

Minutes of the Pilots' Meeting held during the Multi-Class National Gliding Championships, Omarama, 9 January 2013

Meeting commenced 11:06 am

1. Attendees:

Ross Gaddes (meeting chair), Dane Dickinson (secretary) and 30 other contest pilots / organisers.

2. Apologies:

Maurice Weaver, Ben Flewett

3. Prior Minutes:

Minutes of the previous pilots' meeting at the Multi-Class National Gliding Championships Omarama 11 January 2011 were summarized. (Confirmation was not required, as had occurred during the 2011 GNZ AGM Pilots' Meeting.)

No matters arising.

4. Discussion Items

- Weighing

Max explained that there had been a number of non-descript comments about competitors overloading to organisers and the SRC, and that Maurice Weaver had sought discussion at the meeting as to whether weighing needed to be (re)instituted at nationals.

Lindsey Stephens – Felt there is no overloading problem. Weighing just creates more work for organisers.

Brett Hunter – Explained that scrutineering and weighing occurs in Australian nationals.

Bill Walker – need to weigh pilots for cockpit loadings.

Grae Harrison – Cheats will be found out in our competitions.

George Wills – Not a rules issue, matter for organisers to address.

Max Stevens – do we have a problem that needs to be solved?

General feeling of the floor was that overloading is not a problem at Omarama. Weighing is an unnecessary hassle.

- Finish Ring

Dane Dickinson explained that having trialed the finish ring at the competition, now would be an opportunity to evaluate the procedure compared to the established finish line and take a mandate to future competitions as to which method is more appropriate for finishing.

Theo Newfield – felt there was no safety issue with the finish line at Omarama. Spectators miss out on watching finishes with the finish ring.

Grae Harrison – Advantage of finish ring is that it allows easier eastern finishes. Also easier to finish with a ring at higher altitudes.

Derek Kraak – Traditional line finishes meant all the energy of finishers was funneled from the west in a defined corridor – led to predictable maneuvers / traffic. Spectators miss out.

Doug Hamilton – Felt the ring brought a problematic safety issue of possible conflicts with non-competition traffic in circuit

Vaughan Ruddick – Ring finish means that finishing was done by instruments, reduced pilot lookout at critical flight phase. Thought that finishes were much safer when conducted visually.

Bill Walker – The finish line was fine at Omarama because of the low numbers of finishers; typically 30 pilots spread out over 1 hour

G Dale – Finishing line at Omarama works because of experienced pilots; could be difficult for newer pilots. A finish ring will get better with experience.

Graham White – With a finish line non-competition pilots know very clearly where finishers travel and where they will end up. With a ring, don't know where anyone is going.

Alan Belworthy – Ring trialed at Matamata for variable circuits with no significant height limits. Worked reasonably well.

Gavin Wills – likes traditional finishes, but felt ring could help address the occurrence of low energy circuits in strong easterlies. Also ring gave advantage to task setters for finishing tasks from multiple directions.

Brett Hunter – Thought the ring was good as allowed finishing from the east without having to do a push into wind plus 180-degree turn and circuit.

Doug Hamilton – smaller circle would allow eastern finishes plus retain feel of line.

Mark Willson – smaller circle would mean pull-ups into opposing traffic.

Warren Dickinson – finish ring makes finishing through Lindsey's saddle much easier.

Bill Walker – Concerned about instrument mediated finishes when using ring – pilot look-out is impinged.

Ross Gaddes asked for a show of hands to gauge the feeling of the floor as to who was in favour of finishing by Ring versus Line.

16 pilots preferred the ring, 16 the line.

- FLARM

Grae Harrision – Explained that the FLARM technology has improved, costs have come down, acceptance is growing. Thought that it was time to mandate the usage of FLARM at Omarama at all times, not just at competitions.

Mark Wilson – questioned the reliability of FLARM and whether mandating something that wasn't reliable was a good idea.

G Dale – Generally a believer in FLARM but mentioned many problems with FLARM, and also that it was problematic to mandate with rules. How could it be policed?

Graham Parker – Explained his experiences from Australia where FLARM is mostly mandated. In competitions, competitors whose FLARMS are not seen were reported and then steps taken to rectify the installation / non-compliance. Thought that with mountains and snow, FLARM was a no-brainer in Omarama. Technology getting better. "Stealth modes" reduced spurious warnings and tactical advantages. Audible voice warning systems becoming usable.

G Dale – reiterated that technology reliability brings serious questions. FLARM is not the final answer, and airmanship is still extremely important. Serious risks in being heavy handed with rules.

Doug Hamilton – Agreed with G. FLARM is an aid, not a sure-fire solution.

Gavin Wills – technical issues with FLARM will get better in time, but at the moment half the fleet have no FLARM. Need everyone to have a FLARM and accept some unreliability rather than have half without.

Phil Plane – original OzFLARMS were hopeless. New technologies with better antennas are much better, but FLARM range is installation dependant and importantly there is no method to test an installation.

Ralph Henderson – Suggested that the rules/policing issues were easily overcome.

Brett Hunter – likes FLARM in Omarama, but won't buy one his glider to be used only once in two years.

Mark Aldridge – Questions whether the local topography makes FLARM less effective.

Theo Newfield – near miss with tow plane in recent regionals and FLARM would have made difference.

Gavin Wills – Accepted that need for FLARM in competitions is less important than in general due to gagging and tasking. The real benefit with FLARM comes in uncontrolled areas where there is no traffic order (e.g. Alps). But suggested that the best strategy for general FLARM acceptance at Omarama would be through mandating at competitions.

Motion: That the carriage of functioning FLARM is mandatory for all competing gliders in Omarama Competitions - to be included as part of the local rules.

Grae Harrison / Gavin Wills – CARRIED 24-2

- Standard and 15m classes

Bill Walker – Asked whether the people liked the two classes separated or combined.

Dane Dickinson – Couldn't understand who would want them separated; bigger class is better for scoring and more fun and more competitive.

Alan Belworthy – asked about how the rules allowed the classes to be combined and how the scoring and trophy allocation worked. Could it be possible for 15m pilots to retain 15m trophy?

TvD – to get benefit of additional numbers, 15m class pilots must accept the risk that a Std class glider could win the 15m trophy.

Doug Hamilton – remembered an issue about gliders only being able to enter one class. Asked about current rules.

Dane Dickinson – explained that current rules don't treat the combined 15m/std class as two classes; technically should be called "15M class" or perhaps "15M performance class". Trophy allocation is ancillary.

G Dale – Internationally the FAI classes are ruined and predicted a shake down in the coming decade. The 18m class was the front of development due to value-added gliders (motors). Thought NZ should look for a total revamp of classes to cater for the future and reject the soon-to-be expired FAI model. Preferred unhandicapped 18m class and handicapped 15m performance class.

- 18m and 15m classes

Tony Passmore – Wanted to discuss the perennial issue as to why 15m gliders were prohibited from entering 18m class. The latest AGM again saw a regression in rules which make no sense.

Graham Parker – felt there needed to be a lower limit on handicaps for a racing class – have to draw the line at some point, otherwise could get libelles flying the 18m class.

Grae Harrison – 1.06 minimum handicap for 18m. Otherwise becomes a Sports class which is against the concept and disincentives purchase of new gliders.

G Dale – the development of new gliders is in the 18m class; therefore should be unhandicapped. Whereas the "legacy classes" - 15m/std – are great racing classes and can be preserved as handicapped.

Graham Parker – need new gliders brought into NZ, therefore should design classes to favour open class and 18m – the gliders at forefront of development. If a K6 won open class, who would buy a new glider?

Dane Dickinson – thought that the 18m and Open classes have been so slow at these nationals that an LS6 could easily be winning the Open class unhandicapped.

- Junior Nationals

Alex McCaw – thought that it was about time that a Junior Nationals was instituted in NZ. Asked whether there was support for such an idea. Would be a good way to get more young people involved in competitions.

Ross Gaddes – where are the young youth glide pilots, why are they not in the nationals?

Phil Plane – thought that cost, and contest format were factors – competition is two weeks which is too long as difficult for people to get time-off.

David Tillman – went to JoeyGlide as team manager and recounted some experiences. Many pilots there had 100 hrs or less. Couldn't have 100 hr pilots in NZ come to the nationals and fly the long tasks.

Karen Morgan – U25s should run the whole competition.

David Tillman – attach a junior nationals to a regionals.

Tony Passmore – better to have the young pilots fly in nationals as the learning curve is steeper.

G Dale – Junior nationals in UK was developed as a training venue with lots of twins, plus the idea of creating a decent junior social scene where young pilots can have a competitive environment. Big task to institute similar

Bill Walker – by having separate competition outside of nationals, allows old pilots' gliders to be made available for use.

Doug Hamilton – used to have ProAm class with twins at regionals.

Theo Newfield – the clubs are useless and young kids are lazy. They could their acts together and fly the nationals. Shouldn't need more help.

G Dale – It's not the exceptional pilots that need catering. It's the unexceptional pilots that need it. Need to help create and foster a depth of pilots, a population of young pilots.

Meeting closed at 12:38 pm