2019 SSA Competition Rules Committee Meeting Minutes –Final
Palo Alto, CA November 9, 2019

Attendees
9B Andy Blackburn
H7 Bif Huss
UH Hank Nixon
DT David Coggins
EA Rich Owen
X John Good
QT John Godfrey (via phone)

Election of Officers and Committee Appointments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RC Chair</td>
<td>Andy Blackburn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>David Coggins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rules Writer</td>
<td>John Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules Change Summary</td>
<td>John Good, Andy Blackburn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilots’ Opinion Poll writer</td>
<td>Bif Huss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilots’ Opinion Poll publisher</td>
<td>Andy Blackburn, Hank Nixon, AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Ranking List</td>
<td>John Leibacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicap Sub-Committee Chair</td>
<td>Hank Nixon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winscore Liason</td>
<td>John Godfrey</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSA Website Liason</td>
<td>Rules committee members as appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoring Adviser</td>
<td>John Godfrey</td>
</tr>
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Future Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Assignee</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/21</td>
<td>Meeting Minutes to committee</td>
<td>DT, 9B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/29</td>
<td>Minutes comment period ends</td>
<td>ALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/6</td>
<td>Publish minutes on SSA website, Publish Poll results</td>
<td>DT, UH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/6</td>
<td>Competed draft of all rules and appendix changes to committee, cross reference links vetted.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/7-20</td>
<td>Rules change review period</td>
<td>ALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/29</td>
<td>Publish Rules Change Summary on SSA website</td>
<td>UH, 9B</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>Pilot comment period closes</td>
<td>ALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/17</td>
<td>Final rules changes agreed</td>
<td>ALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/24</td>
<td>Draft rule change document published to committee for review</td>
<td>X, 9B</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/24-2/1</td>
<td>Rule vetting</td>
<td>ALL</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Final rule documents vetted</td>
<td>9B</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/7</td>
<td>Blue book cutoff date - documents transmitted to Hobbs</td>
<td>9B</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>Publish Rules on SSA website</td>
<td>UH</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>Handicap committee complete with 2020 updates</td>
<td>UH</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/15</td>
<td>Poll topics to poll writer</td>
<td>ALL</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/20</td>
<td>Poll to Aland for publication</td>
<td>H7</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/1</td>
<td>Call for nominations to committee</td>
<td>UH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>2020 Pilot Poll and Election announcement</td>
<td>9B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>Poll Opens</td>
<td>AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/20</td>
<td>Poll Closes</td>
<td>AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 6-8</td>
<td>2020 RC Meeting</td>
<td>9B</td>
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POLL AND ELECTION
1) Poll participation. 163 people responded, down 13.8% from 189 last year. About 65% of the 2019 all Nationals pilots responded and about 25% of all others and 32% overall. Multiple announcements were made on RAS and an email blast to all on the ranking list was done. It remains difficult to estimate how many on the list are still not getting email messages.

Poll Responses Down 14% from 2018

![Graph showing poll responses down 14% from 2018](chart.png)
2) Rich Owen, running unopposed, returns to the RC to serve a 4-year term.

PARTICIPATION

3) UPDATE – UH study - Contest participation was slightly down compared to 2018 with total entries being 516 compared to 547. Regionals down from 426 to 402. Nationals down from 121 to 114. 100 pilots flew 114 entries and 93 participated in the poll. Nationals drop was partially due to the Sports/Std event at CCSC. This had a number of unfavorable. First, the event was scheduled virtually in conflict with many other contests, most notably the Club class, which affected possible double participants. Second, the event was rained out and rescheduled which prevented a complete loss but did result in loss of about 8 entries. The later timing was better for weather, but several people could not reschedule or consider coming (school back in session). The Open and 18 Meter Class Nationals were scheduled in Hobbs together. With the number of JS-1C's that competed in Open or 18 Meter, it precluded them from participating in both events. PAGC conflicted with a modest effect. The importance of better scheduling and positioning of nationals by the site selection committee is very apparent.
Where have all the pilots gone?

Folks try contests for one maybe two seasons and don't come back. Following up with first year contestants may be a key to increasing participation.
Starting (2001) 496
Departures 1,431
Rejoins 340
Permanent Losses 1,091
New joins 1,046
Ending (2020) 451

Less than one-third of all pilots who have been on the PRL list over the past two decades remain on the PRL today. The vast majority of those who leave the PRL depart within one cycle. Apparently, they try a very limited number of contests and then stop flying contests altogether.

Conclusion: New contest pilots should be given special attention to understand their needs and expectations ensure they have a good experience and receive focused efforts for retention.

Poll responses are down by 14% for 2019. However, 2019 is the 4th highest participation to date. Participants are between 150 -190 over a five year period. Scheduling of contests is a major factor in participation. Such as class combination, location and time between to allow pilots who fly multiple contest.

Sport Class significant decrease
Need to decouple the Sport class from other classes. Needs to be the alternative class for pilots to fly when their nominal class is not convenient to participate.

15M slightly increase
18M growing

Standard slight decrease
Site selection committee working to improve contest scheduling for contest season to reduce or eliminate scheduling conflicts for 2020/2021. However, the committee is limited to the soaring community whom want to hold a Regional and or National contest. For example Minden 2020 is in conflict with Cordell 50th anniversary.

Total contest entries continue to trend down by 1% per year.

Review of pilots on the Pilots Ranking List for a 20 year period indicates a 10% decrease per year. With the introduction of the Online Contest, has become a substitute for participation in sanction contest.

Contest managers are requesting a document “How to run a contest” (cookbook). Rich Owen has one in draft and John Good has been capturing best practices from many contests over the years. Rich and John to publish after collaboration.

Bif Huss to poll (survey) first time (39) contest pilot. Andy Blackburn to supply list.

4) CONTEST ACCIDENT REPORT (UH Reporting)

Five accidents were reported related to SSA sanctioned contests.
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a. Air Sailing Regional - Sailplane landed long after a high pattern at the
   contest site. Conditions were reported to be windy. Glider ended up in soft
dirt and sustained damage due to gear collapse. No injury.
b. Uvalde Invitational - There was a high energy impact in rugged terrain. Fatal
   injuries resulted for the pilot. There was significant concern over how long it
took to locate the accident site.
c. Club Class Nationals - Off field landing in a dirt field. The glider pitched
   forward and this resulted in damage to the lower nose area. No injury.
d. R2N Wurtsboro - The pilot of the self-launch type sailplane had trouble
   staying aloft. He made four engine relights. He attempted a fifth at a point
   too far from the airport, and at low altitude. The engine did not start and
the pilot landed in a swampy area. The glider sustained damage to the
leading edge of one wing, and the horizontal tail. No injury.
e. R11 Truckee - Glider tried to exit the runway on the cross taxiway and
   clipped the taxiway sign, with leading edge damage to the wing. No Injury.

Search And Rescue (SAR) document for contest managers. Rich Owens to send
Seminole’s SAR document to John Good and David Coggins for review. Then
include as an online document resource to Contest Managers.

5) Review of 2018 RC meeting action items (which need to be revisited?):
   a) UH/9B - Research better tool/platforms to distribute the Rules Poll and Election
      notices for 2019.
      Better results utilizing the SSA email server. However, our polling
      continues to be caught by SPAM filters. Continue to work on solution(s)
      to broadcast the survey without tripping the SPAM filters.
b) EA - Generate list of contest managers to survey their inputs regarding how the
   rules affects their ability to manage contest.
   Polled both the CD and CMs regarding their input into the rules.
   Basically, they do not see a need to participate.
c) 9B/UH/X – Generate new pilot intake best practices for CM guide. (Not
completed). Additional consideration: Poor new contest pilot retention is a
   particularly large source of PRL losses.
   Document generated. Needs to be reviewed by the committee then
published.
d) 9B/Doug Easton - place request for credit for CD/CM/Score duty on registration
   form
   SSA treasure is placing onto the entry form (online) for 2020.
e) Doug Easton and EA to establish electronic signing on forms. EA/9B/H7 to
   establish electronic payment capability, as well.
   Issue with a few states regarding electronic signing. Oregon, California,
Connecticut and New York will not allow electronic signing of WAIVERS.
Work around (for all 50 states), Pilot can print the waiver, sign, scan and
send waiver to the contest organizers.
Add options on submitting of documents to page 7 of contest document. PayPal, on two contest pilots have utilized. Payments APPS do not work well in all cases. Varies greatly from bank to bank. Most popular is a manual credit card entry.

f) UH to clarify the process of handling oversubscribed multi class nationals. Completed. Hank to issue.

g) UH to recommend improved class pairings for Nationals to site selection committee
   Continue to review and refine. Discussed in length under participation. In addition, the site selection process is documented in the Request for Bid document.

h) 9B/QT – Recruit and oversee team to begin development of WinScore changes and SeeYou scripts to incorporate FAI Rules plus US local procedures/adjustments (as feasible). Collect experience in developing/maintaining national rules and local procedures from other countries. Investigate potential scoring system failure modes in a full US implementation.
   WinScore implementation is complete and tested. Nothing done with SeeYou. Winscore may need to be updated with another set of scoring equations with respect to the 2020 trial if we adopted the US FAI proposal.

i) UH/QT/9B - Handicaps - both the suitability of various handicaps systems (see also #28) for use in the US and the way the handicaps are integrated into scoring. WinScore automatically downloads US handicaps. Figure out how SeeYou does this and how to adapt it to US needs – e.g. Sports Class weight adjustments.
   Weight adjustments have been revised and are in good shape. Based handicaps with published polars are in good shape. However, sailplanes without published polars are at best estimate with respect to the available data.

j) 9B/H7 – Look into requirements and resources for uploading of Tasks directly to pilot flight computers and downloading of IGC files directly to the scoring program via cellular/Wi-Fi/Bluetooth connectivity.
   Current population (majority) of flight computers do not have this capability. In some cases, flight computer do not allow task changes once flight has begun ie. SN10.
   What is required is standard format for task. Changes to prime task or backup task are not allowed in WGC due to the variety of spoken languages.

k) 9B/UH/QT - Connection to FAI for pilot ranking. Automated uploading.
   Implementation issue is centering on the US pilot database does not have IGC pilot Identification number for all pilots. Need to revise the contest entry form to include this information.
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I) DT/QT/9B- Connection to US PRL. Recommendation for providing scores for PRL processing. Investigate differences between PRL and FAI ranking.
   Reference above.

m) UH/QT - Training of scorers. Most scorers in the US are almost exclusively trained on WinScore. We will need a SeeYou training program to avoid problems in the longer run.
   No issue as WinScore has been updated. In addition, WinScore is intertwined with other SSA databases.
   Action (9B/QT): Identify/create a list of all the integration required to switch from WinScore to SeeYou should that become necessary.

n) UH - Recruitment of 3-4 contests for 2020 trials.
   All FAI National Contests

o) H7 to supply recommended process for standardized handling of crewless pilots.
   Completed

SPECIFIC TOPICS BY RULES SECTION

SECTION 1.0 GENERAL
None

SECTION 2.0 SANCTIONING
None

SECTION 3.0 CONTEST PERSONNEL
6) Request to make sanction fee waivers transferable from a non-flying spouse who was Scorer, CD or CM.
   “I would like to request that you revisit 3.2.2 with your fellow Committee members sanction fee waivers to CMs, CDs, and Scorers. I believe that ‘Spouses’ that serve in these positions be able to transfer the waiver to their Competitor other. The cases I reviewed revealed when a spouse volunteered, the competitor would also do more volunteering for the contest.”
   Not adopted.
   Rationale: Too many what ifs scenarios to manage.

SECTION 4.0 PERIOD OF THE CONTEST
7) Increasing duration of Club Class Nationals.
   Poll: Lengthen – 25%, No change – 66%
   Not adopted.
   Rationale: Agreed with the Poll results.

SECTION 5.0 ENTRIES

8) Adjust wording in 5.7 to clarify handicaps in 20M Nationals. Other adjustments?
   Adopt the language stated in 6.11.5 and apply to 6.11.2
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Rationale: Standard Class handicaps are fixed and not weight adjusted or configuration changes. Make both the same.

9) From UH via Steve Leonard and others: Ships included in Club class. We have had a couple of gripes about removing the Kestrel (17M ship).
   No Action
   Also we should discuss the current allowing of motorized ships. I will be prepared to discuss both issues.
   Adopted allowing motorized.
   No change to handicapping in Club Class

10) From JB:
    Per our discussion at CCSC, I understand the reasons for having a minimum number of competitors and a minimum % of the winner’s score for them. I well recall several regionals decades ago where a Ka-7 in the hangar and a 1-26 on someone’s trailer were entered in the Open Class to get a class for the three pilots who showed up with big ships.

    But at the recent Standard Nats at CCSC, there was a disincentive for us to keep flying despite having reached four days with all competitors exceeding the required 40% of the winner’s score. So I wanted to propose a change: viz., after a contest has achieved a sufficient number of days and competitors with a sufficient percentage of the winner’s score, it cannot become unofficial because of subsequent events: e.g., one or more competitors drop out or score insufficient points to maintain the 40%.

    Specifically, I would propose modifying paragraph 5.2.1.1, as follows. The change is in [brackets]:

    5.2.1.1 Minimum number within a class for an Official competition
    For a National competition: either eight regular entrants with a final score not less than 40% of the winner’s final score, or five regular entrants with a current pilot ranking score greater than 92.0 and a final score not less than 75% of the winner’s final score [except that once the requirements for an Official competition have been met, the minimum number of entrants and the final score requirements will no longer apply]. NOTE: this might mean removing "final" from the sentence and wordsmithing it a bit.

    I haven't thought much about it but I think it would make sense to have the same modification to the regional Rules, too.

    Entrant must achieve 40% or above for the days which validates the contest.
    May require additional wording.

SECTION 6.0 SAILPLANES AND EQUIPMENT

11) Technology in the cockpit
    Poll Results – Carriage (2018 -> 2019 responses)
    • Flarm (85% -> 87% carry)
    • ADS-B Out (12% -> 26% carry, 39% -> 33% plan to for 2018 -> 2019)
    • Tracking (90% -> 90% carry, mostly Spot, InReach grew 25% -> 28%)
    • Weather (18% -> 29% have tried – after being relatively flat)
    • AHRS (18% -> 18% have installed)
Discussion of trends and potential impact on safety, fairness, enjoyment of racing. Implications for rulemaking.

12) FLARM
   a. Requests to exempt Club and Sports Class Nationals from mandatory carriage rule. Poll: Exempt – 50%, Retain mandatory – 47%
      No Change
      Pilot Option
   c. Demonstrate working Flarm. Poll: Log on Request – 49%, Submit log. – 26%, Pilot’s word – 24%.
      Added to the appendix: Working FLARM is required for the contest. CD may request a FLARM IGC file to determine functionality. If found inoperative, warn other pilots and allow the contestant to continue flying per CD judgement.

SECTION 7.0 AWARDS
   • Request to revise wording to qualify for speed trophies at US Nationals from “fastest scored speed” which does not include penalties to “fastest winning speed” or “fastest scored speed on a penalty-free flight”, or similar. The issue with the second wording is whether small penalties should be disqualifying or only if the penalty results in a non-winning score.
      o At least one winner from 2019 has requested not to be awarded the trophy due to having incurred a penalty that resulted in not winning the day.

Preference to reword to include, fastest scored speed of the day winners.

However, this may violate the endowment of the trophies. Rewording endowment of trophies is beyond the scope of the RC EA to investigate the speed MOU. UH to escalate to board for advice as appropriate.

SECTION 8.0 PROTEST
None

SECTION 9.0 SAFETY
None

SECTION 10.0 CONTEST FLYING
13) FAI Rules - Review of poll feedback
   Mission statement: SSA Rules Committee (RC) intends to adapt US rules towards greater harmony with FAI rules by incorporating FAI task definitions and scoring formulae. RC retains its focus on safety, participation and fairness in administering the rules under which US contests are flown.
FAI trials for 2020
71% Favor, 25% oppose, 4% no response
WinScore is configured to support National FAI contest for 2020.

Specific Rule feedback:

- MAT (2018 Drop/Keep: 52%/48% → 2019 Drop/Keep: Regionals - 23%/74%, Nationals – 51%/42%)
- Units (2018: 65% English, 35% Metric → 2019: 58% English, 13% Metric, 26% Combination)
- Start line (2018: 51% optional, 26% yes, 23% no → 2019: 41% option, 40% cylinder, 18% line)
- Start Altitude (2018: 62% limited, 38% unlimited → 2019: US 2019 Rule 47%, Fix Below 23%, No Limit 26%)
- Finish height/penalty (2018: 75% FAI, 25% non-FAI → 2019: 70% feel FAI approximation for 2019 is “about right”)
- Team flying (2018: 55% yes, 45% no → 2019: Regionals - 47% yes, 54% no, Nationals – 39% yes, 59% no)
- Ground support (2018: 45% yes, 55% no → 2019: 33% yes, 67% no)
- AT turn configuration (2018: 67% 500m 33% 1 mi, 51% no distance credit → 2019 51% 1mi, 29% 500m, 14% 0.5 mi, 48% no distance credit)

Adopted for all FAI-Class Nationals as follows:
2020 FAI task definitions: FAI Annex A Parts 6 and 7.1-7.9 - integration philosophy is by waiver.

Rationale: Support the US FAI scoring proposal via implementation along with FAI task definitions in the US for the 2020 season.

ANNEX “A”
Adopt Metric for distance and English for altitude.
Start line and cylinder are available. However, only one can be utilized for the duration of the contest.
Handicapping standard Class need to be addressed
Altitude limited starts are not supported in ANNEX “A” states “one fix below a stated altitude after the gate is open.”
Can only claim the first task completed.
No MAT

14) MG airfield bonus – Is 1mi/800’ too close to traffic patterns?
It's distance than this. SOtB

Alternatives:

1. Request from John Good and misc pilot feedback.

The proposal to be considered is to eliminate "start out the back" (hereinafter SOtB). This would be done by returning to the rule that first-leg distance can be no greater than from the center of the start cylinder. (A pilot can start by exiting the start cylinder anywhere, but doesn't gain distance by doing this in its "back" half.)

SOtB has just one benefit: it removes a few words from the rules (the ones that cap the distance of the first leg).

It has several drawbacks:

1. It's un-obvious, especially to less experienced contest pilots, and thus represents a rule that gives an unearned advantage to more experienced pilots.
2. Especially on weak days, it can disadvantage late launchers. They will often not be able to reach the favored start position (up to 10 miles from the airfield) during the normal 15 minutes from last launch to task opening.
3. It should motivate the CD (in the interests of fairness) to increase the time from last launch to task opening. CDs (those that understand) mostly opt to accept this unfairness, due to the undesirability of losing valuable soaring time on difficult days.
4. It can increase the chance of outlandings before the start, as the optimum start location may be far enough from home that a safe return for a re-launch isn't possible.
5. It includes a (poorly understood) implication for tasks on slow-to-develop days when which the chance of completion is in doubt. On such days, savvy pilots will make an early "distance" start (out the back, to maximize distance) and then a "speed" start, which may be much later and from near the "front" of the cylinder. In case of an incomplete task, the earlier start is used, giving up to 10 miles of "free" distance.
6. At a time when US Rules get criticized for being different from those used at WGC events, it represents a huge departure from IGC start rules. And it's perhaps the only US Rules difference for which obvious advantages can't be cited.

SOtB thus offers no safety or fairness benefits (indeed, it actually compromises both). Its disadvantages are a poor trade for the one small advantage noted above.

Alternatives:

1) Return to “front half” rule
2) Return to “last start” rather than “best start”
Return to Front Half rule (2017 rule wording).
Rationale: 2018/19 rule introduced too much ambiguity to the start.

**Finishes**

16) Review 2019 rule change to use “FAI-like” finish penalty.

    No issue

17) Airport Landing Bonus


    No Change

18) **10.5.3.4.1** Once per flight, pilots may elect to test an engine that was not used for self-launch. The engine must be started within three miles of the home airfield, within 30 minutes of aerotow release and not below 1000 ft AGL.

    Poll: Eliminate 3mi Limit – 25%, Test In Start Cylinder – 20%, CD Determines – 23%, Keep As Is - 26%

    Poll: Reduce penalty for being outside 3 mi. Yes – 72%, No – 13%

        Eliminate 3-mile limit
        10.5.3.1.5 Verbiage change to accommodate the elimination of the 3-mile limit

19) Question 7.14: Discussing adopting the French method of a time penalty for a finish below the finish cylinder.

    Poll: Favor – 6%, Oppose – 26%, Not sure – 66%

    Not Adopted

20) Question 7.11: Authorizing the use of a sector for an AT to enable it to be used during potential adverse weather.

    Poll: Yes - 63%, No - 32%

    Not Adopted

**SECTION 11.0 SCORING**

   Adopted: Alternate FAI formulae adopted by FAI

Handicaps

   Not adopted
   Rationale: Comparison indicates only a slight difference. Will take another look during 2020.


   Done

SECTION 12.0 PENALTIES

24) QT request: Eliminate Minor Airspace penalties.

   Not Adopted

SECTION 13.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

None noted at draft time.

Participation

   RC is looking into combining the Standard class with other classes as well. Possible handicap the combined class. No action for 2020. Continue to monitor participation and competitiveness of Nationals in Std/15M

26) East-West Nationals. Poll: Yes – 45%, No – 48%

   No Support

27) Limit Nationals to Outstanding Sites. Poll: Yes – 36%, No – 55%

   Data only

US Team Considerations
28) FAI Scoring has more point spread for similar relative performance. Using FAI formulae will result in 2020 contests having higher weight than normal. Do we want to weight the 2020 results to compensate?

Moot

Safety Topics
29) Safety report generated by UH. Discussion.
   Discussed previously, duplicate

Communication with Pilots
30) Review effectiveness of reaching all pilots on the PRL.
   Continue to review methods of reaching pilots and work around regarding SPAM filters.

Other items not included in agenda
31) None noted at draft time.

Errata
32) None noted at draft time.

   Discussion on ANNEX A Section 3
   Drafting of local rules.

   Validity of Finishes:

   7.8.3B Finish: Preferred finish ring to be defined as final finish. Retain US finish definition.

   7.8.4 Finish: Call 4 miles from the finish ring or CD discretion.

   US FAI proposal is adopted at the FAI level. Available to utilize during the 2020 contest season on a voluntary basis. Becomes mandatory for the 2021 contest season. Reevaluated just prior to the 2022 contest season and voted on to permanently incorporate.

   Presentation of local procedure document.

   8.1 Scoring System

   Take the alternate scoring from ANNEX A and incorporate.