

Proposal of new air sports discipline

We would like to bring about creation of a new flying discipline called "XC open distance paragliding"

Justification:

1. We strongly believe that official disciplines should reflect those widely practiced by large (relevant) groups of people. Paragliding pilots have been competing ever since – racing to goal, accuracy landing, aerobatics and who will fly further or in other words open distance. So far only the last one – open distance – is not officially recognized as separate discipline.
2. Open distance flying is significantly different than racing along given course. You can't really compare a marathon runner with a sprinter. Apparently they are both just running, but in reality everything is different (gear, preparation, tactics, training and physical qualities of the athletes – there is not a single runner in the world who would excel in both sports).
3. Popular servers like XCC, WXC, XContest or Leonardo clearly show the open distance paragliding to be the mainstay of paragliding. Nevertheless, paragliding competitions completely miss that type of tasks, distorting image and spirit of paragliding.
4. Officially, free-flight paragliding as of now has three established disciplines: „paragliding competitions” „paragliding accuracy competitions” and „aerobatic competitions”. „Paragliding competitions” feature a set of tasks like race to goal, elapsed time race, assigned area tasks and open tasks. While open tasks are sometimes present during FAI 2 class competitions, they are not to be encountered during FAI 1 championships.

Thus, current character of the FAI 1 championships does not reflect the paragliding as a whole, so instead of „paragliding competitions” they should be called „paragliding races”. Creating a new discipline of cross-country/open distance paragliding competition would restore the balance, opening space for determining new national/continental/world champions.

5. Creating such a new sport type leads to creation of wholly new set of Champions, national teams, coaches etc., with according new possibilities of obtaining grants, donations and sponsors (good news for organizers of the competitions, as their significance will grow).
6. Currently the winners of FAI-approved WXC competition receive nothing but diplomas (no champion titles) and that fact proves the situation to be far from normal. The diplomas bring only personal satisfaction to pilots and do not mean much to sponsors, thus are neither helpful to pilots in return for their often outstanding airmanship, nor to paragliding as a whole.
7. Perhaps the most important effect of the new discipline is a radical improvement of the safety in the FAI approved championships. Open distance cross-country competing means eradication of many risks typical for racing (low altitude, close to obstacles full-speed flying, with waypoints often forcing pilots to choose dangerous routes in areas they would never visit otherwise. On the contrary, XC flying emphasizes prudence, integrity and meteorological skills of independently flying pilots – something highly needed in our sport.
8. We recognize fact that creating new discipline is an audacious proposal calling for serious changes in official rules, starting with Sporting Code. Thus, we need time for discussion, determining legal procedures, scoring rules etc. This is rather too much for hasty solutions, so perhaps the best solution for now is to delegate an international working group in order to prepare detailed scheme, ready for implementing at the next CIVL meeting.

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