

# OPINION ON CLAIMING MULTIPLE RECORDS

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## **Introduction**

In Gliding, the rules regarding World Records are found in the FAI Sporting Code, Section 3, Chapter 3<sup>1</sup>. The rules specify that, at most, one distance record and one speed record may be claimed in a single flight.

Recently, the NACs of France<sup>2</sup> and Austria<sup>3,4</sup> have proposed to change the Sporting Code to allow a pilot to claim multiple distance and speed World Records from the same flight.

The proposals are scheduled to come to a vote at the meeting of the Plenary of the International Gliding Commission (IGC) on 3 March 2007.

The IGC Sporting Code Committee (SCC) opposes changing the rule. In a separate Agenda item<sup>5</sup>, the Committee recommends that the French proposal be rejected by the Plenary. It is assumed that SCC also opposes the Austrian proposal, which was submitted to the IGC Agenda concurrently with the SCC recommendation.

This author agrees with the proposals of Austria and France. This opinion paper<sup>7</sup> is a criticism of the Sporting Code Committee's recommendation.

## **Discussion**

### World Records: rare and valued

The debate began in 2003 following a period in which multiple records were claimed from single flights. Regarding multiple record claims, SCC asserted<sup>6</sup>:

This tends to make a mockery of the record system when a World Record should arise from a very special performance.

In the current proposal<sup>5</sup>, SCC quotes the basic FAI/IGC requirements:

The basic requirements of a world record are that:

- It must be the best performance in the world of a particular type of task for the class of aircraft;
- It should be rare and valued for both the rarity and the excellence of the performance made.

These are sensible requirements, and there is no argument. The SCC proposal continues with this statement:

By having the same flight able to claim for two very similar types of record may have met the first requirement but certainly did not meet the second.

Let's look at both parts of this remarkable statement.

The first part of the SCC statement says that allowing multiple claims meets the requirement of recognizing the "best performance in the world." This is certainly a true statement. But the contrapositive statement immediately comes to mind: **Disallowing multiple record claims means that we cannot be sure that the best performance in the world will be recognized.**

Today, the holder of a World Record is subject to the following challenge:

"How do we know that your performance wasn't exceeded by another pilot on a flight accepted and authenticated by FAI, with the pilot choosing to claim a World Record in a different category?"

All World Record holders, in any category, are currently subject to this challenge, and the only response possible is "We don't know." Is this bizarre situation really what FAI wants?

The second part of the SCC statement says that allowing multiple claims does not meet the requirement that World Records should be "rare and valued." The statement fails to explain why two people, each holding a record, are more rare and valued than a single person holding two records. In fact, it seems to me that a single person who is clever enough and skillful enough to hold two World Records is rare indeed.

We already know of examples of World Records that are not the best performance in certain categories. One well-known example is cited in the proposal from France<sup>2</sup>. The Sporting Code Committee says that "a World Record should arise from a very special performance." Why then, are we allowing World Records to arise from less special performances?

World Records should be awarded for the best performances in the world. This makes them both rare and valued.

#### The historical argument

In one of the record categories ("Speed over a triangular course"), the limitation has existed for many years. It has long been a rule that only one speed record can be claimed, even though the minimum distance requirement for two defined triangles may be satisfied, and the flight may break two speed records.

In 2003 the Sporting Code Committee acknowledged the situation<sup>6</sup>:

Many years ago it was found necessary to limit the number of speed records claimed in one flight to prevent the speed records coming into disrepute from a similar problem so there is ample precedent for such a restriction.

and again in the current proposal<sup>5</sup>:

Speed records were limited to the one record immediately below the distance flown many years ago and have therefore become the standard for gliding World Records.

The Sporting Code Committee offers no logical defense of the limitation, and simply cites the fact that we have been doing it this way for a long time. The NACs of France

and Austria view this as an opportunity to fix something that has been broken for a long time!

#### The distribution of World Records among pilots

The Sporting Code Committee states the opinion that the policy of disallowing multiple record claims

...achieves the aim of many aspiring World Record pilots; there are more opportunities to claim a new record.

and

...there have always been many aspirants for World records, they should have their opportunity too.

It is complete nonsense for the body that defines world record criteria to be involved in the fair distribution of World Records among aspiring pilots. The "fair and equitable" distribution of awards has no place in a system based on achievement. World Records are earned; they are not handed out.

Does FAI consider one of its goals to be an increase in the number of pilots holding World Records? Perhaps. If this is a goal, then the means of achieving it should not be to define multiple record performances that can be achieved in a single flight!

#### Appearances

The current proposal from SCC contains this statement:

Finally, to change the distance requirement only 3 years after enthusiastically accepting it would damage the reputation of the IGC for making considered decisions.

First of all, a bad rule should be fixed, regardless of its age. It is interesting to note that the SCC presents its opinion with both "too soon to change" and "long established history" arguments.

Secondly, the enthusiasm cited in the statement cannot be detected in France, Austria, or USA.

It is discouraging that an "argument of appearances" is being used to persuade the distinguished IGC delegates to vote a certain way. I would hope that the delegates, without exception, would choose to vote for what is best for the sport, without consideration of their reputations. It is what the glider pilots of the world expect of them.

#### **Conclusion**

In an attempt to create an interesting and challenging variety of World Record categories, IGC has given us a system in which several records may be attainable in a single flight. In order to enforce "separation," the Commission has artificially restricted the number of claims that can be made following a single flight. This has the undesired effect of introducing uncertainty in which performances are in fact the world's best.

FAI should adopt a formal policy of awarding World Records based strictly on achievement.

## References

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<sup>1</sup> [FAI Sporting Code Section 3](#)

<http://www.fai.org/gliding/sc3>

<sup>2</sup> [IGC 2006 Agenda Item 12.3.3d](#)

[http://www.fai.org/gliding/system/files?file=12\\_3\\_3%20ffvv%20proposals.pdf](http://www.fai.org/gliding/system/files?file=12_3_3%20ffvv%20proposals.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [IGC 2007 Agenda Item 9.2.2a](#)

<http://www.fai.org/gliding/system/files?file=9.2.2.a%20Austria%20Distance.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [IGC 2007 Agenda Item 9.2.2b](#)

<http://www.fai.org/gliding/system/files?file=9.2.2.b%20Austria%20Speed.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [IGC 2007 Agenda Item 9.2.1d](#)

<http://www.fai.org/gliding/system/files?file=9.2.1.d%20Abandon%20Record%20Restrictions%20Proposal.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [IGC 2003 Agenda Item 10.1](#)

[http://www.fai.org/gliding/meetings/2003/10.1\\_specialist\\_report.pdf](http://www.fai.org/gliding/meetings/2003/10.1_specialist_report.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> The present document is archived at <http://www.ssaregion1.org/igc07>