

United States Soaring Team Committee



The Soaring Society of America's Board of Directors at their 1995 winter meeting in Reno, Nevada established the United States Soaring Team Committee. Largely through the work of Mark Huffstutler, the SSA Board approved the formation of a committee to, *"oversee the affairs of the Soaring Society of America with respect to its representation at Federation Aeronautique International (FAI) approved World Soaring Championships."*

The 1995 United States Team Committee

The makeup of the original committee was five members, a Chairperson and four Committee members each charged with a specific area of authority and included Administrative, Competitive, Fund Raising & Promotion, and Technology members. The Chairperson and/or Committee members could hold successive and consecutive terms with no term limitation.

This Committee reported directly to the SSA Executive Committee Chair, the SSA Board, and the SSA President and was created as an ongoing entity unless dissolved or changed by the SSA Board of Directors. The chairperson served from the time of their election by the SSA Committee members until the last day of the then current World Championships.

Under this system and with Mr. Huffstutler's professional guidance U.S. soaring teams competed in the 25th World Gliding Championships in 1997 held in Saint Auban, France and the 26th Championships held in 1999 at Bayreuth, Germany. Mark stepped down as U.S. Team Committee Chairman at the conclusion of the 1999 World Championships in Germany.

Changes to international competition

Since the U.S. Team Committee was conceived in 1995, there have been fundamental changes to the world or competitive soaring. In 1995 there was a single U.S. Soaring Team, one world soaring championship venue held on a predictable two year cycle and just three FAI classes. By 2003 there are eight FAI classes, five championship venues held on consecutive years and potentially five U.S. Teams. These changes, combined with the advantage of hindsight, have made it necessary to revise the initial purpose of the U.S. Team Committee.

As more classes and World Championships were added it became obvious that the original system established in 1995 could no longer meet the needs of U.S. Teams and the soaring community. This highlighted the need to re-think how our soaring teams do business and resulted in the U.S. Team Task Force project.

The 2002 Team Task Force

The U.S. Team Task Force was created by the SSA Board of Directors at the 2002 SSA Convention held in Ontario, California and successfully completed its work at the end of 2002. The Task Force was formed to examine how U.S. Teams were organized and did business. Task Force members included Jim Payne, Tim Welles, John Seaborn, Jim Short, Ken Sorenson and Doug Jacobs. Out of this year long process, the Task Force developed fourteen areas of areas of investigation and issued a report on its findings. The central finding was that the U.S. Team Committee was in need of revision to meet the challenges of future team management.

Specifically the newly revised U.S. Team Committee addresses several key areas including:

- **Organization**
Develop an organizational structure capable of managing the expanded list of U.S. soaring teams
- **Competitive & Efficient**
Move away from single event focused management that reinvents the wheel with each championship as members come and go
- **Provide Consistency**
Provide much needed consistency to team management, policy, fundraising and as a team member
- **Develop Resources**
Develop team intuitional knowledge and resources for team members and captains to draw on when fielding U.S. Teams.
- **Clear Responsibility**
Clarify who is actually responsible for funding policy, expense management, selection procedures and other critical elements of team activities.
- **Task Sharing**
Work closely with the SSA, under Board direction, but off load many of the team related tasks now accomplished by the SSA
- **Long Term & Sustainable**
All volunteer with smaller, more manageable task size to limit burn out.

New U.S. Team Committee outline

As defined in 1995, the U.S. Soaring Team Committee was an operational body primarily focused on the effective conduct of the U.S. Team at a World Championships. A critical element of the Task Force's vision of the future U.S. Team operation and organization was the creation of a re-purposed and newly defined U.S. Soaring Team Committee. The new committee has a broader focus and assumes responsibility for the selection, overall management, and funding of the U.S. Teams. This responsibility and authority is subject to SSA Board oversight. The intent is for the relationship between the SSA Board and the U.S. Team Committee to develop into the same relationship that exists between the Board and the Rules Committee. The U.S. Soaring Team Committee is responsible for long term strategic planning in team affairs.

New U.S. Team Committee

The U.S. Team Committee consists of both appointed and elected positions and resembles the successful Rules Committee in both structure and procedure. Appointed positions include **US Contest Chairman, US Team Chairman** and the **SSA President**. There are three elected members to the committee as well. The election process followed by the U.S. Team Committee is the same as that used by the successful Rules Committee with three major differences. First, the SSA or the acting U.S. Team Committee will appoint a designee to administer the election. This designee may be the SSA or a third party. Second, the election will utilize the Internet for much of the communications and voting and third, the entire SSA membership is eligible to vote rather than exclusively ranked pilots on the seeding list as is done for the rules committee.

The three elected members of the **US Team Committee** will be elected to staggered three year terms, similar to the Rules Committee. One elected position would come up for election each year. This staggered election arrangement will help to ensure an institutional continuity to this key management committee.

The presence of the **SSA President** on the committee will provide a direct link to the SSA Board and a much-needed historical perspective on US Team operations.

The **US Team Chairman**, besides being a key member of the US Team Committee, will be the overall manager of the US Teams. This position will now be more of a management role, rather than an operational role as in the past. The US Team Chairman will have a number of supporting positions to spread the operational workload. These positions include the Team Captains, Team Treasurer, Fundraising Manager, Documents Manager, Promotions and Sponsorship Manager, and Ranking Lists Manager.

Each WGC competition venue will have a **Team Captain** who will be responsible for the overall management of their respective teams including all logistical issues. Management issues will include financial budgeting, reporting and fundraising in coordination with overall team fundraising. Additional detail regarding Team Captain's responsibilities is provided in the US Team Task Force Team Captain checklist (USST DOC 365) as attached. Included in the supporting positions will be:

Team Treasurer - will manage all US Team's finances. This would include monitoring team contributions and income, ensuring that any class/venue specific contributions are properly accounted for, and ensuring that Team pilot contributions are received. The Team Treasurer will work with the Team Managers and review the pre-contest budgets, collect post-contest reports, and will prepare an annual report on the Team's finances.

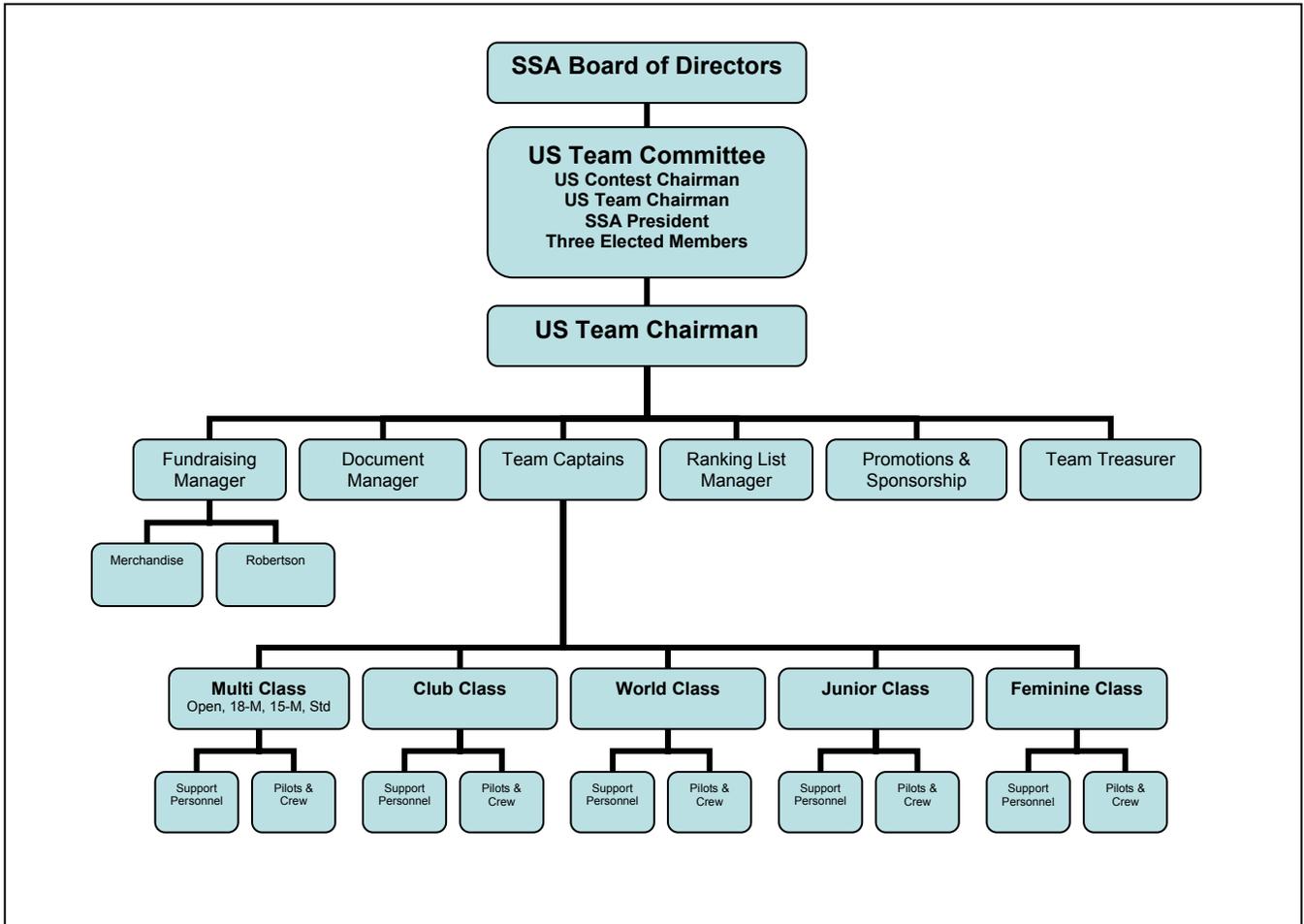
Fundraising Manager - will be responsible for developing and implementing the fundraising activities of the team and to coordinate fundraising with individual team captains and the SSA as described in Task Force Topic 6. Under the Fundraising Manager will be the team merchandise manager, and the Robertson Trust campaign manager. It is anticipated that a good deal of event coordination will be needed in the Fundraising Manager position.

Document Manager - will maintain and update the US Team related documents that are described in Task Force Topic 12. This position would be responsible for assembling a "book of knowledge" for the US Team so we are not continually re-inventing the wheel with each new WGC contest.

Promotions and Sponsorship Manager - will work with past, present and future US Team members to share the superior soaring and racing skills of the top US competitors with the broader SSA membership. This US Team activity is intended to be an opportunity for the US Team to "give back" to the general membership and to promote the sport. The intent is not to promote the Team, but rather to use the Team to promote soaring in general and competition soaring in particular to both the soaring community and the general public.

Ranking List Manager - is a move to recognize and formalize within the new organization the exceptional service which has been provided to the competition pilots by John Leibacher.

US Soaring Team Organizational Chart



Creation of new U.S. Team Committee

In January of 2003, at the winter meeting in Dayton, Ohio, the SSA Board of Directors unanimously voted to adopt the recommendations of the Team Task Force and to modernize the U.S. Soaring Team Committee.

U.S. Team Committee Election Process

The six-member committee includes the Contest Committee Chairman, the U.S. Team Chairman, the SSA president, plus three members elected by the SSA membership. The procedure for selecting the three elected members is nearly identical to that used for the Rules Committee elections: nominations from SSA directors, SSA-conducted election and staggered elected terms with one position up for election each year. The establishment of this committee provides much-needed institutional continuity to U.S. Team management as individual volunteers come and go. Operational aspects of the U.S. Team will be handled by the U.S. Team Chairman and the various team captains

The U.S. Team Committee and the Rules Committee differ in three areas. First, the SSA or the U.S. Team Committee will appoint a designee to administer the election. This designee may be the SSA or a third party. Second, the election will utilize the Internet for much of the communications and voting, and third, the entire SSA membership is eligible to vote rather than competition ranked pilots alone as is done for the Rules Committee.

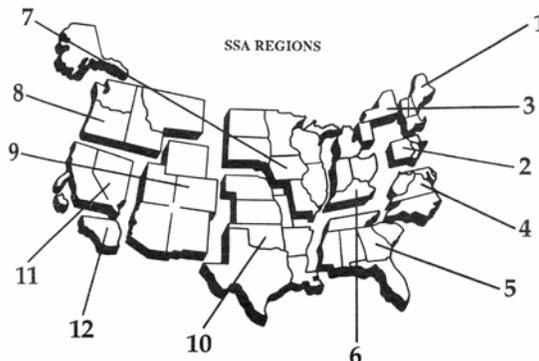
How it works...

Director Solicitations

Directors of the twelve SSA regions are solicited to nominate members to serve on the U.S. Team Committee. This solicitation can be by mail or by e-mail. There is a deadline by which to submit nominations to the designee. For this initial election this period will be accomplished by February 25, 2003.

If SSA members wish to run please contact your SSA Regional Director.

See the directors list at: <http://www.ssa.org/directors.asp>



Ballot Creation

The U.S. Team Committee Designee collects the nominees from the SSA Directors and a ballot with voting instructions is created. This can be mailed to all members of the Soaring Society of America or placed on the Internet for voting. If mailed, there would be a postmark deadline for return. If run on the Internet clear opening and closing dates will be established.

Election Notification Process

If run on the internet there would be a period in which publication of the election purpose including specific opening and closing dates would take place. This period would begin when the election opens. The initial election period will be from March 1 to March 31.

The opening and closing of the election would be widely publicized within the SSA membership community using news groups, SSA Web site and Soaring magazine.

Vote Counting

Balloting is "preferential." That is, people vote in order of the preference they have for the candidates listed on the Ballot. For example, if there are five candidates for two positions they vote for all five candidates in rank order by preference. This allows the establishment the top two with a plurality.

For the initial election of the committee the nominee with the highest ranking would be elected to the first three year term, with the next highest ranking nominee assigned an initial two year and one year term according to who received the next highest ranking of votes. The initial election results to be announced in the first week of April, 2003.

Notification

All nominees will be notified as to the outcome of the election. Final election results will be widely publicized within the SSA membership community using news groups, SSA Web site and Soaring magazine.

The initial kick-off meeting of the committee will take place in April, 2003. Subsequent election dates would be decided by the Team Committee and might be chosen to coincide with the Rules Committee election.

2003 Initial U.S. Team Committee Election Time Line

Nominations solicited by the U.S. Team Committee Designee from the SSA Regional Directors	February 1 th to February 25 th
Ballot creation and preparation	
Opening of election and publication of purpose, opening and closing dates plus solicitations for participation.	March 1 th to March 31st
Results will be tallied and announced. All nominees notified and results will be posted on the U.S. Team Committee Web site on the SSA US Team web.	First Week in April
Initial kick-off meeting	Mid April