



Updated US Team Selection Process Summary

By US Team Committee

Overview

The US Team Committee (USTC) was created in 1995 and redefined in 2003. It has been tasked by the SSA Board of Directors to, “oversee the affairs of the Soaring Society of America with respect to its representation at Federation Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) approved World Gliding Championships”. The USTC members include the Contest Committee Chair (John Good), Pete Alexander (USTC Chairman, appointed by the SSA Chairman), and three members elected by the full SSA membership; Sarah Arnold (term expires 2017), Fernando Silva (term expires 2018), and Bob Fletcher (term expires 2019).

One goal of the US Team Committee is to improve US Soaring Team performance and results in future World Gliding Championships (WGC).

To that end, during the summer of 2015, the US Team Committee began considering changes to the existing selection and preparation process for our Teams. Outside sources were consulted including former US Team Members and the captains and coaches of the successful national soaring teams of England and France.

Based on this research, the US Team Committee proposed four initiatives considered necessary to field high scoring US Soaring Teams at World Gliding Championships. The four initiatives are: Update US Team Selection Process, Training, Continuity Of Knowledge, and Growing The Pilot Pool. USTC has been working hard on multiple fronts working toward the ultimate goal of improving US Team performance.

For details, see the document titled “Improving US Team Soaring Performance v1.0” which is located within the US Team section of the SSA Website at: http://www.ssa.org/files/member/Steps%20Towards%20Progress%20v1.0_2_13_16.pdf.

As described above, one of the initiatives was to update the US Team Selection Process. After careful consideration and months of discussion with current and former members of the US Team and USTC, an updated selection process was presented to the SSA Board in early 2016. After the presentation of the updated process to the SSA Board in February 2016, a few tweaks were made and a feedback period was set up to solicit feedback from the US Contest pilots during March 2016. Some additional changes were made to the proposal after additional input from pilots, and then the final selection process was approved by the SSA Board in April 2016. The updated selection process was posted to the US Team documents section on the SSA website. This initiative was completed in April, 2016.

The new process added two additional steps beyond the previous US Team Selection Process as defined in the current US Team Selection Policy document v3.3.3 (http://www.ssa.org/files/member/v3.3.4_US_Team_Selection_Policy_Dec_2014.pdf). These changes were made to allow potential US Team pilots to provide input into the pilot selection process and some flexibility in the final selection of the team by the US Team Committee.

Details of the complete selection process can be found at:
http://www.ssa.org/files/member/Update_US_Team_Selection_Process_v1.2.3.pdf.

There are now three steps in the US Team Selection Process:

Step #1: Pilot Eligibility

Pilots eligible to be selected to compete in a WGC event are designated as members of the US Team Squad. To be eligible for the US Team Squad a pilot must be a US Citizen or Resident Alien and meet all applicable IGC pilot eligibility requirements.

For all such pilots, a US Team Selection Score (USTSS) is calculated, by competition class. Pilots are considered a member of the US Team Squad when their USTSS is not less than the smaller of:

- 90% of the highest USTSS in the class
- The fifth highest USTSS in the class

The most recent 3 years of U.S. National and FAI Category 1 Contests results are used for US Team Selection Score, selecting the best two results.

2017 US Team Selection Scores for all classes based on the above criteria can be found at:

http://soaringweb.org/US_Team/HomePage.html

Step #2: Preferential Voting By Qualified Pilots

An important part of the updated team selection process is the opportunity for qualified pilots to vote by preferential survey for members of the US Team Squad which members are most likely to achieve good scores and place well in their class at the upcoming WGC.

This step was added to allow the US Team Squad members to provide comments regarding their fellow pilots and an overall ranking to help the USTC select the best teams possible.

A pilot becomes qualified to vote in one of two ways:

- By achieving a US Team Selection Score score of 85 or higher in a US National contest in the previous 3 years
- By participating as a Pilot, Captain or Coach on a US Team at a WGC event in the previous 3 years

Voting is class-specific and held in confidence within the US Team Committee. SurveyMonkey was used to collect the results over a 10 day period for each class.

Step #3: Final Team Selection

Final selection of US Team Pilots is done by the US Team Committee, with close regard to pilot selection scores, performance in specific contests and team training events, and to the results obtained by evaluating the preferential ballots and associated comments.

2018 Team Selection

This year for the first time the process included a poll seeking evaluations from elite pilots. In every competition class, poll responses were received from a high percentage of those eligible, and it was clear that pilots were consistently careful and thoughtful in crafting their responses. In accordance with team selection procedures, the USTC's final selections closely follow the poll results.

2017 Survey Response Rates			
	Sent	Response	Rate
18M	29	24	83%
Open	19	19	100%
20M	12	12	100%
Std	15	14	93%
15M	26	21	81%
Club	38	36	95%
Total	139	126	91%

The USTC and Ken Sorenson met via conference call to review the survey results and comments to make the final 2018 US Team Selections on October 16 for Standard, 15m, 18m, Open and 20m 2-place classes and October 24 for the Club Class.

USTC Members Present: Pete Alexander, Sarah Arnold, Bob Fletcher, John Good, and Fernando Silva

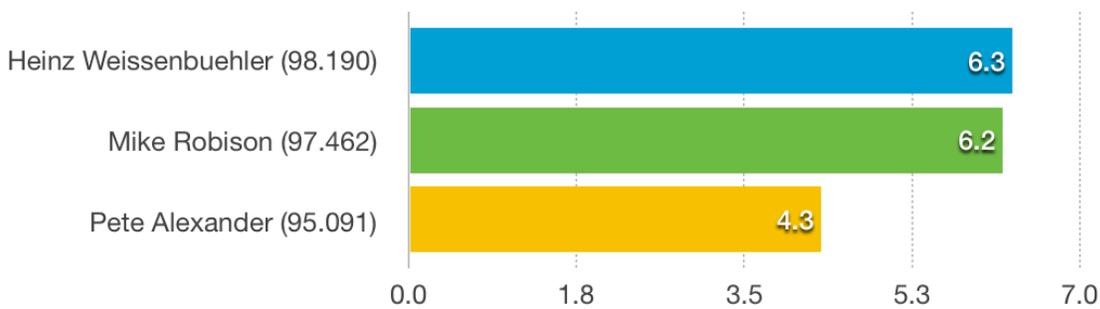
Ken Sorenson, as SSA Chairman, is a statutory member of all SSA committees. He was asked to participate in these discussions because of the need for several USTC members to be excused from the discussions affecting classes in which they were eligible for selection.

USTC members eligible for selection in any class do not participate in or attend discussions for that class' selection.

The 2018 US Team Selection Results for all six classes can be found in the US Team News section on the SSA Website at: <http://www.ssa.org/USTeam?show=blog>.

Examining The 2017 US Team Selection For The 20m 2-place Class

As an example – Here are the results of the 2017 US Team Survey for 20m 2-place Class:



What do the numbers 98.190 and 6.3 following Heinz Weissenbuehler name mean?

98.190 is 2017 US Team 20m 2-place Class Selection Score from Step #1 above. 2017 US Team Selection Scores for all classes can be found at: http://soaringweb.org/US_Team/HomePage.html

6.3 is the SurveyMonkey pilot ranking survey result which is the average of the pilot rankings received from all survey participants.

For example, if there are 10 pilots being ranked the top pilot of a given respondent gets a 10, next 9, ...on down to the last getting a 1 from that respondent.

The scores from all respondents are then averaged. In the above example, with three respondents:

Pilot A gets a 10 (first place vote) from first respondent, a 9 (second place vote) from second respondent and an 8 from third respondent (third place vote). Then his score would be 9, the average of 10,9,8...

Notice that in a class with 14 eligible pilots the top score would be 14, while in a class of 6 pilots the top score would be 6. The only way to get an absolute top score is to be voted number 1 by every respondent.

Final Selection Results For The 2017 US Team 20m 2-place Class:

USTC members eligible for selection in any class do not participate in or attend discussions for that class' selection. Accordingly, Pete left the conference call when this discussion was taking place. The remaining USTC members and Ken reviewed the survey comments and ranking results making the final selection as follows:

20m 2-place Class US Team Selection

1. Heinz Weissenbuehler (Accepted)
2. Mike Robison (Declined; accepted selection to the Open class team)
3. Pete Alexander (Reserve)

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