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U.S. Soaring Team Day
Reports & Results2006 FAI 29th Multi-Class WGC
Open, 18-Meter, 15-Meter, Standard

Eskilstuna, Sweden, June 4-17, 2006



Sunday, June 4th - Day 1

Practice is over and the 29th WGC is underway with Day 1. Morning Report posted with evening report now available.

REPORTS

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Day Report

TEAM REPORT - Sunday, June 4th
Morning Report

This is it – the first competition day of the 29th World Gliding Championships. A rather abbreviated practice period is completed and all actions are quite a bit more serious from here on. I will try to make two reports each flying day: one after the launch is complete, and one in the evening when flying is done and (we hope) some results are posted.

Yesterday's beautiful weather has persisted. At noon we have lots of sun, warm temperatures (at least by Sweden's standards), and a sky filled with cumulus clouds (perhaps just a few more than would be ideal this early in the day). Pilots are already reporting strong climbs to over 5000'; later on they have been told to expect as much as 8 knots to perhaps 7000'.



In the face of this, the tasks seem rather short: Open class has a 410-km assigned task, 18-Meter class will do 370 km. The short-wing classes have turn-area tasks: 3 hours for 15-Meter class and just 2:30 for Standard. The reason seems to be concern about the possibility of mid-level clouds forming in late afternoon. But there seems to be a sense among pilots that these

tasks are just a bit timid for what looks to be the second-best day we've seen thus far. The general notion is that a WGC task should be long enough to use most of the soaring day, with no assurance that all competitors will get home. If the afternoon presents no significant problems, there may be enough soaring weather today to go twice around a 2.5 hour task. If the mid-level clouds spread, the grouching about the tasks will not be heard this evening.

All tasks will head to the same general area as two days ago: the

SCHEDULE

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Contest



eastern part of the task area, more or less north of Eskilstuna. This area is generally held to have better landability and not quite as good lift as western areas.

The launch went smoothly. The field has dried nicely – muddy areas are now so few as to be no impediment. The final count of gliders seems to be 117; the huge fleet of Pawnees (we believe it's 17) got everyone in the air in about an hour. A substantial number of the Open-class gliders self-launch, but in truth this slows things down a bit – no auxiliary engine can match 235 hp at the front end of a towrope. There have been times when a half-dozen Pawnees were idling, waiting for a Nimbus to lumber slowly down the runway and into the air.

All the towplanes use towline reels, so the rope can be retracted after the glider releases. This tends to save wear and tear on the rope and reduces the chance of exciting events like snagging a towrope in trees or power lines (as we have here, at both ends of the runway). But it removes one possibility for crews' artistic expression prior to launch: At most World contests the practice is to lay out a towrope for each glider well in advance. Crews would often coil these into artistic designs (or sometimes interesting slogans) that would evaporate as soon as slack was taken out – sort of an airfield variant of sidewalk chalk paintings. Would-be buskers will have to find another medium at Eskilstuna.

US Team Pilots

At 1pm, the US Team pilots are about ready to start. Lift is good, and there are reports of gliders well above cloudbase, in wave lift. The only contest altitude limit is a general one of 2750 m (just over 9000 ft) covering the entire task area. This can make it a good plan to search for weak wave prior to starting, in hopes of gaining a couple thousand feet on less fortunate

competitors who can't find this.

It's now 1:30 and I'm about to file this report. We see some signs of overdevelopment near the airfield, but the sky to the north (where all classes are headed) looks good. The initial reports from those on course suggest good, though not yet booming lift.

June 4th, Evening Report

It proved to be a good soaring day in Sweden, though not without its challenges. The threat of mid-level clouds never really materialized, but there was enough overdevelopment and clag to make things interesting, even though nearly everyone got home. Pilots were often faced with rather long glides through dead air. Lift could be found at the far end of these, but not always great lift. Yet passing up low thermals in hopes of something better seems to be a risky strategy here – most pilots are reporting that climb rates when low are often disappointing. The smart money emphasizes staying reasonably high, even if this occasionally requires accepting a rather weak climb.

US pilots had a so-so day. The best result was turned in by Dick Butler, who was 4th in the Open class at a speed of 120 kph. In 18-Meter class, Rick Indrebo came 15th; Sam Zimmerman got slowed a bit and finished 27th. Dave Mockler had quite a decent day in 15-Meter class, finishing 8th; Gary Ittner was 20th and noted that he simply got too low too often. In Standard class, Doug Jacobs was 11th.



As many have predicted, there were airspace problems: in both the Open and 18-Meter classes, one pilot was nabbed for trespassing. The penalty for this is

JUNE 4 - 17

Closing
JUNE 18

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severe: A violation occurs when your flight log shows that you entered forbidden airspaces, even for a second. Your first flight with a problem is scored as if you'd landed at the last legal spot before your violation. Your second problem flight will earn a score of zero for the day. With strike three, you're out – pack your bags and go home. It sounds severe, but is necessary if gliders are to continue to be allowed to fly in multi-use

airspace.

Yet despite the draconian penalties, infractions are not nearly as rare as they should be. It's awfully easy to be tempted by a beautiful cumulus cloud in an otherwise dull sky. It's common to start circling while well clear of problems, only to have the wind drift you toward trouble. An insidious case is when a couple of less-than-careful pilots are circling near trouble. Other pilots see them climbing nicely and say to themselves "If those guys are content, I guess it's okay for me to climb there, too." This has resulted in penalties for many gliders at once.

The good news about the scoring here is that once a pilot's flight log file is properly submitted, scores are calculated and posted almost instantly. The bad news is that submission is done via a web page and the process can (and today did) get seriously overloaded at peak times. Rules say that a pilot's log file must be submitted within 45 minutes of when he lands. The time necessary to tow the glider clear of the runway and to its trailer (along with perhaps dozens of others), then extract the logger, download the file onto a memory card and get it to a computer can itself be significant. Today, this was the easy part. The computer network pretty well seized up for a time and it was nearly impossible to get a flight log transmitted. Dozens of pilots were getting very nervous as their 45-minute deadlines approached with no assurance they'd escape a penalty. As a crisis loomed, the announcement was made that the deadline would not be enforced. Less panic meant less haste, and before long all flights were submitted and scored.

This is not the first important glider contest that has faced these problems. It's clear that the whole local network/internet model of how to administer a contest needs some additional thought. The basic point is that a World-level contest with well over 100 entrants generates a load that can be extremely challenging. What works well when tested with, say, 30 pilots may grind to a halt under the strain of the real thing. At a minimum, there should be non-networked ways of submitting flight logs and viewing scores. We'll see how this is addressed here – I imagine no one is looking forward to a repeat of today's problems.

I spoke to Uwe Engström about the finish of his aerobatic routine at the Opening Ceremony yesterday. He had planned to land just in front of the crowd, but was blocked by a vintage glider and a photographer who had leaked onto the airfield, in defiance of signs and ropes (as photographers will do). This required a last-minute turn to the right, during which his wingtip did in fact scrape the ground (with the main wheel still 15' in the air). But all's well that ends well, as did this flight. He gets credit for providing the most exciting moment of the airshow. I suspect you'd have a hard time talking him into a repeat performance.

John Good

Captions for photos: *From top to bottom:*

Looking east with Ekeby airfield in the center of the picture.
US Team Pilots.

U.S. Soaring Team - Standings

Class	Pilot	Sailplane	Contest Number	Day Place & Points	Overall Place & Points
Open	Dick Butler	ASW-22 DB	DB	4/922	4/922
18-M	Sam Zimmerman	Ventus 2cx	SZ	27/705	27/705
18-M	Rick Indrebo	ASG-29	99	15/826	15/826
15-M	David Mockler	ASW-27	VW	8/820	9/820
15-M	Gary Ittner	Ventus 2	C	20/723	20/723
STD	Doug Jacobs	Discus 2	D2	11/661	11/661

See the official scores [here](#)

Points of Interest

ABOUT DAY REPORTS

The U.S. Team Day Reports are brought to you by the US Soaring Team and Team Committee. Veteran reporter John Good (also crewing for Doug Jacobs) will be bringing you up to the minute coverage from the U.S. Team as they go for the gold in Sweden. The daily reports are posted by Frank Whiteley and John Seaborn.

EMAIL TEAM

You can send the team in Sweden an email using the mail box set up for this purpose. Click [Team email](#). Communication will go direct to Team Captain John Godfrey and cannot normally be replied to.

U.S. TEAM COMMITTEE

The U.S. Team Committee has been working for over five years to establish more stable management structure and better resources for our soaring teams. The objective are more transparent, accountable, sustainable and competitive United States soaring teams. See the full information on the [U.S. Team Committee page](#).

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TEAM NEWS, HISTORY & ARCHIVE

To catch up on all the news for the U.S. World Soaring Teams see the [U.S. Team News](#). See the U.S. [Team Archive](#) for team background since 1950 including scans of all the original articles as they appeared in Soaring magazine. Also see the [U.S. Team History](#) page for a complete listing of U.S. Teams since 1950 or the [World Champions](#) page for a complete listing of champions since 1937.

YOUR TEAM SUPPORT

Our participation at the international level depends on the generous contributions from the larger soaring community. Thanks to those of you who have contributed to make participation in these international events possible. If you have not contributed to the team please consider making one! To see how, visit the U.S. [Team Funding](#) and the [Robertson Trust Web](#).

Country and Contest Site



10/27/04 - SITE CHANGE FOR 2006 WGC

The 29th World Gliding Championships originally slated for Uppsala Sweden have been moved to Eskilstuna Sweden (Ekeby airfield). This site was where the 1993 US Team had a week of practice before Borlange (site of 1993 WGC). The two sites share very similar terrain.

Sweden and Eskilstuna will be the host of the World Gliding Championship 2006. Approximately 120 pilots from all around the world will gather at the Ekeby airfield 5 km west of Eskilstuna to compete in four classes, Standard, 15 meter, 18 meter and Open class, on June 5-17 2006. The management for WGC 2006 have decided to move the competition site from Uppsala to Eskilstuna.



The reason for this is that the original competition site in Uppsala no longer has the possibility to adequately serve the needs of the competition due to a much higher degree of other activity at the airfield than originally anticipated. Eskilstuna is an excellent alternative with all necessary facilities already in place. Eskilstuna also has a tradition in large international competitions.