

GUIDE TO FLYING TASKS GNZ NATIONAL & REGIONAL GLIDING CHAMPIONSHIPS

2003 – 2004

Starting and Finishing

In recent years, various types of start lines to reduce gaggles and enhance safety have been tried. Similarly, various finish line configurations to provide the safest and least conflicting arrivals have been tried. We are now using the latest IGC starts and finishes. As always, there will be a thorough briefing on starting, finishing and general procedures before the contest starts.

Task Types

The current IGC task types have been adopted, ie:

- a) Racing task.
- b) Speed task – Assigned Areas (minimum time to finish).
- c) Distance task – Assigned Areas (maximum time to fly distance).

The Rules say no one task type should be used for more than 2/3 of the contest days. At most contests the task setters will probably use Racing tasks interspersed with just one of the other types.

Racing Task

Most pilots will be familiar with the simple racing task – a good old race around prescribed turn points in a set order. To round a turn point correctly, your GPS record has to show that you got within 0.5 km of it. You can miss by up to 0.5 km but you will then incur a penalty of 25 points. More than 0.5 km – hard luck ! In racing tasks, getting home is the name of the game, but to get any speed points, your handicapped speed must exceed 2/3 of the winner's handicapped speed. Otherwise you get distance points only.

If you do land out (or wish to claim a virtual outlanding), your scoring distance is worked out by taking the distance from where you landed to the next turn point then around the rest of the course (ie the bit you didn't do) and subtracting that from the task length.

Speed Task – Assigned Areas

This task gives the task-setters more flexibility in setting tasks, and is particularly useful when the weather can't be reliably predicted. Instead of having to fly through 0.5 km radius turn points, you fly through assigned areas that can be as big the task-setter likes, so long as they don't overlap. This also gives you the pilot great flexibility because you only have to penetrate each assigned area in the correct order, and can choose when to turn in each area. You get credit for your best overall distance flown, as shown by your GPS. As in the Racing Task, you can miss the assigned area outside boundary by up to 0.5 km, but will earn a 25 point penalty.

If you finish, you will receive the same distance points as the pilot flying the greatest distance unless your handicap distance is less than 2/3 of that pilot's handicap distance – in which case you'll get fewer distance points. Your speed points will depend on your speed relative to that of the winner – but like the Racing Task, to get any speed points your handicapped speed must exceed 2/3 of the winner's handicapped speed.

If you don't finish, you will just get distance points relative to the pilot flying the greatest handicap distance.

Speeds are calculated like this. The task setter designates a MINIMUM task time; say 3 or 5 hours or whatever, for each pilot to accumulate distance. If you get back early, you will be credited with less speed because it will be calculated as though you took the designated minimum time. But if you get back late, that's OK because you'll be credited with your actual speed. However, you shouldn't deliberately fly for much longer than the minimum time unless you're in good conditions that will improve your average speed.

What's the general strategy for flying one of these tasks? The task setter will have given you the nominal task distance, assessed via the centre of each assigned area, plus the minimum and maximum task distances achievable via the assigned areas. You have the opportunity to adjust the length of your flight according to the conditions in order to avoid finishing before the minimum time is up.

Generally, you cut short in poor areas and go deep into stronger ones. John Coutts says his only rule is to go deep into the first assigned area, especially if the conditions are reasonable and you're uncertain what the conditions are like in the second area.

Distance Task – Assigned Areas

As for the Speed Task – Assigned Areas, this task gives the task-setters more flexibility in setting tasks. Again, instead of having to fly through 0.5 km radius turn points, you fly through assigned areas that can be as big the task-setter likes, so long as they don't overlap, and you only have to penetrate each assigned area in the correct order. You get credit for your best overall distance flown, as shown by your GPS. Again, you can miss the assigned area outside boundary by up to 0.5 km, but will earn a 25 point penalty.

The way it works is this. The task setter nominates a MAXIMUM time limit; say 3 or 5 hours or whatever, for each pilot to accumulate distance – you've got this amount of time to clock up the km. For safety reasons, a minimum QNH altitude is also set for your time-out position, normally equal to the launch altitude. This means your actual time-out will be earlier if you get too low as the time nears. But if you correctly cross the finish before your time runs out, you score to the centre of the finish regardless. If you haven't made it to the finish before your time runs out, you score as if you made a virtual outlanding at your actual time-out point.

Try to be in a position to dive off your height as your time limit approaches, leaving enough margin to be just above the specified minimum altitude. Obviously, you don't want to land before the time limit because you'll be giving away valuable distance. Similarly, if you're well above the minimum altitude when your time runs out, that's

energy wasted that could have been converted to distance. There's one proviso to all this though – if you think you can correctly cross the finish at or just before your time-out, you'll have an advantage because you will effectively score to the contest site rather than back at the point where you last went below the minimum altitude.

Potential Day Devaluations

On some days the winner doesn't get 1000 points – how come ? Well, there is more than one way for this to happen:

1. If the winner does a racing task in less than 2 hours, then it is deemed to be under-set for the day, and is devalued accordingly. The day is also devalued if the designated minimum time on a speed task is less than 2 hours.
2. If less than 75% of those launched in the class get past 80 km, then the day is worth less than 1000 points. For example, if only 50% get past 80 km, it's worth 500 points. If 25% or less make it past 80 km, the day is worth zip ! Factors vary on a straight-line formula in between. Club Class pilots can relax – their qualifying distance is 50 km, not 80 km. And for Sports and PW5 classes it's 30 km. In all cases we're talking about handicapped distances.
3. There is still a chance for the day to be devalued if the task setter and/or the weather forecaster doesn't get it quite right. To avoid devaluation, the winner has to score a handicapped distance of at least 200 km (80km for Sports and PW5s).

Helping the Scorer

You can really help the Scorer by making sure you submit your GPS recorder and flight declaration as soon as possible after you land. The Rules give you a maximum of two hours from the time you get back to the contest site (whether by landing there or after a road retrieve). Later than that – you'll cop a 50-point penalty.

For all tasks you must list the turn points or assigned areas you wish to claim, in the order in which you rounded them. Remember that another essential element of your after-flight declaration is the exact GPS time or GPS coordinates of any virtual outlanding or actual outlanding – this will save the Scorer much time in processing your performance.

Safe flying – keep a good look-out and go for it !

Sailplane Racing Committee