

FAI SOARING AWARDS RULES & PROCEDURES

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Many questions seem to arise over various aspects of the rules and procedures used in earning the international F.A.I. soaring awards. This article is intended to set forth the official rules (**bold face type**) together with explanations and approved procedures for complying with them (normal type). The word soaring is substituted for gliding since the original French has only one word for the two.

The particular rules for the award of soaring badges form Chapter III (paragraphs 9.0 through 9.3) of Section 3 (Class D, Soaring) of the Sporting Code of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale. The F.A.I. is the international governing body for all forms of sporting aviation, including records. The F.A.I. Soaring Committee (C.V.S.M.) has charge of Section 3 of the Sporting Code and all changes thereto. Sections 1 (General Principles and Regulations Applying to All Aeronautical Sport) and 3 together make up the complete Sporting Code for Soaring.

The official representative of F.A.I. in the United States is the National Aeronautic Association in Washington, D. C. NAA has delegated its authority in the field of soaring activity to The Soaring Society of America, Inc. SSA administers the awarding of F.A.I. soaring badges in the U. S.

CHAPTER III

9. International F. A. I. Badges for Soaring.

9.1 GENERAL CONDITIONS.

9.1.1 Three tests are laid down for obtaining each of these badges.

The word test is what is commonly referred to as leg in the U.S.

9.1.2 Not more than two tests may be attempted during any one flight, except, in the case of the Gold badge with diamonds, for which the three tests may be made in one flight.

This means that one flight cannot

be claimed to satisfy all three legs of any one badge, except the Diamond badge. Further, it is interpreted to mean that not more than two different *types* of legs may be claimed for any one flight; again an exception for when all three diamond legs are completed on one flight. The controversial cases are when a five hour flight to a 300 km. (186.4 mile) goal is claimed for duration, Gold distance and Diamond goal; or an altitude leg substitutes for duration in the previous example. Any two may be claimed, but not all three.

9.1.3 A test may count for all three badges (and for the C) provided it satisfies the regulations relating to each.

A flight by someone with few or no legs to his credit which meets the requirements for a higher award leg may also count for the same type of leg for all lesser awards. Thus, a five hour flight earns a C and the duration legs for both Silver C and Gold C. If the same flight had an altitude gain of 5000 meters (16,404 feet) or more, it could also be claimed for the altitude legs of the Silver, Gold and Diamond badges. This does not contradict 9.1.2 which disallows claims for three different *types* of legs on any one flight.

9.1.4 The pilot must be alone in the aircraft.

9.1.5 In tests for distance, the loss of height between the point of release and the point of landing must not exceed 1% of the distance flown. When the loss of height is greater than 1000 meters (3281 feet), the distance certified shall be the distance flown less 25 times the loss of height reduced by 1000 meters (3281 feet).

The first sentence is a specific condition which must be met on all distance flights. It is usually overlooked on Silver C distance flights with aero tow launches where the normal release altitude is approximately 2000 feet. If only the minimum distance

of 50 km. (31.1 miles) is flown, release must be made at or below 1640 feet (1% of 31.1 miles or .311 x 5280) above the intended landing point, which could be lower than the take-off point, necessitating an even lower release above terrain. The farther one flies, the higher he can release and not be disqualified.

The second sentence is referred to as the distance penalty. If your release altitude is more than 3281 feet above your landing point, then the distance flown is penalized as stated. For example, if the release was 4281 feet above landing, the penalty is 25 times 1000 feet or 25,000 feet (4.7 miles)! Dick Johnson's World Class distance record of 535.2 miles was subject to this clause because of terrain drop off and actually covered a great circle distance of 543.7 miles. This must be kept in mind on the long flights for Gold and Diamond distance and Diamond goal that just barely exceed the distance requirements, especially from launches into mountain waves which generally have high release altitudes.

9.1.6 In all tests a sealed barograph must be carried; it must be sealed and opened by an official steward recognized by the N.A.C. If the tests of endurance and distance have been observed continually during the flight by a steward, the barograph need not be carried.

The sealed barograph is necessary for a number of reasons. On distance flights, it determines the release altitude and landing altitude with respect to each other so that the conditions in 9.1.5 may be checked. It also offers proof that no intermediate landings were made. Continual observation may substitute for the latter reason but there must be some proof for the former. This proof could be an appropriate towplane barogram or a statement by the towplane pilot giving the release altitude as read from a properly set and calibrated sensitive altimeter. If no barogram is submitted with the application, an Official Observer must certify that the flight was under continual observation.

In the U. S., official stewards recognized by the National Aero Club (NAA) are SSA Official Observers. These are defined as all full Members or Student Members of SSA who hold a C badge or better, airport managers, CAA control tower