

## Discussion paper – Sporting Code committee

### ***On simplifying the content of the Sporting Code***

The Sporting Code Committee regularly receives questions from ordinary pilots, OOs, and even national Claims Officers on how to interpret some aspect of task selection for badges and records, how to resolve start/finish problems, how to find a viable claim from failures in declarations or flight decisions, etc. They ask why the Code should be so difficult to understand, and often complain that the many Code requirements discourage badge flight activity. Even experienced record pilots have problems.

**Preamble** In 1999, the Sporting Code committee undertook a major overhaul of the *language* of the Code by reorganizing the text layout and simplifying the sentence structure and wording. However, there was no mandate to simplify its *content*, which is what we now propose. The Code contains many fossils – procedures that have been superseded in practice by time or advances in technology but have been retained because their continued need has not been questioned.

*Imagine that gliding was a brand new sport today, and the IGC had the job of writing the procedures for the conduct of records and badges; it would **not** make it as complex as it now is.*

The problem with the current Code is that, over time, each new method used to gather flight evidence introduced another layer of procedures. Also, with each new means of collecting more precise evidence, new tasks have been added to make use of this new-found ability. However, the older means of evidence gathering has rarely been deleted, so the Code more and more resembles an onion, and its complexity grows.

**Simplification examples** It is easy to state that the area of the Code most in need of simplification, since it has the most options and accompanying restrictions and presents the most problems to pilots, is that relating to the start and finish of a task and navigating its turn points.

- Flight evidence was originally collected using one's eyes and a wristwatch. A start gate to visually mark the crossing of a start line was used for decades before cameras replaced it (except in contests). Yet, when this means of recording position evidence was superseded by photography, the start line remained. It could be eliminated.
- New closed courses were invented for badges and records to make use of the additional task freedom allowed by the camera as OOs no longer had to be in place at the turn point. The sector OZ was introduced then as a sufficient means of establishing the rounding of a TP using photo-interpretation. When flight recorders were introduced for position evidence, a new cylinder OZ was defined to accommodate this technology. But when camera use was deleted from the Code (the only text reduction since 1999), the sector OZ remained. It could be eliminated.
- Relatively cheap FRs and PRs provide accurate height and less error-prone height data or calculation. When will the time be appropriate to retire the mechanical barograph and the paper trace? (The Claims Officers of three of the largest NACs have indicated that the use of a paper trace has almost vanished.)

So, is habit a legitimate reason to retain old evidence collection methods in the Code?

- Consider modern record courses. Sailplane performance now make flights possible that outstrip a pilot's ability to make reasonable assumptions about the meteo conditions over the entire extent and duration of the flight. The three free distance closed course tasks were introduced for this reason. So new records are added, but old record types whose definitions had been constrained by past limitations of evidence-gathering have not been examined as to their continued utility or retired on the basis of obsolescence such as the duration record.
- Is there still a compelling reason for record and badge tasks to require TP declarations (excepting perhaps the Diamond Goal)? In what other sport is an athlete required to state in advance how the record is to be exceeded, and that it must be completed by that increment to be accepted?
- Considerable comment is being expressed in the gliding community on the never-ending increase in glider competition classes and the problems it is causing for the sport.

**Conclusion** A difficult-to-understand Code is a disincentive to the growth of our sport. It has become unnecessarily complex and needs to be trimmed of its fossil regulations. Judging from the problems sent to the committee, the Code is often found to be unnecessarily difficult as a result of this complexity, causes flight and evidence problems. OOs and Claims Officers state that the Code in its present form can be detrimental to the progress of beginning cross-country and badge pilots – a group that, for the betterment of the sport, must not be discouraged.

The intent of the committee is to redraft the Sporting Code on the following basis:

*that the Code only retain the minimum set of rules/procedures necessary to establish a soaring performance, and that alternate means be eliminated unless there is a positive reason to keep them.*

*that certain record types be retired in order to shorten the list to those that most effectively span the range of distance and speed performances that the IGC recognises.*

Immediate comment and suggestions from delegates and other knowledgeable pilots is invited. Based on a consensus of input received, the committee will prepare one or more draft changes to the Code, and present them as Year 1 Proposal(s) for IGC approval.

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for the IGC Sporting Code committee

*Note that the Committee cannot respond to all suggestions, but will guarantee they will be considered. Suggestions should be by email to > [igc-sporting-code@fai.org](mailto:igc-sporting-code@fai.org) <*