

## Dear Competitor

One of the competition committee's main tasks is to review and adjust the competition rules each year. In October 2024 we again asked for inputs to this process before we started. We had some 40 ideas put forward. All of these have been considered along with inputs from directors of competitions during the season and from members of the BGA Executive.

In this document you will find details of the issues that we considered, our reasoning, and the decisions we have made. All have been approved by the full committee and by the BGA Executive. I do not expect that everyone will agree with all of the decisions, but we have tried hard to deliver our terms of reference to the benefit of the sport and competition scene as a whole. We welcome your feedback. However, unless you identify errors or omissions, your suggestions will now go into the pot for 2026.

As I said before, one of the key areas of concern is safety and the behaviour of pilots in the air. I am sure that you agree that we all want to go home with ourselves, and our gliders, in one piece at the end of the competition. I hope that all pilots will engage positively with the safety initiatives coming forward this year.

I wish you all a successful and safe competition season.

Jim White

Chair of the BGA Competitions Committee

## Rule Changes for 2025

Drawing upon directors' reports, pilot inputs, and our own observations the following 40 topics have been considered by the rules subgroup and the full committee. The changes have been approved by the BGA Exec are implemented in the 2025 draft rules. Below is what we decided. In no particular order:

### **1. Start Calls**

We received further input following last year's change. Pilots and organisers at regional competitions expressed a desire to re-instate this rule.

We discussed at length and agreed that requiring start calls in Nationals was not appropriate but that, given the strong feedback we had, we could give discretion to directors to require them in regionals. Discretion for this has been added to the rules for 2025. We decided to add:

5.6.8 In Regional competition, pilots may be required to make start calls as defined in local rules if the organisation chooses to use this option.

### **2. Safety briefings**

Safety briefings were mandated in 2024 but not always delivered well. One suggestion was to produce a CC led briefing video.

The CC decided that creating a standard CC led video was not appropriate but that the guidance given in the OBNs last year should be repeated.

### **3. Below finish ring penalty problem.**

A pilot who struggled to complete a task obtained no speed points but made the decision to return to the airfield below minimum finish height at the ring. The pilot was penalised 50 points in accordance with the rules whereas, if they had landed in a field immediately prior to the ring, they would have had a better score.

We discussed this at length and felt that the 50 point penalty is not appropriate. We decided to change the penalty for this to 'loss of speed points' only.

### **4. Circle with PEV start rules.**

The CC had an input suggesting new rules for starting. Last year The CC decided to wait until the IGC decided their own new rules and consider those for inclusion. Start circles with PEV start have been included in SC3a for 2025 but there is ongoing argument and still no scoring software able to score it automatically.

We decided that our present stance on this should continue into 2025. No change has been made pending clarity at the IGC.

## **5. Gender neutral wording**

It was suggested that we review the rules for gender neutrality. Max Lazenby has kindly reviewed the rules for gender neutrality and appropriate edits have been made.

## **6. MOP for FES equipped gliders**

In the 2024 rules we put forward that we were considering mandating MOP for FES equipped gliders. We had one strong protest to this rule change. One director highlighted the inadequacy of ENL for FES as an issue.

The CC felt that if an ENL is shown to detect operation of a FES on the first day of the competition that is OK provided that the logger is permanently fitted to the aircraft in a position that detects FES use at low power, is not acoustically shielded in any way, and is not moved between days. A modification to the rule has been made to this effect and directors urged to scrutineer during the competition. Rule 5.2.2 will now read:

“For engine-equipped gliders competing without the engine disabled, any FR used for verification must be fitted with an approved means of indicating engine operation. Gliders with internal combustion engines or FES installations may use engine noise level (ENL) provided that the flight recorder is securely fixed in a single location for the entirety of the competition. ENL flight recorders must not be shielded or placed in a way that reduces sensitivity in flight. Gliders equipped with jet turbines and all other electric installations must use an approved means of propulsion (MOP) detector. In all cases, the recording equipment must be capable of clearly indicating engine use even at low power-settings.”

## **7. Role of PSC**

The CC decided in 2023/4 that the CC could rename the PSC but that widening the role was a much greater change that would require further consultation for consideration during the year for 2025. Pilot feedback was that the PSC was OK as is.

The CC discussed the PSC. We agreed that it should remain, but its role expanded to include the review of proposed tasks and finishing rules before each daily briefing. It was decided to rewrite rule 5.1.1 to read as follows:

### **5.1.1 Role of the PSC.**

- \* To ensure, by use of ‘peer pressure’, that safe flying and airmanship standards are followed by all pilots (including tug pilots).
- \* To assist the organisation in promoting a positive safety culture.
- \* To provide advice to the organising team daily on the suitability of tasks and procedures.
- \* To be available as a point of contact to any pilot who wishes to voice a safety concern regarding either the behaviour of another pilot or pilots, or a general safety concern of any kind. To investigate such matters and take appropriate action.
- \* To act as the representative body of the pilots as a group on all such matters.
- \* To advise the director on the awarding of penalties for non-specific hazardous / dangerous flying if the director considers an infringement deserving penalty has occurred.

## **8. Day results**

We had a request that we mandate the publishing of day results on paper for the briefings.

The CC felt that this was for the organisation to decide. No change was proposed.

## **9. Poorly set tasks**

One correspondent said that finish ring heights were accidentally being set incorrectly at airfield height.

The CC didn't feel they can do much about that. Maybe the change to the role of the PSC would solve this problem.

## **10. Finish ring minimum height**

We had an input that finish rings should be set just below the height required to reach the airfield.

The CC felt that this was not appropriate and probably unsafe. No change proposed.

## **11. Release height**

We had a suggestion that release height should be mandated at 2000ft in the rules with a penalty for release above.

This was discussed at length. It was felt that directors should ensure that competitors are waved off at release height and pilots penalised using the existing rules if they do not release. A note will be put in the OBNs.

## **12. Rule 6.2.6 redraft**

Following difficulties with selection for the 2025 WWGC this rule has been redrafted to make selection procedures clear. See 40 below.

## **13. Forum – Mandate or strongly recommend control point before finish ring**

Strong support for this at the Lasham forum and one member of the rules subgroup.

This was discussed at length. The CC decided to allow the organisation and the PSC to judge whether a control point is necessary for the proposed task / day. Action to add to Organiser's Guide and OBNs.

## **14. Forum Remote line option**

Hanweide successfully use a remote finish line. Possibly less congested than a ring.

The CC decided that this was not necessary in our rules. No change proposed.

### **15. Forum - Start opening calls**

One input was that we should adopt Hanweide's use of a repeat back system for start open calls.

The CC decided that this is not necessary. No change proposed.

### **16. Forum – Both pilots in 2 seat on published results in briefing**

One input that the organiser should show both pilots if in top 3 at briefing.

The CC decided that this is an issue for the organisation to manage. No change proposed.

### **17. Director's report – Mandate proper moving maps**

It was said that mobile phones are not sufficiently reliable to be used as moving maps.

The group felt that mobile phones were fine if used properly which is a pilot issue, not a rules issue. No change proposed.

### **18. Director's report - Proximity Analysis Tool**

The PAT tool had major issues in 2024 which should be corrected for 2025. The CC decided to use it in further trials during 2025.

### **19. Windicapping**

Do we need to use in single class Nationals?

The CC felt that it was still appropriate to reward into-wind legs more than downwind ones. No change proposed.

### **20. Director's report - Use of AFPEX for NOTAM**

Should we change the NOTAM system to AFPEX?

AFPEX requires subscription. The existing system is simple, largely automatic and considered adequate. No change proposed for 2025.

### **21. Director's report – Late payment**

Organisers are having problems with pilots leaving payment to the last moment

The CC considered that this a matter for organisers not the rules. No change proposed. Advice will be put in the Organiser's guide and notes.

### **22. Protest period at end of competition**

Review of time allowed. Now that competitions are scored using See You it would be rare for the last day's results to be issued late and 5 days seems excessive. Other countries reduce the protest period to as little as 2 hours. The CC decided that the penalty period should be the same as for other days i.e. 24hrs after publication of unofficial scores. Rule 5.19.1 has been amended accordingly.

## **23. Airspace penalty structure again.**

Every year The CC discuss this rule. Are our airspace penalties too lenient?

Choices considered were:

- 1) No change. The easiest option but does give the CAA and public cause to think that the BGA condones small infringements,
- 2) Adopt the IGC rule of 'land out at point of infringement'. This fixes the perceived problems but is not a consistent penalty. Very severe at, or before, the start (up to 1000 points) but much smaller towards the finish or a land out (potentially just a few points).
- 3) Remove the buffer zone inside airspace. Each, or multiple, infringements of a single piece of penalty airspace would get a 500 point penalty. This solves the perceived problems but whilst severe, remains fair.  
With today's in-cockpit navigation equipment pilots can easily set themselves a buffer outside airspace. There may be an argument for retaining a 50 point buffer vertically inside airspace.

In 2023/4 the CC felt that we should adopt (3) above for horizontal infringements but retain the 100ft 50-point buffer for vertical ones because of the potential for altimeter calibration inaccuracy.

The CC put this forward for consultation as a potential 2025 change. Pilot consultation feedback was that no change was required.

This year the CC has confirmed their preference for choice (3) above and consulted the Airspace chair to find out what the current state of BGA / CAA discussions on this subject. He and the BGA Exec support this change.

The airspace penalties have been altered to reflect option (3) above for horizontal infringement.

## **24. Dangerous low flying at the finish**

There were two accidents in 2024 competitions where the use of a finish line may have been a contributing factor. In 2024 the CC decided to consult on the removal of finish lines. From feedback, it was clear that this would be unpopular with some competitions and many pilots.

The CC decided that it was not necessary to change the rules but that additional guidance should be given on the use of rings. The CC will recommend that directors consider using a ring where the undershoot options are poor or there is potential danger to persons on the ground e.g. roads or other public rights of way on or near the airfield threshold. Also we will recommend that consideration is given to using a ring to allow final downwind legs to the finish.

## **25. Provisional Licences for first time competitors**

In 2023/4 the CC said that it would consult on this. JW and one correspondent both like this idea as it reinforces desired attitudes to risk and safe flying at the beginning of a pilot's competition career. There have been pilots in recent years who may have benefitted from this approach.

The CC agreed that, although the objective was good, this was not the answer. Directors will be encouraged to report on the flying and safe attitudes of new pilots to the CC. Guidance will be put in the OBNs.

## **26. Maximum height loss rule**

We had a suggestion that we set a height loss from start to finish rule that mitigates against the need to start as high as possible e.g., at cloud base.

The CC sees this as a positive idea but wonders how it would be scored. SeeYou scripts cannot presently access start height so this cannot be scored automatically. The CC will consider again for 2026.

## **27. Starting engine before or after the task in emergency.**

The CC was informed of two instances in 2024:

- a) A pilot had to restart his engine prior to starting the task because it would not fully retract after test running.
- b) A pilot elected to start his engine to delay landing on a congested airfield after finishing the task

See (28) below.

## **28. Turbo Relights**

Turbo relights were trialled in 2023 then removed from the rules as there was no clear majority for or against. The CC discussed whether to reinstate.

The CC discussed options and felt that we should re-introduce a new rule that allows 2 turbo relights per launch. This would also solve the item (27) above as pilots would be able to use this rule to further test their engine or to avoid landing on a congested airfield. The following changes to rule 5.22 have been implemented:

### **5.22.3 Failed engine test**

A further engine test using rule 5.22.2 may be attempted if the first running fails to operate or shut down correctly.

### **5.22.4 Use of engine for relighting**

Dependent upon competition site parameters, the organisation may elect to allow engine enabled self-relights. The following procedures will apply:

5.22.4.1 For the purpose of a self-relight, engines may be started only within the active engine starting areas as designated by the organisation in a published airspace file

5.22.4.2 Engine must be shut down below the designated release height within the active release areas as designated by the organisation in a published airspace file

5.22.4.3 Engines may be started up to three times before landing for a normal relight thereby permitting repeat use of these procedures. These three starts include launching for self-launchers, testing according to rules 5.22.2 and 5.22.3, and a maximum of two self-relights.

### **5.22.5 Further Engine Operation.**

Any other engine operation prior to completion of the task ends competition flying for that day (No penalty will be applied if the engine is operated after completion of the task). Self-retrieving gliders must return directly to the competition site without delay to minimize the effect on pilots still competing.

## **29. Mandating Flarm or Strobes**

All agreed that Flarm and Strobes are great aids to safety in competition. Nearly all pilots carry Flarm already so no rule that mandates equipment is required. It is noted that strobes are now mandatory for FAI competitions. The BGA have also highlighted the value of strobes in their guidance on collision avoidance. Rule 5.16.5 has been amended to include this recommendation.

### **30. Director's report – Club class handicapping**

We were asked to clarify the use of IGC handicaps in Club Class Nationals.

The Club Class Nationals had difficulty with this. Our existing penalties are slightly ambiguous and should be clarified. Also clarity required regarding drinking water. The penalty has been reworded:

Exceeding Declaration  
Weight in Club Class

Weight over limit in Kg x 2 points x no of competition days elapsed since  
start of competition / last weighing (if less) including the day of discovery.

Overweight penalties for other classes remain unchanged. Drinking Water is included already in local rules.

### **31. Minimum time limits for AAT**

One director suggested that 2 hours minimum was too long for Regionals. They said that having a 1:30 minimum would be more like the 80k for racing tasks and would result in more AATs being set.

The CC felt this was appropriate. The scoring formulae was reviewed and it was concluded that this decision would have no material effect on scoring in Regionals. The minimum time for AATs in Regionals and Juniors has been reduced.

### **32. Arcus/AS32/HPH304 handicap increase**

Pilot inputs suggest that the Arcus and similar gliders are under handicapped. Similar performance to ASG29 and other 2<sup>nd</sup> generation 18M gliders has been measured in Germany.

The CC also felt that the Arcus, AS32, and HP304 handicaps should be reviewed. This was passed to handicap sub committee who recommended an increase to 109 which, although lower than that used in Germany, was agreed and has been implemented.

### **33. Tie breaks**

The rules group agreed to ask the full committee to consider this for 2025. The subgroup now does not consider tie breaks are necessary and are concerned about fairness of various proposed solutions. No change proposed.

### **34. Forum - 2<sup>nd</sup> Logger**

Pilot asked that we should allow pilot to submit evidence from 2<sup>nd</sup> logger. SC3a treatment was reviewed. We decided to write a new rule to reflect this. The following is proposed based upon IGC rules:

#### **5.5.10 Use of Secondary Logger**

The Organisers will analyse flight log files from the primary flight recorder for the purpose of scoring the flight. If that evaluation shows a continuous flight and indicates no penalties, then that evaluation will be used for scoring.

In cases where the primary flight log fails to demonstrate flight continuity from take-off to landing, or indicates a penalty, complementary data from the

secondary flight recorder may be used to fill the gap or reduce the penalty.

### **35. Reserve day**

We had a proposal that the second Sunday be designated a reserve day for use if the previous week did not provide 4 competition days.

The group discussed. This has been considered before. There is nothing in our existing rule book that specifies 9 day competitions. The bid document for Nationals requires 9 days. Organisers are free to do as they wish for Regionals but choose not to.

The CC decided to specify a minimum for Regionals and advise in OBNs that they can have less than 9. Nationals to remain 9 days. The following has been added to the rules:

#### **4.4.4 Length of Competitions**

National competitions will be run over 9 consecutive days. Regional competitions may be run over 7, 8, or 9 days.

### **36. Ratings**

A member of the rules subgroup proposed that we should not include overseas competitions (other than European and World Championships) in our UK ratings. There are many reasons why it is not possible or practicable for all UK pilots to fly overseas competitions including financial, medical, and work commitments. Pilots that can fly overseas may, therefore, gain an unfair advantage over these pilots; especially if the overseas competition has a base rating of 1000 points.

The rating list is used for prioritising entry to UK Nationals and for Team selection. It was argued that pilots should gain their rating by flying against UK pilots in the UK. There is also a question about the quality of an overseas competition compared to our own.

For these reasons it was proposed that we either:

- 1) Exclude overseas competitions from the UK rating list, or
- 2) Reduce the base rating of overseas competitions to 750.

The CC agreed to remove the option to have overseas competitions included. UK ratings to be based upon UK rated competitions and CAT 1 events only. Rule 6.1 has been modified to remove this option.

### **37. Task Devaluation Times**

The group thought that UK Nationals presently devalue at 200 minutes. IGC is 180. Paul Candler has confirmed that the 200 minimum in our rules results in devaluation below 180 minutes. No change proposed.

### **38. Change to selection procedures and timing**

One input suggesting changes. The CC also believes that this is an area for serious review and has proposed that a group of British Team pilots led by Werner review the whole process during 2025 for inclusion in the rules for 2026. No further action required.

### **39. Use of IGC handicaps in Club Class Nationals**

2024 rules suggested that the scorer should multiply IGC handicaps by 100 before using See You to score. This is not necessary as the script does this automatically.

The CC has added to rule 4.3.2 and 4.3.4 as follows:

#### **IGC Handicap Integration with BGA Scoring**

It should be noted that IGC handicaps will require a multiplier of 100 prior to integration with BGA scoring formulae as described in Appendix 7.2. For the UK Nationals, this is done automatically by the UK SeeYou Scoring Script.

### **40. Womens Team Selection**

Following difficulties experienced in selecting pilots for the 2025 WWGC, the committee has reviewed the selection procedures and redrafted rule 6.2.6 as follows:

#### **6.2.6 Women's World Championships.**

Up to 6 pilots will be selected to represent the UK in the Women's World Championships with a maximum of 3 pilots per class. To be eligible for selection pilots must have fully participated in a UK Nationals within the last two years for the specific class they intend to compete in. Pilots will be offered a place using the following criteria and, within each, in points order (highest to lowest):-

1st. Medal Winners from the preceding Women's World Championship will be offered a place for the class in which the medal was achieved.

2nd. Then pilots that have achieved 550 points or higher in a UK Nationals (excluding Juniors) will be offered a place for the class in which points were earned.

3rd. Then pilots that have achieved 550 points or higher in either a UK Nationals (excluding Juniors) or an International Championship (Women's World, unrestricted World or European Championship) in any class will be offered a place for the class of their choice.

4th. Finally, pilots that have achieved 550 points or higher in Junior Nationals, Junior Internationals, or Rated Regionals. If places are available, pilots in this group will first be offered a place in the class in which their points were earned.

Points to be used for qualification must be gained within the two qualifying competition years prior to selection.

End.