



IGC 2022 Plenary Meeting

Agenda Item 7.2.3

Annex D Committee

Reno Filla, Chairman

Report to IGC Plenary 2022

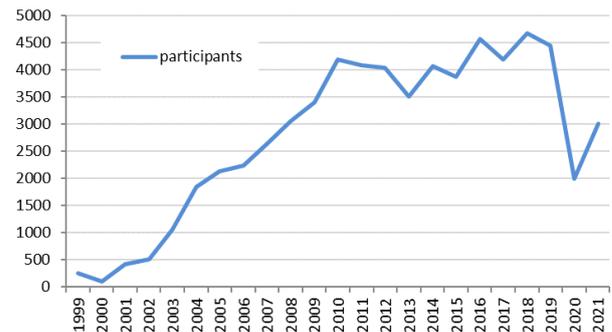
31 January 2022, updated 02 March 2022



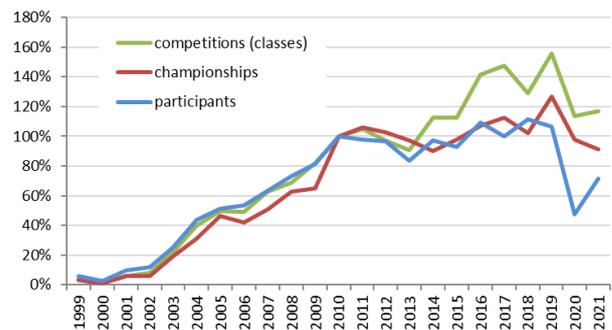
Annex D Committee Report to IGC Plenary 2022

STATISTICS

From 2010 to 2018 we had approximately the same amount of championships every year as the growth had previously levelled out in 2010. However, in the 2019 season we have seen a jump in number of competitions (from 141 to 175) and classes (from 261 to 318) because in that season we tried to promote the Ranking List by giving a discount to attract entries from championships that would otherwise not have considered IGC ranking. This seems to have worked well. Looking at the number of participants we can detect an upwards trend until 2019. Then came COVID'19 which in 2020 and 2021 impacted all numbers quite significantly:



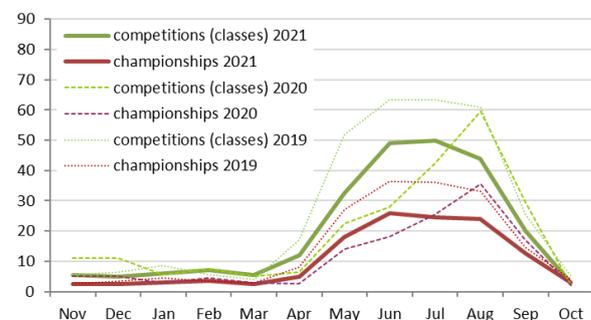
In normal years we see that the number of individual competitions (i.e. the total amount of classes in all championships) has certainly increased since 2010 (see figure to the right which shows the relative change with the year 2010 set as the reference).



This means that while we normally have about the same number of pilots competing in about the same number of championships, they do so in more classes, which in turn each encompass fewer pilots on average than what used to be the case.

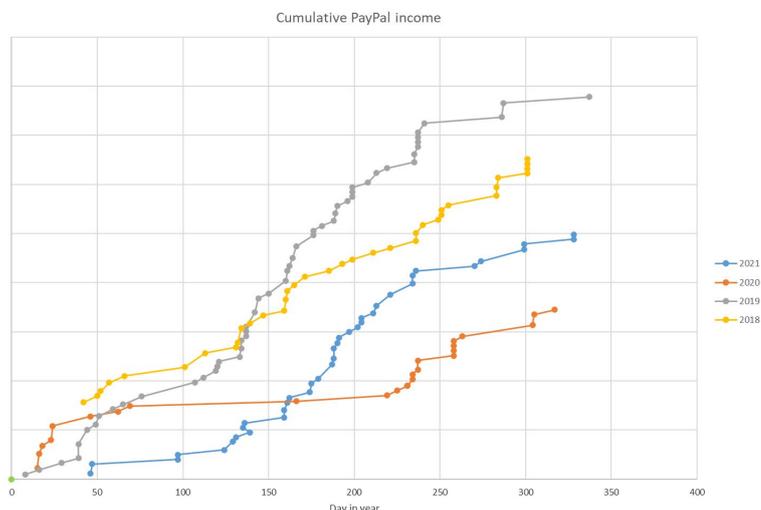
The numbers for 2020 paint a different picture: while both the number of championships and the number of individual competitions each declined by ca 25% the number of participants and the total number of day results both declined by ca 55% each. This means that while there still have been held gliding events in season 2020 most of them were of small size, large events were rare if existent at all. For 2021 it looks like even fewer championships were held but the numbers for 2020 also contain events that were registered yet never held. To keep the record of payments we decided to not purge the database from these non-events.

The chart with the distribution of championships over the season shows that in 2020 there was a certain catch up towards late summer of the northern hemisphere yet in total a significant drop from previous years (note that the diagram shows the moving average of two months in order to account for the fact that a contest may start late in one month and continue into the next). The shapes of the 2021 curves resemble the normal situation we otherwise see each year – although at a lower level. Naturally, this impacted the RL income accordingly.



In order to give the IGC Bureau the chance to monitor the situation the RL team sent monthly income reports to the Treasurer. This also helps FAI to correctly attribute PayPal income from the Ranking List (which is how nowadays most single events are paid by) to IGC. Thanks to our detailed monthly reports we were able to identify money from several transactions that would otherwise have been lost to IGC. We have offered FAI to integrate our report system into their accounting system to make the necessary amount of manual work as small as possible.

The chart to the right shows the accumulated income by PayPal for the past four years. The dramatic decline in 2020 is clearly visible: after a good start in early 2020 Covid-19 hit the world with full force and only in late summer could some championships be held. Also in 2021 registrations of championships began late, but not as late as in 2020 because by then various vaccination campaigns started. In total there was a higher income by PayPal in 2021 than in 2020 but still significantly lower than what we usually see.



In 2020 we made the pledge that payments made for events that had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 would not be forfeited but credited. In 2021 we honoured that promise, which also meant that a part of the income loss generated in 2020 first hit IGC in 2021, leading to a total income (including invoiced events and NAC bulk deals) even worse than in 2020.

REGISTERING COMPETITIONS

With the introduction of PayPal as the main way of paying for events the RL team saw a steady decrease in workload related to such administrative matters. On the other hand we see many times that despite the instructions on the website it appears unclear that successful completion of the PayPal procedure is a prerequisite of a successful registration of an event: anyone registering a championship needs to pay for it by PayPal right away, which means the login details for PayPal need to be at hand. There is no normal way of coming back at a later time and continuing a registration. The non-normal way is for the RL team to recover the partial registration and ask FAI to send an invoice. This creates extra work and therefore there is an extra fee in such cases.

For another extra fee the RL team also offers to register single events but our hope is that this service will be rarely used.

For NAC bulk deals the procedure has always been that NACs register their events themselves, which is also why they get a discount. We want to take the opportunity to stress that it is very important that all such NAC events are properly registered. If results for a registered event are missing we can easily see it by the end of the season and many times we either hunt them down ourselves or contact the organizers, sometimes through the respective IGC delegate. If, on the other hand results are submitted for an event that has not been registered we also take notice and contact the organizers. In case of a double fail, i.e. both are missed the RL team has no chance to intervene as we are simply not aware of any results still missing – because no events are registered with us in the first place. In this case the only chance for recovery is that the NAC or the pilots themselves use the extra time allotted to RL review after the end of the RL season on September 30th to actually review if all results are uploaded (deadline: October 31st) and correctly calculated (deadline: December 31st). If no review by the NAC or the pilots flying in the events is undertaken for championships that have been missed to first register and then to submit results for then there is a high risk that the Ranking List will not include these events for the season in question.

Sadly, the occurrence of such a triple-fail is no longer a hypothetical case. At the very end of 2021, long after the deadline had passed, we realized that one NAC missed to both register their events, submit their results, and review the outcome of their events. None of the pilots having participated in these events contacted us, either. According to the rules as approved by the IGC plenary these events cannot be included in retrospect and the fee is forfeited. Please, let us not repeat this tragedy.

SUBMITTING COMPETITION RESULTS

In previous years a major source of additional workload for the Ranking List staff and frustration for the pilots have been late or wrong result datasets. After having had a staggering amount of late submissions of results in 2018, including late registration of competitions, the 2019 IGC Plenary approved clear deadlines. Since then the situation has improved significantly, though some 2020 results have still been delivered after the deadline and consequently had to be refused. In 2021 we had no such cases, apart from the tragedy reported in the previous section.

Another classic source of delay also occurring in 2021 is that sometimes competition officials have to be reminded that it is their responsibility to send the results to the RL team.

Late submission of results prevent continuous updating of the RL, which in turn means the current rankings are not really current. This becomes more than a vanity problem in case of Two Seater competitions where only the pilot with the higher ranking at the start of the competition (then to be set as Pilot in Command, "P1" in the scoring software) is eligible for the ranking points generated from that contest. If competitions prior to the Two Seater contest are late with their results then it might well be the case that the wrong pilot is pointed out as P1! In order to record and document historical standings the Ranking List now features a way to go back in time and check pilot score and rank for any previous day of the season ¹. Please note that Pilot Ratings change all the time due to new results being added and old ones getting devalued. To reflect this in full the IGC Ranking List should be automatically recalculated each day – which is impractical at the moment. Therefore the results as published at a certain date are to be regarded as the official results for that date, even though some changes might occur in case of a recalculation.

In last year's report we asked for help with improving the RL by reporting double pilot profiles. These doublets are created whenever contest scorers don't follow the instructions ² and skip referring to a pilot's Ranking List id, either through negligence or to minimise their own workload. During upload the system then creates a new id for the pilot in question and assigns the ranking score to this doublet instead of the pre-existing profile.

Usually pilots first recognise this when they fail to qualify for their respective National Team and realise that results are missing from their Ranking List profile. The RL staff then needs to edit the results in the database manually and re-calculate the ranks for the season concerned. Thankfully, also in 2021 a number of NACs worked with their respective pilot lists and notified us about required changes. This is highly appreciated! Unfortunately, new such double profiles are created all the time, also during the 2021 season. However, previously the largest source of such double profiles have been when whole championships have been submitted without referencing pilot IDs, thus automatically creating many new double profiles at once. Such result data sets without pilot IDs referenced are now ruled incomplete and thus not legible for inclusion into the RL until corrected by the Competition Organizer. This has drastically improved the quality of the Ranking List.

¹ <https://rankingdata.fai.org/SnapshotRLstandings/ShowSnapShotRL.html>

² <http://www.sgp.aero/igcrankings/competitions/instructions-for-scorers.aspx>

CLARIFICATION RE: DEADLINES AND CALCULATION OF RESULTS

Irrespective of the date of calculation only results for events from or prior to the Competition Season to be calculated are included. For calculations after then end of a Competition Season only championships that have ended by the latest on September 30th are considered.

Competition Season 2021 ran from October 1st, 2020 to September 30th, 2021. Only results from championships that have ended by the latest on September 30th, 2021 are considered in the calculation of rankings for Competition Season 2021.

At the latest by October 31st, 2021 all results must have been uploaded to the RL database, after this date no results were allowed for new upload. However, until December 31st, 2021 it was allowed to modify already uploaded results, for example to address wrong pilot IDs.

On or soon after October 1st, 2021 the RL team was to calculate and publish Preliminary Final Rankings for the Competition Season 2021. Without this pilots flying in the Southern Hemisphere and producing results for the Competition Season 2022 during the remainder of the Calendar Year 2021 would have to wait for their updated rankings based on the new results until January 1st, 2022. This year due to technical reasons (see below) we had to postpone this until beginning of December 2021.

On or soon after January 1st, 2022 final rankings for the Competition Season 2021 were to be calculated and published based on the RL data from December 31st, 2021 – but only including results from championships that have ended no later than September 30th, 2021. Due to continued technical reason we had to postpone this until mid of January 2022.

CLARIFICATION RE: WWGC 2019 RESULTS

Prior to 02 March, 2022 approximately 13:45 UTC the Competition Seasons 2020 and 2021 have been calculated with the WWGC 2019 results as published by the end of the event, i.e. with each Australian team pilot having been penalized with a deduction of 225 points ³. The FAI International Appeals Tribunal (IAT) published on December 2nd, 2021 its decision to disqualify all Australian team pilots, instead ⁴. This decision had been further appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) ⁵ by the Australian NAC. Therefore the IGC Bureau advised the RL team to disregard the IAT decision for the calculation of Final Rankings of Competition Season 2021, which would also had necessitated a recalculation of Competition Season 2020.

According to the IGC President's report ⁶, on request confirmed by FAI CASI the appeal to CAS was terminated by the court on 22 February. Thus the original decisions by IAT are to be executed. By approximately 13:45 UTC of 02 March, 2022 all AUS team pilots' day and competition results have been zeroed and their respective position set to "DQ" (disqualified). Both Competition Seasons 2020 and 2021 have been recalculated completely and re-finalized.

ANOMALIES

The Ranking List team would like everyone to also in the future notify us about any perceived quality issue: double pilot profiles, suspicious calculation results etc.

In previous years we discovered that a number of old competition results had not been devalued as expected. Due to this several pilots derived too high a ranking from outdated performances. With the

³ https://www.soaringspot.com/en_gb/10th-fai-womens-world-gliding-championship-lake-keepit-2020/results

⁴ https://www.fai.org/sites/default/files/iat_wwgc2019_report_and_decision.pdf

⁵ <https://www.tas-cas.org/en/index.html>

⁶ https://www.fai.org/sites/default/files/3_2022_igc_president_report.pdf

beginning of the Ranking List season 2021 (which began on October 1st, 2020) devaluation rules in Sporting Code 3 Annex D section 5.5 have been changed so that devaluation is entirely based on the calendar age of an event ⁷. In total this seems to have worked very well. The suspicion of a bug delayed preliminary calculation of rankings until beginning of December, by which date the calculation turned out to actually work just as intended. The RL team wants to thank original RL developer and long-time RL admin Keith Nicholson for his gracious effort in implementing and debugging this new scheme.

A more serious bug was discovered recently, which delayed the publication of Final Rankings for Competition Season 2021 until mid of January 2022: it turned out that a number of pilots who hadn't participated in gliding competitions for several years still derived Ranking Points and thus a Ranking Position despite having not received any Rating Score during the season. Somehow, with zero score they still got awarded an amount of Ranking Points which translated to a Ranking Position in the RL while these pilots should not have been featured at all, because they didn't participate in any recent competition. This issue is still very much a head scratcher which in order to not delay Final Rankings for 2021 any further has only been addressed with a quick fix. The root cause is still to be found and we expect the problem to reappear during 2022. Needless to say, this will be monitored closely.

An unfortunate side effect of the launch of a new website for the SGP Series 11 was that the Ranking List website was functionally disabled. It took several days to get back to a working version, which at the time of writing is still not completely recovered. At this point it can be debated whether our efforts should focus on a total recovery of the old site or a speed-up of launching the new one (see below).

SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Further improvements of the Ranking List are continuously on-going include the implementation of a way to generate income reports (to IGC and FAI) and a new website for presentation.

QUESTIONS TO THE PLENARY

The RL team asks the IGC delegates for guidance in two matters (same questions as asked in the reports for 2019 ⁸ and 2020 ⁹):

1. Shall the registration fee be adjusted?

The standard fee of 4 €/pilot with a minimum fee of 100 € per event and a maximum of 300 € ¹⁰ has not been adjusted for many years. The income from the IGC Ranking List is used for various IGC purposes, among others to cover travel costs of IGC officials and to procure material. All these expenses are subjected to general inflation yet the fee generating income to cover these expenses has been kept constant for quite some time. It seems that a sensible adjustment would be welcome.

2. Shall other types of contests be allowed to register with the IGC Ranking List?

For the moment only the results of two main types of contests are possible to upload: either the typical gliding contest with the 1000 point system or a Sailplane Grand Prix event.

In 2019, 2020, and 2021 we had to handle a third type of event: the E-Concept with a

⁷ https://www.fai.org/sites/default/files/sc3d_2020_v1-4.pdf

⁸ https://www.fai.org/sites/default/files/ranking_list_2020_report_v3.pdf

⁹ https://www.fai.org/sites/default/files/10_2_3_ranking_list_2021_report.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.sgp.aero/igcrankings/about-the-igc-ranking-list/sanction-fees.aspx>

new method of calculating results ¹¹. In the first two years we coped by re-calculating the results as place-based and thus treating the E-Glide as just another Qualifying SGP. In 2021 with time-based scoring now supported by SeeYou Competition and SoaringSpot we modified the SGP algorithm slightly but not in principle, E- Concept is in essence still handled like a place-based contest. We acknowledge that this is probably not necessarily the best way to reflect the overall performance of the competing pilots and suggest therefore that the E-Concept should be given its own formula for converting competition results into ranking points. In the mean time we need to put our calculations on a firm legal basis and ask therefore the delegates to adopt proposal 6.3.2 ¹² as a temporary measure.

We are also aware of contests where pilots take turns to fly a shared single-seater glider throughout the competition. In order to not invalidate or devalue the results of all involved we handle such situations by lumping plane-sharing pilots together as an anonymous team (usually designated as “(team)” in the RL) as well as setting the “deceased” flag in order to prevent that any such team is been reused by someone else (and thus taking advantage of the ranking points that originated from someone else’s past performance). We don’t want to suggest that the highest ranked pilot in such a team shall be given the ranking points – this would actually be unfair, in our opinion. Rather, we want to suggest that perhaps a new scoring method can be proposed where, for example, only the three best day results in a competition are used. This way two pilots sharing one single-seater in a week-long contest can still both hope for good ranking from such a contest.

ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

During 2021 the Annex D committee consisted of Brian Spreckley, Keith Nicholson, and Reno Filla (chairman). Reno Filla has been the RL Manager since 2016 (solo since 2017) and since 2018 Lars Rune Bjørnevik is the RL Administrator. The work split between us is as follows:

RL Admin (Lars Rune Bjørnevik)

- Pilot support (pilot profile/account management)
- Contest support (contest registration, results upload + calculation)
- System admin / main developer (including support for external developers)

RL Manager (Reno Filla)

- Pilot support (pilot profile/account management)
- Contest support (contest registration, results upload + calculation)
- System super user / occasional developer
- Commercial point of contact (invoicing, NAC support, bulk rate negotiation)
- Chairman of the Annex D committee

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The IGC Ranking List has become a success thanks to the dedicated work of initiator and long-time RL Manager Brian Spreckley, original developer and RL Administrator Keith Nicholson, as well as developer and administrator Paul Crabb, whose past tremendous efforts as well as their continued willingness to render help in times of need we gratefully acknowledge. Keith in particular has provided

¹¹ https://www.fai.org/sites/default/files/e-concept_v15.pdf

¹² https://www.fai.org/sites/default/files/6_3_2_2022_other_sc3d_8_sc3d_-_rating_of_e-concept_competitions.pdf

valuable and highly appreciated hands-on help with code development while Brian can always be depended on giving good advice and support in general matters. Thank you!

Operating the Ranking List and keeping it a success through constant improvements is a surprisingly labour-intensive job and always less publicly visible than what it deserves to be. We are indebted to the Ranking List's Administrator Lars Rune Bjørnevik who also put down a significant amount of time on improving the stability and security of the system even before he officially joined the RL team.

We also would like to acknowledge the good working partnership with the software developers of SeeYou/SoaringSpot and StrePla (the latter sadly having decided to exit the business). We do understand that occasionally there might be other, more urgent priorities than the IGC Ranking List and hope for continued collaboration and swift support.

Reno Filla

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