

2004 SRA Pilot Opinion Poll Results

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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.

12.3: Please give your definition of what makes a contest "fun".

1 Daily prizes 2 Frequent evening events and/or meals 3 Cold drinks after the daily task 4 Activities for families and crews

Make tasks longer. Use more of the day that is sometimes wasted while waiting over the start area for the day to develop. Also, a safe contest is a fun contest.

- All pilots being recognised for their efforts and achievements. - Replaying top flight log traces with pilots commentary

1. Contest is well organized and the CD, CM and scorer are knowledgeable of the rules and follow them. A professional team makes even a bad weather contest good - Examples of excellent were Mifflin, Parowan, Uvalde. 2. The organizers have planned evening events and dinners for half of the days 3. The tasks are varied, ie not all TAT or AST 4. The organizers guarantee excellent weather for every contest.

1. no devalued days 2. getting back every day

1.) Selecting soaring sites with known, consistent good/excellent soaring conditions. 2.) Assigning challenging tasks that really test the skill of the pilots. There is a great deal of fun/satisfaction to be had in successfully completing the daily challenge assigned by the CD. We spend a lot of money/time going to a contest and even for a Regional, I would like to fly a challenging task. The TAT can be and especially good task by allowing each competitor to select the size of his/her daily challenge while flying within their comfort level. 3.) Selecting Soaring sites with good infrastructure/support (restaurants, hotels, etc) nearby. 4.) Frequent, scheduled evening social events 5.) If a rest day is required, try to plan an interesting event. 6.) More pilots flying = more fun.

1.challenging tasks2.social events3.happy,organized contest officials

2 weeks of being with friends with lots of opportunities for get-togethers and social events with families, coupled with challenging tasks that promote discovering and learning new situations, and become memorable experiences.

A contest is fun if 1. It is managed in a manner so as to maximize safety 2. Tasks are called such that there is a reasonable chance for 90% to get home 3. Social events are made available for all to participate 4. The soaring weather is fantastic!

A contest is fun when the weather is good, the tasks are reasonable, there are not too many gliders in the meet, the host town and/or club is enthusiastic about the event, the organization is experienced and understands the problems of the pilots and the crews, and is therefore run safely. Wives and families are really not happy with the safety of the sport and anything that be done to improve the safety including sending pilots over safe landing areas, limit the contest to perhaps 40 gliders, calling off tasks early if the weather is going to be marginal would improve the fun that can be had at regional and national meets.

a contest that is enjoyable to fly and enjoyable on the ground. for most, contests are vacations, and it is more fun if the activities/environment on the ground is pleasurable too. I also like challenging tasks.

A fair contest, no land-outs, and no controversie. Evening social events a big help.

A fun contest for me is one where the CD does not over-task the day based on the expected weather and the task area terrain (landing possibilities).

A fun contest is one where both pilots and ground crew are treated fairly, there is a sense of competition in the air and comradship on the ground, and no one (ie. the organizer, sponsor, or contest personell) are using the contest to push their own adgenda. The organization of a contest should never loose sight of the fact that although we are there for competition, the actual reason we fly gliders is for enjoyment. Any requirements which decrease that enjoyment (increasing cost tends to decrease enjoyment for most of us) need to be very carefully measured against the gains they are expected to achieve.

A fun contest is one you want to go back to next year. A good example is the New Castle Region 4S meet that is great even if the weather isnt (like this year). Evening meals and entertainment every night and people who come up with something new every year.

A fun contest is well organized and well run, it should consider available soaring conditions and set tasks that challenge the best pilots yet offer opportunity for the new or crosscountry challanged pilots to complete. I think the AT and MAT formats offer this opportunity.

A Fun contest is where the pilots have achieved new personal goals resulting in a sense of satisfaction wherever they finish in the final results. A Fun contest is where the crew have been comfortable, with good facilities and finished the contest looking forward to the next one!

A good number of organized events (Dinners and evening events / Rest day programs) . Sufficient variety in task setting to provide different challenges from day to day . Clear direction from the contest organizer regarding dos and donts around the contest site (to avoid frustration to airport owners / pilots caused by participants and crews doing things they shouldnt)

A high percentage of finishers.

A Karl & Iris contest. Seriously, BBQs/potluck dinners, ice cream socials, etc..... A well organized and ran contest with a sense of fun, adventure, and humor.

A lot of flying. No landouts. Great weather.

A lot of participants, a fair CD who knows the rules and calls challenging tasks, using TAT and MAT (especially at the regional level) to enable pilots of varying skills better opportunities to land back at home. An emphasis on safety helps, also. I always like the daily safety briefing from one of the contest pilots. A sense of humor among contest staff helps set an enjoyable tone. Social events (not necessarily every night) add a great deal for crews and pilots.

A task that can be finished in a reasonable time and not an endurance test. Several days of 5 -6 hours in the cockpit is very dangerous.

A well organized contest staff who keep things smooth running and provide a low amount of non-flying stress. R5 World Class at Bermuda High was really fun. The flying was good, tasks were a good measure of skill and fit the wx, scoring was fast and accurate, and the people on the ground made the pilots feel welcome. The pilots had a great sense of comraderie and worked with the orginizers to solve any problems that popped up.

Activities on the ground. It is more important to entertain the crew than the pilot.

Activity & Events

Briefing -- pilot remarks on flights of previous day Overall -- evening low key social events -- get togethers Sports Class competitions are great fun because anyone can enter and fly anything -- handicaps keep scores relative (my 53 years of competition flying has lead to this conclusion)

Call tasks taking into consideration all pilots not just the top ten. This would help the safety record and would increase participation.

Challenging (not impossible) tasks. Large group of competitive pilots. Good weather. Good contest organization (specifically Charlie Spratt as CD). Lots of organized activities (dinners, etc.) aimed at pilots AND families. Good facilities, including provision for campers (including tent campers).

Challenging but achievable tasks, good company, good food, and good weather.

Challenging but doable tasks. Level playing field. High completion percentages.

Challenging tasks, capable competitors, predictable conditions

Challenging tasks, smooth operations, evening social events

Challenging but makeable tasks. I like the way Charlie does it in that he is not afraid to change the task with pilots in the air to send the task to the best looking areas on that particular day.

Charlie Pratt

Close races with lots of social activity after flying. After this year- just gettin to fly

Comraderie, events, dinners, good flying, safety,

Comraderie, fair competition, social events.

Comradery between all pilots. Informal BBQs at the field. Everybody gets a chance to tell a funny story.

Contest fun is: Meeting old friends and making new ones. Finishing a task. Flying with other pilots. Comparing personal skills along with aircraft performance against competition. Flying a safe final glide. Discussing flight with friends after the flight. Not asked but more important: WHAT IS NOT CONTEST FUN: Flying in weak weather. Spending entire day on grid. Never seeing another ship all day. Flying over-called task. Task called for top contenders vs main body of pilots. Flying task called with main purpose to have a contest vs choosing best pilot. Flying task which are mind games vs racing.....such as figuring how deep to go into turnpoints and ETA back home to achieve best speed/distance. Flying task which are luck prone vs pilot skill. Flying task over hazzardous terrain. Flying task which are so hard/long that pilots are fatigued to exhaustion. +

Convenient available housing, social events

decent weather and my crew gets to play lots of golf. Social events every 2-3 days. Making it home when US Team members land out ; -) Winning in 15 Meter Class with a STD Class machine

Design Tasks that are challenging yet realistic. Hold the contest in an area that has something to offer for the non-flying crew (i.e. Lubbock was a very good site!) Organize BBQs and other activities for all participants.

Doable tasking for the majority of contestants Quality social events scattered throughout the event

Evening social events that include wives

Fair and safe tasks that allow the opportunity to fly with other pilots, couple with social activities which build esprit de corps among pilots and crew. This is our familys avocation. We work all year to do this. It should be fun.

Fair competition among pilots of similar skill levels with similar capability equipment, (a level playing field). I have sports class in mind, the more advanced classes can better deal with advantages in equipment. They are the more experienced pilots and usually have more money to devote to the effort. I dont mind being beaten, I just dont need to be anihilated by a 30 year veteran flying the latest, most advanced equipment when I am just starting at competition flying. The hotshot veterans should be flying in the more advanced classes.

Fairness, safe site, pilots that get along, reasonable costs.

Flying a lot, completing difficult tasks, doing well.

For a regional contest, having pilots help each other out. Especially long time contest pilots. The most important thing is to make the new contest pilots feel welcome and included. There is a big reason that the SSA membership is declining. It is that the SSA mainly represents entrenched

contest pilots. Thats too bad. The SSA can cite any excuse it wants but the bottom line is that the SSA membership has gone down while the On Line Contest participation has sky rocketed. The sense of community that the OLC has created is what makes it fun and what makes people want to participate in it. :-) Go OLC Hip Hip Hooray!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

friendliness, family attractions, local interest,

Friendly atmosphere and planned events in the evenings.

Fun = whatever you think is fun. For me, it is going fast and being in the pressure cooker of competition. For others, who knows???

Fun is a challenge successfully overcome, but in a safe environment. Contests won by dodging thunderstorms or flying weak ridge in unlandable areas (or in my case, lost by refusing such things) are just frustrating. Its fun when I feel that I have learned and improved as a pilot, and maybe helped someone else to improve as well. And contests are my gliding vacation. Its fun to see beautiful sights, fly far and high, enjoy the company of fellow pilots, and the inspiring solitude of the airport at dusk.

Fun is: finishing a task flying a task and getting home at least 75% of the time. flying above landable terrain having no one hurt during the contest social events throughout the contest

Fun means contestants believe conditions, tasks, and procedures are safe. Fun means contestants can see and measure in flight their performance with respect to their competitors. Fun means that a contestant can know almost exactly upon completion of the task how he performed relative to others without waiting hours for a complicated scoring program to tell him how he did.

Good flying and a good social structure. Most contests are at the mercy of the wx for the first one and do a good job with the second. New Castle, VA and Perry, SC contest sites are exemplary for their hospitality and social structure. The Uvalde organizers also do a great job.

Good organization by good looking women good weather lots of partys and social events hold contests where it is not too hot or rainy and where there are lots of outlanding fields

Good soaring conditions, good airport conditions, an interesting location, good food and lodging, I win.

Good soaring weather and tasks that stretch a pilot and his skills.

Good social activities after flying. Humane interpretation of rules, educational efforts rather than punitive, inclusion of all pilot levels in daily talks (cannon fodder guys have stories too). No scary tasking, aim for middle 65% level at Regionals, and 80% skill level at Natls. with 3 hour tasking. Remember customer service.

Good weather you cant control. High number of completions to minimize the misery on the road of long retrieves! Good evening social activities and meals together to promote the fellowship of soaring. Good use of the sniffer so pilots are not forced out on a dangerous task with poor chance of success.

GOOD WEATHER!!! Other pilots with good attitudes to learn from.

Good weather, good food, friendly people, short drive to site and of course winning.

Good weather, good tasks, good pilots, good social events, flying ballasted, contest finishes, accurate and timely scores. RACING tasks not MATs, but TATs or ASTs.

good weather, landable terrain, competent organization, plenty of space for parking, landing, nearby accomodation

Good weather, long tasks taking advantage of the weather, fair scoring, safe operations.

Great flying conditions, high winning speeds, good camradery

High % of starters finish. Race every contest day.

High number of finishers Reasonable length of time on course Alternate tasks provided BEFORE the launch Adequate number of tow planes Adequate number of dinner events (One every other night a goal) Planned and/or available activities for rain days (individual or group)

Keep the rules as simple as possible. Make scores available as soon as possible. Make scores available on the internet as soon as possible.

Long cross country flights in both time and distance. The time limited tasks reward flying the minimum time and distance rather than long flights, would like to encourage longer flights. A few social events really add to the fun too.

Longer tasks Timed tasks (MAT, TAT) Smooth operation Social events

Measuring my skills and decisions against other planes and pilots. The more directly I can see my performance to others the better. I enjoy flying assigned tasks (and much prefer the MATs over the old PSTs) for this reason. I enjoy stay close to other aircraft and can see how they are doing compared to me.

Measuring your performance against your peers, and the socializing.

No hassles - good contest management. Good weather data.

No tasking under thunderstorms and rain showers over unlandable terrain. No tasks with zero visability in tiny area with numerous gliders just to get a day in. Good social events !

Plan events which insure competitors and crew participation.

Promote evening social events for pilots/crews. Provide a reason to go out to the gliderport even if its raining for a dinner/cook-out.

prompt information on scores, on task of the day and weather. Informal receptios at the end of the days Imitate the Uvalde TX frendly and efficient organization. Keep pilots and crew together at the end of the day.

Racing with all the best pilots in one class. More classes equals less top pilots per contest, equals less fun. Did the US win 3 worlds between 68 and 74, because we failed to adopt the standard class and everyone was competing in a single serious venue??

Realistic tasks that most can complete but still are challenging. An atmosphere of friendly (stress friendly) competition.

reasonable amount of flying not too many mass landouts absence of tasks involving hazardous weather or bad landout terrain

Reasonable tasks. Accurate scoring. reasonable work load over the entire contest period.

rules not complicated, confusing, or subject to interpretation. easy for cd to administer. well organized. minimum hassle on administrative matters. you know you won if you went the fastest.

Safe and a challenging variety of tasking combined with a social schedule where everyone can relax and enjoy the time with friends.

Safe tasks and social events for all

Safety, good organization, non-flying activities

Selection of a soaring site that is suited for both pilot and crew. Great weather is very important. Terrain suited for best soaring conditions while still providing plenty of landout options. A well organized and planned event always improves the fun factor.

Social events after the racing that contribute to the fun factor for the crews and other workers. Hopefully, getting all together at a common gathering place.

Social events...Charlies picture sharing at Hobbs in the briefing...different BBQs, different activities maybe on rain days(autolaunch signoff...), getting the tow car stuck in the mud after retrieving the sailpane out of a not so dry field. Hearing DJ low on the radio a long way from home. region9 had alien sightings, standards wasnt as good.

Social interaction between pilots and crews. Good flying weather. Contests shold be moved from sites that are in an extended wet weather cycle. We need to develope contest support systems that allow contests to be move to dry sites on as little as two weeks notice Bill Snead 6W

Socials, awards for 1,2,3 and last place finisher per day and at the end of the contest.

Some measure of success, and feeling welcome. The mentor programs which assign a vetran to a rookie as a coach seems to be a great idea at addressing this. There should be others.

Starting off the first day 10% off the optimum and building to the bigger flights. Sight-seeing tasks, in different directions. Staying relatively close to home base, i.e. shorter retrieves.

Tasks in regionals that take all contestants into consideration with limited landouts so all can get back and FEED. A rest day in Regionals, so all can enjoy the contest site area. Not early griding and not staging in the rain. Contest sites with great soaring conditions, i.e. 10 kts+ climb rates, swimming pools and pretty girls.

Tasks where pilots have a chance of flying with/near other pilots, thus giving us an opportunity to learn more (leachers never win!). Social events that involve pilots, crews, volunteers and the community. Something memorable.

The funest part is an accurate, fair, engaging, safe, challenging assessment of ones pilot abilities against the day and against other competitors. Take away one of these elements, and the fun drops dramatically- no matter how many evening socials you have. For some of us, a one week regionals or a two week nationals is the centerpiece of our vacation time. There should be time to spend with crew, relaxing and exploring in a new location, and getting to know new people.

Variation in task calling, long tasks, landouts, interesting site.

Well organized, location suitable for the event, safe operation, challenging tasks, planned evening events to get to know other pilots and crews.

When everyone completes the task.

When the contest is over subscribed year after year it has been made fun.

Winning of course but since everyone cant be at the top of the score sheet then the social activities with fellow competitors will have to do.

You are only having fun when you are beating your friends.....

13.1: Are there any other issues that you would like the SSA Rules Committee to address, or any questions that you would like to see included on future SRA polls?

Question 60...I thought that the MAT and TAT were speed tasks. Are you trying to encourage someone to go overtime and build up mileage? If a pilot is greedy for miles and cannot make it back, he should suffer the loss of points. Time management is an important factor in each task. This ruling would encourage the pilot to continue way over the assigned time limits (If he cannot get back) and hope to gain more points.

(Future pilot poll question) Worldwide interest in free flight has exploded on the scene, as evidenced by participation in OLC and the introduction of FAI free flight records. It is only a matter of time before timed free flight tasks are introduced into international competition. Indeed, had GPS been available when PST (nee POST) was invented, it is likely that it would have been timed free flight. Why not introduce timed free flight tasking into our competition menu, and free us from the tyranny of turn points?

1) Please retain the start cylinder, but eliminate the finish cylinder. Lets go back to an exclusive finish gate. 2) Lets start promoting team flying in this country. Were getting our butts kicked by the Europeans at the Internationals (just as in the Ryder Cup in golf). We are independent as Americans and fly that way in competition. We should organize regionals where you enter as a team with another pilot (with two ships among you). Communicating with that pilot on task would be allowed. See You now has a great team feature which allows you to see your team mate on the moving map. Scoring would involve a combination of the two times (or possibly only the slowest time of the two). This would be a fantastic way to build teamwork and enhance flying skills for faster speeds. It would also be a lot of fun. I think its a great idea and cant figure out why we havent done this yet. Thanks. PC

1) since foreign pilots now can get seeding for Regional Competition and enter using the seeding points, reduce the reserved slots for non-seeded pilots to 2 positions. Allow the contest manager to use the other 3 positions as sees fit. Similar to the sponsors exemption in NASCAR. There are now cases where out of Region Pilots are very involved in the organization and planning of certain remote regionals, but then can not get into the contest due to seeding. Allow the Contest

Manger the freedom to save up to 3 positions for these type individuals. 2) Review handicaps to bring them in line with handicapping around the world. The current CH list seems to very subjective parameters for measuring handicaps. The German DMST competition has a very good list which would be a good point of reference.

1. Make the preferential entry deadline 90 days rather than 60 to give pilots in oversubscribed contests more time for planning if they are close to the cutoff. 2. Reduce the number of foreign pilots in oversubscribed contests. (there are a couple of them that seem to have a 100.00 seeding) There should be a limit of one National and one Regional per individual pilot unless there are additional slots. I.e, A certain Canadian pilot cannot send in all his entries a year in advance excluding other pilots who may only have the option for one contest. Also, I think that the rule for allowing preferential entry for foreign pilots was intended for someone like Karl Rabeder, who was visiting last summer, to be able to compete in our contest. However, they rarely know a year or so in advance. I do not believe that it is was intended for someone who has a citizenship in another country but who is living in the USA or for one who lives just over the border. These pilots should be ranked with their SSA seeding just as the residents are ranked. I would suggest that only the visiting foreigners be given preferential entry and all others use the SSA. Thus, the first contest a non-citizen would enter in a three year period, he would get preferential entry. After that, he would have a ranking number and be ordered along with US citizens. We should still limit the maximum number of non-citizens unless there are extra slots. 3. Have a mandatory rest day following a fatality. 4. Standardize the pilot ranking so that it is more representative of pilot skill. If a Category One pilot is in a regional, all scores are reduced much more than if all pilots have the similar skill level. Thus, it is easier to raise ones ranking if one goes to an unpopular site with lower ranked pilots. I suggest that the seeding calculation not include the Category 1 pilots. I.e. the highest scoring non-Cat 1 pilot would set the standard for the remaining pilots. eg. If the highest non-Cat 1 pilot scored .95 of the winner all lower pilots would receive a ranking calculated as $(\text{their score}) / .95 \times .92$ instead of $(\text{their score}) / 100 \times .92$. Of course, at the National, no change to existing system. 5. Make it MANDATORY for a tow pilot to have a PERSONAL briefing by the chief towpilot before towing on a given day. I.e, no more flying in after the launch has started and queing up for the next tow no matter how much experience he/she has towing. I would rather have a slower launch than an accident. Ask Tom Kelley, et al, about Uvalde!! 6. Make the Leibacher Data base the OFFICIAL list and insist that the organizers have this finalized TWO WEEKS before the first official practice day. If there is a NECESSARY update after the two weeks, it is the responsibility of the organizers to give the pilots a list of changes with their packets. Changes such as moving the coordinates a mile are unnecessary as all databases will have the same point. Who cares if it is exactly over a runway end, etc. Changes such as a site being unlandable or a site that is landable but not eligible for the 25pt bonus must be provided before the first practice day. I dont know how you enforce this but it is a big problem at most of the contests (Mifflin excepted). At Uvalde, the database was significantly changed two days before the contest!. It is much easier for one organizer to get this done and to check it than to have 60 pilots all scrambling to download the data, upload it and to remark maps. 7. Increase the minimum time for regional tasks depending upon the time of year and the site. What a waste to fly the minimum time of 2:30 at a site like Hobbs, or Uvalde, or Parowan in mid-June or July! 8. Give added weight to distance in TAT so that two pilots with 70mph but the one with more distance gets more points. 90% of the score could be based upon speed ranking as is now and 10% could be based upon distance ranking. This would also reduce the necessity to finish exactly at the minimum time. The contest committee could tweak these percentages to achieve the desired weighting. Analysing previous years nationals would provide some evaluation. Overall, the Rules Committee has done an outstanding job and the rules are very consistent.

11.1 -- this question asks whether pilots should be given credit for flying 2 extra miles at every turnpoint. If we give that much, it will pay to fly to the nearest point on the cylinder between turnpoints, which effectively reduces the 1 mile radius turnpoint back to 1/4 mile in terms of aircraft density at the turnpoint. Better would be to ask if we should go back the 1/4 TP as before. To which my answer is yes, lets go back. The 1 sm radius does little to reduce density,

increases closing speeds within the cylinder, and defies easy understanding of how best to maximize speed under various conditions within the cylinder.

Although soaring is becoming more and more an individual sport, it is not clear to me whether that is a cause or an effect of decreasing participation of those on the ground. My personal opinion is that by making the contest more fun and interesting to those working the contest, crewing for the pilots, and observing as spectators, everyone at the contest would get more out of it. This can only be done by allowing the people on the ground more participation - access to scores, knowledge of progress of the pilots, and actually seeing the gliders (ie finish lines, turn points at the contest site, etc.). I believe that this should be the focus of any changes in philosophy or technology.

Availability of ghood, real-time weather data.

CDs and weathermen come in all colors. Some are great some are underqualified to downright clueless. How about a program that gets the basic skills across and kind of qualifies the newbies as most sports do with their referees.

Cost. How to reduce the cost of competing. Any proposed changes that will impact cost should be evaluated with that in mind (even mandatory ELTs, which I favor). The other example that comes to mind is flight recorders. Our preoccupation with approved flight recorders for anyone with any ambition to be on a U.S. Team is getting to be ridiculous, especially in the context of the near-mandatory backup logger (considering the uncertain reliability of many recorders in recent years). Keep Sports Class open for everyone (not just Club Class and entry-level pilots) and promote it even more to allow those with older gliders to participate fully in the regional and national competitive experience. Some [regional] contests have been exploring different concepts to increase participation with variable entry fees (inversely proportional to # of entrants), unbundled services (pay-as-you-go tows), etc. We should encourage further exploration of that. Soaring is subject to the same laws of supply and demand as any other product thats for sale: the higher the price, the less demand. Im sure there are more issues that could be discussed. The question about fun is a refreshing departure from the AST vs. POST debate. Lets do more of that. The top pilots should still be served but the rest of us should be able to enjoy and afford the fly, too.

Do away with 1000 point scoring system. Best flight should get 1 point, next best 2 points ect. Lowest total points wins the contest. Present efforts to eliminate luck are bad. Allow team flying. Allow unlimited use of family band radios air to air and air to ground. Need to allow ground crews to help pilots with navigation, and tactics. Bill Snead 6W

Dont allow emotional responses to dictate equipment requirements. ELTs only allow us to find wreckage, soothe the survivors. They dont make flight SAFETY. Most glider wrecks need 15 minute response for life saving. ELTs wont give us that. I HAVE saved a life, in a contest, by flying in medical staff in a towplane. We didnt ask for ELTs after that one 12 years ago. We didnt ask for ELTs after a pilot out all night at a TX Nationals 8 yrs ago. If a pilot/crew wants it, let them do it. Dont mandate another \$500 for contest entry to no appreciable benefit. Selecting the Team should be a byproduct of a Natl, not a dominant purpose. If they couldnt Team select would anyone show up? Hopefully, yes. hopefully, lots of folks.

Encourage the CD to assign longer tasks. 4 hrs nominal for the Nationals and 3 for Regionals. More weight for distance vs speed. ie, 75% for diatance and 25% for speed.

How about - world championship tasks in Nationals?

I think the current start cylinder rule that allows a start out the top of the start cylinder is unsafe. I am typically 100 to 200 feet below and approaching the edge of the start cylinder when on several occasions this last year someone comes screaming over the top of me that has started out the top. I am sure these pilots did not see me or they wouldnt have come so close that I was concerned about a mid-air collision.

I am a new competition pilot with three contests in the last 18 months including two Sports Class Regionals and one Nationals. It is my understanding a primary goal of the Sports Class was to encourage new pilots and help them develop xc and competition skills in preparation for Regionals and Nationals. I can not understand how the move towards eliminating or restricting the reverse seeding rule will help new pilots gain the necessary experience to become safe and competitive pilots at the national level. This rule would appear only to allow more experienced competition pilots to fly in Sports Class at sites that are fun to fly such as Parowan. The elimination of reverse seeding would close out new pilots at sports class contests held at such popular sites. To exclude pilots from outside the region from reverse seeding would reduce competition availability from the very type of pilot who is most capable of becoming a serious competition pilot. You have to be pretty dedicated to competition if you make the time and expend the effort to participate in two or three regionals. If new pilots were retracted from participation in sports class regionals outside their region would you be restricting them to only one contest a year? Certainly you would be improving the possibility of this happening. How does this encourage the progression? It is my belief the movement to remove or restrict reverse seeding is short sighted and serves only to enhance the top pilots opportunity to gain access to Sports Class contests at popular sites. It is short sighted because it serves to remove or reduce accessability, participation, and encouragement (ie: flying at a great contest site) for new contest pilots. Lets keep our eye on the goal of encouraging and promoting new competitors at Sports Class competitions.

I have not flown contests for the last two years because we ended up flying tasks much shorter than the local flying day (Ephrata). It seems like I was landing and there was a couple of good hours of flying left. With rule changes of the last two years flights longer than the task time may not be so penalized. I would also like to see someone right a how to optimize the MAT/TAT/etc tasks for the given years rules, since they seem to change yearly. Thanks for working on the rules committee.

I like these surveys. Keep up the good work and thank you for your contibutions to the soaring community.

I strongly believe that the length of tasks, venue, and rules of each U. S. national contest should be commensurate with those of the upcoming world championships in the corresponding classes. U. S. Team pilots should be selected in Nationals that are sited in locations where the terrain and weather are similar to those expected in the next WGC. It makes little sense to select pilots who are particularly good at racing in Uvalde for a team that will compete in Poland. Rules for U.S. nationals and the length and kinds of tasks should be identical or at least very similar to those used in the WGC. If we are serious about trying to field a winning team, then we need to get serious about making our nationals a true test of a pilots potential to do well in the next WGC. Pilots who want a more relaxed and less demanding competition can race in regionals. -- Rand Baldwin LS-8a NN

I would like to see a dialog started regarding team flying in our nationals. Many other countries allow it. Although I dont favor it, we should discuss it if winning at the WGC is of great importance.

If we want to compete with the rest of World we need to turn out pilots that are used to Worlds rules and tactics. Get our Nationals contests more aligned with the Worlds. Regionals are too

expensive to get the X/C capable but would like to join in the fun type pilots. How much can a PortaJohn at the end of the runway really be?

Im not sure what Improving Safety means. Certainly we need to maintain our awariness of safety issues, keeping the T.O. line free of cars/people, visual and radio communications procedures, high risk areas (gaggles, turnpoints, start/finish gate). The mandatory safety meeting and safety talks at every pilots meeting must continue. If there are specific issues that we need to work on, we should identify these issues and task a group, or the SSF, to look into them. Generic comments that we need to improve safety will fall on deaf ears. Focusing on specific problems will generate efforts to fix them.

Issue- The use of concentric start cylenders of different size creates a serious safety hazard. For example, Hobbs Regionalthis year the sports class had a 3 mile cylender centered the same as the 15 meter. When the sports class launched before the 15 meter they could pass through the 15 meter start cylender at high speed while the 15 meter class was still climbing.

keep it simple

Less burden of paperwork for the contest organizers.

Making the 9 lb wing loading optional for Nationals opens a huge can of worms. Essentially the decision would become very political, as its already controversial. Both finishes should be allowed at the descretion of the CD - this doesnt appear to be as controversial as the above, and some venues are better suited to one or the other of these finishes. The purpose of the rules should be to promote SAFE and FAIR competition. Contest days should not be devalued due to late starts by pilots. There are many reasons why they might start late, including the CD launching the field and opening the gate too early while we all struggle around below 2000 AGL. With the start cylinder and GPS, we can start any time we want, and all together if we want. The pilot accepts the risk by starting late, the penalty shouldnt be affected because a bunch of pilots took that same risk and lost. If Organizers are going to add requirements for equipment, etc. (ELTs) they should have to list it on the sanction form before its approved and not amend it except by established process. We cant allow organizers (or CDs) to make last minute decisions or demands on the pilots without recourse. The Rules Committee is overly concerned with competition costs at Nationals. We are all flying \$75k+ gliders at these events. Some of them are driving \$150k+ motorhomes. An extra \$100 is nothing to 90% of the contest pilots. The other 10% are whiners. Fewer Organizers are bidding for Nats because they cant make enough money to justify holding the event. You should send a survey to every Nats sponsor from the last 15 years asking them what issues they would like to see addressed.

Motor gliders participating in 15 meter and other non motor glider contests should have to land out just like a non-motor glider when necessary, rather than starting the engine and flying back to the airport. After landing, the motor glider should then be allowed to start up and fly home. Twice last year, I flew contests where the advisers received radar and wx info after the launch started. The other contestants did not get the same info. I believe this gives the advisers an unfair advantage.

Please stress to contest organizers the need for better preparations to receive and direct contestants as they arrive at the contest site. I have raced at 3 nationals and 9 regionals. This task has been handled poorly at every race I have been to.

Promote the use of anticollision technology, like FLARM

Review the formula used to devalue certain contest days . It is much to hard on pilots that

complete tasks on poor days when only a few finish . Too many contest do not run the full number of days and someone winning a day and getting 200-300 points on one out of say three days usually eliminates them from contention ! NO ONE HAS EVER BEEN ABLE TO EXPLAIN TO ME THE BASIS FOR THE MATHEMATICAL FORMULA THAT WE USE TODAY ! (IN MY HUMBLE OPINION A SCORE MUCH CLOSER TO 1000 SHOULD STILL APPLY ON SUCH DAYS !)

Rules are good only if they are enforced for all contestants. When penalties are given, at the next morning pilots meeting, the CD should go over the infractions and what is/are being done about them, and when they are resolved, then make the announcement.

Rules should address possible fatigue and not increasing distances and time on course. Fatigue affects each pilot differently certainly with the younger and more fit being the least affected and the oldest most affected. The current trend appears to be longer task with mind games which will increase fatigue at the worst possible time. That means trying to figur how deep into turnpoints to go and ETAs back home at the end of the flight when fatigue is at its highest level. As a safety lecture fatigue is rarely mentioned while dehydration is frequently the subject. The question of what makes a contest fun, is excellent. Perhaps a better question is what about contest is NOT fun.

Safety No. 1

Sec 3.3 - Instead of a fixed number, consider a percentage (25%-35%) of the Sports Class entries received by the Preferential Entry Deadline - That would better fit the large Sports-class contests such as 2001 Region 2 Sports. Sports Class is a great way to introduce beginners to competition, but it seems that the majority of pilots who are currently flying in sports class regionals are not beginners (some are far from beginners). This has led to a number of problems, such as pilot seeding, equity in handicapping substantially different gliders, and the pilot ranking that can be achieved at a Sports Class Regional. A logical solution to this problem would be to keep Sports Class for novice pilots and establish a Club Class similar to European Club Class for the competitive pilots who want to fly a handicapped contest at both Regional and National Level. Benefits: - Eliminate the Reverse Seeding issue - Restricted performance range would eliminate the disparity of a Nimbus 4 competing against a Ka-6. - Regionals would have a direct tie-in to Nationals, which would in turn more closely resemble the Worlds - Pilots would have a competitive class that does not require a \$60-70k glider to be competitive at the Regional level (ie - Club Class pilot can earn a .92 at a Regional) - Tasks would be more appropriate to the respective class. Current Sports Class tasks must be long enough for the Nimbus, short enough for the Ka-6, and challenge the experienced pilot while not being too tough for the novice. I suspect that if we were to implement Club class, it would turn out to be one of the more popular classes. For the upcoming year, look at the experience level of pilots flying in Sports Class, then see how many pilots would be interested in flying Club Class via next years SRA Opinion Poll.

Simplify the rules. Quit trying to have a devaluation factor for every thing that can go wrong during a soaring day. Quit making new rules in the name of safety when there really is no problem. The new rule almost always has its own safety problem.

Sites being forced to follow the east, center, west, center, east pattern.

Some comments on this poll: 3.0 Reverse seeding does not work well. Its better for newcomers to go to another region for a low key contest than to go to a huge high pressure contest like Mifflin anyway. 5.2 The two parts of the question are incompatible. I want both options retained if one of them is the line. Im happy to ditch the line if we keep the cylinder. The question as stated doesnt let me specify this. Even at nationals (Hobbs, 15 meter 2003) on assigned tasks people fly the wrong way through the gate. For spectator appeal, allow a show gate after the cylinder. 4.0 Use larger of ssa or home seeding. If you just use SSA, then people who have not flown in the US

before cant get in, and all the slots will go to the usual Canadians. On the other hand, who knows what the home seeding is and how it works; using just that would be a problem too. Some foreigners are here long enough not to have an established home seeding; they should be allowed to use the SSA seeding. 8. WGC style scoring. More arguments against: The WGC scores are crazy, unsafe, and change every time anyway. Who knows what they are? (See for example start procedures at Lezno.) Our scoring system is better, safer, more consistent, and more appropriate to the pilots, terrain, and airport facilities at US contests. A world training camp run under world rules is a good idea. It is a different thing than a US nationals. Extra issues: The rules for trying the task again are amazingly arcane. I now know them, but most scorers and CDs dont. You have to flip all over the place to figure out how youre supposed to do it. Thus, you should write a separate paragraph of the rules on procedures to cover a second task attempt. While youre at it, lets rethink the rules. Given GPS, does it really make sense to force a landing, turn in scores, and takeoff again if the pilot wants to try again and not lose the first flight if he lands out in the second? That made sense with cameras, but I dont see the point now. In the same vein, you should make it explicit whether you can finish a MAT and then try another turnpoint, taking the better of the two scores if you make it back. As a part of this rule, but more generally, please address the problem that pilots can no longer figure out what landing card options make their flights best. We dont have the official scoring software, and options may depend on things the pilot doesnt know anyway, like day devaluation. Thus, please explicitly state that the pilot may ask the scorer to choose the best of several options. Among others: was my first flight better, or my second one? Did I go faster taking a finish at home before rounding another turn? Should I take a penalty for just missing a turnpoint, but get the extra distance, or ignore that turnpoint in declaring my MAT? Ive gotten into arguments with scorers who insist that I pick such options, but catch - 22, there is no way for me to figure it out. I hoped we would have a poll question this year whether radio communication would be allowed at regionals. Perhaps limited to sports, perhaps limited to instructional information or something else. How about next year? (Or just write the rule!) I was frustrated at a nationals this year that the CD did not follow the task guidelines, in particular the task guidelines say make full use of the weather. Contests are my gliding vacation, and its frustrating to take two weeks off of work, drive all over hell and creation, sit in a motel for a few days while it rains, and then get sent on a 2.5 hour task on a 7 hour 700k+ day! Standard minimum task time is a minimum, not standard task time! On the one hand, there is not much to ask you to do since the task guidelines are very clear. However, many CDs seem not to read the task guidelines, or to interpret standard minimum task time as standard task time. Given that, we could address this by increasing the minimum task time, say to 4 hours or even more. It actually makes sense to weight contest days by the number of hours in the air, without an arbitrary cut at 3 hours. If longer tasks are always rewarded with more points, CDs will always feel pressure to extend the task. Change this survey to accept single and double quotation marks!

Start cylinder should be made such that start point measured for distance is any point of crossing the cylinder(up to 90 degree from course line).

Start gate roulette can be dealt with by closing the start line n minutes after it opens. I have flown in international contests where n was 30.

Team flying should be allowed to better align/prepare us with the rest of the world.

The 2 pilot duo discus needs to be devalued in sports class because: 2 teams can fly and always be rested and one guy can always navigate and the other just fly hard all the time

The committee should consider whether some sites are inherently too dangerous for a contest.

The entire issue of automatically allowing 4-5 foreign pilots into regional and national contests. If I, an American soaring pilot, am on the bubble for a nationals or, god forbid a regional, then I

expect to be given preference over a guest foreign pilot for scarce contest space. Who knows, I might miss the chance of a lifetime and maybe could have won the contest I miss? If I am bumped for a foreigner, how does that serve developing US pilots??? It is an issue that needs discussed in an open forum !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The finish cylinder. Crossing the finish line after a long and difficult task is one of the highlights of competition flying. Watching gliders crossing a finish line is the only spectator attraction left, lets not do away with it. The concept of a finish cylinder is absurd and certainly not in the spirit of racing. Out on task we cross unlandable terrain and scratch down low out over the boonies, but we must be restricted from flying below a specified altitude when we get back over the airport?

The valid TP inter-rule references no longer seem to apply to the appropriate rules - one of the referenced rules seems to tell about what the organizers must do in picking TPs. Make it explicit that pilots can make any number of announced starts and finishes and choose the best. Evidently multiple provisional starts and finishes are perfectly legal now (re-starting no longer invalidates claiming the previous start and TPs made between the two starts), but I doubt this is widely understood or thought through. Resolve implications of this fact for the rule that pilots submit card reflecting flight. Can a pilot claim his best scoring (fastest) task within a flight (not counting scoring best by intentionally scrubbing the day) or must he submit his longest (time and distance) including accidental starts and tps during the start gate roulette, combining multiple attempts within one flight, etc. to avoid contributing to day devaluation or scrubbing?

There were several incidents at Uvalde this past summer which jeopardized safety and which should have been managed and controlled by the Contest Manager. We cant make Contest Managers good managers by making rules, yet rules or guidelines could be derived from these incidents and captured in a Guide to Contest Managers.

THIS IS VITAL: Except for a few new task types permitted by GPS, competition rules have been quite static for over thirty years. If the same was the case at Marfa when George Moffat won his first World Championship, he would have had to compete for longest time in the air. What I am saying is that glider competition became the same boring old thing by boring old men. I think it is time to totally re-vamp the sport. If the USA (Dave Ellis) could lead the world with GPS-based competition, perhaps we should introduce video links, make it a spectator sport, and change the rules accordingly. The same boring old rules, lets face it, do not promote large-scale participation, public interest, or anything. Just to show how dumb we are: SOARING IS AN OLYMPIC SPORT - ACCEPTED IN 1938 AFTER BEING A DEMO SPORT IN 1936. Would have been an Olympic number in Helsinki 1940 - the DFS Olympia was the selected Olympic design - but WWII interfered. No one has removed it, but it is so boring no one ever gave it a venue. (These are not just words. You can search the Web for the 1938 decision, and Prince Orleans-Borbon, FAI VP, personally stated that it still is an Olympic sport, just no venue given, at his last visit to the Soaring Society of Boulder less than two years ago). Because it is boring, it is dangerous. The accidents at contests happen because of the way we compete. Because it has low participation, we have no political power, and we can be wiped out. Consider: we dont even require ELTs, and what is worse, we dont require transponders. Yet any cross-country in the Front Range of the Rockies (admittedly not a contest venue) will probably cross 50 airliners coming and going from Denver International within a couple of miles or closer. How many airliner-to-sailplane collisions will be required to wipe out the sport? But no, lets just do the same old thing, mash around the details of the rules... Guys, it is time for a major change! The technology is here, so lets lead the way!!!

throw out individual worst day from score.

Towpilot qualification over and above basic FAA rules

Water ballast -- Its a problem for the sponsor for water and tow planes and has been a safety problem at many contest. Every pilot I have talked to says it a pain to put up with and only because the other guy is doing it.

We need to implement rules to reduce pilot exhaustion. Contests shouldnt be a pilot endurance test. Other than that, I think the rules are making steady progress toward optimum. Continue to strive to make contests safe, fun, interesting, and fair (especially for the little guy). Thank You.

weighing at contest is not done with much thought; how many people speed through a radar trap if they know it is there? weighing the top 5 for the day in each class and the top 5 overall is to much - is this for someones ego or what? a random weighing of about 5 should be enough and if they are overweight kick them out of the contest

Will the 850kg rule stay the international rule? or is it changing back to 750 in a few years? We should stay with what the IGC does.

WinScore does not detect vertical penetration into airspaces [class B&C for example]. If you descend or thermal into a space it is not detected, only horizontal penetration is detected. WinScore should also detect overflight of airspaces. It should convert the upper limits of an airspace to 18,000msl. For example right now if you fly at 6000 feet over a c class space with a top of 4500msl you are not caught. If the program just converted the tops of airspaces to 18,000msl this would be cured - and would match the rules. I noticed both these problems at Perry this year. I do also want to take this time to thank Guy for all his effort on this great program.

Would it be possible to keep the same devaluation ratios, but give the best flight of the day 1000 points?

Would like to see the Rules Committee appoint a committee to do an in depth study of the Scoring section of the Rules.

Yes, I think regional contest organizers should have a certain number of entry slots reserved for them if they so desire to use them. Maybe a percentage of the maximum allowed entries. i.e. 5% in say a 60 pilot max entry.

Return to the [2004 SRA Pilot Opinion Poll survey form](#) to check your input.

Return to main [survey page](#).

If you have problems or questions contact the [survey administrator](#).