PROPOSAL TO IGC PLENARY 2017
Year 1

Proposed by Sweden

Affects: Sporting Code 3, definition of Silver Distance in 2.2.1.a

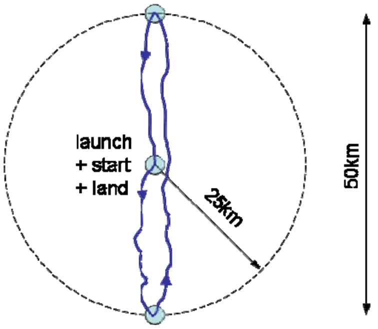
Proposal

It is proposed to change the wording from “a straight distance flight of at least 50 km from the release point” to “a course with the flight track including at least one fix with a distance of at least 50km to the landing point”.

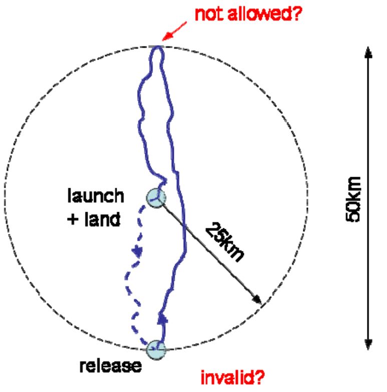
Discussion

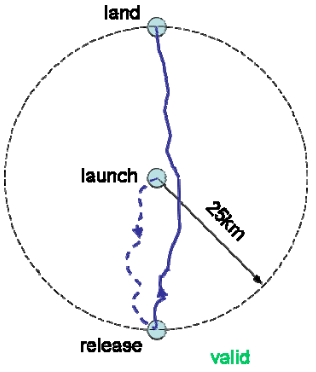
The 2014 version of the Sporting Code 3 defined the Silver Distance in 2.1.1.a as “a flight that includes a leg of at least 50 kilometres. This leg may be part of a longer declared flight. The loss of height (4.4.3) is calculated on the entire flight, not just on the portion claimed.”

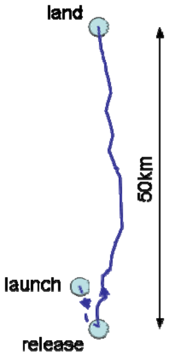
In an effort to simplify and also return the Silver Badge requirements to its roots the 2015 version changed the definition to “a straight distance flight of at least 50 km from the release point”. The intention has been to prevent pilots to just fly 25km from the airfield into one direction, then turn 180° and fly 50km into the exact opposite direction, thus achieving a 50km leg within a safe 25km radius from the airfield, i.e. defeating the idea of a true cross-country flight (see figure right).

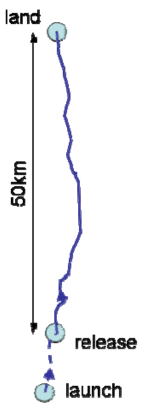


With the change of the definition of Silver Distance to “a straight distance flight of at least 50 km from the release point” a cross-country averse, yet Silver Badge aspiring pilot now needs to take a 25km long aerotow to achieve the same (see figure right). It is our interpretation that the definition of straight distance as “a course without turn points starting from release or a declared start point” has been added to prevent the pilot from turning after 50km and landing back at the airfield launched from, but force him/her to land out. The unlucky and impractical consequence of this is that the aspiring pilot is now at the mercy of the tow pilot: depending on the location of the release point a landing point satisfying the Silver Distance requirement for one pilot will not be sufficient for another (see figure right).



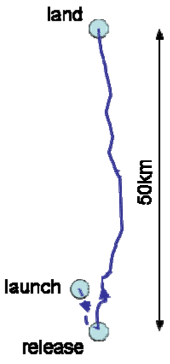


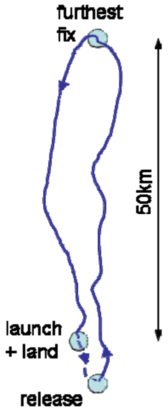


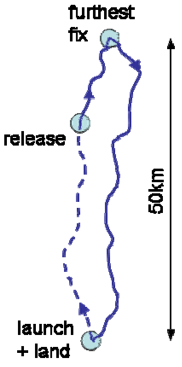


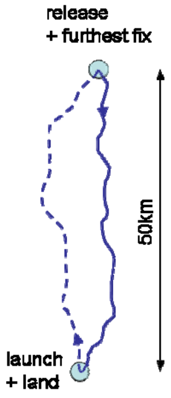
We argue that these complications had not been intended by the Plenary in 2014 when simplification of the Sporting Code 3 was discussed. Forcing the pilot to land at a different field to achieve a Silver Distance certainly never came up.

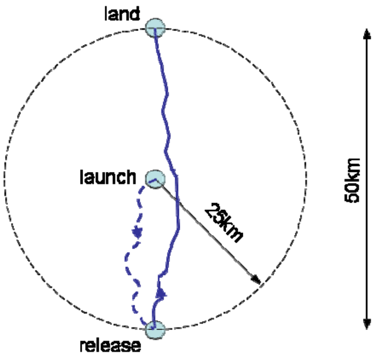
We therefore propose to reduce the requirement for Silver Distance to a simple “a course with the flight track including at least one fix with a straight distance of at least 50km to the landing point”. This makes the release point discussion irrelevant and focuses on the essence to the Silver Distance: forcing the pilot to deliver a true cross-country performance (unless a glider with L/D=100 is used). It also allows for landing back at the home airfield, while preventing the previously shown examples of how to game the system.
With our wording the following flights are considered legitimate:



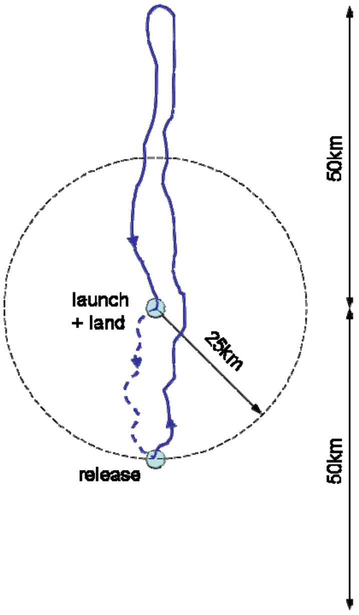


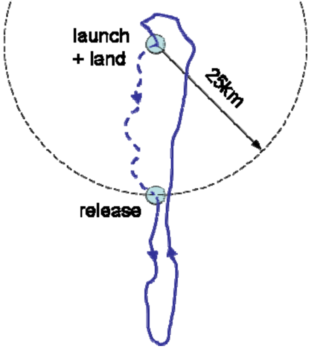






Note that the pilot can still tow 25km and fly straight over the home field but is then forced to land out after 50km in total (see figure above, furthest right) or continue for another 25km in order to be allowed to land back at the home field (which would have made the initial 25km aerotow quite unnecessary) – or to have continued 25km into the other direction right after release from tow (figures to the right).





We also propose to add “No Means of Propulsion (MoP) may be used during part of the flight that count as the Silver Distance and any eventual MoP use during the whole flight does not count as a landing.” in order to prevent pilots from claiming a virtual outlanding by simply running the engine for a few seconds.

Reasons to support the Proposal

The previous attempt at simplification has unfortunately proved inadequate. With our proposal a subtle adjustment is been performed while keeping the spirit of the Silver Badge.
With the proposed change a cross-country flight is a valid Silver Distance as long as the pilot has been at least 50km away from the eventual landing point. It’s hard to make it any simpler than that.