

# **Rules Committee Procedures for Implementing Changes to the US Soaring Contest Rules**

**December 4, 2003**

## **I. Statement of overall goals and procedures.**

1. Continue to evolve the rules following a defined and predictable process responsive to inputs from competitors and contest organizers, and consistent with the philosophy and policies of the SSA as defined by the Board of Directors.
2. Two basic scheduling tracks will be available for making rule changes: fast (for “minor” changes) and slow (for “major” changes). The designation of changes as major or minor is within the discretion of the Rules Committee, but “major” changes would typically include changes that will affect selection of equipment, task types, start and finish methods, significant task scoring changes, and significant penalties.
3. Corrections and clarifications will be made as soon as practical.
4. Major rule changes will be tried in Regional contests before being implemented in National contests.
5. The Rules Committee operates by a vote of the five members. Decision making by consensus is preferred.
6. The Rules Committee will meet face-to-face at least once/year and as-needed by teleconference. Routine communications will typically be by email.
7. The Rules Committee will elect officers each year at its annual meeting. Officers include chairman and secretary. Additional committee assignments include “rules writer”, and “poll writer”.
8. Requests for interpretation of the rules should be submitted to the Rules Committee chairman, who will consult with the committee on substantive issues.
9. The Contest Committee Chairman is responsible for issuing rules waivers, after consultation with the Rules Committee.
10. The Contest Committee Chairman responds to contest protests, in consultation with the Rules Committee.
11. The subject matter of any protest will be an agenda topic for discussion at the next Rules Committee meeting.
12. As a general rule, proposed rules changes and topics under consideration by the Rules Committee will be presented to the contest pilot community for discussion and input before implementation. This procedure need not be followed for simple corrections and clarifications. This procedure may not be followed for all minor changes, but should be followed if practical. This procedure must always be followed for major changes.
13. The Rules Committee will issue a status report to the SSA Board of Directors (BOD) prior to each BOD or Executive Committee meeting. This report will include a presentation of suggested rule changes along with an explanation and rationale for each.

14. The Rules Committee will compile and maintain a written record of the committee meetings, rules making rationale, and rules changes. These records will be publicly accessible, preferably by posting on the SSA website.
15. The Rules Committee's operations, documents, and procedures will be as transparent, open, and accessible as practical. Communication with the contest community will be a high priority. The committee will be as responsive to contest community input as is practical.

## **II. Specific procedure followed by the Rules Committee in implementing changes to the Rules**

1. Comments on topics for consideration are solicited during the year, with extra emphasis near "poll time". This includes input gathering at many Regionals and most, if not all Nationals.
2. The annual SRA/SSA Poll is constructed in late August for publication in September. Suggestions for poll questions come from the committee members based upon their contacts from contest pilots and organizers throughout the year.
3. Input from the poll is used, in part, to finalize an agenda of topics for discussion at annual Rules Committee meeting in November. Input from the poll factors heavily in committee decision making regarding possible rule changes.
4. Proposed rule changes are discussed at the annual Rules Committee meeting. Each change the committee votes to implement is categorized as either "minor" or "major" (see section I. 2. above for definitions of "minor" and "major"). The content of the suggested changes is published in the Rules Committee minutes in early December. The actual wording of proposed changes will be included in the minutes whenever possible.
5. "Minor" changes are proposed for implementation in the upcoming year. "Major" changes are tried in Regionals or by waiver in the upcoming year, are then discussed and "polled" at the end of the upcoming year, and are then re-considered for implementation the following year.
6. Proposed rule changes, with background, are provided to the SSA Board in the "blue book" prior to Winter meeting.

## **III. Rules Committee Operating Schedule**

January	Rules changes and descriptions proposed for current year are sent to SSA for inclusion in Dire briefing book (Blue Book). Rules committee chairman submits report to Contest Board Chairman Handicaps published Proposed new rules published on SSA web page
Winter Board Meeting	Rules approved
After BOD Meeting	Publish approved rules changes on SSA web page

Prior to Seniors	Scoring program changes in place Publish new forms
After Seniors	Adjustments to scoring program in place prior to first regionals.
When rules posted	Announcement on ras and SSA homepage
Contest season	Solicit input from pilots concerning competition rules via meetings at contests.
May	Start rules committee election process by asking for Director nominations and bios of Candidates. Notice to ras/SSA Homepage for handicap change suggestions.
July	Send rules committee election ballots or make electronic ballot available on the web. Remind committee members of deadline for pilot poll subjects.
August	Tally and publish ballot results. Construct final version of pilot poll and make available to SSA web site. Chairman's report to Contest Board Chairman for Executive Board meeting.
September	Establish date/place for annual committee meeting. Establish agenda for meeting
October	Tally poll results and publish on web. Ranking list reminder to compiler Sports handicap changes/additions to Rules Committee Rules Committee agenda item: Contest form changes
November	Rules Committee meeting.
After meeting	Handicap changes to compiler
December	Ranking list sent to SSA/SRA for posting on web site. Rules explanations prepared for Director's meeting. Exact rule wording ready . Handicaps published by compiler Send SSA changes for contest forms