



United States Soaring Team Task Force

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Topic – 7 Pilot Obligations

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This document is for discussion purposes only and should not be considered the policy of U.S. Soaring Teams. Instead, this document provides a starting place from which to develop more accountable, transparent, competitive and sustainable United States Soaring Teams. You can help shape the future of U.S. Soaring Teams by making your comments regarding this document to John Seaborn (planned@boulder.net) or Jim Payne (jpaviation@aol.com)

All taskforce documents are posted on the taskforce web page
http://www.ssa.org/UsTeam/ust_taskforce.htm

U.S. Soaring Team Pilot Obligations

Purpose & Goal

The purpose of establishing obligations for U.S. team pilots is to provide a clear up front understanding of the responsibilities that come with team membership. The goal of developing and formalizing these obligations is to insure team pilots participate in a manner consistent with achieving the overall goals of the team. See TTF 2 Team Goals for a description of these goals.

Philosophy & Discussion

Achieving competitive supremacy at world soaring championships is the primary goal of team members and the underlying organization. We go prepared to win. The path to this goal is not a direct one. There are issues of focus, commitment, fundraising, logistics and preparation that become obligations of the pilots when they become members of a U.S. soaring team.

Being a team member is a lot of work and comes with obligations stemming from participating in a prestigious world event as a respected member of a national team from the most powerful nation on earth and doing so using the personal contributions supplied by the soaring community.

It can also be a heck of a lot of fun and the adventure of a lifetime.

There is no free lunch. Earning a position on U.S. soaring teams should not be considered a reward for success at the national level but an opportunity to achieve at the world level. Team membership is an obligation that each pilot should take seriously. From the time pilots are selected, the team should be the focus of his or her life.

If family or job obligations will make the commitment less than 110%, pilots should decline the position. Anything less than full commitment to this effort short changes the team, contributors and the soaring community.

- **Full commitment to the championship effort to accomplish the team objective is a pilot's primary obligation.**

To achieve long term success U.S. soaring teams must make a tangible difference in the sport of soaring and with the soaring community. As team members, pilots have earned the respect of the soaring community and occupy a leadership position in the sport. Pilot's actions can build critical links to the soaring community, team supporters and contributors – or alienate them.

Most of the soaring community, the grass roots, are not competition pilots and have only a passing interest in the team. At a fundamental level team pilots must better connect with the grass roots of the sport. Team pilots have the obligation to establish connections with the soaring community and to participate in team sponsored events to this end. The second pilot obligation is to:

- **Make a difference in soaring, give something back to the soaring community and participate in team sponsored programs to accomplish these goals.**

Team funding and fundraising are a constant challenge. As U.S. soaring teams are funded exclusively by personal contributions from the soaring community it becomes an obligation of team pilots to assist with the development of, and to participate in, team sponsored fundraising efforts. Contributors expect a return on their financial contributions in three distinct areas. These are, competitive supremacy at championships, promotion of the sport generally and performance soaring education. The third pilot obligation is to:

- **Assist the team in developing and delivering fundraising programs. The aim of these programs is to provide a higher return on contributions. Pilots participation in team sponsored programs to deliver competitive supremacy, promote the sport and provide educational programs geared to performance soaring is key.**

Primary Pilot Obligations Summary

- Primary Obligation 1 - Full commitment to the championship effort to accomplish the team objective is a pilot's primary obligation.
- Primary Obligation 2 - Make a difference in soaring, give something back to the soaring community and participate in team sponsored programs to accomplish these goals.
- Primary Obligation 3 - Assist the team in developing and delivering fundraising programs to provide higher returns on contributions by participating in team sponsored programs to deliver competitive supremacy, promote the sport generally and in performance oriented soaring educational programs.

Primary Pilot Obligation 1

If a pilot cannot make a full commitment to the championship effort to accomplish the team objective the pilot should not accept a position on a team. The minimum a team pilot should be prepared to undertake to meet primary pilot obligation 1 are:

- As soon as a pilot is selected, he or she should establish a plan for winning.
- Read and understand the U.S. Team Policies, Procedures and Guidelines
- Be at the championship site from the eve of the first practice day through the end of the closing ceremony.
- If selected early enough, fly in the pre-worlds and author a competitive team report
- Participate in the pre-practice period fully
- Promptly pay the pilot's share of the cost of participation
- Practice enough in similar conditions to be contest ready
- Acquire a sailplane capable of winning the contest
- Work closely with the rest of the team in a constructive manner
- Conduct themselves in an honorable and fair minded way with fellow teammates and as representatives of the United States of America
- Read through the US team binder and team documents when it is received, paying close attention to the best practices sections
- Acknowledge and respond in a timely manner to team management requests
- Understand and acknowledge that as a U.S. Team member you represent the broader US soaring community and the nation.

Primary Pilot Obligation 2 and 3

If a pilot cannot participate in team fundraising efforts, take steps to make a difference in soaring, give something back to the soaring community and participate in team sponsored programs to accomplish these goals the pilot should not accept a position on a team. The team organization will help develop, sponsor and coordinate programs but pilots are expected to participate as well. The minimum a pilot should be prepared to undertake to meet primary pilot obligation 2 and 3 are:

- Promote the team to the soaring community through education on how the team structure and management work
- Represent the team at the SSA Convention
- Provide WSC pre and post event summary to local clubs
- Be available for and solicit opportunities to promote the sport generally
- Organize and present team programs at Nationals

- Organize and/or participate in team sponsored performance soaring educational programs
- Organize and/or participate in team fundraising opportunities
- Organize and/or participate in post championship wrap up including reporting to the soaring community and participating in team debriefing
- Be available for post-championship promotional opportunities

Team Pilot Best Practices

Pilots should be prepared to accomplish the list of best practices outlined in the UST Doc 355 Pilot Best Practices and in TTF 11 Team Preparation. These documents contain tips and suggestions that have been developed by Jim Payne and other team members and form a critical part of reaching team goals and meeting primary pilot obligation 1.

See U.S. Team Document 355 and TTF 11 in the team binder and on the U.S. Team web site.

US Team Pilot Obligations Summary

Earning a position on a United States soaring team is not a reward for success at the national level but an opportunity to achieve at the world level. It is an obligation that each pilot should take seriously. For the time on the team it needs to be the focus of his or her life. From the time pilots are selected, the team should be the focus of his or her life. If family or job obligations will make the commitment less than 110%, pilots should decline the position. Anything less than full commitment to this effort short changes the team, contributors and the soaring community.

Team pilots should understand that team membership involves a good deal of responsibility and a full commitment to the championship effort to accomplish the team objective is a pilot's primary obligation.

Team pilots should expect to make a difference in soaring, give something back to the soaring community and participate in team sponsored programs to accomplish these goals. Team pilots must expect to participate in fundraising and team educational efforts to better connect the team with the grass roots of the sport

Team pilots need to be prepared to shoulder some of the responsibility for taking the steps necessary to win at world soaring championships. Less than 100% commitment to the team in achieving these goals is less than what is obligated.

Pilots need to understand that there is no free lunch. If they expect to be funded through contributions and represent the United States at world soaring championships there is a responsibility to the soaring community to provide honorable and fair representation while providing better connections with that same community here at home.

All pilots are expected to read the UST 355 Pilot Best Practices document in the team binder as a list of tips and suggestions for reaching the primary goals of the team.