

P R E S S R E L E A S E

The "World Class"

The International Gliding Commission IGC of FAI has created an important initiative: to create a new one-design glider Class, the "World Class", to be added to the FAI World Championships Classes (the Standard, 15-m and Open Classes).

For the first time a one-design class would be introduced in gliding competitions, whereas the existing classes, defined by means of general specifications, put together gliders often quite different in characteristics and performance.

A similar initiative was created 50 years ago, when gliding was very close to becoming an Olympic sport. The initiative was launched, a prototype competition was announced, five prototypes were compared on the ground and in flight (Sezze Romano, Italy, February 1939). The German "Meise" was finally selected. However, World War II prevented continuation of this effort.

The current IGC initiative follows similar lines. The primary objective is to allow a pure measure of the pilot's skill, providing each pilot competing in the "World Class" with a glider of the same type. It is the intention of IGC that the new glider should be also suitable: for use in clubs and by private owners; for training (including early solo flights); for the achievement of badges and, possibly, for construction from kits.

The basic specifications are:

low cost,
safety,
ease of handling on the ground and in flight.

The performance need not be very high. A best glide ratio of not less than 30 and a minimum sinking speed of not more than 0.75 m/s are specified.

Appreciably better values than these are not considered so essential as lower cost, safer flight characteristics, easier handling on the ground and in flight.

The stall speed must not exceed 65 km/h.

Rigging and de-rigging by no more than two persons must be possible.

No limit of wing span is specified. However, the necessary compromise between the often conflicting requirements should lead to a wing span in the range of 12 to 15 metre.

Such a glider should help to expand gliding worldwide in two ways: by introducing gliding where it does not now exist; and by expanding gliding activity where it does exist, by attracting more people, young people in particular.

The inspiration for the IGC initiative is to be found in a paper presented at the OSTIV Congress 1987 by the well known American glider designer and manufacturer Paul A. Schweizer, stating the strong need of a simple low cost glider for the development of gliding. Similar ideas were expressed by Gary Sunderland (Australia, 1981), Leonardo Briigliadori (Italy, 1986), Miguel Conde (Argentina, 1987).

Taking these suggestions into consideration, since September 1987 the IGC undertook the study of a possible initiative aiming at the selection of a suitable glider to become the "World Class" single-type glider.

In subsequent steps, two basic documents were developed: the "Technical Specifications" and the "Rules for the Selection and Production of the World Class Glider". Both documents have received the final approval by the IGC plenary meeting at Frankfurt, FRG, on October 7, 1989.

The "Technical Specifications" contain a set of requirements and recommendations covering the safety, cost, performance and operational aspects to be taken into consideration in the new glider's design. The more significant requirements have been mentioned above.

The "Rules" split the technical competition for the selection of the winning design into two phases:

(over)

Phase 1: designers/manufacturers entering the competition submit a description of their design, technical documentation and analysis of production costs to a judging panel appointed by IGC. A few designs are selected for admission to Phase 2.

Phase 2: the selected designs are realized as prototypes. At a given date (not earlier than August 1992) and at a given site (located in Europe) the prototypes are compared on the ground and in flight. Upon evaluation data provided by a Panel of experts the winning design is selected.

Thereafter, the drawings and documentation of the winning design are made available to any manufacturer of any country willing to produce the glider.

When enough gliders have been flown in a sufficient number of countries, the IGC will announce World Championships for the "World Class", an important move which should stimulate the production and use of the new glider, as past experience has clearly shown.

The first step for the designers/manufacturers who intend to consider the possibility of entering the technical competition is to write to:

** Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, FAI
"World Class"
10-12, rue du Capitaine Ménard
75015 Paris, France,

asking for the official documentation.

The official texts of the "Technical Specifications", of the "Rules for the Selection and Production of the World Class Glider" and a paper outlining the "Documentation Required for Entering Competition Phase 1" will be promptly sent to him together with an "Application Form" containing a statement of intention to enter the competition and acceptance of the rules.

The application form, duly completed, must be returned to the FAI not later than February 28th, 1990, accompanied by a fee of US\$30 to cover correspondence expenses.

Thereafter, the documentation illustrating the particular design and giving all data required must be sent to the FAI during August 1990 (neither before nor later) for the selection of the designs admitted to Phase 2.

This initiative is part of a wide-ranging effort by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale to reduce the cost of sports flying equipment, in order to facilitate access to the aeronautical sports to a larger number of young people.

One of the principal beneficiaries of this FAI policy will also be the world's aerospace industries, because a larger number of tomorrow's highly motivated aerospace professionals, ranging from airline pilots to controllers and engineers, will be generated by increasing the number of today's young glider pilots.

**In order to expedite this process from a time standpoint, interested parties can contact the SSA for a copy of the Application Form. It will still be necessary for all applicants to contact the FAI for a complete set of papers regarding the design contest. The availability and distribution of the Application Form is being done strictly to help those who are interested to meet the application deadline. For the Application Form, contact:

The Soaring Society of America
P.O. Box E
Hobbs, N.M. 88240

Please remember, it will still be necessary to write the FAI for the complete set of design contest papers. The SSA will only have the Application Form available.