# IGC 2019 Plenary Meeting
# Agenda Item 6.2.3

# Annex D Committee
Reno Filla, Chairman

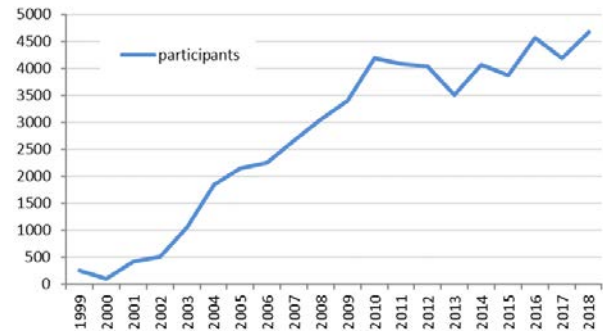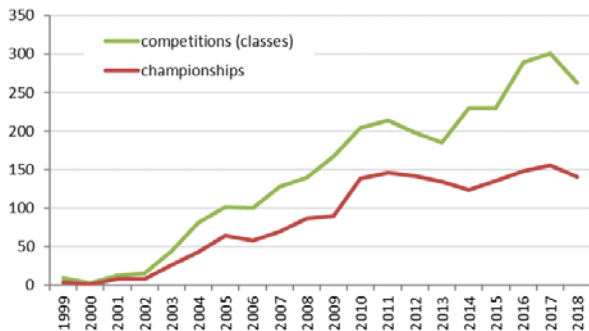# Report to IGC Plenary 2019
February 2019

# Annex D Committee Report to IGC Plenary 2019

## STATISTICS

In the 2017/18 season we had approximately the same amount of championships as in the previous eight years, the growth seeming to have levelled out in 2010. A slight increase in the number of participants since 2013 can be detected, not so much compared to 2010, though.





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 have the same number of pilots competing in 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.
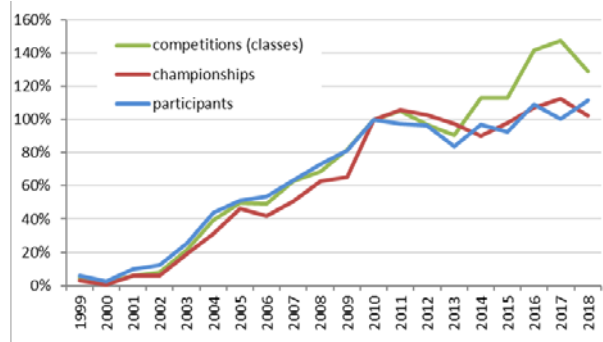


This development has a direct impact on the workload for administering the Ranking List: the manual labour involved in collecting and uploading results increases with an increase in competitions (classes). Since we, sadly, still have to put a significant amount of time into dealing with double pilot profiles also the increased number of participants leads to higher workload for the Ranking List team, although indirectly.

Back in 2017 we certainly had some occasions where we were lagging behind with adding results to the Ranking List, much to the frustration of everyone involved, including the RL staff. We made some changes and worked hard in order to not repeat that situation in 2018. With Lars Rune Bjørnevik, the Norwegian IGC delegate, joining the team permanently as the new RL Administrator as well as Reno Filla working as secondary RL Admin, we hope that all those countless hours have shown results and the team has been perceived as more responsive and as providing a good level of support.



Looking at the distribution of competitions over the season we again see that, predictably, most of the contests are run during the summer season of the northern hemisphere. However, while last year the 2016/17 season showed a clear peak in May and July we see that the 2017/18 season more resembled 2015/16 (note that the diagram above 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).

## SUBMITTING COMPETITION RESULTS

A major source of additional workload for the Ranking List staff and frustration for the pilots are late or wrong result datasets.

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 [1] 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 – in major cases even go back to previous years. Thankfully, in 2018 a number of NACs worked with their respective pilot lists and notified us about required changes. This is very appreciated and we hope it becomes an annual tradition, since, unfortunately, new such double profiles are created all the time, also during the 2017/18 season. Sometimes the ranking score from whole championships has been submitted without referencing pilot IDs, thus creating many new double profiles that needed to be merged manually with pre-existing profiles – with the consequence of a significant amount of the RL team's capacity been occupied with such sanitation efforts. (As a consequence we will now refuse uploading results where all pilots lack references to their respective IDs.)

In 2018 we also had a staggering amount of late submissions of results, including late registration of competitions. One NAC first registered their Nationals a good month after the whole season concluded in end of September 2018. For another NAC missing results from 6 of their championships had to be chased down via email several months afterwards, continuing beyond the Christmas season of 2018! Yet another NAC awoke in January 2019 and asked whether their Nationals from mid 2018 still could be added (which we had to decline).

In some cases competition officials simply might not know that it is their responsibility to send the results to the RL team. We have encountered the defence "But it's on SoaringSpot!" as many times as we heard "But it's on Strepla's homepage!" or "But it's on our club's homepage!" or "But it's on the competition's FaceBook page!". In all of these cases we want to point out that it is not the RL team's responsibility (nor should it be) to chase down competition results of perhaps questionable quality somewhere on the internet. The competitions organisers are responsible to send the official and vetted results in one of the two acceptable formats specified by the RL team [1].

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 <u>at the start of the competition</u> (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!

On the same topic, apparently even for WGC scorers it is news that only the P1 gets the ranking points and that it is the responsibility of the competition organiser to point out who this is in the submitted data. And that it is not enough to just upload said data to a third-party website.

To bring down the workload for the RL team to a more reasonable level and, more importantly, to clearly document the mandated process, deadlines and responsibilities the Annex D committee has put forth proposals 8.3.4 and 8.3.5 (which we ask the IGC delegates to approve).


## REPORTING ANOMALIES

The RL team would like everyone to also in the future notify us about any perceived quality issue: double pilot profiles, suspicious calculation results etc. For example, we have encountered situations

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1) http://www.sgp.aero/igcrankings/competitions/instructions-for-scorers.aspx

where recently held competitions has been assigned the wrong quality factor due to some error in the database. Thanks to observant eyes we were able to quickly correct these issues.

Continuing with quality factors: at the end of 2018 we discovered that a number of old competition results had not been devalued as expected (see right-hand side table).

As the consequence some pilots still derived ranking points from such outdated performances. We adjusted this prior to finalizing the 2017/18 season's official rankings.

We have also received enquiries about specific results that we were not able to prioritise yet. In some of these cases it was not possible to give a satisfactory explanation by simply quoting the SC3 Annex D document and/or comparing it with the actual code used for calculation. Hunting errors in computer code takes time and all the easy bugs are probably hunted down and solved by now. What is left are the complicated cases…

| CAT 1: compname | startdate | compclass | qualfact | corrected to |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Europeans | 2009-07-25 | World Class | 0.6 | 0 |
| Worlds | 2010-07-03 | World Class | 0.6 | 0 |
| Womens Worlds | 2013-06-29 | 15m | 0.6 | 0 |
| Womens Worlds | 2015-08-02 | 15m | 0.8 | 0.6 |
| Pan American Gliding Championship | 2015-04-06 | Club | 0.8 | 0.6 |
| Pan American Gliding Championship | 2015-04-06 | 15m | 0.8 | 0.6 |
| FAI Sailplane Grand Prix World Final | 2016-11-05 | 18m | 0.8 | 0.6 |
| | | | | |
| CAT 2: compname | startdate | compclass | qualfact | corrected to |
| Championnat de France | 2001-07-11 | Open | 0.15 | 0 |
| British Nationals | 2002-06-22 | Standard | 0.15 | 0 |
| Coppa Internazionale del Mediterraneo | 2001-08-01 | 15m | 0.3 | 0 |
| Championnat de France | 2002-06-10 | Open | 0.15 | 0 |
| Coupe du Monde de Vol à Voile en Montagne | 2003-07-09 | 15m | 0.1 | 0 |
| Coupe du Monde de Vol à Voile en Montagne | 2004-07-07 | 15m | 0.15 | 0 |
| Coupe du Monde de Vol à Voile en Montagne | 2005-07-20 | Open | 0.04 | 0 |
| Nordic Junior Gliding Championship | 2010-06-26 | Handicapped | 0.09 | 0 |
| Championnat Inter-Régional Jeunes Nord-Est | 2010-08-22 | Handicapped | 0.0375 | 0 |
| Championnat Inter-regional Jeunes Sud-Est | 2010-07-23 | Handicapped | 0.075 | 0 |
| Swiss Gliding Championship | 2014-05-24 | 15m | 0.15 | 0 |
| Swiss Gliding Championship | 2014-05-24 | 18m | 0.15 | 0 |
| Swiss Gliding Championship | 2014-05-24 | Open | 0.12 | 0 |
| National Air | 2014-05-26 | Open | 0.15 | 0 |

Nevertheless the RL team would like to ask everyone to continue this sort of de-centralised quality assurance by submitting suspicious cases for us to investigate.

## UPDATING PILOT PROFILES

Updating the pilot profiles with information about themselves, their sponsors, pictures etc. is still an issue as pilots appear not easily motivated to do so. The infrastructure is there, but the content can only come from the pilots themselves.

Pilots that get added automatically to the Ranking List by participating in a competition have in the past been able to claim their respective profile by simply entering the pilot ID they want to associate with their email address. However, surprisingly often the wrong ID got submitted (perhaps confusing one's pilot ID with the current ranking position) which led to someone else's pilot profile becoming accessible for editing to a completely different person. We have therefore discontinued this possibility and ask everyone to simply email us in order to claim an existing pilot profile. We will then create the account for them.

## IT-RELATED MATTERS

In last year's report we stated that in 2017 "the servers on which the IGC Ranking List is run experienced some brief hiccups". Stating this also for 2018 would be quite an understatement: during spring then again summer one or several malicious parties conducted serious attacks against the Ranking List by flooding the servers with requests and also causing mayhem using the RL team's own maintenance and calculation scripts. In the process of locking the system down we also discovered other attack vectors like a number of uploaded pilot pictures that in reality consisted of computer code with the hope to get access to the system behind the Ranking List.

Later in summer an upgrade of the FAI server initiated by the FAI's own IT service provider themselves affected the Ranking List severely and made the website inaccessible for several days.

Thanks to a good cooperation between the Ranking List team, also including former members Paul Crabb and Keith Nicholson, and the FAI's IT service provider we managed to resolve these issues and took measures to prevent them in the future.

We should point out that the correctness of the ranking has not been affected by any of this at any time.

In last year's report we also expressed hope for integrating the Ranking List into scoring*StrePla in a similar manner as Naviter has done for SeeYou – which should reduce the RL team's workload, most prominently by avoiding hitherto manual work on behalf of the RL team and by reducing the amount of new RL profile doublets created. Unfortunately this has not happened during 2018 and whether the StrePla developer still pursues this is at this moment unclear.

All these issues represented a significant addition to the already high workload of the RL team. It might therefore be daring to consider further system development, even a complete rewrite of the calculation code for the pilot ranking – but sooner or later this needs to be done as the current system uses outdated software and grows older by the minute. We have asked the IGC Bureau to prepare a modest budget for 2019 and are hopeful to be able to report on first steps towards an upgraded Ranking List at the 2020 IGC Plenary.

## ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

During 2018 the Annex D committee consisted of Brian Spreckley, Keith Nicholson, and Reno Filla (chairman).

Paul Crab has been unable to invest serious time into the Ranking List ever since early summer 2017 and asked to get relieved as RL Administrator. In early 2018 Lars Rune Bjørnevik, the Norwegian IGC delegate agreed to come onboard as Paul's successor in this role. Since then Lars and Reno have shared the work more or less equally, which made it borderline manageable.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The IGC Ranking List has become a success thanks to the dedicated work of original developer and administrator Keith Nicholson, long-time RL Manager Brian Spreckley, and long-time RL Administrator Paul Crabb, whose tremendous efforts we gratefully acknowledge.

Operating the Ranking List and keeping it a success through constant improvements is a surprisingly labour-intense job and always less publicly visible than what it deserves to be. We are indebted to the Ranking List's new 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 ~~got trapped~~ joined the team.


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