

A NATIONAL SCORING SYSTEM

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Questions regarding methods used in recent years in the selection of pilots to represent the U. S. in World Championships prompted consideration of the possibility of an unquestionable method.

A brief review of several ideas and the arrangement of them on paper revealed that it is not only possible to evaluate abilities of pilots and place them in the order their own reported performances dictate but it is also possible to make other very definite gains by developing and operating the required system.

Consideration of the method brought many facts more forcefully to attention; some are opportunities of organizational improvement, some are our shortcomings.

Before beginning a description of the system, which is primarily intended to maintain at all times, a "NATIONAL SOARING TEAM" of the top ten or twenty pilots as well as automatic standings of all soaring pilots in the SSA who wish to be recognized and who cooperate to that end, it should be stated that this "suggested system" is just that. It is not intended to be a perfect method and is not proposed for adoption in its exact present form, but is proposed for serious consideration and constructive suggestions that will result in adoption of a final similar plan which will not only record our pilots' skill but will also give statue to each soaring contest and to all gliding and soaring, similar to that enjoyed by many national recreational endeavors and organizations. Ours is probably the only one that does not control its competitive activities to make them meet certain standards and produce true local, state, regional and national champions. For those who ask, "What can be done to improve the organization and participation?" this, I think, is one answer.

Now for the seeding or rating. The object is to have each pilot "seed" or place himself on a rated list, headed by the best, with all others in order according to actual accomplishment and reported performances.

To this end points are suggested for the following:

1. *Winners and Second and Third Place* in all SSA sanctioned and qualified contests.
2. National and International Records established.
3. F.A.I. Silver, Gold and Diamond "C" Awards.

It is believed that values of these in points can be anything as long as they are constant year after year and for all pilots. Since 1,000 is convenient and is an important value in anything, this proposal begins with that for the best performances and scales down for others as follows:

CONTESTS (5 Year Credits)

	NATIONAL CONTEST	REGIONAL AAA Contest	STATE AA Contest	LOCAL I-A Contest
Winner	1000 points	500 points	300 points	100 points
2nd Place	750 points	400 points	100 points	50 points
3rd Place	500 points	300 points	50 points	25 points

AAA Contests have 20 or more ships contesting and run nine days or more.

AA Contests have 10 or more ships contesting and run five days or more.

I-A Contests have five or more ship entries with not fewer than two contest days.

The National Contest Committee would lay down more specific requirements for minimum standards in each category.

RECORD FLIGHTS (5 Year Credits)

International Record	1000 points
National Record	750 points
Regional Record	500 points
State Record	300 points

Note that "Regions," comprising several states probably, would be set up for contests, and records would be encouraged in each, as well as in states.

F.A.I. AWARDS — BASIC POINTS (Lifetime Credits)

Diamond "C"	1000 points	Each Diamond	300 points
Gold "C"	750 points	Each Leg	250 points
Silver "C"	300 points	Each Leg	100 points

It will be noticed that FAI awards are called BASIC POINTS and are to be used in determining a rating or standing throughout a pilot's activ-

ity. No specific reason for this can be given except that these points are probably the most difficult to earn, since they are gained early and during a pilot's "learning period" and he is most proud of them, and because some base is desirable on which to build. Therefore it is suggested that FAI "C" Awards earn points which a pilot retains for life.

Contest and record points on the other hand are to be retained in a pilot's records for only five years by dropping the sixth previous year's points, in computing the records for a new year. (Point scores should probably be figured immediately after Thanksgiving each year.) This is suggested for several reasons. One is that it is not altogether fair to an up-and-coming enthusiast who has proven his ability to have to take a rearward position in order that an old-time but inactive man can be out front. Another is that we want a current record of the abilities of pilots. We want to know what the oldtimers are still able to do, compared with the "newtimers." This will tend to keep those who want to remain at or near the top in competition. Records of a few but a limited number of years will give us true current ratings or standings with both old-timers and newcomers in their proper positions.

Pilot ratings determined by such an orderly system would have many advantages:

First — There would be an additional incentive for more and better flying and accomplishment by pilots, not only in contests but through all soaring activities.

Second — Since points gained in contests are proportional to the quality of the contest, both operators and contestants would work for and demand improvement.

Third — All pilots would "seed" themselves, by their own accomplishments. No member or group of members would have to assume the responsibility of saying who is best or poorest and no one could say it was not fairly done.

Fourth — Requirement of sanctions and accurate records and complete reporting will increase interest in, and possibly stimulate competition among contests for top honors as to quality.

Fifth — The necessity of better records of accomplishments will increase the need for a bigger and better National Contest Committee, with authority, enhancing its importance and providing a greater incentive to those who would serve on it.

(Continued on Next Page)