



**BRITISH
GLIDING
ASSOCIATION**

**BGA COMPETITION
ORGANISERS' BRIEFING NOTES
April 2017**

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BGA Competition Organisers' Briefing Notes April 2017

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1 Rules Changes for 2017

The 2017 Rulebook has now been published. There are 16 significant changes this year. Here is a rundown of the 10 you definitely need to know about in advance. See the Rulebook itself for the details:

- **Water Ballast in Club Class (4.3.6).** Water Ballast in the fin tank for CofG adjustment only is now permitted, subject to MTOM and no change during competition.
- **Adjustment to Handicap (Club Class) (4.3.4).** Handicap increment steps have been altered from 0.001 per 2kg to 0.002 per 4kg to overcome a clash with the 1% tolerance in rule 3.3.2.
- **Alternative Rules & Procedures (4.7).** This rule has been amended to require the earliest possible publication of the intention to trial alternative rules and/or procedures. Previously, publication with the local rules had been the only requirement.
- **Notice of First Launch (5.3.7).** This procedure now has the force of a rule, although it has been best practice for some time. Note the requirement to give 10 minutes warning of actual first launch and how stream-launching is dealt with.
- **Maximum Start Height Clarified for Blue Days (5.6.3).** On blue days, max start height is defined as 1000ft above expected height of convection.
- **Start Open Time Formula given 5 more minutes. (5.6.4).** To correct potential unfairness to last grid launch. Note also:- directors reminded that this is a minimum time.
- **Final Control Point Radius (5.8.3).** Radius of final control point increased for multi-class use.
- **Finish Ring Minimum Altitude Uses Take-Off Pressure Datum (5.9.3.2 & 7.4).** Clarification to avoid potential disputes when atmospheric pressure may have changed during a flight.
- **ATZs added to Airspace Section (5.10.4).** The Rules had previously been silent on ATZs. causing potential confusion regarding their status.
- **Contest Dependent Variables (7.2.2).** The Minimum Task Distance for a DHT has been clarified to be applied to the Handicapped Task Distance, i.e. the distance a glider of handicap 100 would fly to complete the task.

2 Airspace

2.1 Danger Of Prosecution For Airspace Infringements

The BGA has received reports that there is a new, harsher, line being taken by the CAA with regard to Airspace Infringements which could result in licence suspensions and prosecution of pilots, potentially even for infringements which, in the past, would not

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have been treated as serious. Organisers are reminded that even minor infringements may expose pilots to possible punitive action and are urged to brief pilots accordingly.

2.2 Sensitive Areas in Class G Airspace

This issue was first highlighted in the 2015 Organisers' Guide following concern expressed by certain airfield operators at the number of gliders operating close to or within their ILS areas. We have moved on somewhat since then, with ILS feather now routinely available in moving map airspace files and improved awareness by pilots. On a similar note, there are concerns being raised about penetration of unprohibited (unstarred) Danger Areas, without use of a crossing service. If we are to avoid more demand for controlled airspace, it is imperative that we don't drop our guard on these issues. If a task is routed close to or through such an area, a telephone call in advance to the airfield concerned or the owner of the DA should be made. In addition pilots should be briefed on such zones within the task area and encouraged to communicate by radio with the airfield concerned should they find themselves potentially in conflict with ILS traffic and to avoid unnecessary penetrations of non-prohibited DAs.

2.3 ATZs

You will note that ATZs are now mentioned in the Rules (5.10.4). Since unauthorized penetration is actually illegal, it was felt prudent, given the background outlined above, to clarify their status in the rules.

2.4 Marham Airprox and MATZs in General

A related issue exists with Military Aerodrome Traffic Zones. During the 18m Nationals last year an incident occurred with an RAF Tornado when the task group penetrated the Marham MATZ en-masse, there having been no contact with Marham in advance. This resulted in an airprox report and a very uncomfortable meeting with the UK Airprox Board for the BGA. New text has been added to this year's Organisers Guide (see below) and advance notice of this went some way to mollifying the Airprox Board. Nevertheless, you will see that this year's Airspace Coordination Notices (which you will receive in due course) will have a new somewhat tighter notification requirement. We do not yet know the details, but ACNs will require certain Air Traffic Service Units (ATSUs) to be notified on a daily basis. Organisers are advised to develop a list of contact details for ATSU/airfields in their likely task areas, if this is not already in place..

New Org Guide Text (please read carefully):-

Military Aerodrome Traffic Zones, not including the central ATZ (IE the 5nm radius zones outside the central ATZ together with the associated stubs) have a different status in law to that of civil ATZs which, in practice, means that they may legally be penetrated by GA traffic without permission. (Note this does NOT apply to the standard 2 or 2.5nm radius ATZ at the centre which must be treated as any other ATZ).

The consequences of a large number of gliders being in potential conflict with fast-moving military traffic range from extremely expensive to extremely dangerous or both, so competition organisers must take due note of the MATZs in their task areas and consider whether the advantages outweigh the risks of tasking through the area.

If there is clear competition benefit in a task track going through a MATZ, Directors must advise the appropriate military contact. Directors and Task-Setters are reminded that a

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list of military contacts is available on the BGA website at :-

<https://members.glidering.co.uk/library/pilot-briefing-airspace/military-flying-unit-contacts-june-16/> and must ensure that MATZ operators are kept informed of potential glider traffic in or near their zones. Pilots too must be briefed to avoid unnecessary incursions.

Radio Calls:- When in the vicinity of a MATZ, as with other areas of sensitive class G airspace, pilots are encouraged to make their presence and intentions known by making a radio call. Gliders fitted with transponders should turn them on. Competition organisers will have informed the controlling authority of the possible presence of gliders, and will brief competitors on whether group or individual calls are preferred. In any event, competitors should monitor the MATZ frequency when approaching and arrange for those arriving in the area first to call. Later arrivals can use their judgement. If in doubt, competitors should call.

We have been asked by one of the BGA's Military ATS contacts for feedback on whether military ATS personnel are helpful when contacted. IE are they helpful and useful, or do they start trying to "control", which they should not do? Feedback direct to compscommittee@gliding.co.uk will be passed on appropriately.

2.5 Competition Airspace Files from Navboys

Shaun Lapworth is still happy to produce competition-specific airspace files (in SeeYou .CUB format), but has asked that you decide before contacting him how you want unlicensed airfields, ILS feathers and Danger Areas to be dealt with and to have ready the reference numbers for any AIB's that you want included. Shaun is contactable at shaun@navboys.com.

3 Airmanship at Finishes and monitoring of Low Finishes

Following a number of low-finish penalties regrettably found necessary at some 2016 competitions, we have asked by the BGA Executive Committee to remind competition organisers and competitors that the BGA finishing requirements (i.e. a descending flight profile not below 30' feet unless immediately prior to landing) is an agreed interpretation of the law developed in direct consultation with the CAA following the tragic accident at Husbands Bosworth in 2005 and must be adhered to if we are to avoid further restrictions.

Following the Shoreham Hunter accident, the CAA is particularly sensitive to anything which could endanger third parties and they view the 2005 fatality as just that, a third-party fatality, regardless of the fact that we saw the unfortunate victim as "one of ours". Any perception by the CAA that our finishing rules are not sufficiently understood or respected could lead to a review and the BGA has been reminded of that by the CAA.

Directors are urged to ensure that the finishing rules are fully covered in briefings, even if it seems boring. In addition, all finishes should be properly monitored for compliance and infringements penalised.

It is not a practical proposition to rely on the flight trace to detect finishes below 30 feet agl, so it has to be done visually. That is why it is necessary for the director or other nominated officer to personally monitor finishes. It is not difficult to judge if you do it by comparison to wingspan. EG 30ft is half the span of an 18m glider. Photographs can

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help a lot here both in making the judgement and providing evidence in support of a penalty. Having someone photograph the finishes every day is also an incentive to pilots to make sure they comply. There's nothing like showing a few finish shots at briefing to let pilots know their finishes will be monitored and low-finishes spotted and penalised.

4 Miscellaneous Topics

4.1 Starting Out of the Top

During 2016 at least one competition suffered problems when cloudbase went up much more than expected leaving Max start height well below cloudbase. Several competitors lost out by forgetting that they could start by climbing out of the top of the start sector. We suggest that pilots are reminded of this.

4.2 Overlapping Showery TPs

It is possible that the extreme corners of adjacent showery TPs could overlap. Analysis of this situation has been carried out and confirms that the shortest route, even in this situation, is still to the 0.5km barrel of each in turn. While it is not recommended to set tasks with overlapping sectors, this situation need not be strenuously avoided.

4.3 Minimum Barrel Size in DHTs

The default minimum barrel size for DHTs used in BGA rated competitions is 0.5km. This is appropriate where the range of handicaps is wide, in order to keep the barrel-size for low-handicappers down to a reasonable level. However, this is not a requirement of the rules. Indeed, where the handicap range in a competition is narrow enough to allow it, the minimum barrel-size can and should be set larger than 0.5km. This will have the effect of improving fairness by increasing the size of the target for the high-handicappers. It is also an alternative to the use of "Showery" turnpoints when showery conditions raise the possibility of a TP being obliterated by weather. The latest version of the DHT software will now allow this even when "BGA Competition Defaults" is checked. Earlier versions will need to have "BGA Competitions Defaults" unchecked, in which case the other BGA defaults will have to be selected individually.

4.4 Fallback Tasks

Reports suggest that some days may be being lost due to a lack of suitably short pre-briefed fall-back tasks. Directors and task-setters are urged, whenever possible, to make sure at least one short fall-back task is pre-briefed to cater for the possibility of a very late start, when timing dictates a short task, but when there may not be enough time to create one, brief it and then give pilots the 30 minutes required by the rules to prepare for it. A pre-briefed task needs no additional briefing and can be announced only 15 minutes before launching.

4.5 7-Day Comps

Organisers are reminded that 7-day competitions are an option which could help increase participation. Sunday to Saturday is an obvious option, but Monday to Sunday is another which some might find attractive.

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4.6 New Format for Directors' Reports

When the pressure comes off at the end of a competition, it's hard to find the enthusiasm for writing your director's report. Recognising this, the Comps Committee is reviewing what it needs from you and is resolved to ask only for information that it actually needs and will actually do something with. A new report template will be communicated in due course.

4.7 Designated Starts

A new optional start rule has been adopted by the IGC. Sporting Code Annex A – October 2016 (paragraph 7.4.1). Designed as an anti-leeching and anti-gagging measure, pilots' start times will be taken as the end of a previous time slot (10 minutes seems the most likely slot duration) instead of their actual start time. This optional start method may be adopted into BGA rules in future if trials are successful. Trials during 2017 are currently being considered at the EGC Lasham and at the 18m Nationals at Husbands Bosworth.

4.8 Finish Frequency

At last year's 18m/Junior Nationals a decision was made during the competition to designate the finish frequency to be the same as the local traffic frequency. This was done after a series of incidents involving non-comp finishers. No further incidents occurred after the change. Directors are invited to consider whether this practice would be helpful at their competition.

4.9 Gliding Safety Videos

A series of 10 videos made by Peder Lindbom using Condor is available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLg2FFq0MZjiyNkbxgE0RvDrQ1Z8QvGktZ> According to Peder "The purpose of these clips are as an instructional aid for situational awareness and as a base for flight safety discussions". Might prove handy on a rainy day.

4.10 Call for Traces to Help Airspace Committee

Chris Fox of the BGA Airspace committee is working on a project to produce a "heat map" of gliding activity in the UK. It would help Chris enormously if competition traces could be zipped and emailed to him at chris@tyddynonn.co.uk at the end of your competitions. Chris will be very grateful if you can remember to do this.

5 Competition Forum Seed Topics

The BGA Competitions Committee views competition forums as a valuable channel for feedback and consultation and has been encouraging their use in recent years. As well as providing a channel for general feedback, which is helpful both for the host club and the BGA, we find them particularly valuable for gauging opinion on specific issues on which we expect to make decisions during the coming winter. For that reason, we would like to ask Directors to include the following topics in their forums during 2017:-

5.1 Forum Seed Topic 1: Airspace Penalties

We still see a regular crop of airspace infringements in competitions. Since it seems we are seeing a change in approach by the CAA (see 2.1) the BGA Comps Committee, in liaison with the Airspace Committee, is considering whether a change to the Rules may be appropriate. Currently we have a regime which tolerates (ie gives small penalties

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for) small incursions into airspace, even though this is still illegal. It can be argued that this puts a buffer zone inside the airspace when perhaps it ought to be outside with light penalties given for close approaches and heavy penalties for any incursion. On the other hand, some would argue that penalising pilots for flying anywhere outside airspace, even right up to the boundary would be wrong. Is this a sustainable position? We note that the IGC rules call for landout at the point of incursion, with disqualification for repeat offences. Is that the way we should go? Could the answer lie in better pilot education? We would be interested to hear from pilots and organisers on this issue.

5.2 Forum Seed Topic 2: Held Starts In Regionals

Occasionally, when the weather is marginal, a launch window of sufficient duration to launch and start the whole grid within the normal rules may not occur, though the task may well be achievable. In such circumstances the day's flying may be lost for everyone as the director waits for a weather window. The CC has been asked on more than one occasion if this could be overcome by having some mechanism in the rules to allow a director to suspend held starts. This would, of course, introduce a large measure of luck, so scoring would presumably need to be devalued in some way and a limit put on its use. It is not envisaged that this mechanism would be welcome in a Nationals, but in a Regionals, where the emphasis may be more on fun flying, perhaps pilots would welcome it? The CC would be interested to hear pilots' views on this and their thoughts on how it might be implemented.

5.3 Forum Seed Topic 3: Encouraging new pilots to fly competitions

Overall numbers competing have dropped in the last few years and we would like everyone's thoughts on how to increase this, in particular how to encourage people who have not yet flown in a rated competition to join in. Discounts for people who have not flown / not flown recently? Newcomer briefings? Bring-a-friend discounts?

5.4 Forum Seed Topic 4: 20M Multi-Seat Handicaps

When the 20M Multi-Seat Nationals were introduced in 2015, it was decided to use IGC handicap rules. Under the IGC system, any glider of lower performance than those appearing on the IGC list for the class receive a handicap of 100 regardless of their actual handicap. This was done with the intention of ensuring that the class would fit with the 20M Multi Seat Class at International level. It has been suggested that forcing lower-handicap two-seaters with handicaps in the mid to low nineties to fly at a handicap of 100 makes them excessively uncompetitive and discourages their participation. Since encouraging participation is a stated goal of the Comps Committee, was this a bad decision? Should we change to BGA Handicaps and let gliders fly at their allotted BGA handicap? Will this actually increase participation in the 20M Multi-Seat Nationals without devaluing the competition as a preparation for our international pilots?

6 Mandating of Flarm

Thank you for the extensive feedback we received from your forums in 2016 on this topic. Following a review, the Competitions Committee's position on this issue is as follows:-

- The CC remains convinced that Flarm usage in competitions makes a positive contribution to competition safety and that all competing gliders should be equipped with Flarm.

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- The CC acknowledges there are arguments against making Flarm compulsory in competitions, which go wider than the competition environment.
- The CC feels that there would have to be widespread support before compulsory Flarm in competition is likely to be accepted and Forum feedback shows that support is not yet strong enough.
- The CC will continue to strongly recommend its use and will explore ways of increasing Flarm use in competitions through other means, including education and the provision of loan equipment, where possible.

Following up on the last point above, we are currently engaged in an initiative to make loan Flarm units available for use in competitions. Directors are invited to make it clear that Flarm use is strongly recommended in their competitions, to contact non-flarm-equipped competitors to establish whether loan equipment would be acceptable and to contact the CC (see 10 below) in good time if loan equipment is required. More information on this initiative will be circulated in due course.

7 Organisers Facebook Group

During the Organisers' Seminar in January it became clear that better communication with and between Competition Organisers' would be valuable. For that reason a Facebook Group entitled BGA Competition Organisers' Forum has been created.

As well as facilitating direct communication between you all, it's also a place where we can share resources. For example, on the Files tab you will find useful tools such as:-

- A checklist for decision-making on choice of task/first launch/start time
- A simple guide on weight scrutineering that makes it much easier.
- The Ideal Comp Model (See below)

This is a closed group with entry by invitation. If you are not already on it, send your Facebook name to the Comps Committee (see 9 below) and you will be invited to join. If you aren't on Facebook, you might consider getting on just for this.

Notes and presentations from the Seminar are at <https://members.glidering.co.uk/library/information-for-organisers/>

8 The Ideal Competition Model

What makes a good competition? Obviously, good weather has a bit to do with it. But we can't control that. So, what can we control that will make our competitions better? The Comps Committee has identified a large number of features (not counting the obvious things like having some tugs) that help competitions to be successful. These have been compiled into a self-assessment Excel workbook called the Ideal Competition Model. No single competition can realistically expect to do everything. Constraints such as budget, resources, or infrastructure will rule some out. However, the model should allow organisers to identify practical and affordable things they could do. The CC invites all competition organisers in 2017 to try using this model to identify improvements for their competitions. A copy of the file containing the model can be found on the Files tab of the Competition Organisers' Forum on Facebook.

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9 General Communication

If you have any questions about the contents of this document or any other issues that you need help with (how to get competition airspace files, finding tugs, deciding the dates of your competition next year... whatever) , please don't forget the Comps Committee has a lot of contacts and expertise amongst its members. Don't hesitate to get in touch. You can contact the Competitions Committee directly by email:- compscommittee@gliding.co.uk

Have a great competition.

The BGA Competitions and Awards Committee