

TO: SSA Directors
FROM: Rick Sheppe
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SUBJ: A Stronger International Voice

SUMMARY

IGC is responsible for maintaining the Sporting Code, keeping records, and supervising international events and awards. Changes to the Sporting Code and IGC policy occur every year. These changes have immediate and long-lasting impact on all glider pilots. SSA should do a better job of monitoring international issues and providing our delegates with official positions on proposed changes.

BACKGROUND

The IGC Plenary meets once a year, in March. Our delegate is Eric Mozer, and our Alternate Delegate is Hannes Linke.

To his credit, Eric Mozer has risen to the position of 1st Vice-President of IGC. He holds this position by virtue of his personal qualifications, not his association with SSA or the importance of the United States in the international gliding arena. We are, in fact, a minor participant in international matters, and the reason is that we rarely speak up. This is not Eric's fault; it is ours.

As Directors, it is our responsibility to monitor the international gliding scene, take formal positions on controversial matters, and convey, via our delegates, SSA's positions to IGC. (Strictly speaking, these are NAA's positions, but we originate them).

It is important to take this responsibility seriously. The international rules (SC3) and IGC policy affect more than the US Team, they affect all of us. Some of the less obvious examples of this are:

- There is a movement to allow low-cost GPS receivers to be used as flight recorders for badges. Do we have an official position on this? No.
- There is a movement to require a certain fraction of World Championships to be held outside Europe. No US position on this one either.
- IGC has commented favorably on a proposed international glider pilot's license that would require a medical exam. Should we care about this? Yes.
- As in SSA, the work of IGC is done by Committees, Working Groups, and "Specialists." How many Americans are on these committees? A few. Not many.

A more complete list of international issues is attached at the end of this paper.

OUR CHALLENGE

We should embark on an initiative to "look outward" more. Individual SSA members pay much more attention to international issues than the Board of Directors. We (the Directors) should know more about what our members are working on. We should stay ahead of the IGC agenda and adopt formal positions on selected issues.

The challenge, of course, is resource management. SSA's "domestic" issues are indeed more important than international representation and deserve higher priority. However, we have a responsibility to represent our members' interests in the wider world, and this requires engagement by the BOD, not just our ambassadors.

I have no action items to propose. I invite discussion.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: A partial list of IGC issues.

Note: This list is for illustrative purposes. It is not complete, and it includes both issues we have neglected and issues in which some of our members are engaged.

Badge rules

- Criteria (sectors vs. circles, GPS vs. camera, observer qualifications, precision)
- Procedures (security, calculations)

World Records

- Procedures (evidence required, observer qualifications)
- Categories (how many is too many?)

Championships

- Entries (1 or 2 per class, defending champion invited, etc.)
- Tasking
- Flying rules and safety
- Scoring and penalties

Technical

- Mass limits
- Flight recorder specifications
- Algorithms

Political/Controversial

- Interpretations of SC3A, actual protests and lessons learned
- Proportion of championships held outside Europe
- Proliferation of glider classes
- Introduction of new types of events
- Makeup of Steward/Jury pool
- Makeup of Committees, Working Groups, Specialists
- Candidates for Lilienthal, Majewska, Gehriger awards
- Influence of ICAO and EASA on IGC
- Rules for changing the rules (including moratoria on changes)

Attachment B: Acronyms used in this paper:

IGC International Gliding Commission
SC3 Sporting Code Section 3 (the rules governing the sport of soaring)
SC3A Annex A of SC3 (the rules governing international competitions)
ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization
EASA European Aviation Safety Agency