



# United States Soaring Team Task Force

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## Introduction

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### Introduction

On Saturday, February 9, 2002 the SSA Board of Directors adopted a proposal to create the United States Soaring Team Policy Task Force (TTF). With the creation of this project the door is open to put our soaring teams on a successful course that may have a long lasting impact on the sport. The bad news is that it is going to take a lot of work to accomplish this goal.

An overhaul of how the US Soaring Teams function, the development of a more robust management structure and the creation of better defined policies are overdue. This is our opportunity to make the teams more competitive, more enjoyable to be a member of, better organized, better funded, easier to manage and most of all more competitive.

An important goal of the TTF is to solicit feedback from the soaring community regarding team operation and develop a US Soaring Team structure and management direction more consistent with the expectations of the soaring community.

There is an accountability aspect of this effort. Contributors have the right to know that their contributions are being used responsibly and in a manner consistent with their expectations. Team members have the right to know up front what is expected and what it means to be a US team member.

The best accounting, policy statement and management are wasted if not done in a transparent way. Contributors, supporters and management should be able to look into the organization and see what is being done. But even the most organized, accountable and transparent organization does not guarantee championship success. After all, the point of championships is to compete in a way that maximizes the opportunity to win. What kinds of things should we be doing to put our pilots in the best place to win?

So, at the end of the day, we have an accountable, transparent and competitive organization but there is a final piece to the puzzle – sustainability. Without the ability to sustain this level organizational performance no consistency can be established. Organizational competency, consistency and credibility suffer without sustainability. These core principals; transparency, accountability, competitiveness and sustainability are defined in this document and will be used as the screening tool for new ideas and new policy.

With some effort up front we have the chance to make a real and lasting difference.

John Seaborn & Ken Sorenson  
Co-Chairs US Team Task Force

## SSA Board adopted the following guidelines...

See TTF Final Proposal 012602 for the complete proposal adopted by the SSA Board of Directors. A summary of the main team task force proposal follows.

### The Mission

The mission of the U.S. Team Policy Review Task Force is to accomplish a fundamental review of how United States Soaring teams currently do business, solicit community input, investigate areas for improvement, develop solutions, author a report and provide implementation assistance.

### The Principles

The guiding principles of the U.S. Team Policy Review Task Force is to rework the U.S. Team structure and operational policies to encourage high levels of organizational transparency and accountability, management support, continuity and competitiveness in the U.S. Soaring Team organization.

### The Purpose

The long term purpose of the U.S. Team Policy Review Task Force is to establish the U.S. Soaring Teams and the underlying organization as the most capable of all international soaring teams.

### The Process

The first step of the five step process includes the formation of a 6 member U.S. Team Policy Review Task Force. This 6 member Panel will be charged with accomplishing the mission stated above. The second step will involve a review of how U.S. Soaring Teams currently operate and solicit feed back regarding specific problems and solutions from a wide variety of participants. Third, develop solutions to the challenges identified. Fourth, author a report on findings and up-date the existing U.S. Team Funding and Selection Policies document and the U.S. Team Policy & Procedures Manual. Fifth, implement the findings of the report in concert with team management.

### The Time Frame

A report from the U.S. Team Policy Review Task Force will be presented to the SSA Directors at their January 2003 board meeting.

### The Results

It is time to bring all the parts together into one unified U.S. Soaring Team plan that addresses many of the challenges now present in the process we use to fund, field and manage U.S. Soaring Teams. This effort will involve fundamental changes to the way the US Soaring Teams are organized, managed and funded in the new world of multiple teams and championships

## Statement of Policy

The US Team Policy Task Force adopts the following four principals as the core guiding principals for establishing team policy.

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Competitiveness
- Sustainability

The purpose of this statement of policy is to establish the framework for undertaking the work of the task force and to provide clear guidance for future team participants. As an organization largely dependent on private contributions these four guiding principals are critical in all future operations.

## Transparency

Transparency is the information an organization provides about itself and the issues under its control. How much an organization is willing to reveal about itself to outsiders is a fair measure of organizational transparency.

There are few organizations that know more about the importance of organizational transparency than faith based organizations. The faith based watch-dog group Wall Watchers puts it this way, “Wall Watchers believes that all Christian ministries have a responsibility to be good stewards of the financial resources that they have received from donors. Stewardship of these blessings is demonstrated when an organization is transparent to their own donors and to the public.” The Wall Watchers use a snippet from the bible that applies well:

“We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.”

*2 Corinthians 8: 20-21 (NIV)*

According to Webster’s New World Dictionary, if something is transparent it is “capable of being seen through” or “easily understood.” If organizations are not acting in ways that allow their constituents to see through them and understand them easily, then they are not exhibiting transparency and may be failing in their stewardship responsibility.

## Accountability

Accountability is described by Webster’s as, “An obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one’s actions.” Organizational accountability can best be described as a sense of personal responsibility and ownership held by the stakeholders of an organization. This definition implies an organization structure and established expectations.

Accountability also involves rendering an account to someone who has authority over you, such as contributors or team management , on how and how well one’s responsibilities are being met (including the actions of subordinates), or on actions taken to correct problems and to ensure they do not reoccur. It also involves accepting personal consequences for problems that could have been avoided.

Put another way by Fred Nickols in his thesis, “The Accountability Scorecard” organizational accountability has to do with stakeholders. “Stakeholders may be thought of as groups of individuals or organizations significantly affected by what goes on at an organization, with a stake in having it go well, and for whom the organization wants things to go well in return.

In other words, the relationship is reciprocal. The organization gives and gets something. So do the stakeholders. There is some kind of *quid pro quo*.

Organizations with high degrees of accountability tend to be successful. James Burke, former CEO of Johnson and Johnson, has observed that the ultimate measure of an organization's success is the extent to which it "serves all of its constituencies better than its competition" Clearly, this entails integrating, balancing, and satisfying the needs, wants, and requirements of the organization's stakeholders."

Applied to US Soaring Team's the stakeholders include, the Soaring Society of America, team contributors, pilots, team management and the soaring public. The ultimate success of the US Team Task force will come down to how successfully we are at crafting a new organization and policies that meet the stakeholder's needs. Stakeholder input is critical.

## Competitiveness

Of course winning is the ultimate goal of any competitive activity. But a focus on winning is to simplistic an approach. Winning is a by product of doing lots of things right or at least better than the competition. To win at the world level it takes a magical nexus of pilot skill, equipment, organization, preparation, funding and that special quality of sustained brilliance.

Because of their complex nature world championship competition happens at two levels – the organizational level and the pilot level. To improve the competitive standing of U.S. Soaring Teams the focus should be on developing the factors that allow pilots to win both on the organizational and the personal levels. The policies developed by the Task Force need to expand on this competitive challenge.

## Sustainability

Webster's defines the idea of sustainability as, "being a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged." Organizational sustainability has more to do with developing a structure that can continue to operate over a long period using the resources available. Fairness, ethical treatment, rewards, task sharing and a sense of a common goal are all part of what makes an organization sustainable.

The US Team Task Force should carefully scrutinize changes in team policy for sustainability over the long run based on the volunteer nature of team management, the limitations of potential managers, limited funding and team resources.

## Task Force Members – Contact Information

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<p>US Team Committee Chairman</p>	

## Task Force Process & Time Line

In keeping with the process laid out in the proposal adopted by the SSA Board the process for developing the work of the task force will be as follows:

Task Milestones	Status	Dates
1. Develop topics and member assignments	Completed with Ken's excellent agenda and topics presented in Ontario	Feb 8, 2002
2. Task force members to independently develop their topics and circulate to other members for comment.	Done	Start – Feb 9 End – Apl 1
3. Task force to solicit general feedback from soaring community and develop online poll. Publish poll results at end.	Done	Start – Feb 9 End – Aug 1
4. Pull together TTF topics and author draft report for internal review & comment.	Done	Start – Jun 1 End – Jun 30
5. Progress update to SSA EXCOM	Done	Jun ?
6. Publish TTF Draft report on web and ask for community comment.	Done	Start – Jly 1 End – Nov 1
7. Draft report to SSA BOD or simple update	Done	Sep 14
8. Finalize report and ready presentation to SSA Board	Under Development	Start - Nov 1 End – Dec 1
9. Progress update to SSA EXCOM		Nov ?
10. Develop US Team Policies and Procedures Manual		Start - Dec 1 End – Jan 15
11. Present report to SSA Board Meeting in late January 2003.		Jan 23-25
12. Morph TTF into Team Oversight Committee for implementation role		2003

## US Team Time Line

### 2002 Team Calendar

<b>Feb. 9</b>	<b>SSA Board of Directors adopted the proposal to create the United States Soaring Team Policy Task Force</b>
Feb 3-16	New Zealand Nationals and World Class Pre-Worlds Matamata, New Zealand
May 19-Jun 2	Pre-Worlds Jihlava 2 <sup>nd</sup> Woman's World Championships Jihlava, Czech Republic
<b>Jun</b>	<b>SSA EXCOM Meeting – Task Force Progress Update</b>
Jul 2-11	USA Standard Class Nationals – Hobbs, NM USA
Jul 16-25	USA 15-Meter Nationals – Tonopah, NV USA
Jul 30-Aug 8	USA 18-Meter Class Nationals – Lubbock, TX USA
Jul 30-Aug 8	USA Sports Class Nationals – Lubbock, TX USA
U/K	Pre-Worlds 28th World Soaring Championships - Reiti, Italy
Aug 10-24	2 <sup>nd</sup> FAI Club Class World Gliding Championships - Musbach, Germany
Aug 13-22	USA Open Class Nationals – Uvalde, TX USA
Aug 13-22	USA World Class Nationals – Uvalde, TX USA
<b>Sep 14</b>	<b>SSA Board Meeting – Progress Update &amp; Draft report</b>
<b>Nov</b>	<b>SSA EXCOM Meeting – Progress Update</b>

### 2003

<b>Jan 23 – 25</b>	<b>SSA Board Meeting &amp; Convention – Final Task Force Report to SSA Board and at Convention</b>
Feb 8-22	4th FAI World Class (PW-5) World Gliding Championships, Matamata, New Zealand
U/K	3rd FAI Junior World Gliding Championships Nitra, Slovak Republic
U/K	2nd FAI Women's World Gliding Championship Jihlava, Czech Republic
May 27-Jun 5	USA Open Class Nationals - Cordele, GA USA
May 27-Jun 5	USA 18-Meter Class Nationals - Cordele, GA USA
Jun 17-26	USA Sports Class Nationals - Harris Hill, NY USA
Jun 17-26	World Class Nationals, Harris Hill, NY USA
Jul 20-Aug 2	28th FAI World Gliding Championships 2003 - Reiti, Italy
Jly 15-26	USA 15-Meter Nationals - Lubbock, TX USA
Aug 5-14	USA Standard Class Nationals - Montaque, CA USA

## US Team Policy Review Task Force Topics & Member Assignments

### 1) TTF 1 Policy Statement

John Seaborn

Task Force Policy Statement, Goals & Process

Discussion of general goals for the taskforce process and refinement of taskforce and team policy statement

### 2) TTF 2 Goals

John Seaborn

US Team Goals

- a) Open/18M class /15M/Std FAI classes
- b) Club class
- c) World class
- d) Junior and Feminine classes

### 3) TTF 3 Organization

Ken Sorenson

US Team Organizational Structure

- a) US Team Committee Structure
  - i) Ideas on new organizational structure
  - ii) Committee Chair, Team Managers, Team Treasurer
  - iii) Long Term Planning or Strategy Person/Committee
- b) US Team Financial Management Structure
  - i) Team Treasurer's role
  - ii) SSA office's role
  - iii) Transparency & accountability

### 4) TTF 4 Planning

John Seaborn

Team Planning Function (4 year cycle)

### 5) TTF 5 Funding

Ken Sorenson

Funding

- a) Basic funding philosophy:
  - i) Fixed amount available from SSA?
  - ii) Fixed cost to each team member?
- b) Funding cycle/period: 2 year cycle?
- c) Funding per Class
  - i) Open/15M/Std FAI classes
  - ii) 18M class
  - iii) Club class
  - iv) World class
  - v) Junior and Feminine classes
- d) Funding per Pilot
- e) How to combine SSA General Fundraising funds, Venue/Class/Pilot-Specific funds, and Robertson/Wood funds to provide funding for specific WGC contests?



**6) TTF 6 Fundrasing**

John Seaborn

Fundraising

- a) SSA US Team Fundraising
- b) Robertson/Wood Fundraising
- c) Venue/Class/Pilot-Specific Fundraising
  - i) Separate Accumulation of Venue/Class/Pilot-Specific funds?
- d) New Fundraising Sources
  - i) Corporate

**7) TTF 7 Pilot Obligations**

Jim Payne

Team Pilot Obligations

- a) Preparation: practice sessions, Pre-worlds
- b) Financial: Self-funding
- c) Fundraising
- d) Team Cooperation/Team Flying during the WGC competition
- e) Membership/donor/sponsor communication/interaction

**8) TTF 8 Communications**

Jim Payne

Team Communication with the SSA Membership

- a) US Team website
- b) SOARING magazine articles
- c) SOARING magazine column
- d) Financial transparency
- e) SSA conventions
- f) Email bulletins
- g) Team pilot activities

**9) TTF 9 Financial Management**

Doug Jacobs & John Seaborn

Team Management

- a) Expense Reports - DJ
- b) Financial Reporting - DJ
- c) Contest Reporting – A8

**10) TTF 10 Selection**

Jim Payne

Pilot Selection Procedures

- a) Number of Pilots Selected per Class
- b) Pilot Selection Procedures/Formulas for each Class

**11) TTF 11 Contest Preperation**

Jim Payne

Contest Preparation

- a) Pilot preparation
- b) Logistics
- c) Support Personnel
- d) Pre-worlds
- e) Budgeting
- f) SSA support

- g) Preparation and of historical information: budgets, checklists, resources.
- h) Dissemination of historical information and resources

**12) TTF 12 Team Documents**

John Seaborn

US Team Documents

Develop and organize US Team documents and document flow

What documents do US teams need?

Can these documents be standardized?

Who should be in charge of maintaining these documents?

Organize a US Team Binder will all docs

**13) TTF 13 Team Survey**

John Seaborn

US Team e-Survey

Develop an understanding of how US teams are perceived by the soaring community and mine ideas for improvement.

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