

Report of the Chairman, IGC Sporting Code Committee, 2007/8

The committee has been extremely busy in this past year, working on new wording and content for the Sporting Code as decided by the 2007 plenary meeting. Specifically, changes to verification procedures, reflecting the decision to no longer use photographic evidence but to concentrate on electronic recording using IGC approved Flight Recorders. In addition, we have written rules that would allow the use of Commercial, Off The Shelf Global Positioning System units for position recording for Silver and Gold Badges In effect, replacing the camera with the electronic recording units. Following extensive discussion with GFAC as our data evidence experts, we decided to write the rules for COTS GPS units as a separate but authoritative appendix to Chapter 4 of the Sporting Code. This was intended to indicate that the rules were not quite the same as those for Flight Recorders and were limited to silver and gold badge flights. For altitude measurements a separate barograph will be required as it has always been when using photographic position evidence.

With over 500 GPS manufacturers and the wide variety of GPS units manufactured, it was considered that to have GFAC expected to check on the operation and suitability of GPS units for verification use was not practical. The decision, not entirely supported by all of the GFAC, was to ask that NACs decide which GPS units they could accept following guidelines written into the rules, and advise IGC which types had been accepted. This is intended to satisfy the expert's concerns about security and operation. The aim was to give a relatively cheap and simple way to introduce newer pilots to FAI badge flying and to show proof of flight to a satisfactory level. On the whole I believe this has been achieved but only time will prove if this approach has been correct. It is known that our hang gliding friends have used GPS without problems for a number of years, the committee hopes that the introduction to the gliding community will also be trouble free.

During the year, discussion with Max Bishop (FAI Secretary General) Bob Henderson President, IGC, and others, led to amending the FAI forms used to claim World Records, to include a paragraph to be certified by the pilot, confirming that the flight was performed in accordance with the FAI Sporting Code and was made in compliance with (1) all operating limitations established by the aircraft manufacturer, (2) any more restrictive operating limitations imposed by national airworthiness regulations of the civil aviation authority of the country of registration, and (3) airspace regulations where the flight took place. In anticipation that IGC would not accept that flights for badges should be any less legal than those for world records, the committee has included a similar paragraph in SC3, (5.3.2). NACs will need to make changes to their claim forms if IGC accepts this addition.

The opportunity of a new edition was taken to consolidate the present chapters 5 and 6 into one chapter. The overall size of the code has been reduced by nearly 20% through removal of photographic evidence rules and rewording.

Delegates will be aware that the Sporting Code Committee's draft copy of the code appended to the year 2 proposal is not expected to be the final version, a later draft will be available during the meeting for discussion. We will endeavour to highlight any major differences from the draft published in the agenda, although we do not envisage any significant changes in policy from the draft in the agenda.

I must commend the members of the committee for the pleasant and cooperative way they have taken on the heavy workload on this rewrite which has taken a large number of emails and consideration of many ideas and options suggested. Their attention to detail and rapid responses have made the job much easier. In particular I want to mention Tony Burton who has worked smoothly with me for a number of years now and Judy Ruprecht whose expertise as the SSA "Badge Lady" has been most helpful. Tor Johannessen and Axel Reich have been able to help with opinions and suggestions.

I am happy to report that all members of the committee have agreed to stand again for the next year. I can offer them more detail work as we will need to finish SC3 and also produce a new version of Annex C to follow the new SC3 edition. We ask that the Bureau be given authority to approve the publication of both SC3 and Annex C when completed.

Ross Macintyre
Chairman, Sporting Code Committee.