

Extended Handicap Proposal

Introduction

The current statistics for FAI Category 1 gliding competitions and IGC member country national gliding competitions indicate an increasing trend towards multi-class handicapped competitions replacing traditional FAI class based competitions due to the high number of FAI classes and limited suitable gliders and pilots available to field sufficient pilots for each FAI class.

FAI Continental Championships

Currently 2 continents have FAI Continental Championships: Europe has Continental Championships in all FAI classes; South America has Continental Championships with two or three handicapped classes.

South America started having continental championships only in 2008, the first continent outside Europe to do so. Because of the limited equipment available the South American continental championships can only be organized using two or three handicapped classes, the two events held until now have been using the homebrewn Argentinean handicap system under a FAI waiver. If future events are held on a rotating basis with Brazil and Chile as hosts the South American Continental Championships will potentially end up in a situation where they would have a different handicap system at each event as a result of differing handicap systems in Argentina, Brazil and Chile. The root cause of this potential issue is the lack of an adequate FAI handicap system, Annex A currently only defines a narrow handicap system for the FAI Club class.

If we were to have Continental Championships in North America, Asia/Oceania and maybe even Africa at some point, we would likely end up in the same situation South America is in at the moment. The only continent capable of organizing non-handicapped Continental Championships using the traditional FAI classes is Europe; this is very unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

A new development that will require to address the limited FAI handicap range even for Continental Championships in Europe is the new 20m Two Seater Class which in its implementation by the IGC plenary in 2011 explicitly allows handicaps being used for these competitions except in World Championships. Handicaps and general rules for the handicap list for the 20m Two Seater class are pending publication.

National Championships

The vast majority of IGC member countries is currently not organizing individual National Gliding Championships using the traditional FAI classes but combine FAI classes using a handicap system or creating 2 or 3 performance based classes that sometimes overlap and are scored using local handicap systems. This means that in many countries the effort to develop and maintain a handicap system flexible enough for the local situation is being duplicated.

Other, mostly smaller countries decided to copy the handicap system of some of the larger, more developed gliding countries, either because they liked a particular national handicap system or because

they could not use the FAI handicap system with its limit to Club class gliders and had to look elsewhere.

Small and new gliding countries like Colombia that have yet to implement a proper national championship system will be faced with the same challenges and unless we extend the FAI handicap system will have to go shopping in more developed gliding countries, adapting and maintaining their sporting codes accordingly instead of just using the already existing SC3 as needed.

The OLC, which is increasingly used for decentralized national and international competitions, also requires an extended handicap system to allow for the participation of any glider type, their handicaps are currently based on the German handicap system.

Proposal for IGC Plenary 2012

Extension of the FAI Handicap System

Task the IGC Handicap subcommittee/Annex A subcommittee with developing an extended FAI Handicap system to allow for the use of flexible handicapped non FAI classes at FAI Continental Championships starting 2013. The extended FAI Handicap system shall cover all glider types commonly used for these championships.

Related Issues to Consider

If the DAeC handicap list is going to be used as the basis for the new extended FAI handicap list a mechanism will have to be defined for including gliders that are not covered by the current DAeC handicap. There are local gliders in South America and especially in the US/Canada that are currently not on the DAeC handicap list but could potentially participate in a handicapped continental championship

This is already an issue for FAI competitions using the OLC platform since any glider type can participate but some more exotic ones have to be entered by selecting a different glider but with roughly the same handicap. Handicaps do exist for these gliders on a national level; ideally a procedure would be defined to incorporate them into the FAI/DAeC master handicap list when needed.

A related handicap issue is the definition of the existing Club class. At the moment it is based on actual glider types being put on the Club class eligible glider list instead of just using a handicap range, possibly combined with a span definition. If we were to have a classic CAT 1 Club class competition e.g. in North America we would have many local glider types excluded, e.g. various Schweizers & HPs. These gliders would perfectly fit into the Club class philosophy and are already used for club class styl racing in the US but are excluded from a FAI CAT 1 club class competition because the Club class list is currently a list of older European 15m span gliders within a certain handicap range.