

# 2006 SRA Pilot Opinion Poll Results

October 22, 2006 9:57 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.

Answers to value response questions.

No responsive questions of this type were found.

Answers to short responsive questions.

No responsive questions of this type were found.

Answers to medium responsive questions.

No responsive questions of this type were found.

Answers to long responsive questions.

3.4: If you are currently flying with PCAS or Mode C transponder, please describe your experiences, good or bad, and your opinion of the effectiveness of these systems in gliders.

Another thing to go wrong

Effective for alerting commercial jets to our position at certain specific locations. Not effective for avoiding the mass of light aircraft, which in reality pose a greater threat in most of our airspace/altitude. Not effective for glider/glider or glider/towplane separation which counts for most of our midair collisions. The fact that a guy with a brand new ASG29 had his transponder turned off at 16k over the pinenuts tells you something about batteries and transponders. To make this realistic we need the manufacturers to make room for a dedicated monster battery. I dont suppose that common sense will prevail and the upshot of this incident will be to give us a nationwide code and the right to turn the tponder off.

Flying on the West side of major Chicago airports, there is heavy traffic at 4-6,000 going into Midway and OHare. Often the traffic is at and below the glider operating altitude. At those times it is evident that ATC is routing traffic around my glider. I am not in contact with ATC and only occasionally monitor the ATC frequency. Overall I believe that in areas such as ours transponders help significantly in separation issues. All Chicago Glider Club ships are equipped with transponders, so are around 50% of the privately owned gliders.

For the money, PCAS is worth every penny (\$500) Is will respond to anyone whos got a transponder and thats about 90% of whats out there. A transponder in your glider adds the protection of center knowing where you are and diverting others around you. Also, TCAS equipped ships (airliners & all biz-jets with 6 seats or more) will see you on their TCAS and avoid you. The ASG-29 had a transponder, but it wasnt on! The SSA has a letter in to the Federalies requesting that transponder equipped sailplanes be allowed to \*Not have them on all the time\*, in order to save battery power.....If the damned thing was on, we wouldnt be having this discussion, right now. When are we going to get our shit together and stop requesting waivers to the rules that are in place to keep up all alive? Same thing with our waiver for ELTs, now some contests require them. How about our waiver that relieves us from the pilot sign-off of assembly & dis-assembly of the glider? Now, were signing off the wing tape.....Maybe the Federalies were right in the first place?

I believe that the PCAS is a better choice than the the Transponder. The Pcas is very effective in notifying you of the traffic that transponders do not, the singles and twins that do not have TCAS. It also alerts you to the

large traffic and Military jets as well. With a five mile warning it allows you time to make a couple of circles, ID the traffic and make or dont make corrective action. I have found this to be and invaluable tool and way better than the transponder. I fly in the Phoenix class B and the Tucson Class C and the Prescott Class D airspace and it is surprising the amount of traffic that I didnt see before having the PCAS unit.

I fly in the Reno area, from Air Sailing and Truckee. Squawking 0440 without contacting Reno Approach, I hear Reno Approach warning heavies of my location and of the location of other gliders. After contacting R.A., given a specific channel to squawk, Reno approach will deviate heavies from my intended flight path. In my opinion, anyone flying in the Reno area without utilizing a Mode C transponder is endangering the him/herself, other airplanes and the entire soaring soaring family.

I have had a mode C Becker for 3 years. They are much more important than an ELT in my opinion.

Just started using the PCAS. Seems to provide good info in the busy corridor between COS and DEN. However, if many transponder equipped gliders are in the vicinity, it will probably not provide warning of an airplane that may drive through the thermal. So as with any such tool, its not perfect.

My mode C transponder works fine. Local approach control sees me well. I have had absolutely no battery life issues and leave the transponder on for up to 6 hours with no problems.

New glider - no opinion yet. I expect that controllers will likely filter any code I use. I hope it will help with TCAS-equipped heavy iron.

No problems with operation of mode C Transponder on its own electrical system

Not reassuring to date (although it is impossible to know what was successfully avoided). At New Castle 05 was in a thermal with xpndr going R R R on the edge of the airspace. Commuter descended out of the clouds and missed me by 200 or so feet and the guy on the other side by about 50. I use one in the hopes of setting off TCAS near my home base (State College).

Numerous deviations by large aircraft directed by different centers because of my transponder signal.

Only meaningful problem is dealing with the FAA. I just gave up, use the thing anyway, and keep a Inoperative sticker handy.

The transponder provides access to airspace which would otherwise be unavailable. The transponder allows ATC to provide separation from IFR traffic and possibly other VFR traffic if they are providing flight following to that traffic. The transponder also provides information needed by other aircraft equipped with TCAS or PCAS. However the transponders provides no safety between two non PCAS equipped VFR aircraft when ATC is not willing to provide flight following.

Transponders are very effective in high traffic areas. Commercial and Biz A/c have tas or tcas and they can see us eventhough we cannot see them. If in an ATC environment, such as front range of Denver area, communication with them will give traffic reports. I highly recommend them. Devices such as FLARM are outstanding - I flew it in europe for 6 weeks and it worked flawlessly and provided many surprizes of a/c not seen. Again, highly recommend if we can get it in USA. I hope to work with PDA software mfrs to incorporate 1200 xpdr code info. This would be similar to FLARM except the other ac will not see us unless we have a transponder. In light of the recent midairs, I strongly suggest that all gliders have xpdr installed, about \$2000

Turn it on, take off, fly, land, turn it off. Havent seen any aircraft close to me, but I usually fly in a low density area. I do hear Approach control at various airports warning traffic of my presence without any contact from me. Gliders with PCAS units seem to know when Im about. Ill have a PCAS unit by next March for the 2007 season.

Very effective in the Denver area. No more close encounters with biz jets or airlines since. Transponders will be

less effective in gaggles of transponder equipped gliders as the system is not designed for such high traffic density.

Where I fly it is almost irresponsible to fly without a transponder. I used to occasionally talk with LA center (they took it as a request for flight following and started making unreasonable requests). Now I just listen in when crossing high traffic areas, to make sure they are seeing me (always have).

#### 14.0: Narrative Comments:

Are there any other issues that you would like the SSA Rules Committee, or the US Team Committee to address? Are there any additional issues that you would like to see addressed in future SRA polls? Finally, please make any additional narrative comments to the questions above.

1) 9.1 yes : select all pilots in the year prior to the WGC 2) Distance counted from the point you actually exit start cylinder. 3) Ken : I smell stinky manipulation in 8.2 : Discus A has 0.939 and you guys are trying to sneak in D2 with 0.925 (now the best standard glider )

1. Continue to run our Sports Class Nationals as is but only allow Team Selection for those flying the Club Class ships. Need to ensure we dont dampen enthusiasm for Sports Class in the process of improving Team Selection. 2. For next year (2008), suggest we look at some radically different approaches to contests. Specifically, can we leverage some of what the GTA Series, Governors Cup, etc. are doing with locally decentralized contests to have a type of racing thats in-between a regionals (highly structured and centralized) and the OLC (totally unstructured and decentralized). As a for-instance, should performance in such a contest be counted toward Pilot Ranking and can we then use this Pilot Ranking to try to market more heavily to people to attend regionals. I think the current approach to Regionals (hold it and they will come) is running up against issues of time commitments, new family constraints, etc.

1. Align admin/procedural rules with international rules (e.g. report starts required). Benefit is less new stuff to remember when competing internationally 2. Align task definitions with international rules. Same logic but no restriction on other task types not used internationally 3. Modify scoring so task flying strategy better matches international considerations. 4. Consider scoring start from where cylinder/line is crossed. This will allow SeeYou to be used for scoring eventually. (I am also continuing my multi-year lobbying effort to get them to provide distance calc from course line of first leg). 5. Airspace violations: consider relaxing penalty as follows: FAR airspace violation remains as current. SSA airspace violation (e.g. over flying class C/restricted area or entering restricted area when inactive) gets landout at incursion. 6. Clarify the rules about flight log security. As I currently read the rules, an IGC secure log is not required to be submitted at a Nationals, just one made with an IGC approved logger). Problem is with the phrase in 10.5.2.1 (applicable security checks). My take is that an IGC secure file should be required but the secure file can be created by the scorer running the CAI conversion stuff on the cai file. In any case the language should be clarified and indexed to the level of flight recorder approval of the FAI. 7. Doug Haluza and I have had some correspondence on the submission of contest logs to the OLC (see attached). Flight logs are currently archived in multiple, inconsistent places (SSA contest site, Leibachers site, OLC, Guys site). OLC is a different contest from the one they are flying in. I dont believe the OLC has undertaken to be the repository of record for other competitions (if they were to undertake that role it would be very nice). I would advocate that there be an olc provision for a scorer to upload flights on behalf of contestants (with their prior permission) as a way of avoiding phone line congestion such as we have at Mifflin. IOLC would have to provide some additional time latitude so all logs could be submitted in one fell swoop at the conclusion of the contest. It would be good to have a clearly defined archive for contest logs that can be accessed by interested parties via the internet. Encouraging organizers to assist as they can in providing internet access for contestants is nice but I would guess not seen as a central contest function.

11.1 defined benefit is more important than participation in nationals. However one thing to think about is the amount the team member does to promote and raise funds. One pilot may do a lot of work to get donations another pilot nothing, they both get the equal amount of funds, this could be allowed by pilots being able to raise funds independantly.

12.1 Team flying allowed if the pilots are not being scored for seeding. Only good for team members that are already on the team.

9.1 Do you really believe that one year makes a difference in pilot skill level?

9.1 Hard to answer a Yes/No question that contains an OR choice. I favor the current Staggered Team Selection process 12.1 Current US rules do not allow Team Flying. Either Selectees fly as guests that do not disrupt competition or U.S. rules are restructured to reflect WGC rules

9.1 has two questions: I selected Yes for Currently, for a particular class we select one pilot two years prior to the WGC.

9.1 Yes, we should continue. Ambiguous wording. The answer should be continue or change, not yes or no.

9.1: My yes answer to the ambiguously worded question 9.1 is in favor of continuing the current policy. 13.1: Organizing and teaching at a cross country camp is of significant benefit as well, as I have learned from personal experience.

A point to consider: Question 8.1 suggests limiting Club Class Team selection to pilots flying Club Class gliders in the Sports Nats, and question 10.1 suggests allocating Team funds based on class participation levels at Nats. If both these measures were adopted, it follows logically that Club Class Team funding should be based on only the number of Club Class-eligible participants at Sports Nats. Perhaps some Club Class specialists should be careful what they wish for.

All decisions regarding team selection, training, and funding should be made with rigorous consideration of a single objective: WINNING.

ALL open class gliders need 850kg, not just two-seat motorgliders; this is the direction IGC is heading. Otherwise, only two-seat motorgliders can be competitive ! Question 9.1 is phrased impossibly and youll need to discount the answers (youve asked A or B and give choices Yes or No). Transponder issue is a mess given no suitable 406 units on the market (many are waiting for GPS-linked fixed-installation 406 units, Pointer and others are delayed indefinitely).

Before you dumb down soaring competition by throwing out the MAT you might poll past and potential CDs as well.

Comments on the poll The wording of 4.0 on the MAT seems perversely designed to generate negative answers. Of course it takes some heads down time. Of course wed all like to fly in perfect weather where ASTs make some sense. Does this mean we rule out the MAT, so that this tool is not available? How else on earth are you going to run a sports contest on the ridge, for example? Do you like it is not a very productive way to address should it be in the toolkit. If you phrased the question do you think its a good idea to force everyone to go to a prearranged set of turnpoints even if it means landing out half the fleet? you would get the opposite answer to the same question! 5.2 doesnt address the problem posed by 5.1. Sports class, the Nimbus 4 hits the back of all the cylinders and comes home 15 minutes undertime, while the 1-26 does a perfect task. Devaluing both just weights injustice a little less in the final scores. 6.3 fails to mention that the IGC devaluation rules lead to massive gaggle flying. Its strange that you mention this in 6.1 where it doesnt really have an effect, but left it out of 6.3 where it counts. In thinking about world rules, we need to remember that the purpose of our contests is to run our contests, with the skills and resources (much less crew) of the assembled pilots, not to run a training camp for worlds. 12. I dont see how you can limit team flying to just US team selectees. Its particularly hard to do given that we dont have more than one selectee before the actual contest, so when are they supposed to do this? If were going to develop team flying skills, we have to open it up to everyone, so people can learn to team fly before they are actually selected for the team, and not as a last-minute hookup with someone they dont know. The international teams report they have to practice for years before getting any benefit. In the process, you might as well also open up radio communication for mentoring and passing information more generally, especially at regionals. As Ive suggested before, the only workable solution I can think of is that communication IS allowed, but all communication must be on a common frequency (choose 3 or 5), brief, not in code, and conducted in a sportsmanlike manner. Since people seem to love to chat on the radio, they might enjoy contests more, which is what were here for after all. 13. Instead of focusing US team members skills on getting beginners going xc, it makes a lot more sense to me to have US team members skills

focused on a training camp for the next 30-40 on the ranking list. I really would attend a team camp whose objective was if you're #20 at nationals, here are the skills to be #10 and if you're #10 here's how to win -- and if you're on the team, what does it take to win the worlds. The poll should be a poll of questions where opinions really count. (For example, If nationals lasted 7 days not 10 would you be more likely to come?) Asking people in essence to vote on complex rules proposals like the world scoring is asking for trouble. Additional comments/suggestions: 1. The cell phone / pda / portable satellite weather issue is going to get out of hand. Having a visible satellite photo showing where cu and overdevelopment are, and having the weather radar to show where rain is, is a huge competitive advantage. For examples, at Hobbs (18 m nationals) this year, we ran lots of 30 mile radius turn areas, in which what's going on in the next turn area is the central strategic question. You can't see the next turn area. At Uvalde last year, there was a famous day in which the winners penetrated thunderstorms in the first turn area, thus avoiding having to penetrate worse thunderstorms in the second turn area. I presume they were lucky, not looking at web cellphones, but one quick look would have made for a contest-winning decision. Most of all, of course can I penetrate the rain and what's behind it are vital decisions. Right now we have a very useful and widely available technology, a ban on its use, and no enforcement. This is a bad combination. The best solution I can think of is to keep the ban, (especially since legal equipment still costs 3k and cellphones are still illegal), and encourage the CD to broadcast (or have someone else) broadcast the information available on radar, visible satellite, etc. on 123.3. It doesn't have to be much, 1315 Z visible satellite shows isolated cu in the north half of the second turn area, and a storm developing 20 mi north of the third turn. This is especially important for safety information. When there are thunderstorms making task completion difficult, why on earth do we not have someone on the ground watching the radar / pirs and regularly broadcasting what he sees? 2. Sometimes contests are held with constant threat of severe weather, for example Cesar Creek this year. For some reason we abide by an unwritten rule that the CD may not call off the task once the start gate has opened. Rely on pilot judgment we say, but we all know how reliable that is, especially when a national win lies just on the other side of that big thunderstorm. I suggest that you formally allow the CD to call off the task for safety reasons, even if the start gate has been opened and the task is underway. There is no rule against it right now, but it doesn't happen (most CDs think there is a rule against it) and there would surely be a huge protest were a CD to do it (Well I started early, I knew how to dodge hail, and I was gonna win; how dare you call it off). If a squall line is coming in at 30 mph, shouldn't the CD be able to say that's it, no more racing, get them down NOW rather than continue as we presently do in stoic silence? 3. You should remove the ban on using self-contained PDA/GPS with software, at least for regionals, or at least for sports class regionals. Come on, who is going to bother writing a program to generate a false IGC file to win a sports class regional?!!! On the other hand, this is the most popular setup for new pilots, and asking them to buy more equipment seems silly. In addition, most regionals bend the rules and accept them anyway, so why not bring rules in line with practice and just accept any IGC file in regionals -- or at least in sports regionals.

Elimination of the line finish vs. 1 mile cylinder with 500 floor at Regional contests: This is a safety issue that should not be left to the contest organizers to decide. Several classes finishing from possibly different directions pose a severe collision hazard when pilots fail to adhere to finishing directions given.

I am not on the pilot ranking list, but I am a contest organizer and contest manager.

I strongly feel that the Rules Committee should stop making rules that differ from the FAI, and focus their efforts on being lobbyists to change the FAI rules themselves. I feel it counterproductive to have a separate set of rules. In order to address poor behavior of US pilots, the CD should be encouraged to levy unsportsmanlike conduct penalties on pilots who are known to be attempting to bend the rules, rather than have the Rules Committee continue to create new rules to protect the contests from this type of behavior. There should be no rules named after people, as there are today.

I think the current rule that has to do with start gates should be revised. This is suggested, A pilot in any class may start any time from release to one hour after take off. This would allow for tactical decisions on weather and other factors. The last one off has the same opportunity and the random nature of the grid process keeps the potential advantage spread around. This procedure would enhance safety in the launch area and spread the race out over more distance and the first one off does not have to circle for an hour before starting.

I would like a regional contest scored such that the start cylinder exit point be used for the first leg scoring distance. For example, if you exit the side/back of the cylinder, the distance for the first leg and the start time

should be calculated from your actual exit point and then the scoring formulas applied in order to determine which exit point is your best start. I believe this would greatly reduce dangerous prestart gaggles and would also reduce gaggle flying on course by spreading out the starters over a larger area. The Mifflin SRA meeting decidedly pointed out that many people there believed that this method greatly increases the number of perceived ideal start points. Currently there is virtually just one ideal start point After Mifflin I was led to believe that this question had a good chance of being on this poll.

I would love to see our pilots do better with team flying, but it would cause harm to the competition as we currently have it if this was allowed for the top pilots at US nationals. Basically, it would keep the the hopeful pilots down in the scores if the top pilots were allowed to team up. Perhaps the team camp could be used in some fashipon to work on team skills, as I would expect this to be a share the knowledge venue where communication during flight is to be promoted.

My understanding is that the site selection committee and some members of the board have broadcast their disapproval with Uvalde and want to remove it from the short list of sites to host future nationals. If this is true, it must be vigourously addressed by those pilots who recognize its value. It is, without doubt, the jewel in our crown - the single most dependable racing site in the North America. (Blessed with weather, infrastructure, convenience, and on-site management.)

on question 12.0: I think this is a good idea, but they should not be scored in the overall pilot scoring system. Their scores should not count. They still should be able to participate, and measure there speeds against the other pilots.

Please consider shortening National contests. My suggestion is 6 days. I did not go this year because I feel that 10 days becomes generally overtaxing and too expensive. It can also be difficult to round up the requisite crew for such a long time committment (particularly if your crew-wife has her own sports and hobbies and vacation constraints). Many prospective racers and crew people have limited vacation schedules; as it stands, a single national contest will consume an entire years vacation allowance for many folks. An added benefit to a shorter contest is that there would then not be a need for a rest day. That results in more bang for the buck. Similarly, my suggestion is that regionals should be set at 4 days for all of the same reasons. In general shorter contests would allow racers to travel around to more sites and attend more contests on the same vacation budget. Shorter contests would also effectively reduce the present high cost of making a single mistake that results in a landout and blows a contest. The commensurate benefit would be reduced dropout rate over the course of the contest. Shortening our contests would result in greater attendance at US regionals and nationals and thereby help promote the sport of sailplane racing. It would reduce the present burdensome committment required of contest personnel.

Question 9.1 could be stated clearer. What is the yes or no question?

Question 9.1 is ambiguous with the or in the question: Yes we should continue the current 2-year selection. No, we should not change to all selected in the last year.

Question 9.1 is ill-formed. It has an or in it. I think safety factors should be addressed more heads-on. e.g. should a contest day be canceled mid-flight, if the weather makes successful task completion hazardous? I for one dont like the continuation of days where flying directly through a line of storms is the only way to win.

Question 9.1 is unclear. I couldnt tell which answer I was actually giving. I think we should continue choosing 1 pilot from each class early to give them the oportunity to participate in the preworlds.

Question 9.1 is useless. It asks either and then gives a yes/no answer.

Question 9.1 is very confusing What are you asking? I think that you should choose all of the pilots competing so that they have a chance to go tho the preworlds, or dont compete at all in the worlds. If our goal is to compete with the world, then all of the rules need to be in line with what the worlds are doing and we should strive to get to that. What is our objective?

Question 9.1 should be deleted. there are two questions in this statement and answering yes, could mean either one.

Question 9.1, my answer is Yes to keeping it the way it is. (poorly worded question :) )

Regarding 12.1. It would be good to figure out how to have team members practice team flying. However it should not be done in such a way to effect the official results of any given contest where this is done. The current multidirectional finish for the MAT task is particularly unsafe. I suggest a final steering turn always be used.

Regarding US rules vs IGC or any other world based organization: I believe the US should align itself with the movements of the rest of the soaring world. We should also participate and work with those organizations that define those rules.

Require a CD to have complete knowledge of posting daily scores to the SSA web site before approving him/her as CD.

Selection of WGC members should be made using WGC racing rules. The USA nationals should use rules that reflect regionals rules. The entry fees for the selection events for the participants for the WGC should reflect the costs of sending the participants to the WGC.

Sorry about my little rant in 3.4 above. Transponders are coming, they may just be required within 40 miles of Reno for all flights above 10,000 feet. If that happens we will be forced to require them in contests held at Minden and Air Sailing. Not a bad way to ease the rest of us into what is probably coming. Lets not fight this, its to keep us all alive. How about one small step for mankind and make the critical assembly check, mandatory (its only \*recommended\* now). JJ

Sports class currently gives a 25 point bonus for a constructive landout,i.e., landing on an airport instead of a random open field. This should not apply to a motorglider. There is no reason for a motorglider to land off airport at any time since they have a motor to ensure reaching an airport every time.

Tasking: At the 2006 World competition in Sweden this year 88% of the tasks were assigned speed (racing) tasks. At our four FAI-class US nationals this year, only 22% were assigned speed tasks. What is wrong with this picture? There is no way that our team is going to do well in a European-venue AST contest if they are selected on the basis of their "fly where you want" skills, rather than their ability to win tough AST tasks in marginal conditions. The MAT should be eliminated, and contest directors should be instructed to use the assigned speed task at least 80% of the time, reserving the TAT for truly unusual circumstances.

Team flying: Ive used this technique in local XC flying. With practice, it can greatly enhance task completion and speeds, particularly on weak days. H7 is a great resource. I do believe that team members should be allowed to practice in contest situations, but how they are scored will require careful consideration. Training Camps: We (PGC) hosted one in 2005. Despite the weather for the event, the XC bug hit and we had a record number of people participating in contests this year.

The members of the US team often live far apart and rarely get to practice together. The US team members could refine many team flying techniques by using Condor - the glider racing simulator and a speaker phone to practice radio techniques. It is not a substitution for flying together but could be fantastic practice available 24/7, everywhere and even when the weather is bad. We have a geographic challenge [as the US is too big to get the team together often], this is one partial solution and it is cheap and easy. Get with the 21st century.

The proper resolution to the problem posed in 5.0 is for the CD to use TA circles of the appropriate diameter.

The questions associated with the MAT task failed to state how the task was being called. A MAT task called with a significant number of points would not call for heads down behavior, nor would the luck factor be especially high. A MAT task called with a minimum number of points--0, 1, 2--would become much like the old

PST which was quite luck driven and could encourage unsafe conditions. I believe that the MAT task, properly called, is a safe and challenging task.

There is no way to answer question 9.1 It needs to be restated so that an answer that makes sense can be given (you give an either/or option in the question and only a possibility of a yes or no answer. Also, the poll should give an option on each question of something like no opinion.

Throw out the results of question 9.1: poorly written. Revisit 9 lb. wingloading limit in Std. Class. It worked just fine. I flew max gross this year in Uvalde and it was fun but I'd just as soon see a return to 9 lbs. for safety reasons. I don't want to launch at, say, Caesar Creek with 350 lbs. of water and then dump down. Or at least allow organizers--including at the nationals--to set a wingloading limit (instead of having to pick from anything goes and dry contest) Continue to draw a distinction between national and regional competition; e.g., for nationals--longer tasking, lower target completion ratios, more rigorous entry limits (yeah, I know the organizers have to make a living but having a few inexperienced pilots on the line can influence the CDs tasking and other decisions), finish lines (not cylinders), perhaps higher wingloading (OK, so I'm not consistent), no rest days (in the infrequent cases where the weather stays good, we want to fly, not take a day off), etc. Encourage more multi-class contests at the national level, not just 18m/Open or anything plus World. Sure, some pilots want to fly multiple classes but most nationals are shrinking (21 at Uvalde this year??). A nationals should be a big time experience and it's more difficult for organizers (and crews) to get excited about hosting a nationals with lower attendance than many regionals. Pull the plug on team support for World Class. It was a noble idea doomed from the start and it's not fair to siphon off resources from viable classes to prop up the PW-5 group. If they can survive like the 1-26 folks, great. I'm not sure which is more offensive/pathetic: 8 Open Class ships or the same number of PW-5s vying for a national championship. Deal with the Open Class size problem with allocation of resources according to popularity of class. Open Class at least has state-of-the-art gliders flown by [a few of] some of the best pilots in the country, not something that can be often said about PW-5 competition. Finally, it's not a Rules issue per se, but consider ways to capture and distribute the best of the daily safety briefings at contests. I've lost count of the number of times pilots (at all experience levels) have commented on the quality and value of these. Yet you have to attend a contest to benefit from them. Finally #2, continue the push to get more about competition into Soaring mag: a column (like KS has done) on competition issues, including skill improvement tips that can help XC and contest pilots; and better contest writeups (the best of these can make for a good read even by those who don't compete, and help bridge the gap that some feel exists). Finally #3, MAKE THE RULES SIMPLER. I can't imagine coming into this game today cold and trying to memorize/understand the mass of complexities contained in the current document. It's got to be as much of an impediment as anything else for someone thinking about getting into his/her first contest.

Your wording concerning the Club Class international Team selection was done poorly! No mention that ALL pilots can still enter the Sports Class Nationals and ALL pilots can be National Sports Class Champion, just not considered for the team unless he is flying a Club Class glider!

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