



2013 CIVL PLENARY – ANNEX 20

COMPETITION STRUCTURE WORKING GROUP REPORT

The Competition Structure Working Group (CSWG) was implemented by the CIVL 2012 Plenary in these terms...

“Several proposals regarding competition formats and structures were presented to the 2012 Plenary (...). A working group (will) be implemented in order to analyse pros and cons, define a long term strategy, make proposals to the next Plenary. Having in mind that a Category 1 championship must be a “safe, fair and satisfying contest”, the WG will explore the following avenues:

1 – To have Individual and Team championships in different events or to keep Individual and Team championships in the same event.

2 – To have two separate championships for two different classes of gliders (for example, one championship for Serial and one for Competition) to have two classes of gliders in the same championship, hence two titles (for example, Serial and Competition) to keep championships open to any class of glider and give only one title.

3 – To have a separate new championship (and ranking system) for XC Open Distance.

4 – To call on the expertise of PWCA to help organize championships. 5 – To analyse the appropriateness and feasibility of the new Cat 1 HG “Sport” Championship initiated by the Plenary.

The WG will take into account: the value of a World championship title (symbolic and financial); the benefits and concerns for different parties (FAI, NACs, pilots, organisers, sponsors...); the financial consequences for these parties; the need to find additional competent organisers; how Continental and World championship alternate; how it fits in FAI General Section rules and emerging Sports Strategy.

They will define for the eventual new solutions realistic basic rules, cycles and deadlines.”

The CSWG reports the following...

1 – Individual and Team Championships.

- Switzerland’s proposal at the 2012 Plenary.

The nation competition should be held in a very safe flight area with very easy gliders.

Selection could be 2+1 from most countries. Some pilot qualification level would need to be specified. The Individual competition should be held with a very high pilot qualification level. Selection could be done according to the world ranking scheme.

CSWG’s opinion.

The CSWG is not convinced that separate championships would be safer than unified ones as they are today.

Separate championships would be hard to implement and have unwanted side effects (Simulations shows that in today conditions, an Individual championship would see a single nation have 1/5 of the selected pilots and not enough women to validate a Women title; if Women would be included in a Team event, half the teams would not have a complete team.)

In the last European championship, pilots and team leaders were consulted and the proposal got little support.

Consequently, as it stands today...

The CSWG recommends:

That Individual and Team events stay unified. That the pilot selection criteria and other measures enhancing paragliders safety be studied by the Paragliding subcommittee. Some of these new safety measures concerning both gliders and pilots are expected to be proposed by PMA.

2 – Separate championships for different types of gliders.

- Bulgaria's proposal at the 2012 Plenary.

Create 2 separate sub-classes with separate WPRS : 1 for easy gliders, 1 for not so easy and Open gliders. In Cat 1, we run specific sub-classes championships. In Cat 2, we can run both sub-classes together.

Two separate classes will remove the pressure for some pilots to fly wings above their comfort and ability to handle safely, just to be competitive.

CSWG's opinion.

"Easy" gliders do not mean safer gliders. A specific « easy gliders » championship would probably see the very same pilots who run in today championships. We are against Cat 1 in EN-B or C only, for we do not want these EN to be pushed to the limit like it happened in EN-D. Hence...

The CSWG recommends:

That no specific events shall be run for different types of paragliders.

3 – Separate WPRS and Championships for XC Open Distance.

- Poland's proposal at the 2012 Plenary.

Creation of a new flying discipline called "XC open distance paragliding".

Official disciplines should reflect those widely practiced by large groups of people. Open distance is the mainstay of paragliding. Open distance flying is significantly different than racing along given course. Most important : the new discipline is a radical improvement of the safety in the FAI approved championships.

CSWG's opinion.

The CSWG was far from being convinced that Open Distance XC were safer than today Race to Goal format. Still, CIVL should be open to alternative types of tasks and competitions, among them the XC Open format.

The CSWG recommends:

That the Paragliding Subcommittee observe the development of XC Open competitions, full-scale events included (100+ pilots) to judge the viability of the format. That a specific WPRS sub-category be implemented. If this type of competition develop successfully, both in terms of pilot interest and safety, that the Paragliding Subcommittee study how specific FAI Championships could be implemented.

4 – How to involve PWCA expertise in CIVL championships

- Paragliding Subcommittee's suggestion approved by the Plenary.

CSWG's opinion.

PWCA is a well experienced organisation that runs many high level competitions in conditions similar to our Category 1 events. CIVL can use PWCA expertise only within FAI and CIVL Sporting Code rules.

For Category 1 events :

- FAI General Section specifies that they are organized by NACs, that NACs must bid 2 years in advance, that NACs must approve which pilots represent them. These rules are almost impossible to change.

- CIVL Section 7 specifies almost everything else. CIVL rules are easy to change (2/3 majority at the February Plenary, in effect the following May).

The way PWCA selects their bids is very different from CIVL. A very few people, all specialists, handpick them. They choose only well tested organizers and sites. In CIVL procedure and tradition anyone can bid, the Paragliding Subcommittee always agrees that the bids are safe and OK, then all NACS present or represented at the Plenary select them according to their own criteria, which might be very different from safety and experience. PWCA technical delegates are chosen from a restricted group of people. CIVL Stewards are chosen from a larger group of people. The role and duties of technical delegate and stewards are different.

The CSWG recommends:

That CIVL reviews its way of selecting bidders and bids. The CIVL Bureau should be given the power to look for potential bidders. Within the existing rules, the Paragliding subcommittees already have strong powers to advise on bids. These powers should be put to use. That CIVL review its policy concerning Stewards and Jury. Both should come from a restricted group of specialized people. Jury and Steward job description should be revised. In other words, CIVL has to professionalize the way it runs its high-level competitions.

5 – Appropriateness of the new Cat 1 HG “Sport” Championship

- This new hang-gliding Class 1 sub-category was implemented by the 2012 Plenary, mainly to solve the financial problems that keep potential organizers away from Category 1 events (it is hoped that “Sport” will bring extra pilots and entry fees).

CSWG’s opinion.

This specific subject was hardly discussed, as among the 10 members of the working group there was only one hang-glider pilots. But during discussions on other matters (like Open Distance XC championships), arguments were used that could apply to the subject. Mainly... Category 1 Events should be only for the best pilots on the best gliders.

The multiplication of World and Continental titles devalue what these titles are worth.

There might be many issues (including safety) if gliders meant for leisure are used for Category 1 competitions.

The same top pilots flying topless gliders will probably compete in this new category.

Today Sport WPRS analysis is not very encouraging for a Sport World Championship (less than 10 pilots took part in more than one event). Who will be selected in such a championship and how?

The CSWG recommends:

That the Hang gliding subcommittee reviews its position and decide if and how Sport Category 2 events should be encouraged, so the financial viability of Category 1 events is not the main (and only?) incentive to create new World and Continental titles. That that Bureau and Hang gliding subcommittee study the issues carefully if they have to deal with a bid including Sports gliders.