To: Hank Nixon, SSA Contest Board Chair

From: Andy Blackburn, Rules Sub-Committee Chair

Subject: Report for Winter Director's Meeting

Date: 1/24/2020

The SSA Rules Sub-Committee is currently in the process of completing the rule-making cycle for the 2020 contest season. This includes completion of the fall meeting in November, writing of new or modified rules and assigning of key implementation actions with regard to follow-up items as well as changes to infrastructure such as SSA.org and WinScore.

Most notable this year is implementation of the decision taken in 2018 to adopt, under waiver, key features of FAI Rules for US Nationals of FAI competition classes. Sports Class will not be subject to the waiver. The RC elected to implement FAI task definitions and scoring formulae as described in the recently adopted, US-proposed “Alternate Scoring” method that is available for FAI contests starting in 2020. All other aspects of the rules for US contests, including penalties, handicaps and contest management will remain under the US rules as amended for 2020. The RC felt it important to support the US scoring proposal as it addresses multiple issues with FAI Rules used at WGCs in the view of the RC and UST Committee.

The rationale for the trial has multiple considerations. 1) The US contest infrastructure is currently dependent on single individuals who have created proprietary systems. This leaves the systems for running contests vulnerable to interruption should those individuals no longer be available to maintain and update them. The change to FAI-based rules allows US contests to migrate to commercial off-the-shelf software as needed. 2) The move to FAI Rules makes it possible for US pilots to take advantage on many technological innovations that connect tasking, flying and scoring of contests that would be increasingly difficult to emulate under proprietary US systems. 3) The move to FAI-based rules makes it easier for the US to integrate with international systems such as Soaring Spot and the FAI pilot ranking list. 4) The move to FAI-based rules gives the US more “skin in the game” when it comes to proposing changes to FAI rules, such as the US proposal to change how scoring is done. 5) Pilots support the move and while the RC believes that the benefit to US competitiveness (outside the scoring changes, if permanently adopted by the FAI) is likely to be small, the implementation as proposed will maximize the potential benefits without compromising key objectives as regards participation in and safety of US contests.

Submitted respectfully for the Sub-Committee,

Andy Blackburn, 9B