



United States Soaring Team Task Force

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Topic 4 - Team Planning

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This document is for discussion purposes only and should not be considered the policy of U.S. Soaring Teams. Instead, this document provides a starting place from which to develop more accountable, transparent, competitive and sustainable United States Soaring Teams. You can help shape the future of U.S. Soaring Teams by making your comments to John Seaborn. planned@boulder.net Task Force web page http://www.ssa.org/UsTeam/ust_taskforce.htm

U.S. Team Planning

Purpose & Goal

The purpose of the US Team Planning function is to develop and consistently maintain a forward looking schedule for US Soaring Teams that allows management, pilots and staff to anticipate, develop and accomplish the tasks necessary to participate in World Soaring Championships well ahead of need.

Philosophy & Discussion

Historically there has been little long term planning done for US soaring teams competing internationally. The focus has tended to be exclusively on the next championship effort with organization and logistics occurring rather late in the process. There has been little competitive planning focus. The new complexity of multiple teams, championships and venues turns good planning into a competitive weapon that will allow U.S. soaring teams to more effectively position themselves to achieve competitive excellence at World Soaring Championships.

In the past US team planning typically came to an abrupt halt when the US Team Chairman stepped down. This inconsistent process has allowed US Teams and the team organization to get far behind the curve when preparing for Pre-worlds and world championships.

A more consistent planning function that “lives” within the overall emerging Team Committee can offer more consistent support to the various teams and the US Team Chairman as they come and go. The idea is to provide an opportunity for US Teams to be ahead of the curve when it comes to organization, funding and logistics regardless of the longevity of the US Team Chairman.

A strong planning function accrues benefits to both individual teams and the overall Team USA organization.

From the individual team prospective a consistent planning process provides our pilots, team managers, supporters and contributors a more consistent and known process. A strong planning function provides an early warning to team members regarding their eligibility and the critical milestones they need to accomplish to participate in their WSC. A forward looking process provides the opportunity to identify challenges and organize well before need.

From the overall Team USA organizations prospective a consistent forward looking planning process gives the organization some ability to forecast levels of participation, budgets and identify challenges well in advance. Consistent forward looking planning communicated to individual teams early in the process establishes a known organizational structure and can also help underline responsibilities and expectations for teams.

Good planning also builds organizational credibility with stake holders including supporters, contributors and participants. Team planning if implemented in a somewhat methodical way is consistent with the overall organizational policy of transparency, accountability, competitiveness and sustainability. In fact planning is the bedrock of these policies.

It is critical that team calendars, schedules be made available to primary stake holders (pilots, crew & management) directly, posted on the internet (US Team Web) and presented at each of the four SSA management meetings held each year.

Who Should Be Responsible For Team Planning?

Team planning should be the responsibility the emerging US Team Committee. There is some discussion on the best way accomplish a forward looking planning process but it is clear that it needs to happen in close cooperation with the SSA Management, US Team Chairman, US Contest Committee Chairmen, Team Captains, the Team Selection Coordinator, Team Document Manager and the US representative to the IGC. Some of the areas of planning responsibility include:

- Developing a six year calendar for World Soaring Championships (WSC)
- Monitoring changes in the IGC and FAI calendar
- Communicating the WSC calendar to pilots, team management and supporters
- Developing and identifying the opportunities for the following programs well ahead of need:
 - Fundraising
 - Logistics
 - Staffing Team Captains
 - Competitive Issues such as the Pre-Worlds

The US Team Chairman and US Team Committee should have oversight authority to insure critical milestones outlined in the team schedule are being accomplished by teams.

Timing & Horizon

A planning review should be accomplished annually with updates as needed when future events became more defined at the international level. The timing horizon should be focused on a perpetual six year plan that would drop the past year and add the sixth year.

Team Selection

One of the absolutely critical aspects of team planning is the selection of pilots and team captains. The benefits of early team qualification, selection and notification are at the core of credible team planning.

The fundamental aspects the selection process is:

- Ongoing refinement and development of the rules of team selection
- Team selection rules are published in a timely, transparent and accountable way
- Team selection standings are maintained in a fully public and accurate manner
- Team selection standing are kept up-to-date, within days of the completion of US Nationals

- Team members are notified immediately of their qualification to a US Team
- Team Captains developed early in the process, preferably before the Pre-Worlds

The U.S. team **qualification** process should be separated from the **selection** process. Under the current system the US team **qualification** process happens automatically based on national and past WSC performance using the criteria laid out in the US team qualification documents. The final US Team **selection** process takes into consideration funding, number of WSC slots provided by the organizers and other considerations. Waiting until the selection process is finalized puts the planning process far behind for some teams. Let's split these up. Pilots are qualified if their numbers are right on the team ranking list and they are selected if the funding, slots and others factors align so that you can go. Both steps should be acknowledged to the pilots and team by the US Team Chairman.

Developing the Championship Calendar

Developing a reliable championship calendar is the first step in the team planning process. To augment this effort the following calendars and charts have been developed. These will be integrated into the developing US team document list and the team binder. This chart shows the milestone dates for future World Soaring Championships.

World Soaring Championship Calendar					
2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
WAG World Class 18-Meter			Pre-Worlds WAG	WAG	
Multi-Class	Pre-Worlds Multi-Class	Multi-Class		Pre-Worlds Multi-Class	Multi-Class
Feminine	Pre-Worlds Feminine	Feminine	Pre-Worlds Feminine	Feminine	Pre-Worlds Feminine
Juniors	Pre-Worlds Juniors	Juniors	Pre-Worlds Juniors	Juniors	Pre-Worlds Juniors
	Pre-Worlds World Class	World Class		Pre-Worlds World Class	World Class
Club Class	Club Class	Pre-Worlds Club Class	Club Class	Pre-Worlds Club Class	Club Class
Based on IGC Document dated 10 July 2000 with credit to John Leibacher http://www.fai.org/gliding/championships/dates.pdf					

NOTE: While this transition has been proposed there is currently a good deal of talk about rescinding this transition in the international community. While the 18-Meter phase in is taken into account in the team calendars and seeding lists no additional changes have been made to modify the US seeding and selection schedule.

Class Transitions

The IGC and international community have proposed steps to eliminate two entries per class and add classes to World Soaring Championships. The proposed schedule follows.

This process has very real ramifications for US team selection. If this process goes forward then teams will have staggered selection with some classes being eliminated from some selection years. This schedule needs to be determined with certainty and published so that pilots can plan their participation and seeding strategy accordingly.

For instance the 2001 18-Meter & Open Class US Nationals did not count for a seeding year for the 2003 WSC if the ICG proposal is followed through on.

World Soaring Championship Class Transition Schedule						
28th World Gliding Championships 2003 , Reiti, Italy	1 Open	2 15-Meter	2 Standard	1 18-Meter	0 Club	0 World (PW-5)
<i>Eliminates one Open position, adds one 18-Meter</i>						
29th World Gliding Championships 2006	1 Open	1 15-Meter	2 Standard	1 18-Meter	0 Club	1 World (PW-5)
<i>Eliminates one 15-Meter position, adds one World</i>						
30th World Gliding Championships 2008	1 Open	1 15-Meter	1 Standard	1 18-Meter	1 Club	1 World (PW-5)
<i>Eliminates one Standard position, adds one Club</i>						
<i>NOTE: While this transition has been proposed there is currently a good deal of talk about rescinding this transition in the international community. While the 18-Meter phase in is taken into account in the team calendars and seeding lists no additional changes have been made to modify the US seeding and selection schedule.</i>						

The following calendars show each years (01-06) individual events as per the IGC 10 July 2000 schedule. The 18-meter and Open class IGC transition seeding is indicated but no impact on the US seeding list is reflected in these calendars.

Pre-Worlds Participation

In this time attending the pre-worlds for U.S. pilots especially is near mandatory to be competitive at the subsequent World Championships. Obviously if the IGC class transitions go ahead and the US team selects pilots on the year prior to the WSC no pre-world participation will be possible. Something to consider is changing selection to allow pilots affected by the proposed IGC changes in class size to participate in pre-worlds

See the U.S. Team Calendar on the SSA U.S. Team Web site for the latest calendar information. He web address is http://www.ssa.org/UsTeam/ust_calander.htm

Recommendations

1. The purpose of the US Team Planning function is to develop and consistently maintain a forward looking six year schedule for US Soaring Teams that allows management, pilots and staff to anticipate and accomplish the tasks necessary to participate in World Soaring Championships well ahead of need.
2. Planning should be the responsibility of the emerging Team Committee working in close cooperation with the SSA Management, US Team Chairman, US Contest Committee Chairman, Team Captains, Team Selection Coordinator, The Team Document Manager and the US representative to the IGC.
3. The US Team Planning Committee should create, maintain and publish a detailed Team Calendar of future FAI/IGC events. This schedule should be maintained at least six years into the future and be reviewed annually with updates accomplished when needed as international events become more defined.
4. The Committee would have a limited degree of oversight authority to insure the critical milestones outlined in the team schedule are being accomplished.
5. The Planning Committee would prepare short presentation as part of a more in depth Team USA presentation given at all four of the SSA management meetings each year.
6. The master planning schedule should be made available to US Team primary stake holders (pilots, crew and management) directly, posted on the US Team Web site and in the US Team Binder.
7. Team management needs to get a handle on how the changes proposed by the IGC will be integrated into the US team selection process. THIS IS CRITICAL TO AVOID A FUTURE RAUCOUS SEEDING DEBACLE.