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US Soaring Team Day Reports & Results



Monday, December 24

27th World Gliding Championships, Mafikeng, South Africa, December 18-31, 2001. Check this page for daily updates.



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Day Report - December 24

06/17/07 12:00 AM -0600



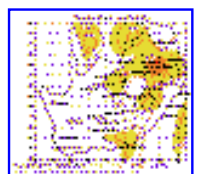
The United States Soaring Team in South Africa wishes all the people of the world a joyous Holiday season. The World Soaring Championships are an example of the unity of competitive nations that can bring our world together.

NEWS FLASH- Doug Jacobs won the day in the Standard class. Preliminary results have all U.S. pilots finishing the task except for Chip Garner, who landed just short.

There will be no competition flying on December 25 so stand by for a resumption of reporting on



0900 GMT
12/24/01
IR Satellite



T-Storms?
12/24/01

December 26.**December 24 Preliminary Scores**

Day Place	Points	Pilot	#	Overall Points	Task/ flown	Contest Day
14	781	R. Gimmey	7V	13	3687	415.0 km Day 5
12	828	J. Payne	HW	7	3836	415.0 km Day 5
8	896	K. Striedieck	KS	12	4005	343.2 km Day 5
19	789	G. Ittner	P7	6	4273	343.2 km Day 5
17	591	C. Garner	W3	14	3408	314.0 km* Day 5
1	983	D. Jacobs	DJ	18	3253	314.3 km Day 5

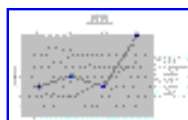
See all the scores on the official web site - [here](#) * Land Out

From the officials

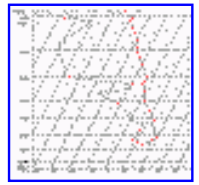
Today's conditions are expected to be better than yesterdays described by Championship Director Dick Bradley as a "Tough Day". Tracking units will be fitted to the Open class for the day. We expect a 20% chance of thunderstorms over the area in which today's tasks will be flown. Winds will be moderate Northerly to North Easterly. Thermal tops will be 8500' increasing to 9500' by about 12h00 Zulu. Thermals are expected to die in the early afternoon. Launching will commence at 10h00 Zulu with the Open Class in front followed by the 15M class and lastly the Standard Class. There will be flying for those who wish to fly on Christmas day by arrangement only.

From The Weatherman

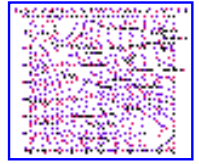
Last night we had a number of thunderstorms about with fairly significant amounts of rain, particularly to the east. At sunrise there was a noticeable cloud bank to the north east but clear conditions over Mafikeng and to the west. The upper air sounding for the day suggests thermal tops of up to 9500 ft in the blue. As soon as the dew point starts increasing though there is a good chance for over development in and around the flying area. Our expected maximum temperature for the day is 30 °C.



The official WGC web has a very interesting analysis of the daily placing for the top



Sounding
12/24/01



SFC Wind
12/24/01



WGC
Scores



WGC
Site Link

[Mirror Site](#)

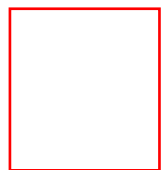



Photo
Gallery



Time in
South Africa

[Read Jim
Payne's
Day 1-5
Report](#)

 competitors to date. See the Open Class analysis by clicking the small image on left. See the official site under "Result Analysis" for the other classes.

Today's Tasks

For more information on today's tasks see the official sight under tasks. [WGC Site](#)



Task Image
From Official Site

Class	Task Type	Distance
Open	AST Assigned Speed Task	415.0 km
15-Meter	AST Assigned Speed Task	343.2 km
Standard	AST Assigned Speed Task	314.3 km

Tracking

Several GPS tracking units are being used to show the flight path of competitors. These tracks, despite some initial problems, are now displayed in near real time on the official web site. To view these tracks go to the official web site and look under tracking. Five tracking units in the Open Class today, the five selected aircraft are those occupying the first five positions overall. [WGC Site](#)

Bulletin 16, Monday, December 24 - John Good



Martha Jacobs with two grid Santa's. Apparently, North Pole dress standards have been relaxed somewhat in the southern hemisphere.
Photo: John Good

It's a little hard for me to believe it's really Christmas Eve. Somehow, a sun directly overhead at noon and temperatures that reach the mid-nineties don't serve to put a New Englander in the Christmas mood. There is a big party scheduled for this evening, with choirs singing carols, eggnog, etc. -- perhaps that will do the job. Christmas Day is a rest day; much of the US Team

plans to visit a game reserve and enjoy a South African barbecue, known as a "braai". Again, not exactly traditional, but it should be interesting. (Because of this outing I may not be able to file a report tomorrow, but will be back on the job Wednesday.)

Yesterday was another difficult day. With much more moisture and wind than any soaring pilot would want, tasks for the Open and 15-Meter classes were canceled early. But because the Standard class was a day behind the other two (having completed just three valid task days) it was their honor to launch on a day the weatherman described as close to hopeless.

The early conditions were perhaps slightly hopeful, with 2- and 3-knot thermals to almost 3000' AGL. But the predicted overdevelopment was not long in coming, and the outcome was also predictable – 100% landouts, and a whole bunch of muddy retrieves. Apparently, a fair-sized gaggle formed and some pilots managed over 200 km in very tough conditions, before they all hit the dirt. Unfortunately, the class leader Laurent Aboulin of France was not among them – he landed early, just 18 km out. The day was devalued because a number of pilots failed to make 100 km, but he wound up with just 56 points on a 700-point day, and thus is effectively out of contention despite having flown brilliantly up to this point.

Soaring competition always has an element of luck to it, but tasks in conditions like yesterday's tend to make luck loom large, perhaps too large, in determining results. There was some discussion among pilots and crews of using a "throw-out-your-worst day" scheme to deal with this sort of disaster. In a long contest, luck is supposed to even can make up for a 56-point day.



Pilots meeting - French Team Photo

The throw-out-your-worst-day concept is simple and seems to appeal to many, but has never been given a serious trial. Britain tried it a few years ago in a contest they call their "Overseas Nationals" (held somewhere on the Continent, in hopes of escaping the dreadful British weather). The trouble is, they set it up as "throw out the day on which you scored the fewest number of points". With devaluation, this doesn't work. In that contest, the pilot who should have won was forced to throw out a day on which he was the winner, and so another pilot walked off with the trophy. The right way to do this is to define "worst day" as the day on which you finished furthest (in points) behind the winner -- each pilot has points added to his cumulative score equal to the biggest difference between his score and the day winner's score. So you don't actually throw out the worst day; you simply negate its effect. Perhaps some day this will be tried.



Retrieving Doug Jacobs from a giant corn field. Though the corn looks a bit high, the landing was no problem. The rain held off, making the retrieve easy. Photo: John Good

Doug Jacobs landed at the edge of a huge corn (locally called maize) field, near what he thought was a gate. It wasn't -- the true gate was on the other side of the field. From where we found him it was about a 6-km drive by dirt road to the gate, then a 2.8-km drive along the edge of the field to the glider. Fortunately, it had not rained in this area and the driving was reasonably good. What this retrieve would have been

like in the very heavy rain we later drove through doesn't bear thinking about.

On the way home we had the traditional South African rain and lightning show, a trifle muted in comparison to the one we encountered the first day of the contest, but spectacular by any standard. We also saw a number of trailers heading out into the darkness and rain, toward fields that were sure to be quagmires of mud.

Chip Garner landed in the same general area as Doug, also in a giant corn field. The farmer spotted him by chance, having climbed up to his roof to do some repairs. It was fortunate that he did so, as the driving directions to this field were remarkably roundabout -- Chip said that despite good cell phone coverage there would have been little chance he could have directed his crew to the right spot without this detailed local knowledge.

Today looks a bit better, but we're back to the standard prediction of a 20 to 40% chance of afternoon thunderstorms. At the pilots' meeting, this was presented as an improvement (and compared to yesterday, it is), but even 20% means that the chance of having to dodge a thunderstorm somewhere during a 300- to 400-km task is high. There is also the point that yesterday's rain has left considerable moisture on the ground, which will certainly dampen thermal lift. Mafikeng weather has rarely rewarded pilots trying to finish late in the day, and this day should end earlier than usual. I expect that there will be few late-starters today, and that despite this there will be some who spend Christmas Eve in muddy fields.



DeBeers Eurocopter departs
Nikki Oppenheimer
(Chairman of DeBeers
Corporation) departs as
pilots and sole crew of his
Eurocopter. Photo; John
Good

We had a distinguished visitor the other day. Nikki Oppenheimer showed up in his Eurocopter, done up in a truly exotic and beautiful paint scheme, depicting ancient petroglyphs. He is a sponsor and patron of this contest, and has offered to host the contest winners at his private game reserve for a 10-day holiday next year. He is also the Chairman of DeBeers, the

company that controls the world's diamond supply.

The local puff adder has been seen again, this time near the Team Canada office. He is living up to his shy reputation -- I've not yet been able to get a picture of him. It's also worth noting that the crack Mafikeng Airfield animal control team has not been able to corral this snake, so there is hope for me yet. I plan to check out his haunts this evening, which seems to be the best time for puff adder viewing.

It's now 1:30 pm. Launches are complete and the sky looks beautiful -- cumulus clouds in all directions. Pilots are reporting good climbs (occasionally 5 knots) but surprisingly low bases -- they are rarely able to get as much as 3000' above the airfield, and the trend seems to be downward. I expect most pilots will start within 15 minutes of task opening time. I hope we get most of them home today -- we're looking forward to the Christmas Eve party, and I suspect everyone here has had enough of retrieving for a while.

Addendum - Monday, December 24 -- John Good

Today worked out about as forecast. Lift was a bit better and there were a few more clouds than predicted, but the day died early, as the met man said it would. All the US Team pilots made it home except for Chip Garner, who was caught by the weakening conditions and landed about 12 miles out. The W3 crew has just departed on what looks to be a relatively easy retrieve (though we've learned not to make too many assumptions about retrieves at Mafikeng).

Doug Jacobs had a good day. The preliminary results have him on top, and a whole bunch of the top-standing pilots seem to have had some real problems. Both Reinhard Schramme and Peter Fisher of Germany are reported to have landed out, along with Markku

Kuittinen and perhaps some others. It reinforces what we already know – Mafikeng in 2001 is a tricky site, and the scoring system used frequently results in large score swings. A lot of flying remains to be done.

We're off in a few minutes to the contest Christmas Eve party. I will not be able to file a report tomorrow, but will be back on line Wednesday. I wish you all a Merry Christmas, and hope you are enjoying these reports. All the best to you from the US Soaring Team in South Africa.

Bulletin 16- Monday, December 24 - Jim Payne

It's Christmas Eve in South Africa, the day's flying is over and our thoughts are with our families and friends.

Day Five was another challenging one. Open Class launched first and at task open time at 12:43 PM the cloud base was 3,600' AGL. Since we were concerned about storms and the day shutting off so Ray and I had agreed to start ASAP. Today



it was my turn to have trouble getting started so I was behind Ray. Later in the day the conditions near the field deteriorated and some later launchers had to relight.

I spent the day chasing cu and trying not to get below the good working band which was only about 2,000 feet thick. This worked well until after the second turn where I needed just one good climb for a fast trip home. I could not connect despite some good looking clouds so was slowed on the trip home. We are still amazed at how the lift switches off late in the day. Today it got soft shortly after 4 PM which is an hour earlier than normal.

Tonight the organizer's are hosting a Christmas Eve party. Tomorrow, Christmas Day, is a rest day. We hope you all have a Merry Christmas and enjoy a wonderful Christmas dinner.

In closing let me say again how much the Team appreciates your support ... Gary Kemp, Team Manager, has been wall papering the Team hut with your "Go Team" messages. Thanks for your wonderful words of encouragement. Green Air, Peace on Earth, and Goodwill to All.

Editor - Check out the competition. Visit the [German](#)

[team](#), the [Canadian team](#), the [Dutch team](#), the [British team](#), the [Polish team](#) and the [French team](#) as they all have excellent sites.




[Practice
Day Reports](#)

USA Soaring Team Results 2001/2002

To catch up on all the news for the 2001 U.S. World Soaring Teams see the [US Team News](#) for the top finishers in each class plus the U.S. pilots final standings. See the U.S. [Team Archive](#) for team background since 1950. As part of the Archive tour see the [US Team History](#) page for a complete listing of US Teams since 1950 or the [World Champions](#) page for a complete listing of champions since 1937.

US Team Web Additions? Problems? Corrections? [US Team Web Master](#)
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