple: perhaps SMS only. I wouldn't want to see task changes by say CUP file distribution a few minutes before first launch.

If you use a cell phone as a tracker, pilots may have them installed in the cockpit instead of carrying them around prior to launch

In the air, no. On the ground, maybe. In the air I consider any use of a cellphone to be an unwanted distraction. On the ground I would not require any specific app such as whatsapp. Plain text messages are OK for almost everybody these days, as is email. But then some airfields in the USA don't have good cellphone or WiFi coverage.

It's a vastly more efficient and effective way for the contest personnel (namely CD) to communicate to the pilots.

It's very effective to make announcements for task sheets, first launch, delays, etc.

Its already been used at several contests I've flown in. Works fairly well, better than aircraft radios, at least while still on the ground.

Its the 21st Century!

Just do it!

Love it.

Many sites are very rural with no coverage. The sport is already too software-driven and "heads down" - let's not feed the beast.

May be a way to create interest.

http://adamsfive.com/a5soaring/survey/surveyresults.php?FmemberID=541699&FmemberLastName=nixon&action=LISTTEXT&supress=no&FsurveyID=RulesPoll18
My experience flying a German national with that type of communication was very positive. We received text messages updating us on weather, social events and anything else that needed to be communicated in a timely manner.

No service above 4000ft in many places. Doesn't work.
Not all sights have good cell coverage, making this possible.
OK on the ground. Not flying.
One more reason to have pilots not looking out the window.
Pilots shouldn't be texting in flight

Recommend protocol requiring a reply from each pilot that msg was received .. possibly just Contest ID. Contest mgr could then follow up with non-replies.

Should be in addition to face-to-face distribution of information
Simple texts are an effective way to communicate.
Solves a problem we don't have. One more thing for organizers to manage.
Some of us do not do social media and are not interested in starting. Email is ok.
Sounds good, but may lead to problems when data is not received by all competitors.

Text and email backup as a minimum.
Text message only, I have no idea what is whatsapp or any of these other things the kids use to communicate.

Text messages and such are very helpful for communicating with pilots and crews.

Text messaging is OK if everybody has the capability. And - You didn't ask, but why can't we electronically sign and pay registration fees in advance and online with a credit card?

Text messaging would be easy and effective
Texting to pilots would allow pilots to consult their text during a period of reduced workload. It would also reduce frequency congestion. It would also help pilots with difficulty hearing their radio.

The Region 10 Championships CM and CD - Michelle and Ken Sorenson respectively - used "gang texts" to great advantage this year. It is a very good way to get information into the hands of the contestants quickly.

The SSA and its volunteer committees should help us identify the apps or software to facilitate these communications. We hacked the problem at Cordele this year by sending emails to txt messaging systems using cellphone numbers and codes for the various systems.

The only issue is that cell phone coverage in Europe is much better due to density of population. We have many locations where it is impossible to use a cell phone.

There are areas where cell phone/internet access are hopeless.

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Text messaging is OK if everybody has the capability. And - You didn't ask, but why can't we electronically sign and pay registration fees in advance and online with a credit card?
This is a great idea! However, I think it should be a supplement to existing contest communication procedures, not a replacement (at least for the time being).

This is a stretch for many contest managers and fraught with technical pitfalls (e.g. blacklisting, signal coverage).

To be workable, this would need to be a system developed for use by CDs and CMs. "Roll your own" can't be expected to work real well here.

Unsafe. More head in the cockpit time.

Use WhatsApp. Contestants can choose to turn notifications on and off at their will. With texts messages, the sender is in control and has to take action to remove somebody from the list.

Use it if you got it...

Use it.

We (the SSA), need to provide contest staffs the training and resources to support better technology in running contests. By soliciting new ways to informing pilots, better communication during a landout, and submitting scores by email, contests are made better. It doesn't have to be hard, just make a technology package available to the contest staff with the training to use it.

We live in the 21st century. Email has been widely used for 20+ years now. Electronic signatures are accepted for most major activities, including contracts and banking. :-)

We need to reduce the amount of paper generated but I feel this will take several years to arrive at.

We used WhatsApp extensively in Europe and in Argentina to great effect. In Poland, the contest WhatsApp group became one giant bulletin board for lost and found, mutual help on equipment, task posting, social events organizing, etc. We (US Team) even recruited crew help via the WhatsApp group when I landed out while my crew had a serious back problem! The daily tasks were posted to WhatsApp long before they were printed, copied and handed-out, allowing the Teams to do their WX and Strategy meetings in a timely manner.

We've used them at least the past two years. Most of us use SMS/WhatsApp extensively already.

WhatsApp is owned by Facebook which many smart people avoid at all costs. This app WILL STEAL your personal information! Simple texting without apps is totally sufficient if the individual pilot agrees to it.

WhatsApp or SMS works very well for commutations at contests. WhatsApp was great for sending out tasks, etc.

WiFi or cell coverage is spotty at some contest sites.

Worked great at the Std Class Nats at TSA

Worked well at Uvalde. But, don't try and provide contest documents like score sheets, grid sheets, task sheets, etc via text. Not everyone has a phone that can easily display things in a readable size or at all. Simple things like "don't grid" or "these people come to the scales" work great.

Works well at the Worlds.

Yes as long as critical documents such as task sheets are still distributed as hard copies.

Yes, but cell phone coverage is very limited in some places and it will not work

Yes, text msg to be used as a help, but not official. Would not want communication via, facebook, Twitter, etc.
11.3a

Please comment on whether Contest Manager should formalize crewless pilot operations.

(None)

A pilot with a sustainer or self-launch capabilities should not be considered crewless. But if they land out it should be their sole responsibility to arrange for a retrieve.

Actually, I think, we need to formalize the process currently used in conjunction with the Contest Retrieve Desk where there is a sign up sheet at the retrieve desk and the top 2 - 3 pilots hang out at the desk until we know everyone has returned. Each day, the top 3 pilots would move down the list. I do not think, we would want to find out the next morning a pilot had not returned.

Again, at Region 10 Championships, they had the first crewless pilot landing assigned as the crewless pilot retrieve manager. Although I had crew, I thought this concept was a good one.

An equitable arrangement. However, there should still be consideration for active pilot flight time. Having a pilot that has just returned from a full day's flight to then be responsible for retrieving another pilot can introduce unnecessary fatigue. The Contest Retrieve Desk is still needed.

Anything to better organise the "crewless" would help. Would also be nice to somehow make the pilots have their car and trailer ready to go..

At the Region 8 contest and the Nephi OLC this seems to work itself out with little problem.

Bring your own crew or become the crew for another competitor.

But it should not eliminate contest management's responsibility to help retrieving a pilot from the land-out.

But leave it to contest manager discretion at a particular place.

CM option - but they should at least think about it.

Contest Managers/Directors should REQUIRE that all contestants list a retrieve crew - even if it is another pilot - that will be responsible for the retrieve.
Contest organization should never have to be responsible for finding or providing crews.

Crewless pilots should automatically be on a list of retrieve personal. Other pilots with crews should also be able to add their names to the list.

Crewless pilots should organize themselves. It should not be a contest organizations responsibility.

Encourage pilots to make own crew arrangements.

I agree with the idea; I am just unsure about the implementation method (and how tightly the method needs to be defined in the rules). Requiring a "retrieve buddy" and having that one person's commitment to help another person - written down - seems like a good idea overall. I don't know if a general list of crewless pilots is a good solution, since a list/dog-pile doesn't entail individual commitments between individual pilots. Therefore it leaves more of a possibility that someone falls through the cracks or a retrieve doesn't get arranged.

I am not sure. Not enough knowledge of the plus and minus facts to comment. Is the current method working and adequate? If so don't try to fix it.

I am of the old school belief that each pilot should have a crew.. both to lesson burden on themselves as well as others.. I think we should be doing more and more to encourage pilots to bring wires, kids, friends, girlfriends, etc... Crewless pilots should have a shared responsibility. Motorglider pilots will likely not agree with this.. till the day comes that the motor won't start.

I am surprised to hear that not all contests are using this approach.

I don't have a crew. I did 3 contest landouts this year. It wasn't that bad. I don't mind waiting.

I don't think this should be a concern.

I have been in charge of many self-organized efforts. They fall apart quickly over a few days, then suddenly we are all out in the middle of nowhere. Many organizers just say "you're responsible, bring a crew." The number 1 thing for participation is to make it easy and normal for crewless pilots to fly.

I think most crewless pilots usually team up with their crewless buddies anyway. Formalizing this and publicizing it a bit might encourage new folks who have been reluctant to try racing because they did not have a crew.

I think the crewless pilot's list is good (I'm one), but I also like the idea of just backing up another pilot voluntarily. I have an engine and make it home for the most part. Do a better job of calling reasonable tasks- Landouts galore this summer- mostly due to tasks called on days I wouldn't normally assemble. I don't mind a challenge but when most of the field lands out it a bad task call.

I think the idea warrants further discussions and possibly trials at a few events.

I think this problem largely solves itself.

I thought that is how its done currently.

I thought this was already SOP.

I thought this was already supposed to be the way it worked

I thought this was already the norm. We should not discourage crewless pilots, but impress on them their duties to fellow crewless.

I'm not certain what the issue is here. I think crewless guys (of which I am usually one) are doing a mostly satisfactory job of self organizing.
If crewless pilot procedures are to be set, it should be required that they are published before preferential entry deadline so that pilots can figure out how to meet the procedures. Not acceptable to hand them out at the contest. If the organizers want that, I would not object.

If this means passing around a crewless pilots signup sheet, yes.

If you cannot afford to have a crew you should not fly contests or go cross country for that matter. Period.

In my experience, most Contest Managers do this anyway.

Including this in a formalized way will protect contest management personnel slightly from the disaster scenario where a crewless pilot didn't take the initiative to handle his/her own retrieve. This might avoid litigious activities.

It is important to deal with crewless pilots at contests because there are a lot of them, and a way to accommodate their need is important to encouraging participation. Placing all the responsibility on the crewless pilots is not the best solution. Having someone to help them is a good idea.

It would be great if volunteers could be assigned to a crewless pilot in advance of the grid time.

Its already a very common practice, at least for the contests I've flown. Not clear formalizing will change things. Certainly include it in "best practices" to help new organizers out.

Managing a crew is one less thing... I appreciated the help the organizer offered.

Many do it today. Just make it more "packaged" for the CM so they don't have to reinvent the wheel.

No tows for pilots that don't have a landout card with 2 potential retrieve persons. This reduces the issues with multiple landouts on a given day.

Once again, it is hard to drag my crew (Family) out to Hobbs, New Mexico for our yearly vacation. Let's be careful about penalizing pilots who are unable to supply a crew. For that matter, lets stop rewarding Motor-gliders with an Airfield Bonus unless they actually put rubber on the pavement of said airfield.

Optional

Please don't put this on the Contest Manager! Can this be worked into the Guide to the Rules and you have people signed up as crewless have a known procedure that will be used at each and every contest they attend. Variation from site to site will likely cause issues.

Seems to work out okay as is.

Since a majority of pilots are crewless this seems like a no-brainer.

Some formalization must be done ... but how and what is the question. The big problem with crewless pilots (and I likely will be one at times) is what happens when a lot land out? The trend to crewless pilots forces more conservative tasking.

Sort of. Sometimes I go an get people and I have a crew. A sign-up sheet of the potentially willing is better than a formal paring. If the new guy lands out every day that gets old.

Still have to buy dinner!

Sure, whatever helps the organizers deal with the workload. We crewless pilots try to look out for each other but when you're calling in, sometimes it's easier just to say "I need someone to retrieve me" and hope for the best. And that's unfair.
System is challenged when many land out. Retrieve desk function required for keeping track of pilots.

The contest management should ultimately be responsible to make sure that no pilots go missing. I'm not sure how the contest management would formalize crewless pilot retrieves, especially on those occasions where all pilots land out.

The crewless pilots need to be in a pool of their own doing, if they can't organize themselves to bad let em rot.

The retrieve desk person does not go on retrieves, rather facilitates communications which is a good thing. Other pilots, mostly crewless, already do the actual retrieves. So I don't think it needs to be formalized too much. Encouraging a buddy system where specific pilots pledge to support each other in advance may be a good idea.

There are a number of ways CM's have handled this issue in the past. Crew-less pilot lists have mostly been used with mixed results. Having these pilots pair up and volunteer to retrieve their partner/s, works better. The Retrieve office has a listing of these pairs so it's easier to call one or two pilots versus trying to track down someone on a list of 15. The first crew-less pilot who has returned has been sent to the retrieve office to help. Their responsibility is to match up a landed out crew-less pilot with another returning crew-less pilot. We have used CAP cadets to act as crew for crew-less pilots. We just ask them to financially compensate the kids for their work. The pilots have done such a good job, the kids look forward to retrieve's. Whatever the approach, it is part of the CM's job to formalize the best way for their contest to handle this issue.

There have been some good systems put into place. Let's learn from these best part of these and formalize how all contests should handle crewless and clueless pilots. Allow contest managers to deviate from this standard, but lets start with something that we can start working with.

There is an App for that! It is called lowcrop.aero and it is free. It is a virtual real-time Retrieve Office. It is common in European contests and available for us to use.

There should be a complete list of all crew less pilots including cell numbers.

There should be a plan that the crewless pilots agree to. If it isn't organized to some degree, guarantee you it will be disorganized.

There should be a system in place at each contest for how this is done. I think the system could be left up to the Contest Manager to decide, but this should be discussed in the first pilot's meeting so expectations and responsibilities are clear. Contest Managers should not be left in charge of finding a crewless pilot a crew.

They certainly should have the option.

This is an easy thing to do - just set up a signup list or create a crew-less WhatsApp group.

This is going to vary by site and retrieve desk. In general the desk should encourage non-pilot volunteers to help so that finishing pilots aren't forced out on retrieves. But most of the time pilots will volunteer and on days with mass landouts everybody helps. Often crewless pilots go out on retrieves to help get crewed pilots.

This isn't done already? This should be communicated to crewless pilots in the contest communications before the contest and at the beginning of the contest.

This makes sense. As a CM for several Champs, I would appreciate a rule like this in order to help my volunteer staffing issues.

This should not be a rule, but rather a "best practice" recommendation to contest organizers.

This should not be a task for the contest management.

This works well in the GTA Racing Series. I have seen work at many contest i have been to. Pilots and crews who have landed often
are the first to volunteer to go get landed out pilots. This is and easy fix.

Thought we were doing this for years

To bring crews back; bring back daily show, low finish over line, like last year 20m Nat https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X70XPO7_JI

Up to the organizers.

We do that at Cordele and Perry. Makes sense!

With a possible exception for motor gliders, crewless pilots might pay a higher entry fee into a pool to hire a retrieve team. Shortfall to be made up, excess goes to line crew

Yes but no responsible contest organization will just walk away from the phones after the last finisher.

Yes, I believe it is unfair for the retrieve desk folks to have to cajole people into going on a retrieve. Anything that makes that volunteer job easier and less of a struggle is great.

Yes, given that it is very common...

Yes. As a CM this always worries me. A list should be mandatory, and every pilot should be required to obligate themselves to crewing for another crewless pilot.

You might as well set up a mechanism for it in advance because it will happen. It's better to have it set up rather than tray and handle it on the fly when it happens.

help it informal and flexible.

keep it flexible but try to make recommendations for crewless pilots to join together in support of each other.

there are more and more crewless pilots at contests. all that can be done to help with the organization is good.

11.4

Please provide comments on improving Contest Organization.

(None)

Allow the CD to fly if supported by a good contest manager.

An online system to complete registration before the contest would make everyone’s life easier.

At least based on recent contests I've attended, pilot meetings can be shortened. They should also include a task briefing followed by a weather briefing. The task sheet should be made available to pilots prior to the task briefing so they can see where they’re going (or the task should be projected for all to see), particularly if task safety considerations are important during the briefing (e.g. if pilots are being sent to areas with large distances between safe landout locations). The weather briefing should follow the task briefing; pilots will be more apt to pay attention if they can see how the briefing is relevant for the task. Shorten the time between the end of the morning pilot meeting and grid time (i.e. make pilot meetings start later). At least one of the CD or CM should always be present at the contest site until all gliders are safely accounted for. For example, in the event of an incident, the CD or CM should be available to respond to the press.
Availability of tow planes, quality of weather information, good tasking that maximizes the use of the whole day. Having these things well organized increase (at least my) enjoyment at a contest.

Every contest I've been too the organization has been great, no problems here.

Fully electronic is the way to go. Physical checks are so yesterday tech.

Getting enough qualified volunteers. Hard to do at smaller regional contests, especially.

Good CD, Good Task setter and good weather is the key to Great contest

Have your volunteers arranged and with responsibilities assigned ahead of time.

I hate to say it but we are dying. In years past the 15 meter nationals in Uvalde would have had 65 signed up and 15 on the waiting list. This year? something like 17 total in 15-meter. If racing does not change or work to attract new competitors the time will come when we have one supper contest per year with all classes.

I have not found any big flaws in the current methods. Small changes: Perhaps some local rules and situations should be specifically emphasized in the handouts and pilot meetings. Some CDs seem to think everyone knows the local area. Talk about areas to keep away from (for any reason).

I'd just like to say thanks to any and all contest personnel that put forth the time and effort to make glider racing happen.

IMHO, most of the organization at US contests is very good.

Increase bonus for CMs and CDs for TWO years.

It's time we encourage more clubs to hold mini (weekend) races and mentor future CM and CD. Likewise, assistant CM and CD should be mentored at regionals.

Like I mentioned before, we need to train contest staff members. We need to identify those folks who have an interest in being involved and ask them to mirror contest staff members to learn the ropes. Place training lessons on the various jobs on the SSA website to better prepare contest staffs to do their job. Identify mentors to act as long distance helpers for new contest staff members to answer questions thru all phases of the contest process (planning thru execution). When a contest staff has a better way, share it with the entire group. Different contests have widely varied numbers and goals. It should be fun to put on a great contest. Let's make it easier for these staffs do their job.

Making paperwork be all-electronic would be a big help! It would also be nice if contest reports could be filed online and linked to pilot's online registrations - eliminating the need to send in physical paperwork after the contest is over (especially since Trophies can be awarded from scores posted to the SSA website). CD compensation and/or allowing the CD to compete in the contest (under some rule whereby they are recused from protests involving themselves) would also make it easier to get CDs to sign up for events. Lastly, although it would be a tech effort, making WinScore into a Web-based tool would ease contest administration & score-posting! Even just an SSA-hosted form & location for uploading IGC files would be an improvement. Although some contest sites are remote enough to make internet access tough, the vast majority of sites are covered by cell service nowadays (and smartphones or wifi hotspots can be used to obtain internet access via the cell network). Given that folks are already often seeking/using internet access for weather briefing and planning, it is reasonable to expect that pilots can upload small files (IGC files) and/or use the web to submit forms during the contest - at airports, at their hotel, or in the nearest town.

More funds (for example, to set up a system to make it easy to text message all participants about a task change, and to pay experienced CDs at least as much as a CFI) would help. I think you could increase the price, with an option for a pilot to declare
financial hardship and pay the old lower price (with a promise that no one will question their claim). Pilots with new JS3s and Ventus3s probably can afford to spend a little more and I think most would not complain.

More time after the daily meeting till the grid time. Some CD/CM think that 45 minutes is enough to move from the meeting to the gliders then to the grid which is about 3/4 miles away get the task and the first class be ready to launch in 20 min on a 100 degree day

No suggestions. I think some contests are organized and run more efficiently than others. Best I have seen is Mifflin & some Harris Hill events.

Please provide/share to contest managers and CD’s the comments that come from this question.

See credit card comment above.

The contest I attended this year was well organized and operated by people with decades of experience.

The contests I fly could hardly be improved organizationally. The hosts and their help are absolutely top notch!!

There needs to be much better planning of Contest dates and effective recruiting and coaching of potential Organizers. The Site Selection Committee needs to take its game to an entirely new level and its mission needs to be changed. Start by changing its name from "Site Selection" to "Contest Promotion"

Try to minimize mandatory jobs that must be done for a successful event. Lower barriers. Don't add on Steward and Juror jobs per IGC rules. Don't require scrutineering. Or even weighing except maybe at nationals. Encourage offsite scoring where connectivity is good. Keep the organization down to what's required for safe launch and recovery and good tasking.

We're lucky to have contests. Anything the SSA or Rules Committee can do to standardize certain tasks to relieve the burden on the host organization is a good thing.

12.1a

Please provide comments on motorized glider airfield bonus minimum altitude claims.

(None)

1000 ft is already too low for some MGs. We already have enough dangerous low starts; let's not encourage it.

1000' AGL is an absolute minimum. Anything lower is risky. My personal minimum is about 1200' AGL

1000' is a good arrival for non motorized gliders- motorized should be the same

1000' within 2 miles is reasonable.

700'

700'

700' AGL

700-800 feet is enough for most airports.
A MG pilot who arrives over an airport at less than 1000 agl can always collect the airport bonus by LANDING. The next time LX bitches about this, someone hand him some effing GOLF CLUBS. This gets tiresome.

A self launch glider should not be eligible for an airport bonus.

An airfield bonus should be eliminated altogether for motor gliders. They already have a significant advantage of not having to actually land away from the home airfield.

As a motor glider pilot I think that 1000' is the absolute minimum for starting the engine.

Changed yes, but the max altitude should be higher - 1500 feet max.

Contest pilots should be trusted to make their own decision about a safe altitude to commit to stop trying for a save.

Don't care

Don't give the motorgliders more advantage than they already have. It is discouraging to get a MAT task at a site with mountains or other rough country and watch the motorgliders all head up into the high country where the cu's are popping while everyone else has to stick with the landable low areas where it's dead and blue. This is going to be even more of an issue with FES with highly reliable and near instant power with low/no performance penalty in case of a failed motor start.

Electric motors can start quickly and are very reliable

Engine starting altitude is a PIC/personal responsibility function and should never be influenced or interfered with by anyone else.

Fairest would be no special rule for MGs - they already have all the options of a non-MG (either climb away or land for a bonus), and one nice additional one (start motor and fly home). Giving the pilot who already has an advantage under existing rule even more advantage is not justified.

For "death dive" starting sustainers like mine, 1000' is too low. For FES or ES equipped gliders, they may be comfortable starting lower than that. The SSF in now recommending a hard deck of 1000' agl so this rule is a nice compromise for motorized gliders.

Get it too low and they will try to thermal out past the point of stupid.

Going lower is too much risk in the event of a failed start. If MGs want to risk a lower save they can land if they want the 25 points that badly. 25 points is a small price to pay to avoid a retrieve.

I am not a big fan of airfield bonus for anyone. Would prefer it goes away.

I don't think this is a problem so no new rule necessary.

I think 600 ft at engine start should be sufficient. The reasoning is that altitude is lost just getting the engine out and ready to start. However, this is not a huge issue for me!

I think the airport bonus rule should be dropped in general.

I would never start my motor that low. But why should a motorglider making a straight in approach to an airport and starting the engine on final be penalized more than a motorless glider making the same straight in approach?

If anything, the minimum altitude for an airfield landing bonus should be increased for motorgliders. The current rule incentivizes motorglider pilots to wait until the last minute (1000' AGL) to start their motors. In my opinion, in the event the motor does not start, this leaves little margin for the pilot to execute a safe landing. I would propose raising this minimum altitude to 1500' AGL. Below this...
altitude, it may be safer for pilots to land (as a pure glider), start their motors, and then takeoff again to return home. If motorized-glider pilots feel this is unfair then a 1000' over the field rule could be enforced for sailplanes claiming the bonus. If we want to tell our non-motorized pilots that they should be committed to landing and entering the pattern at 1000'AGL than this rule should stand.

Is it possible to use a ratio of Distance/Height to airfield? We could specify, say, 10:1 glide ratio to airport coordinates and no appeals. It is perfectly safe to try to start the engine while on a close base leg at 600’ for example.

It takes about 200' to start the engine. Most pilots have 1000' as their decision altitude, so why not lower it to 800' Its a safety issue. But maybe the rule should be a distance bonus, not a mileage one?

Lower to 500 AGL. A SAFE climb out from 1,000 AGL is possible. There is time enough to deploy and start from 500' - or land at the designated airport. Want FAI rules? FAI rules ignore this totally (no bonus)

Lower would reward bad behavior.

Many motorized gliders are able to safely start below '1000 AGL as directed by their respective Flight Manuals. 700' AGL would be a better number. Motor gliders should NOT be allowed any airfield bonus. They already have a built in advantage competing against pure gliders.

Motorglider pilots already have an advantage knowing that they can make it back when the weather deteriorates while others are looking for hours of retrieves. So to make the airport bonus easier for motor gliders is not fair.

Motorgliders should be scored the same as "pure" gliders. There should be no difference. If you have to start the engine above 1000' then "pure" gliders should not be able to make a 360 degree turn below 1000'. But we should change to FAI rules and not have airport bonuses.

Motorized glider should have to land at the airport to get the bonus. Motorized gliders don't belong competing together with non-motorized gliders!

NO airfield bonus for motor gliders. This bonus was designed to discourage field landing. Motor gliders will always land at an airport. No different than a motorless glider

No going to comment on US rules

Not a motor glider expert... But some of them really need to be running before they sink lower than that don't they? FES/other electric powered -- perhaps different limits apply.

Not familiar with Motor Glider parameters.

Now that I have a motorglider I want a low altitude!

One must keep in mind, the motorized glider can always get the airfield bonus by landing. That said, I am strongly against the airfield bonus in general, as I don't believe it contributes to safer flying in many instances. Why would you create a scenario where someone who achieves less distance on course is scored higher than another who achieved more distance!? (25 points on a 100% land-out day is HUGE). Perhaps having lost a national contest by the award of an airfield bonus to a fellow competitor makes me a bit biased!

Pilot has option to have true landing at the airport same as motorless pilot
Please remove height restriction. Let it be a matter for the pilot to judge. The pilot knows how low to go in his/her particular ship.

Probably more like 800 feet as this allows for some extraction and start sequence time. With more electric engines coming out this will become easier and faster.

Pure glider can flop over the fence and get the bonus, motorgliders "could" safely try an engine start over a runway below 500 ft.

Pure gliders can climb out from any altitude. Its a personal decision when to deploy the engine or start an approach (in the case of a pure glider).

Remove the airport bonus and there is no issue.

Safety. ANY glider pilot who is not in the pattern at 1000 feet is an accident waiting to happen. Motorized gliders have added burden of getting motor started and developing thrust to get up and away.

Sorry, but I don't like the "airfield bonus" at all. It's really a "landout penalty" on the gliders that didn't make it to an airfield. It's not used in Canada (where I have flown 4 Nationals) and has no real impact on pilot inflight decision making. If I pick an airfield to land out at, it is to protect my $100K plus investment - not for a silly 25 points. For much the same reason, regulating motor glider safety through scoring is pointless.

Standardize the altitude to 800 ft AGL minimum at 2 miles. Local rules may change the altitude or distance per CD.

Starting altitude for a glider with a motor is very similar to the altitude we stop soaring and land in a pure glider. It depends on a lot of factors which include terrain, size of the airport we are over, aircraft traffic, wind, obstructions, and control tower instructions/ restrictions. Both gliders have PIC's that have their safety as a prime consideration. I believe we treat them the same. If you want an altitude restriction (not my recommendation) then make it apply to both groups. Otherwise, remove the restriction so we treat both pilots as adults and trust in their judgement as PIC's. Personally, if I go below my engine starting altitude I am committed to landout or climb away. Starting the motor is no longer an option.

The 1000' requirement for airfield bonus, unfairly discriminates against motorgliders. A better rule might be that ALL gliders must enter a predetermined safe radius of an airport at 1000'AGL in order to claim the airfield bonus.

The airport bonus is intended to encourage safe behavior by non-motorised gliders. Given the questionable safety record of MG's it makes sense that they too be encouraged to fly safely and start their engines at safe altitudes.

The airport bonus is a safety-encouraging rule. Trying to make it to a too-far-away airport and then starting the engine low is trying to game the same rule in an unsafe way. So I would keep the rule as it is.

The historical reason for the airfield bonus is to change the points incentive to risk landing off airport. The min engine start altitude over the airfield feels like an attempt to eliminate some of the advantage of carrying a motor by causing the pilot to head for the airport possibly earlier. If the engine starts and nothing gets hurt, that was the goal in offering the incentive to start over an airport, or land on it.

The motor is sufficient of an advantage on soft days when crewless.

The motorglider has the same option a non-powered glider has, to continue the search for lift, or land on the airport (and get the bonus), plus an additional option of powering up and going home which in itself is an advantage in terms of pilot enjoyment and fatigue. Contests aren't won or lost by the airport bonus.

The philosophy behind the altitude limit should be examined. If the intent is to ensure that the motorglider arrives with enough altitude to safely land if the motor doesn't start, then starting at 600 ft is OK, recognizing that the glider had to begin the engine start
process at least several hundred feet above that. If the intent is to offset the clear advantage of having a motor, then the 1000 ft is ok. Another alternative is to require a landing in order to claim the bonus (which would produce howls from the motorglider owners) - note that this is actually called an "airfield landing bonus". KM

The rule is OK as is - it was set at this height for a reason. While some technical advances have improved the chance that a sustainer engine will start (like the ASG 29Es) it is still a reasonable height. The FES system may be more reliable still, but there are many older motorgliders being flown in contests and they should started early enough to be safe. I do not have a motor and I have to fly a pattern at 1000 ft AGL, so it is a matter of fairness as well.

There should not be any airfield bonus for a motorized glider. A motorized glider should be scored as a landout, off airport, at exactly the point of motor activation.

This rule is a joke! Quit rewarding motor gliders for being lazy. If you want 25 more points on the score sheet, put the rubber on the pavement of said airfield. Otherwise, tape the motor shut and quit using it as an excuse. This is not a matter of safety anymore, this is just making an excuse. Remove this rule completely and start racing like you are in a glider and not a Piper Cherokee.

This rule was instituted to provide a margin of safety to the motor glider pilot in the event that the motor doesn't start or the pylon can't be retracted after it fails to start. I realize that the FES pilots would consider this altitude too high. For some motor gliders this may be too low. The present rules don't preclude any pilot, with or without an engine, from descending to any altitude that they judge as reasonable to save the flight. In light of this, it's not unreasonable to require a start at 1000' feet or higher near the airport if that pilot wants the airport bonus.

Unsafe lower.

We all know it takes several hundred feet to get the engine out and running at enough power to start a climb. 500 feet AGL would make a lot more sense when on-task. That could also be used before a start, but it is OK to keep the current higher number so pre-starters are not cutting it too close to traffic in the launch area.

We should move the limit down to 800’ AGL about the time you are required to start a safe pattern.

What is the benefit in reducing the height of this rule? Yes, non-motorized gliders can "save out" from lower than this height; but motorized gliders are inherently more-complex and more-distracting (and often lower-performance) than a non-motorized glider, when starting the engine or recovering from a low altitude. Giving them an extra 200-300 feet to occasionally make a low save isn’t worth encouraging poorer safety margins.

When a motorglider starts engine/motor pilot is scored as a landout. If the pilot is within a min distance from an airport (say 1/2 mile) pilot should get airport bonus regardless of altitude.

With FES (for example), pilots will be tempted/able to start at much lower altitudes, further impacting the fairness for motorless pilots. Would increase incentive to start the motor over an airport, which is potentially safer in case of a failed start.

Yes but only over airports currently in the contest list as bonus allowed adds clutter to the rules.

assuming the limitation was for safety, I would think that 600-800 ft would be ok for a start. Now that is assuming established on downwind, and I do not know if that is "knowable" for the scorer

motor gliders must not be encouraged to try low saves before they can power up. MG's have the advantage of a likely self retrieve. Reduce that advantage with a possible higher land out height.
12.2

Please provide comments on other Motor Glider issues.

Based on my limited experience starting below 800' should likely get a penalty for unsafe flying - perhaps not for the FES bit most certainly for the original ASG-29 system.

FES and other systems are swinging the competitive advantage to motor gliders even more and their reliability will reward risk takers. FES gliders have a motor start reliability so high that they have a competition advantage of flying over questionable terrain.

FES is about to become ubiquitous. We should introduce a simple "Motor-use" penalty. It should be a straight penalty based on energy used or something like that. It shouldn't matter where you are and it shouldn't be an automatic land-out.

FES looks like a problem: pilots with one can now justify getting low over unlandable terrain and relying on the motor. This could wreck the perceived balance of fairness between MG and non-MG pilots.

Great idea and one way to lessen need for a crew.

Handicaps should be increased for motor gliders due to the inherent ability to reduce stress and time for landout retrieves

I can't help but wonder if the movement toward Motor Gliders doesn't contribute to the location of contests in areas of strong conditions (MGs have trouble competing in weak conditions) with the result that we do poorly in weak conditions at WGCs.

I flew XC for many, many years as a hang glider and ultralight rigid wing glider pilot. Landing out is no big deal. I have even landed in a football field (300 ft) that was surrounded by 80 foot high trees, using a drogue chute. But flying a sailplane XC in New England, where even 1500 foot long fields are rare, is not safe! That is why my first sailplane is a self-launcher and my next one too! After all this is a sport. I am not willing to risk damaging my expensive glider or myself in an unknown and tiny field! I love my self-launcher!

I hate to be this cynical, but Means of Propulsion sensors on flight recorders need to checked for sensitivity and security. Otherwise, we are going to get FES guys sneaking in a little power from time to time.

I like the improvements in checking motor operation prior to the beginning of the race. Much simpler.

I sure did hate it when I got stuck landing out that day at Mifflin, when the other two motorized gliders popped out their engines and motored away.

I understand the desire of the motorless to eliminate the competitive advantages of carrying a motor. I've been pure for a long time and have voted that way. But times are changing. We can really ignore the differences during the actual scored / unpowered performance.

If self-launch during contest: - Ensure there's a small motor-glider-only area close-in for climb-out and shut-down (in Uvalde its area just west of airfield). - Brief contestants DON'T FLY UNDER A GLIDER WITH MOTOR EXTENDED, EVER!! Too much hazardous traffic as-is.

MG guys sure are whiny...

More flexibility in take-off order would reduce the launch time. If next launch has no towplane and motor glider is ready, push forward and let him launch.
Motor gliders already have a big advantage. It's not unreasonable to require the 1000agl rule.

Motor gliders have real advantages and disadvantages in a mixed contest. The advantage that motor-glider have that I think produces unfair competition occurs when there is a difficult transition over bad terrain. They have a much lower fear-factor. This is a tasking issue, but sometimes not practical to foresee or to avoid.

Motor gliders should not launch themselves from within the field of gliders without motors or motor-gliders that are not using their motors to launch.

Motorglider is different mind game, engine use should be prohibited in competition with pure sailplanes. Half a gallon of gas for take off only.

Motorized gliders don't belong competing together with non-motorized gliders!

None

None yet. After decades of racing I now have sustainer engines in the two I race. So ask again next year :)

One key issue with motor gliders, they are not pure gliders. Motor gliders have no place in the racing scene with pure gliders. Motor gliders can compete with other motor gliders, but putting them in the same race with pure gliders adds a whole different psychology to the race that cannot be accounted for in the handicap or design of the task. Motor gliders will become the death of current soaring clubs as pilots become less dependent on the social aspect of those clubs and the dependence of a towing mechanism. Motor Gliders will certainly destroy the soaring community unless we preserve some degree of segregation between the two.

See above comment on FES. With more electric options or options like the Schleicher eStart engines, the fact is that a motorglider pilot is not flying the same race as a pure glider pilot. The old arguments about engine reliability are becoming less relevant. Short of flying 20 miles into a forest over completely unlandable terrain (you can't fix stupid anyway), the motorglider has a clear advantage.

I'd love to see a 1% "penalty", but of course I'm biased not having a motor...

See wing loading issues below.

Should be allowed in ALL classes, INCLUDING US Club Class. Increasing opportunities for participation of motorgliders will increase attendance at contests in the near future given the trend of use of sustainers or self-launchers on new gliders and the new generation of light-weight motorgliders.

We do too much manipulation of the rules to suit the minor complaints of motor glider pilots. It's an advantage to have a motor.

We've beat this into the ground, they have an advantage of [ in theory] of being able to go into unlandable terrain. Look at CX tracks for proof of this and always getting home for dinner, no late night retrieves. What can you do ? Kick em out? I don't think so............

13.1

What ideas do you have to make contest flying more attractive to new participants?

"Newbie contests" at good soaring sites. I got started at Karl Striedeck's contest at Mifflin years ago. Great environment for new pilots. Have 1 of those a season and alternate locations if possible.

(None)

1) Get rid of all these rules. You are bogged down with endless concerns about the pickiest details. 2) Stop emphasizing the
“contest” aspect which keeps many new people from participating. Emphasize fun and comradeship rather than competition.

1. GTA type club racing could spread around the country. 2. Offer coaching, seminars, and evening chats at Regionals. 3. Call more Assigned Tasks and encourage leaching so newbies can learn by following, at least for a short while. 4. Allow pilot-to-pilot communications, but the top pilots can't work with each other. Instead they would coach and communicate with their assigned mentee or designated leech. A bit of a tongue-in-cheek suggestion, but would be fun and very motivational. Imagine if you had been selected to be coached and encouraged to follow DJ in 1986. You would definitely go to that Contest!

3 day sanctioned contests. Nationals (7 days) - Regional (5 days 92%) - Local (3 days 80%)

Additional SSA Soaring Webinars about: soaring, x-country, and racing tips and techniques from our experienced racing and x-country pilots. 45 min - 1 hr Racing/x-country Seminars before the daily briefings with just a BIG white board; no slides; keeping things simple and easy to put together. Garret Willat did this during a Hobbs Nats a few years back which was focussed on the Jrs flying the contest; towards the end of the contest, the majority of pilots in the contest was showing up to listen and participate.

Advertising Regional competitions as training camps for new competitors may be helpful. Having coaching sessions on SeeYou before pilot meetings for beginners is extremely useful. Being a new pilot in a competition environment can be intimidating, but if a beginner is surrounded by others asking similar questions and learning at the same level it could bring in more new pilots.

An OLC camp parallel to a marginally participated contest seems a great idea. 1- As long as OLC pilots are launched before or after the contestants, at the discretion of the CD and/or participation fees are not higher than pro rated contest fees.

Apply special discounts for younger pilots

Ask the new participants and listen.

Assigned tasks and pilot to pilot communication. The ability to watch what other, more experienced pilots do and to listen to their conversations / decision making process would allow new pilots to learn much faster.

At the regional level, local contests split over two weekends may help attract new participants who otherwise would be unwilling to take a week of vacation to fly their first contest. It may also help to formalize contest mentorship programs (e.g. have one or more experienced pilots at the contest host daily briefings for new pilots) and/or mandate that new pilots seek out an experienced contest pilot to mentor them during their first contest (as is required for the junior contest rebate program).

At the regional level, maybe not allow open team flying, but allow communication to help a newbie get their feet wet with completions instead of landouts. Allow communication for such things as "good lift on the west side, AZ". Everyone should be aware of who is allowed to be helped before the contest starts.

Big breasted blondes for launch crew. Asian massages for the winners. Who knows? If you want to fly go fly Nothing can be done IMHO to change participation, that's the way it is. You like comps or not.

Bring the Sports class back to one for newbies!! But don't artificially, intentional or otherwise, belittle the participants in favor of the other classes and hot ships.

Club class! Promote more regional "fun" contests as an introduction to contest flying experience. Offer awards/recognition to the best first-time competitor. Have more first-time competitors provide coverage and insight on their experience online, and in Soaring.

Clubs need to make their single-seaters available for member use in regional contests. Clubs with bus class gliders need to prioritize mentoring beginning XC pilots by asking experienced pilots to take prospective (future) racing pilots up with them in 2 seaters at regionals. Contest sites need to be family friendly and have camp sites available. Communal dining is a must. Playgrounds and
portable pools (or sprinklers and slip n slides) would be helpful too. Young kids plays for hours at splashpads all over the country. Getting a projector screen and digital projector setup (with speakers) to have movies playing at night would be good too. FYI, A PA system can be purchased at Costco for under $150 that will blue tooth connect to your computer.

Contest staffs need to encourage more experienced pilots to act as mentors at regional contests. At the Seniors we have a core group of very experienced pilots meet in the hangar every morning. They are available to review flights, discuss what their decisions were that enabled a good finish, what their strategy was for the day, things they would have done differently, and have an open discussion with those pilots not in the top 5 of the contest. It is well attended and we have seen improvements in these pilots performance and a bigger smile on their faces. At Cordele I hold an hour long review session for anyone who wants to attend. I bring my laptop, with all the flight logs loaded, so inquiring pilots can see their flight compared to the rest of the Class. They get a better understanding of why they finished where they did and can identify areas they can improve. Some of these pilots have gained enough confidence in their ability that they entered their first National. It also is a great way for them to ask questions about rules!

Dedicate site briefings for pilots either new to competition or new to the site. Full use of "Buddy" assignments

Develop more GTA like races were tasks are shorter and participation is easier. The webinar series already going on has fired up a few of my fellow members in my club.

Encourage the use of Finish Lines at sites that can support same.

Encourage/approve more mixed racing/OLC events to get more OLC pilots experience flying tasks under racing rules.

Everybody starts at a regionals -- work to make the regionals newbie friendly. What about a beginner class? This could have somewhat simplified rules, and avoid the Hank-Nixon-scrapes-off-the-leeches turnpoint. Another idea would be to provide a shepherd pilot for the first day (or maybe two).

Fix the handicap system. use both OLC and contest results to revise handicaps.

Formalize a mentoring program at regionals. Racing the first time can be very intimidating. I attended two Nephi OLC's before competing for the first time and I felt that it really helped.

Formalizing crewless pilot arrangements and making it known that crewless pilots are welcome should encourage the fence sitters to get off the fence. Simplify rules where possible (way easier said than done, of course). It is likely that potential new racers are not too interested in qualifying to fly at the World's. We can optimize our rules for producing pilots competitive in world (European) glider racing or we can encourage new participants by optimizing our rules for enjoyable, challenging, and reasonably safe flying. Training U.S. Team members and encouraging newbies are not entirely mutually exclusive goals, but it would be difficult to accommodate both without a lot of compromise. I'd lean toward rules that reward individual performance, and that discourage unnecessarily risky behavior like gagging, low saves, and low energy finishes.

Handicap all classes, including handicap modifications due to a MTOM that is pilot-selected at the beginning of the contest.

Hard to say -- so many things have been tried.

Have them attend Perry and New Castle.

Hear their story at next-day pilot meeting

Here are some ideas: 1) Make contest entry easier by making the application/registration 100% electronic. 2) Work with willing glider pilots (such as myself) to set up mentorship opportunities & ways for newbies to connect with experienced contest pilots (in person, online, or over the phone) to ask questions or learn what they need to do to prepare. 3) Create some short online videos (a la the
EAA "Hints for Homebuilders" series) to discuss topics around flying XC and getting started in contests. 4) Work with clubs & contest organizers to help set up weekend or week-long learning & mentorship events that promote XC soaring (and use that topic as a gateway to flying in contests).

Host more events to explain contests to beginners/those that have never flown a contest. Every winter contest pilots can stand up in front of their club for 45 minutes and explain how it works, or host a seminar.

I am a first-time regional pilot. I flew five of six days in Region 10 at Yoder, KS. I landed out 4 times and didn't make it out of the start cylinder the 5th day and I skipped the 6th day because of marginal weather and life. The weather was not great; the seasoned competitors landed out too, most about twice, but it was sufficiently daunting and I probably wouldn't do it again in those conditions until I had a better ship, FES or better skills. Few pilots are brave enough to consider making even one turn at a regional competition. I know them all in Kansas and Missouri, and I can count up only seven. I'd have appreciated a regional "training wheel" contents or an event to train-up new xc pilots that's weather optional (3 days in advance) with easy, yet significant tasking. Something we have a better than 50/50 chance of completing and learning. If we want to win and advance soaring, we need more pilots, it's just numbers. If we get national support for this event (points, qualifying, etc) that would be a huge boost to such a program and would become a "farm system" for US gliding.

I am still a "new participant" having been to only two regionals and still on the fence as to whether to attend any more contests. The short distance to the regional site was a big draw for me. The split-over-two-weekends format back in 2016 was a draw for me. (2018 R1 was not split, due to July 4 falling on Wednesday.) Of course the split format must be combined with short trip distance to make sense, to perhaps less applicable out West. Mentoring by more experienced pilots is a draw, and allowing air-to-air communications would be even more so. Tasks were sometimes flexible enough to allow lower-performance gliders (and pilots and risk levels) to complete, but on some other days not so much given the weather, that could be improved.

I need to think about this, but as stated before, I would be happy to be a part of a committee to brainstorm on this. We could start working on the comments this poll provides.

I'm sure the racing crowd can seem at times clannish and inward-looking ... so just make sure to make it a point to interact with any new racing participants and offer to help in any way that might come up. Most contests will ask in the first pilot meeting if anyone would like a mentor, so that should continue. Make them feel part of the clan right from the start and they will want to return.

It's Society. Our risk adverse, never inconvenienced, sit on the beach, few vacation days, no time with the family, no I won't go to the airport world. Glider racing is doomed unless steps are taken to get people into contests early in their soaring experience and develop the idea that contests are PART of one's progression in the soaring experience. Sell the benefits of contest flying and make it comfortable and fun. The UT OLC camp with 75 entrants in two days might be a wake-up call on what is attractive.

Limit experienced pilots from flying in Sports class competition. i.e. Karl Streidick should not be flying his Duo in Sports class. He should be in the 20m comp.

Location, location and location during the best weather periods.

Low level meets and clinics would entice new participants and make them confident and safer.

Make contest closer to pilots. In Europe you can go to contests most of the summer within a few hundred km of your home. In the Us we are expected to drive 3000 km for only one significate contest. Focus on local or state level contests so pilots can start racing closer to home. start thinking about the younger pilots with jobs and families rather than the retired pilots that have the time and money to travel.

Mentoring and inclusion in the group is one of the most important. Take a little time to get to know the newcomers, help out a bit, and
make them feel welcome.
Mentoring at contests. Pre-contest written briefings by experienced local pilots. Task selection that affords good landout opportunities, and advertising that fact.
Mentoring, Team Flying, interesting locations.
Mentors connecting up potential new contest pilots with experienced ones. Webinars and mentoring seminars helping new pilots get access to at least Club Class capable gliders. More contest training and pair flying workshops.
Migrate it to an OLC type event with weather normalization and daily areas type tasks to allow folks to play without the long drive.
Have the contests in fun places. Cordele, Hobbs, Mifflin, etc. have lost their charm and the weather is not so reliable.
More "learn to race" type Regionals. Better recruitment of "First Time Nationals" contestants. See 10.3 comments above.
More coaching and mentoring at club level. Adopt Task Days like SCOH does and there will be more contest pilots.
More encouragement for contest management to set up a morning debrief of the previous day's flying to be held before the pilot meeting and led by an experienced pilot.
More new participants. Big company advertising and funding. Big cash prizes for winners. Follow the money. Golf, NASCAR, etc.
More regional competitions. They are very few and far between in the western 2/3 of the country. In Region 9 for instance, the last standalone regional contest, not a small concurrent Sports Class only paired with a Nationals, was in 2014.
More time to input task data into flight computers for from end contestants.
More two-seaters.
OLC camps are popular because they don't have to deal with ~36 pages of contest rules. It's the number one reason I get when I ask experienced pilots why they don't fly contests. Simplify the rules: separate the contest and organizer rules, for example (parts of Rule 3.x and 5.x are "organizer" rules, for example).
Perhaps a de-rated "Newbie" class? So, instead of .92 for a Regional, make it .80 for the newbie class. Allow only one year in the newbie class.
Promote greater use of MAT's on weaker weather days for regional contests. Encourage more OLC type contests like the one organized at Nephi.
Reduce the entry fee for first time participants.
Regional Sports Class should be restricted to pilots with a seed below 87.
Scheduling techniques and tactics discussions, possibly preceding the pilots meetings, on certain days of the contest. Garret Willat held discussions every day before the pilots meeting at Hobbs a couple of years ago at a nationals. It was well attended by virtually all of the contest pilots, with many top pilots participating in the discussions. It was a value added benefit to attending that contest.
See prior comment about vacation time and making contests shorter to get working stiffs to the locale. Also consider multi weekend roaming events as official events. Also it would be nice if there was a R12 regional/national on the horizon.
Simplify rules and scoring.
Simplify the rules.
The Rules are really imposing to new pilots. Actually, I know of almost no pilots who understand everything in the Rules when the scoring system is included. I watch one of our most senior and experienced Rules mavens get confused and have to start/stop several times recently trying to address a question about some arcane aspect of the scoring in front of a bunch of pilots. If this guy has trouble, what hope do the rest of us have? I don't know to what extent the Rules inhibit new pilots from participating but I suspect it's a factor. I also don't know what a solution could be if I'm right.

The handicapped task length might help Sports Class. We need more Club Class events!

The “Bus” class used at R2N seems to have done a lot to introduce pilots to both xc and racing. Things like that as well as the week long precontest xc camps that DJ and G Dale ran help to bring pilots into the racing mode.

Too many to list here. My sense is that it's doable but requires a lot more investment (time/money) than we are willing to put in. I think that "long weekend" contests (say Thursday-Sunday) and/or "pop up" contests (good weather predicted for the coming weekend) would work on a small scale. Considering how many contests today draw fewer than 20 pilots, it's not as if this couldn't be done.

We need participation and the sports class fills that need, but allowing the top competitors to fly there race ready Ventus 3 and the like should be discouraged either with higher handicaps or another method. So the lower performance gliders will have a chance of being competitive.

We need to begin by asking the pertinent questions to those who are not in attendance. I can tell you why I can't attend all day long, but if you are trying to attract people who have not attended then the questions should be presented to those who don't attend. Then, and only then, can the contest committee reliably determine whether the change must be related to schedule, cost, location, or some combination of these factors. While we are on the topic, contests are considerably boring for families. Think about a football game for a minute. If a family attends to watch a high school football game, there is action from the beginning to the end. Lets look at the Reno Air Races which draw crowds. Or the RedBull Air Races! I wonder if they have conversations about the safety of low passes at the contest??? Our sport lacks a draw. Why would anyone ever attend to watch a glider race? Thus, why would anyone drag family or friends out to a glider race?

Weather is the emost important factor for sucessfull contest, organize contest at the time and places with high chances for good weather

Weekend contests, shorter contests, camps for non-juniors. Also, a better use of social media by the SSA to promote racing. The official SSA Instagram account has...one post, ever.

You have to demonstrate exactly what it entails to push pilots over the "edge". Unfamiliarity with anything breeds fear! I think my video idea above would be the best way to do this. YouTube and Vimeo are our friends.

encourage a class (Club) with a range of glider that excites newer pilots about flying in older generation gliders (read affordable) encourage mentoring in contests. formal structure for that? Someone to hold your hand and show you the ropes through your first contest or two. OLC team flying as a way to train new contest pilots.

learn to race races seem to always have appeal. I know that this is a lot of work for the organizers, but at least one every 2 years should pick up the new crop of budding race pilots. perhaps an organized effort to rotate them between regional races to help spread the load yet keep them within reach of new pilots

proper task calls
the spectators sure did like the finish line finishes.
Please provide comments on other issues you would like the Rules Committee to consider at the 2018 meeting.

"Task Setting in America" is a critical and much neglected issue. Do we continue to call so many 3:00 hour Assigned Areas Tasks at Nationals on days that could well support 4:00 hour Racing Tasks?

(None)

Again, the club class handicapping clearly is not doing the job of putting lower-performance gliders on an even footing. Fixing this is NOT easy. But the reality is that contest soaring will die if you need to have a glider like an ASW-28 or Discus 2 to have a chance in the club class. People who have those gliders should be flying standard class anyway. Most club-owned single-seaters are around handicap 1.0 or only a little better in the USA, ditto most entry-level gliders that pilots buy. Where the weaker gliders get screwed in contests is transitions, particularly into-the-wind transitions. If you can't make a transition others make, you lose right there. One simple change that would help is to set a threshold on the glider-handicaps that contribute to the formula that devalue a day. e.g. use only the gliders that are the weaker half of those in the contest to determine whether the day is devalued. I also think that handicapping will be forced to go to a variable handicap based on speed-on-course, but that's another issue. Another idea is to run contests, particularly regionals where there are only enough pilots for two classes, is just two handicap classes broken into 0.95 above and below. "club" and "sports" are mostly meaningless.

All, it is a thankless job that you do and I appreciate the hard work and hours you put into the process. I have presented a few points that I am passionate about, and I know that it is impossible to please everyone, but I would like to make one request: Please start expanding the reach of these surveys in order to figure out how to get more participation in contests. Without looking outside of the previous 3 years of contestants, we will never figure out how to draw more people into this sport. Our sport is going on life support right now, and we need to start drawing more youth into the equation, and more excitement into the races.

Bring back the ‘drop a day’ formula. Enforce it at all Regionals by decree. Don’t provide the pilots to elect it at the pilots meeting as a loud few grey beards engage a mob mentality and it’ll never even be tried.

Don’t mess with Flarm, make it mandatory for all contests, it works! Don’t change to FAI rules to try and help out a couple of US team guys. Face it “the US Team sucks”, bad, with the exerception of Sarah Arnold NO ONE has done Jack in along time, and no one I see is going to do anything different, sorry but that's the way I see it.

Fix the handicap system.

For most of my 50 years in competition flying, cost has been a significant issue. I applaud some of the steps the Rules Committee has taken to address this: e.g., the handicaps in Standard Class and not being too quick to mandate FLARM in the early years. I suspect if they were tasked with making affordability one of the key goals of contests, that would improve participation. I also applaud recent decisions (i.e., this year) to allow organizers to reschedule contests as bad weather made the original dates impossible (i.e., delaying R2 by a weekend and R4S by a week). Sure, some pilots couldn't attend, but they wouldn't have gotten a contest anyway. In the old days, we had an announced option to extend a contest by a day or two (or more, in the case of nationals) in order to get the required number of days. Consider that again? Last year I entered contests comprising 23 days and got 8 official days. This year I doubled my flying, scoring 16 days of a scheduled 22. That's a wild swing. Anything we can do to boost our flying days helps.

I have been an active contest pilot who has become disenchanted with US team selection politics and US rules. As a result I flew no contests this year and plan on only flying the PAGC next year. This is one contest pilot who has placed top 10 at two WGC’s and no
longer interested in the US contest scene.

I think combining Standard and 15 Meter into a single class or at least event where maybe they’re scored separate but fly the same task would be an advantage since they are close in performance.

I would like the committee to seriously consider adoption of the IGC rule format. I would also like to retain the options, via the local procedures, to allow site appropriate finish procedures. Also - wish to thank everyone on the Rules Committee for volunteering for an important but “thankless” job.

I'll just use this space to THANKS to all the volunteers who make contests possible.

IGC/FAI rules do not require contest ID under wing, please consider removing this requirement in US rules. FAI 4.3 CONTEST NUMBERS 4.3.1 The contest numbers, as validated by the Organisers, shall be displayed: a. On both sides of the tail fin and/or rudder. These should be at least 30 cm high. USA 6.2.2 The Contest ID shall be displayed in a contrasting color on both sides of the vertical tail (minimum height 12 inches) and under the right wing (bottom of ID toward the trailing edge of the wing; minimum height is the smaller of 24 inches or 90% of the wing chord excluding a control surface).

If team flying is to be tried, I like the UK system where all the teams are on the same frequency and everyone else can tune-in.

Make the rules simpler. If we want to compete internationally, use FAI straight-up. For local competition, keep them simple, just use OLC. There's two rules to rules... Only incent safe behavior and keep them simple.

On the registration forms ask for information on transponders and ADS-B. When we were communicating with search and rescue after the after YO we had to scramble and go to the FAA web site to determine if these devices were installed. Having all the information in one place is important

Pairing up of classes for Nationals. There are getting to be a lot of multi-span gliders that are competitive enough in multiple classes. Try not to pair up 18 and Open or 15 and 18. That prevents flying both, but more importantly it puts both in a possibly geographically undesirable spot, so the pilot ends up skipping a year entirely.

Please send the Contest Management section in an email to those individuals who are not SSA members but function as CM's. Their input, expertise, and recognition for their service is very important. I can name three very great ladies that fit the bill. Kerry Huffstutler, Rhonda Tyler and Virginia Thompson from Canada all should get this section. I know there are more out there, but I'm just a flat land flyer in the south!

Provide an easy to read, summary of any rule changes annually.

Publication of SSA sanction fee finances and what they are used for.

Pure gliders should be able to ballast up to motor glider wing loading at no water regionals. The argument that this ballast can be dumped on weak days is lame because if conditions are that weak the organizers will cancel the day as has been proven on numerous occasions. This leaves the pure gliders flying at a 1 pound wing loading disadvantage for the entire task time for every task.

Questions 1.1 and 1.3 should have also asked: Did you fly any other contests or where you a contest official? My answers would have been "yes" and "yes".

Re: MAT Tasks Many pilots are opposed to a one turn MAT. Standard Min Task Distance is 60,50,40 miles depending on contest. Should the minimum task the CD is allowed to set be those distances?

Reduce the maximum size of cylinders for Turn Area Tasks to 20 miles to better match FAI rules (30km). This will help to reduce the
spreading out of the gliders on task. The US is hurting our results at international contests by flying by ourselves. While it appears safer, we are not gaining critical skills on flying with others on task. The lone wolf style of US flying does not translate to FAI contests. 

Same comment as many years. The "rules" aren't the problem in terms of participation. The expansive poll I ran about 8 years ago clearly indicated that the majority of potential contest pilots aren't that concerned about that. It's about time and sitting around doing nothing when the weather goes bad.

Start working on advanced handicapping schemes to prepare for the future.

Stop trying to make a black and white decision on going to FAI rules. FAI rules are not consistent with growing new racing pilots in the USA. We do not have the concentration of pilots and like beginning sailplanes in areas like they have in European and other countries. Focus more on how to grow the sport, encourage contest newbies and hence grow the pool of contest pilots.

Take the fees out of the rules. Despite claims to the contrary they are one of the reasons that has been given to me as to why some sponsors no longer hold contests. As long as the rules state the fees, some pilots will complain to the sponsor even if the SSA waives the rule.

Technology will increasingly be part of soaring. ADS-B, FLARM, Flight computers, tracking devices, transponders, whether in the cockpit, Wi-fi, Blue Tooth and more will be interconnected and communicating to a larger degree in the future. While there is no use opposing this march it may be a good idea to publish some guidelines on what is acceptable and what crosses the line on the competitive side and why. Thank you for your hard work to keep competitive soaring safe and fun. Standing on the ramp at Uvalde this year I was struck that there is no better place to be in the world and I appreciate your work to make this possible.

Thank you all for your service to the sport. I look forward to racing in 2019

Thank you for all of your efforts in promoting & facilitating our sport!

Thank you very much for the time and effort you put into this each and every year.

Thanks for all the work you do!

Thanks for your hard work and dedication.

The "new" 78 square mile start area is absurdly large. 39 square miles was already too big, especially for an AT.

The US allows different gliders in the club class than are on the IGC club class list. If someone wins the Club Class in a glider not on the IGC club Class list he is allowed to be the US National winner but should not be able to qualify for the club class team. If you want to qualify for the club class team you must qualify in a glider on the IGC club class list!

Way to many rules. But then I am old. Hate it when that happens.

We should never impose weight restriction for FAI class the way it was done in Seminole this year. As a result of this last minute restriction I decided not to fly contests this year. FAI class should be held at location that can accommodate the class properly and if any restriction needs to happen it should be based on wing loading. The decision that was made left high wing area gliders disadvantaged. This should never have been allowed.

You don't need to create new rules just because you are on the rules committee. Have Fun.

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Responses for each text type.
Return to the 2018 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.