

Warsaw, 22.12.2015

Hanggliding and Paragliding Commission of the Aero Club of Poland proposes a modification of the Sporting Code requirements regarding national records, allowing task declarations for national records submitted in a form other than a “paper copy” (i.e. an online form or app).

Current framework:

Currently paragraph 3.3.4 (Task declaration) of the SC 7D says that “If a GPS is being used to validate the flight, a paper copy of the task declaration must be filled out, signed and presented to the official observer prior to the start of the flight.”

Issues:

In our opinion this raises two important issues. The first is a general inertia of paper vs. electronic administration, present in all countries and branches. We think that in present era of electronic communication personal presence of an official observer on the launch can be substituted with any device having a camera and connected to the internet, enabling video connection, especially when the device has a geolocalizing feature. Declaration given during such talk could be recorded and later stated by the observer, thus freeing the pilot from distracting paperwork prior to launch. Another positive outcome of such solution would be availability of the observer to other pilots on other launches too, thus maximizing number of record attempts on a good day.

The other issue is related to direct connection between national and international records, since according to par. 6.1.2 of the SC General Section “to be eligible as an International World record, the performance must have been recognized as a national record by the NAC concerned”. This is understandable in view of necessary standardization across the world and could remain as a requirement in case of a world/continental record for record attempts. Such records are nowadays not possible without serious preparations anyway, so the presence of an official observer with complete paperwork on the launch is not a significant obstacle. At the same time, however, breaking of many national records is still possible with just a fortunate coincidence of a pilot with right gear in specific time and place. In our opinion, since overwhelming portion of the national records does not reach the world international level anyway, we could easily free them from the international level requirements.

Conclusion:

Creating a slight distinction between international and national record attempt requirements would bring a significant increase in popularity of the record flying, bringing many young pilots who live their lives as digital natives into recognizing FAI’s authority and capabilities. As it is now, a growing number of national records is being recognized just socially and not officially due to the paperwork required.

In our view this seriously hampers both the quantity and quality of records being established. It is in our best interest not to be seen as an obsolete organization.

Proposal:

Add to the abovementioned paragraph 3.3.4 a clause, stating “this requirement does not apply to national records which will not be forwarded as candidates for continental or world records”.