

United States Soaring Team Task Force

United States Soaring Team Survey Report

June 18 – Aug 31, 2002



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W. John Seaborn

Part 1 of 3 – Executive Summary Report

Part 1– Executive Summary Report

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United States Soaring Team Task Force

United States Soaring Teams have come to an important crossroads.

In the past competing in World Soaring Championships (WSC) was relatively simple. One team, one championship and one winner. Over the years new classes have been created by the international Gliding Committee (IGC) and become sanctioned by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI) to compete in world soaring championships as part of a global strategy to build participation in the sport. More classes, teams and championships provide more opportunity for our pilots than at any time in history. The organizational, funding and logistical challenges now facing U.S. Soaring Teams are greater than ever before.



At the February 2002 Soaring Convention the Soaring Society of America (SSA) Board of Directors created the United States Team Task Force (USTTF). The goal of this task force is to accomplish a fundamental review of how US soaring teams do business, solicit community input, investigate areas for improvement, develop solutions, author a report and provide implementation assistance. The USTTF members include, Ken Sorenson, John Seaborn, Doug Jacobs, Jim Payne, Jim Short and Tim Welles.

The 2002 U.S. Soaring Team Survey was developed to provide the USTTF, the SSA Board of Directors and team management with a concrete idea of how United States Soaring Teams are perceived by the U.S. soaring community and to provide a solid starting place from which to establish United States Soaring Teams and the underlying organization as the most capable of all international soaring teams.

About The Team Survey

Run from June 18 to August 31, 2002 the US team e-survey was administered exclusively on the Internet using an online polling tool developed by Aland Adams and hosted, due to SSA server constraints, by Bill Bartell on his server. Two hundred twenty seven SSA members participated in the survey. Because of the sheer size of the results the reporting is done in three sections. Section 1 Executive Summary, Section 2 Multiple Choice, Section 3 Open Ended responses.

The USTTF survey used a combination of multiple choice (59) and open-ended (13) questions for a very lengthy 72 question total. Main topics included:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1.0 Demographics | 6.0 Fundraising |
| 2.0 Benchmarks | 7.0 Overall |
| 3.0 Team Organization | 8.0 Communication |
| 4.0 Team Goals and Policies | 9.0 Selection |
| 5.0 Funding | 10.0 Wrap-up |

The questions were developed in draft form by John Seaborn and refined by US Team Task Force members. To gain access to the e-survey, participants were required to enter their SSA number and last name. Because of online nature of the survey this security measure was designed to in some way limit who could take the survey yet respect the privacy of the participant. The responses were not associated with any participant effectively making the survey completely anonymous. Participants at no time could view the overall responses to the survey.

Online Survey Limitations & Generalities

Surveys can be tricky things. Making generalizations about a large population from a small sample can be problematic. The results of an online survey are somewhat different from other more traditional surveys. Participants can decide not to answer each question, skip questions or stop the survey before completion with a few clicks of their computers mouse. The online nature of the survey may limit the ability of some in the target population to participate. The U.S. team e-survey attracted a statistically significant number of respondents from the SSA membership generating a good deal of actionable data.



Online or for that matter mailed surveys will show some statistical scatter and not all response tallies add exactly to 100%. In very limited cases (less than 15) certain open ended responses were suppressed or sniped in the final results. This occurred when inappropriate responses were submitted or they fell in to the "Don't Know" category.

In the final analysis the survey presents both general and clear cut trends about the larger SSA membership with regard to the US soaring team. This report will seek to break out the major trends established by the respondents to compare and contrast with the sub-groups within this population.

Survey Promotion

An online survey requires publicity to be successful. The USTTF survey was promoted at many of the 2002 Nationals, was noted in the August issue of Soaring magazine, and was regularly featured on the SSA contest newsgroup and on the rec.ovation.soaring newsgroup. Over 300 announcement post cards were mailed to a list of US competition pilots.

Sponsoring Organizations

The 2002 U.S. Team Survey was a joint project of the United States Soaring Team Task Force (USTTF) and the Soaring Society of America.

Survey Privacy

Participants last name and membership number were be used to ensure they were a valid SSA member and to limit participants to completing one survey only. Participants could revisit the survey web site and update their responses at any time before the survey closed. The participants were kept anonymous by the survey administrator.

Team Survey Goal

Several fundamental changes are under consideration for U.S. Soaring Teams. The team e-survey provides a tool to discover the true perceptions and opinions that exist in the larger population of SSA members regarding U.S. soaring teams. Research puts a firm foundation under policy development. The goal of the team survey is to provide the Team Task Force, SSA management and Directors plus team management with a clear understanding when establishing future team policy.



One of the core tasks of the USTTF is to solicit feedback from the soaring community on US soaring teams. The 2002 U.S. Team Survey accomplished this goal and then some.

Why is this important?

To reach the long term goal of international competitive supremacy, future United States soaring teams will need the support of the larger soaring community. Without this support our teams and ultimately competitive soaring will be increasingly isolated. If our soaring teams expect to be competitive, funded and compete successfully internationally teams must better connect with the grass roots of the soaring community and provide contributors with increased return on their contributions. In short our soaring teams need to start making a difference in the sport at home while improving their competitive performance internationally. The U.S. Team e-survey is a step in this critical direction.

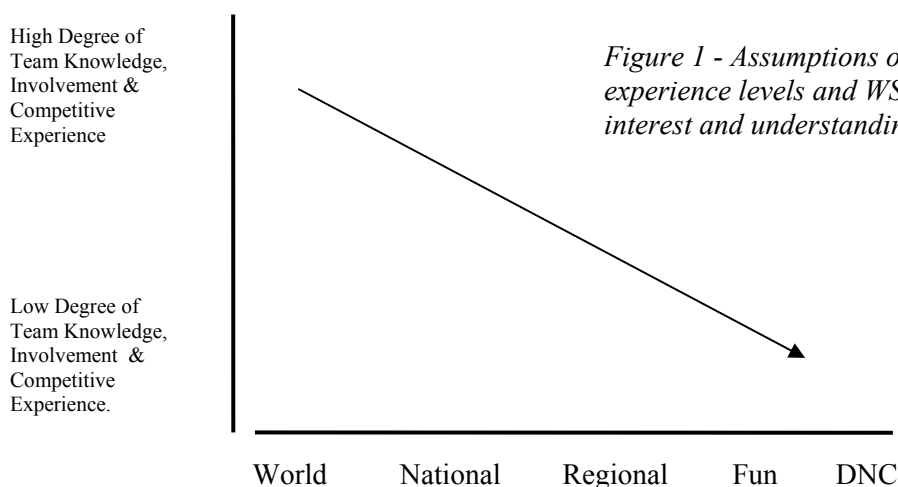
Survey Methodology

Survey results are good, but survey results that break down the target population into specific sub groups using demographic or life style factors are much better. The USTTF survey looked at the respondents on two very basic levels. First, the results from the total population of 227 respondents are presented for each question. Second, respondents were broken down into several sub categories by level of contest experience ranging from participation in world championships to no competition experience at all.

By comparing and contrasting the various sub groups it is possible to discern how attitudes change based on group membership and identify trends in the population. This type of examination tells much more about the population than a simple non-tabulated survey. This cross tabulation is critical to understanding how the team survey was designed to provide team management with both actionable directions while providing a look at how US Soaring teams are currently perceived by the various groups within the SSA based on contest experience.

Terminology & Assumptions

The report uses terms like “more experience” and “less experience” when referring to the groups in the survey based on their participation level in soaring contests. It is assumed to be generally true that world level competitors have more contest experience than participants in the Do Not Compete (DNC) category. It is also assumed that that there is a strong correlation between the level of contest participation and the general understanding of the US team and World Soaring Championships.



Future of Online Surveys

While the USTTF survey was the first SSA survey run on line using the Internet it is hoped that success of the project will encourage the SSA and others to utilize this valuable and cost effective method of gathering data from the soaring community. Aland Adams has developed a commercial quality survey tool that is stable and easily hosted on many servers. The rules committee plans to be using the survey tool for the next pilot's survey. The SSA is encouraged to use this tool to get a better sense of the membership and soaring community at very low cost.

Acknowledgements

The USTTF Survey would not have been possible without several dedicated volunteers who put hundreds of hours into the project. Aland Adams developed the online survey tool that allowed the unique hosting of the survey on-line. Because of hardware, software and server issues, Bill Bartell of RESCO Solutions (www.rescosolutions.com) provided the web hosting services for the survey. Larry Sanderson invested a good deal of time and effort, not to mention encouragement, in the project as well.

Note that this effort was accomplished on a volunteer basis and cost the SSA and the US Soaring Team nothing.

General Disclaimer & Use Restriction

This document is for discussion purposes only and should not be considered the policy of U.S. Soaring Teams. This document provides a starting place from which to develop more accountable, transparent, competitive and sustainable United States Soaring Teams.

Not all the results presented here will turn into team policy as it's up to team management to filter these results and take the action appropriate to the realities of the situation.

Use of this information is protected by copyright and can only be used with the permission of the SSA and U.S. Soaring Team Committee.

Section 1 Summary – Survey Demographics

Of the 227 SSA Members who participated 13 (6%) had participated in a world soaring championships in the last five years, 73 (32%) in Nationals, 40 (18%) Regionals, 28 (12%) Fun Contest, 2 (1%) Other Contest, 67 (30%) do not compete while 4 (2%) fell into other categories.

As expected competition pilots participated in higher numbers than generally represented in the SSA membership with 156 or 69% of the participants having competition experience while 71 (31%) had no competitive experience. Most of the competitive participants flew in the 15-Meter 47 (21%), Sports 46 (20%) and Standard 41 (18%) classes and own their glider 156 (69%). Competition 86 (38%) and cross country soaring 91 (40%) were the main soaring activities of the participants.

Most participants 185 (81%) have never been a U.S. Team member nor visited a World Soaring Championships 149 (66%). Participants have a high degree of FAI badge achievement (68 30% have a Diamond Badge) with a strong correlation between contest experience and FAI badge achievement.

Almost all participants soar exclusively in the USA.

Participant profiles

To gain a better understanding of the participants the following profiles were created of the participants based on level of contest participation.

World Team (13)

Fly in the 15 meter class, own their glider, competition is their primary soaring activity, have a Diamond badge and fly primarily in the USA.

National (73)

Fly in the Standard class, own their glider, competition is their primary soaring activity, has never been a team member nor attended a WSC, hold a diamond badge and fly in the USA.

Regional (40)

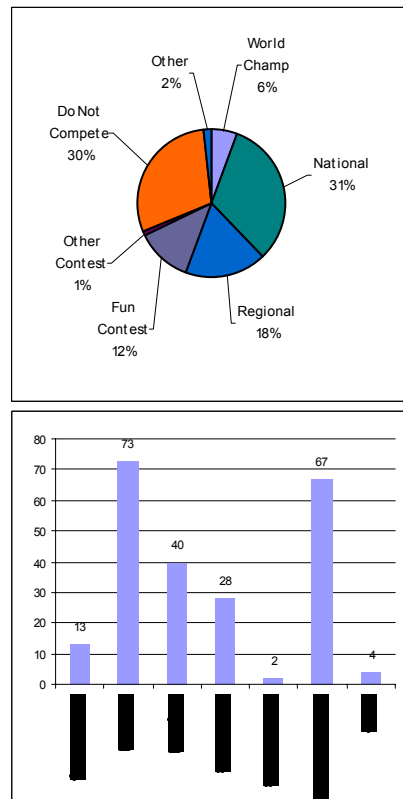
Fly in the Sports Class, own their glider, cross country is their primary soaring activity, has never been a team member nor attended a WSC, hold a Silver badge and fly in the USA

Fun Contest (28)

Fly in the Sports Class, very likely to use a club glider, cross country is their primary soaring activity, have never been a team member nor attended a WSC, hold an A,B,C or Bronze badge and fly in the USA

Do Not Compete (67)

Very likely to fly a club glider, cross country is their primary soaring activity, have never been a team member nor attended a WSC, hold no badges and fly in the USA



Section 2 Summary – Survey Benchmarks

Generally 63% (143) participants think U.S. soaring teams are competitive at world soaring championships while 51% (116) think that U.S. Teams are well managed. Fully 35% (80) don't know if the teams are well managed or not. Only 38% (7) of world champion participants in the last five years thought the teams were well managed. Fifty percent (113) of participants thought U.S. teams spent contributions in a responsible way while 39% (88) do not know if team funds are spent responsibly or not.

Interestingly enough 67% (152) of participants have contributed to the team in the last five years including 46% (31) of the participants who do not compete. The most popular way to contribute is the sweepstakes (47%), team merchandise (26%), contest fundraiser (22%) and direct to the SSA (22%) Fully 85% have visited the U.S. team web site including 75% of those who do not compete.

Of significance, 82% (186) of respondents would like to see about the same or more participating in world soaring championships by U.S. pilots with only 7% (16) seeking less participation. Fully 80% (182) of participants thought that U.S. teams should be a high priority for the SSA with 18% (42) indicating a low or no priority status. Eighty one percent (185) considered U.S. Soaring teams to be important to the sport with 16% (37) indicating unimportant or very unimportant.

Forty four percent (101) felt teams were moving in the right direction while 17% (38) felt that teams are moving in the wrong direction. Thirty six percent (82) did not know which direction teams are moving.

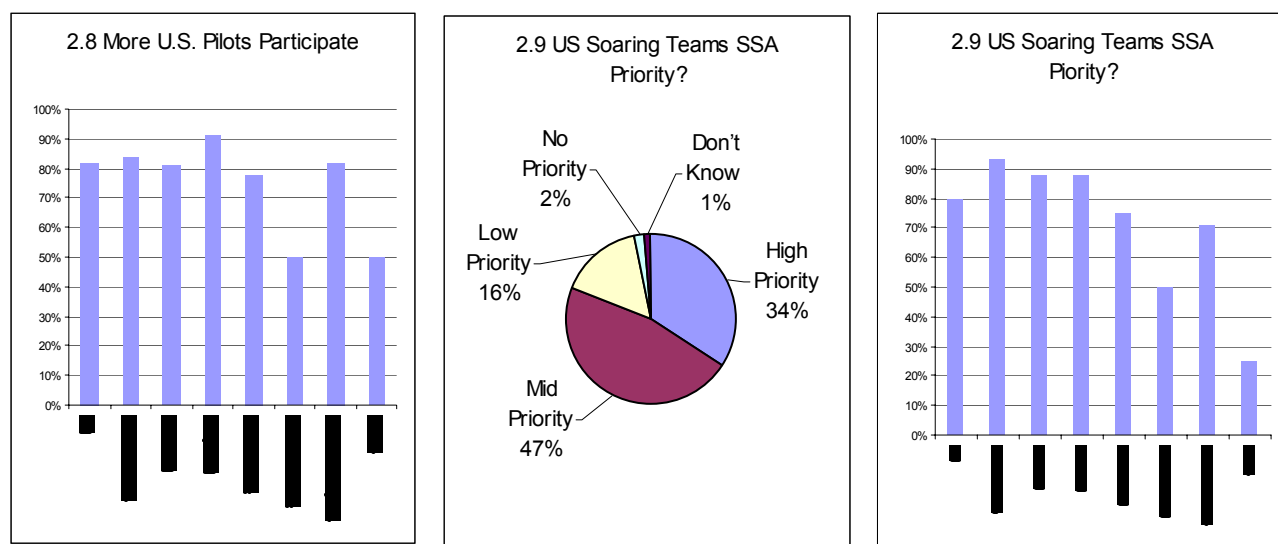
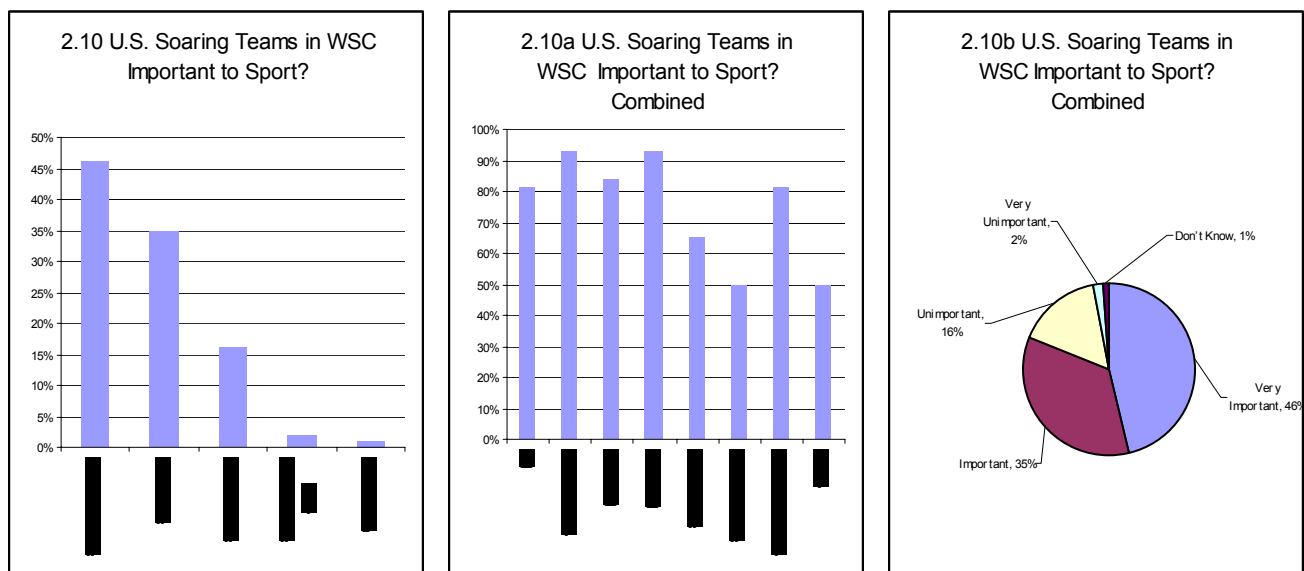


Figure 3 - Three graphs of US Team Participation and Priority to SSA

The graph for question 2.8 (level of participation) at left shows the combined totals indicating strong support for US team participation in world soaring championships generally by participants.

The pie chart of 2.9 (US team priority with SSA) shows that participants felt that US teams should be a priority for the SSA while the bar chart 2.9 (far right) shows that the less the participant is connected with competitive soaring the less they feel the SSA should make the team a priority – although 71% of the DNC participants thought the teams should be a mid to high priority for the SSA.

Figure 4 - Three graphs showing perceived US team importance to sport.



The graph on the left for question 2.10 (soaring team important to sport) shows that most respondents feel that U.S. soaring teams are important to the sport with fully 81% selecting very important or important.

The center bar graph of question 2.10 (2.10a) shows that participants feel that U.S. teams are important to the sport across the demographic categories. The pie chart at right (2.10B) shows essentially the same information as graph 2.10.

Section 3 Summary – U.S. Team Committee & Organization

Fully 67% (153) of participants favor or strongly favor the creation of a U.S. Team Committee with 13% (28) indicating disfavor or strong disfavor with the concept. Ninety Two percent of world champion participants favor the creation of the U.S. Team Committee while 66% of the DNC participants favor the creation of the committee.

Team captains are in charge with 59% (134) of participants favoring or strongly favoring the idea of making team captains responsible for organizing each team's championship effort. Ninety one percent (12) of World Championship pilots felt that this was a good idea.

Fully 70% (158) of participants support the creation of the new support positions for the emerging U.S. Team Committee. Eighty four percent (11) of world championship participants favored the new positions. Many participants 74% (169) would be willing or might be willing to help on the U.S. Team committee.

Section 4 Summary – U.S. Team Policy & Goals

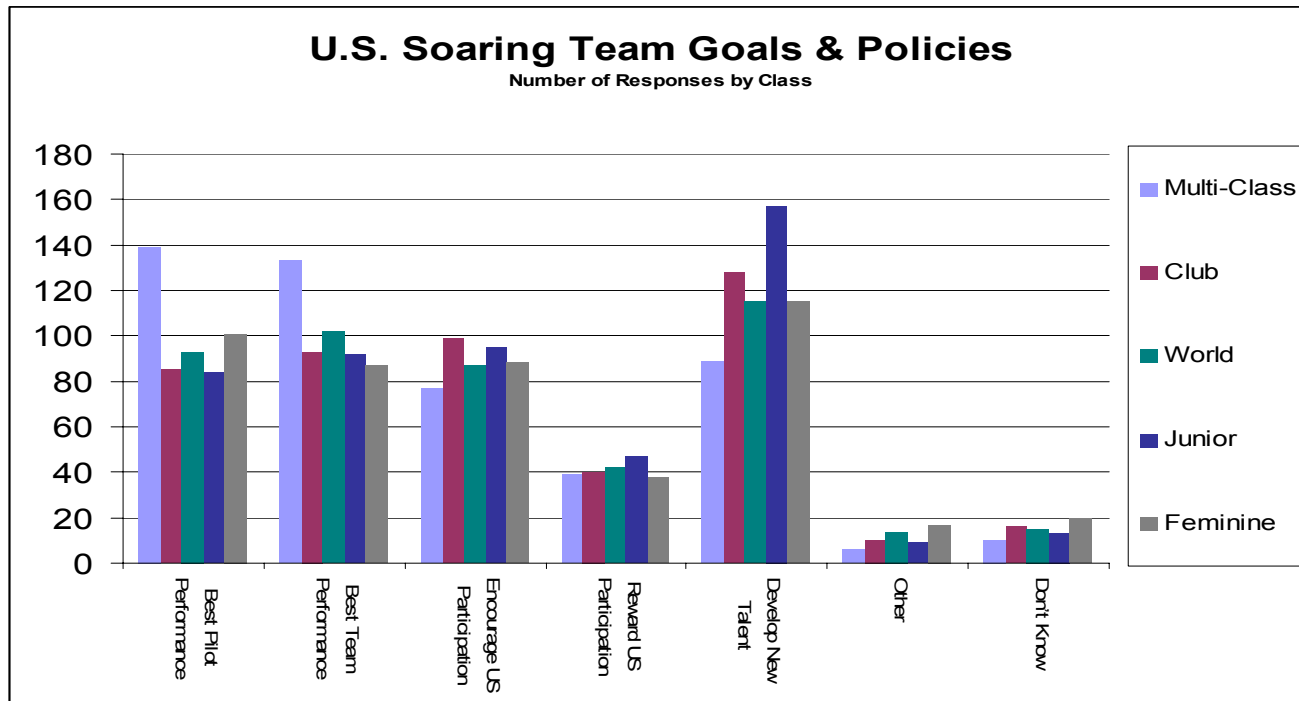
Survey participants favor aggressive performance goals based on competitive performance for the more established classes such as the multi-class (Open, 18-M, 15-M, Standard) while favoring less performance oriented goals for the Club, World and Junior teams such as developing new talent.

Fully 77% of participants favor or strongly favor the adoption of the founding principles for the emerging US team committee of organizational accountability, transparency, competitiveness and sustainability.

An important discovery is that there is support for classes with differing goals and that the competitive goal while critical in the multi-class is not paramount in the other classes. While the data scatter was relatively large here is what each class showed for goals.

- In the Multi-Class (Open, 18-Meter, 15-Meter, Standard) “Best Pilot Performance” is favored 61% (139) over “Best Team Performance” 59% (133) with a very high percentage 92% (12) of world championship participants favoring individual pilot performance over the team’s performance as a whole.
- Participants favored the goals of developing new talent 56% (128) and encouraging participation 44% (99) for the Club Class.
- The World Class had developing new talent 51% (115) and best team performance 45% (102) as the two most important goals.
- The Junior Class had strong support for developing new talent 69% (157) and by a slim margin encouraging participation 42% (95) with best team performance a close third 41% (92) as their preferred goals
- The Feminine Class had develop new talent (51%) and best pilot performance (44%) and the preferred goals.

Figure 5 – Relative ranking of team goals



Survey participants favor aggressive performance goals based on competitive performance for the multi-class while favoring less performance oriented goals for the Club, World and Junior teams. On B/W printers the bars are in the order of the legend.

Section 5 Summary – U.S. Team Funding

While the number of U.S. Teams has grown the teams financial resources have not kept pace. Team management is faced with finding ways to allocate the resources available. Questions in section five were asked about team size, funding levels and financial reporting.

There were few clear cut statistically significant winners in this section. Generally participants favored sending a few well funded pilots 38% (87) to world championships and establishing team size based on funding 49% (111). World Championship participants favored sending more less well funded pilots or as many pilots as possible to championships.

Generally and by a very small margin the respondents favored cutting back on the number of pilots 31% (71) rather than eliminating funding for specific classes 30% (68) based on participation at the national level. The idea of providing less funding for classes with low national participation was a distant third with 20% (46) of the responses. The world champion participants were strongly against eliminating funding while national participants favored this route. Interestingly the DNC participants favored fewer pilots over the elimination of funding.

When asked directly there is strong support for allocating team funds based on participation at the national level with nearly 50% (111) of participants generally and across the demographic groups.

Generally most participants 61% (138) felt that team members should pay for up to 50% (\$7,500) of the cost of participating in world championships with 32% (73) of respondents favoring pilots providing funding to 25% (\$3,750) of the total bill. World championship participants had a stronger willingness to self fund that the general population with 85% indicating a willingness to spend up to the 50% (\$7,500) level compared with 62% of the do not compete participants.

There is strong support for better financial reporting from US teams with 37% (84) specifically indicating that more reporting would be welcome. Almost 70 % of world championship pilots want better financial reporting. The large number of “Don’t Know” 49% (111) may be an indication that more reporting is needed. If you do not know how much reporting is being done now how good can the system be?

There is overwhelming support 71% (158) for the creation of a team treasurer especially amongst the world championship participants with 92%.

Section 6 Summary – U.S. Team Fundraising

Generally contributors prefer 43% (98) funding the general team fund over any other method. The Robertson Trust is a distant second with 24% (54) of the respondents. Contributions to specific classes and pilots had almost no support.

Sanction fee funding while a controversial method of partially funding US Soaring teams has wide support amongst participants with fully 73% (166) favoring sanction fee funding of teams in some amount. Twenty dollars is the most chosen level of support. Thirty nine percent favored a \$20 to \$30 range.

The door is open for teams to run more fundraising efforts based on 91% (206) of the participants indicating that the teams do not currently run to many campaigns or not knowing.

There is clear support for a team organization to run fundraising efforts with 42% (96) of the respondents selecting this option. The next most popular 31% (71) method was a combination between the SSA and the team organization. The SSA only option was selected by 12% (28) of participants.

Everyone loves the idea of big corporate checks with 85% (194) of respondents indicating that the team should go after corporate sponsors.

There looks to be good interest in attending day long club based educational opportunities sponsored by US soaring teams with 62% (138) indicating they would attend such an event. An additional 25% (56) said they might attend.

Over 87% (197) respondents felt that a financial report at the end of the team cycle is a good idea. All the world championship participants think so as well along with 81% of the DNC participants.

Seventy percent (158) of participants indicated that a combination of direct cash contributions combined with perpetual trust income makes the most sense for funding US soaring teams. Only 6% (16) felt that direct contributions alone make sense.

Section 7 Summary – U.S. Team General Questions

Most participants felt U.S. Teams should team fly as appropriate 45% (103). Encouraging team flying was 29% (65) while only 16% (36) felt that an emphasis should be placed on team flying. Sixty five percent of world championship participants flat that team flying should be done only when appropriate.

Generally 53% (120) of respondents thought that the USA should take an active role with the IGC to discourage team flying at world championships with 18% thinking that encouraging team flying should be the USA role.

The consensus was not to require pilots to attend the pre-worlds 56% (127) with across the board support for this position. Generally small teams are favored 39% (88) particularly by world championship participants 54%. The next most popular option was let management decide at 37% of participants.

Section 8 Summary – U.S. Team Communication

A full 90% (205) of participants felt that teams should make communication a priority or a high priority.

There is a role for on line contest coverage as provided by U.S. Team in South Africa with 81% (185) of participants indicating that they followed these reports. There is also a strong correlation between contest level and interest in following WSC's on the web with less experienced participants having less interest in the coverage although a full 67% of the DNC participants followed the championships on the web.

There was relative interest in receiving team bulletins 63% (144) of participants indicating an interest in this form of communication. Participants warmed to the idea of having a team newsletter e-mailed and contest coverage with 77% (174) indicating that they would be interested.

The traditional WSC article in Soaring retains its vital importance in team communication with 83% (189) of participants reading this coverage.

The SSA US Team web site is the preferred way to receive information on the US team 52% (117) with e-mail a distant second 24% (55) and the article in soaring in third 19% (43)

Section 9 Summary – U.S. Team Selection

Generally 48% (108) of participants felt that no changes were needed in the current approach to team selection.

There is substantial agreement 67% (153) that team pilots should be selected before the Pre-world events.

Generally participants did NOT consider flying more than one nationals to be an unfair advantage 56% in team selection.

Generally 78% (178) participants felt that publishing the team pilot rankings in a timely manner is important to very important.

Section 10 Summary – U.S. Team e-Survey Wrap Up

Two open ended questions were asked as a closing to the 2002 U.S. Soaring Team Task Force e-Survey.

Sample of Open Ended Responses

- The Team gives some meaning and goals to the entire US competition scene. It is the carrot on the end of a stick. The competition scene in turn serves the dual purpose of selecting that team, but in my opinion, just as importantly, to promote and promulgate interest in high performance cross-country soaring, the ultimate expression of our sport. Participation at the international level has a little rah-rah value, but not much. It should, however, allow our best pilots (and the rest of us who have measured ourselves against our best) measure and add to their relative skills, and to stay abreast of changes in the sport. For this in turn to have any value to the rank and file of the sport, we have to see something come back to the US from these adventures. The team members need to give something back. Organized seminars, training camps, training regionals (Karls Mifflin Sports Regional was exactly what I am talking about). For me, the current appearance that the team members are somehow ENTITLED to a free ride simply because they won a couple of nationals, is a turn-off. If, on the other hand, the team funding becomes an investment in the promotion of the best aspects of Soaring to a larger audience, then I become a zealot, with both funds and time to contribute
- Although I read each issue of Soaring about as soon as I receive it, I dont think I am adequately informed about the competition scene. I guess I am more interested in who they are than what they did at the last contest. You know, I have never received a personal thank you for the few times I have made a donation to the SSA competiton fund. It seems to me that we are still operating on the Olympic fiscal and social principles of 1920s and that just doesnt cut it today.
- Our team is important to the sport within the U.S. because it encourages local competition which enhances our soaring populations skills. Our team is important in the international arena as ambassadors to host and participating countries where the sport of soaring is of higher visibility than here in the states, particularly where the political ambassadors have not historically been able to develop close bonds to their counterparts.
- Soaring is a competitive activity. Elevation of National champions to the world level is a natural progression of any competitive activity. I also believe it that a healthy competitive environment is the single most important pre-requisite to the future health of the sport. Look around the club, who are the members who have been there 15 - 25 years. Invariably, the racers stay, the others go!

- The accomplishments of the team at international events is a reflection of the importance of the sport itself in the country of origin. The performance of the team compared to their counterparts gives a measure of the levels attained and the goals to be pursued in the sport. Hopefully there is an exchange that takes place on those occasions, which would allow the knowledge of different and new techniques to trickle down to the rest of the soaring practionners at home.
- The Team gives some meaning and goals to the entire US competition scene. It is the carrot on the end of a stick. The competition scene in turn serves the dual purpose of selecting that team, but in my opinion, just as importantly, to promote and promulgate interest in high performance cross-country soaring, the ultimate expression of our sport. Participation at the international level has a little rah-rah value, but not much. It should, however, allow our best pilots (and the rest of us who have measured ourselves against our best) measure and add to their relative skills, and to stay abreast of changes in the sport. For this in turn to have any value to the rank and file of the sport, we have to see something come back to the US from these adventures.
- The team members need to give something back. Organized seminars, training camps, training regionals (Karls Mifflin Sports Regional was exactly what I am talking about). For me, the current appearance that the team members are somehow ENTITLED to a free ride simply because they won a couple of nationals, is a turn-off. If, on the other hand, the team funding becomes an investment in the promotion of the best aspects of Soaring to a larger audience, then I become a zealot, with both funds and time to contribute
- I dont see the relationship between the national team competing against the world and supporting soaring activities in America. The importance to the sport for Americans should be for the national club, i.e., the SSA, to support FBOs and clubs here. Maybe with some education, I could be shown how SSA support for the national team helps soaring in America, but until then, I dont see the importance to our sport.
- Ill ask you a question. What do they do for the general member ship of the SSA? The team members and their groupies represent a very small part of the organization. Spending a lot of SSA resources for such a small group does not seem to be a great benefit to larger non participating members. I felt and continue to feel the very strong efforts of the SSA to raise funds for the Robertson Trust. This is at the same time that the SSA in finacial difficulties. The U.S.Teams should be on the same footing with the SSA as are the 126, Aux Power groups.
- With the new Task Force, the direction of the US teams is for a leaner team, better overall management, and better financial management while maintaining or improving our competitiveness at the world competition level.
- Same old, same old. Like begets like, same input, yields the same reults. Soaring as a whole needs to start thinking outside the box, a paradigm shift, if we hope to move beyond where we are as a sport, in national and world recognition, and in numbers involved; however, or by whatever, yard stick you want to measure progress and growth. Soaring has the same (give or take) monthly readership as it did when I first was a member in 1975.
- This team experience has been spend it like you have got it for years and it shows in the irresponsibility of some actions. Its hard to raise funds when the contributors feel they are contributing for the summer (or winter) vacation for those rich guys who race fibreglass sailplanes. That is NOT what it is all about and if we show fiscal responsibility by using a team committee and watching the pennies, we can gain the confidence of the little guys who contribute their hard earned dollars to support the team.
- The future of competitive soaring rest in the club, World, and Junior, and Feminine classes. People in the rest of the classes chose to allocate large sums of money to compete. People like me (I teach in a public school) can only compete because classes like the World Class exist. It is because Oran Nicks and others worked so hard to make low-cost competitive soaring possible that I was able to

begin competing. Help people in these classes; keep their dreams alive. Make competitive soaring on a world level a realistic goal for everyone.

- The SSA must take a hard look at the way in which the Team is funded. It may be necessary to cut back on Team expenditures. What I mean by that is the numbers of pilots and support people attending World Championships. The Team should stand alone and not dip into Trust Funds. Donations are going to be difficult to come by given the economic environment that presently exists. The SSA is certainly not in a position to throw more money at the team at this point in time.
- I prefer a truly amateur, club sponsored endeavor. This years Mifflin Week One format provides one fund raising mechanism. Let the beginners fund some of the effort in exchange for competitive instruction by the pilots that directly benefit form Team Organization funds. \$25 in dues, \$10 in contest fees and 3-4 instructional regionals provides a good funding base

SEE ALL THE OPEN ENDED RESPONSES IN THE THIRD SECTION OF THIS REPORT.

A cross-county/racing clinic which would put Moffat/Johnson/Striedick and other names into a mentoring position for 3-5 days of hands-on flying in 2-place and groups for in-the-air work would be something I'd pay \$300-500 to attend. Many other ways of utilizing these recognized pilots could be devised to increase both funding and the visibility of soaring in general.

- It's always hard. Selling what you have .. SKILLS ... works the best and donors get something in return.
- Money raised by whatever means for the U.S. Team is likely money then NOT available for SSA/soaring in general, similar to when many charities saw large drops in contributions when so many sent money to NYC after 9/11. The U.S. Team is a TINY fraction of soaring in the U.S. and they consume an inordinate amount of the funds available. I think the U.S. Team members should pay all, or nearly all, of their own expenses to participate in World contests, as they do when they fly in our Nationals.
- I think the Website has been tremendous. The detailed and colorful reporting from the likes of John Good is fantastic. I don't think there's much more to do, other than to make sure that the membership as a whole is made well-aware of this communication channel.
- The goal is to win. To win, you pick the best pilots. We artificially restrict ourselves by using performance in one class only to pick pilots. The skills across at least standard, 15 and 18 are so similar that there is no case to measure skill in one class only for selection in that class. Pilots who want to go to the worlds are now either driving all the way across the country to compete in their class, or buying 2 and 3 gliders and going to 2 and 3 contests to improve their chances of doing well in one class. Of course, average performance rather than best results have to count if we look across classes -- we don't want to pick the guy who came in 35th in 6 contests and managed to win one over the guy who placed 2nd in every contest.
- The current U. S. Team effort draws far too much of SSA resources, time of staff and money, compared to the return the sport of soaring gets from the effort. The U. S. Team effort should be carried much more heavily by those that directly benefit from it, ie the participants and volunteers that have this as their main interest. And the U. S. Team should figure out a way to give back to the sport out of their experiences.
- I'm thrilled that there are people who are stepping up to improve the teams. I'll keep contributing as I'm able to support your efforts. In the future, I hope to be able to serve as a volunteer.