

PROPOSAL TO IGC PLENARY 2018

Year 1

Proposed by IGC Sporting Code committee

Remove cylinder OZ deduction

It is proposed:

To remove the deduction of 1km from the official distance of a performance for every cylinder observation zone claimed.

This proposal affects:

- 1.3.6

Discussion:

The cylinder OZ reduction is one of these small things that add a level of complexity to our rules.

Removing this 1km deduction for each cylinder OZ claimed would simplify both the planning and understanding of declared performances.

A few years ago, it was proposed that we simplify our code by eliminating one of the two turn point OZ geometries. This was rejected by the Plenary on the grounds that the cylinder was an easy to use OZ and very popular with our user base, especially in competitions, while the FAI Sector allowed the flexibility to complete tasks in certain situations, such as bad weather on track, where it would have otherwise been impossible. This is a sensible argument.

Nevertheless, the objective of being able to remove the deduction for official course distance is still a desirable target. It greatly simplifies, both the planning for declared flights, the simplicity of the software used to design and fly these tasks as well as the pilot understanding of our declared soaring performances.

Furthermore, such a change would not fundamentally alter the rules, so its impact to the sport is otherwise insignificant.

The rules we specify for defining the length of our performance geometry dictate the course we get to fly around to satisfy a sporting performance. As such the official distance does not indicated the actual distance flown which is usually much greater, whether in search for thermals, following energy lines or avoiding bad weather. Instead it has traditionally been perceived as the minimum distance one could fly to achieve the performance.

Given a pilot can enter an OZ of a cylinder 500m before the actual turn point and then continue to the next waypoint, we should ask how much of a sporting advantage that offers and whether not deducting 1km would make an actual sporting difference.

When looking at the two OZ geometries from a practical perspective, we have to consider that the ability to select in flight whether one will claim an FAI Sector or a Cylinder actually confers an advantage to the pilot. By choosing the cylinder the pilot can minimize the distance flown, while the FAI Sector allows the pilot to follow an energy line which is out of reach of the cylinder but inside the Sector, or to possibly avoid bad air over the cylinder.

In this sense, it seems a bit strange that we offer a penalty for the cylinder, where in fact, depending on the situation, any one OZ geometry could offer an advantage over the other. Therefore, from a sporting perspective, it would usually make sense to treat these two options as equal.

There is one exception to this and this is the 100km speed triangle. This category of performance is so extreme, by modern sailplane standards, that the potential advantage of a deduction in course length does confer a sporting advantage.

If one looks at the current records, it is clear to see that the difference in performance this change would make for all speed records would be negligible for all categories except for the 100km triangle. That is, the performance margin required to establish a new record is actually greater than the gain achieved by removing the cylinder OZ deduction.

We will need to examine how we approach the issue of the 100km speed triangle. The options are to accept that the next record claim may have a slight advantage to the previous ones (there is precedent for this type of change), adopt some type of transitional rule, or maybe dictate that 100km speed triangles should use only Sector OZs.