



1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the vision, rationale, rules and approach to running a Gliding Competition in the Western Cape with broad appeal.

2 Background

Gliding is a sport filled with anomalies – it is a largely solo sport requiring a team, a sport of incredible beauty that is largely opaque to the public, while essentially the flying is ‘free’ - it is still expensive, a sport that can be incredibly time-consuming but where the flying time may not be that high, and the contrast between standing around waiting for a launch and flying a competition finish at 280kph will take your breathe away.

As a result of these and other factors, in a world where value-for-time is increasingly the criterion for decision-making of participants, gliding is struggling to maintain its membership, and the membership is definitely aging. Accordingly, we need to look at a number of factors:

- Increasing the value-for-time aspect
- Making the sport more visually accessible and attractive to the world at large

This document addresses an aspect of the latter approach.

3 Vision

Create a competition which will be visually stunning and create an element of suspense that will bring the beauty of the sport to the world at large in an entertaining way.

4 Approach

The Grand Prix Gliding Competition is a relatively new gliding concept which aims to make the sport more accessible to a broader following. However, in the opinion of this author, the attempts to achieve this with the GP format have only partly succeeded, for the following reasons:

- There is a massive expense associated with capturing quality images of competitors in action (especially at flat-land sites or sites over inhospitable terrain)
- The competitions have been arranged around what makes a good competition rather than what makes good viewing.

With this in mind, then, we are proposing a variant of the GP competition (GP “edge”). The key element is that the competition should provide a primary viewing location, at



altitude, so that spectators can view the start, finish and multiple legs during the task – on the “edge”.

It is further suggested that each competition day be combined with other activities that will make the end-to-end entertainment experience value-for-time for the audience. Activities would include all the normal activities (& scheduling) which would accompany an air show, viz., aerobatics displays, various forms of flight, etc and the gliding competition would form just a part of this.

In an effort to capture the public interest and emphasize the preciseness required for a competition of this nature (and with a mild apology to the makers of “Gladiators of the Sky”), we’re using the name “Blade Runner” for the Cape implementation of GP “edge”. The “blade” alludes to both the gliders and the ridges along which these competitions will typically run.

A key element of the revised approach is to shift the primary viewing position from the airfield to the ridge – to allow the spectators to be on the “edge” of the action.

5 Key concerns

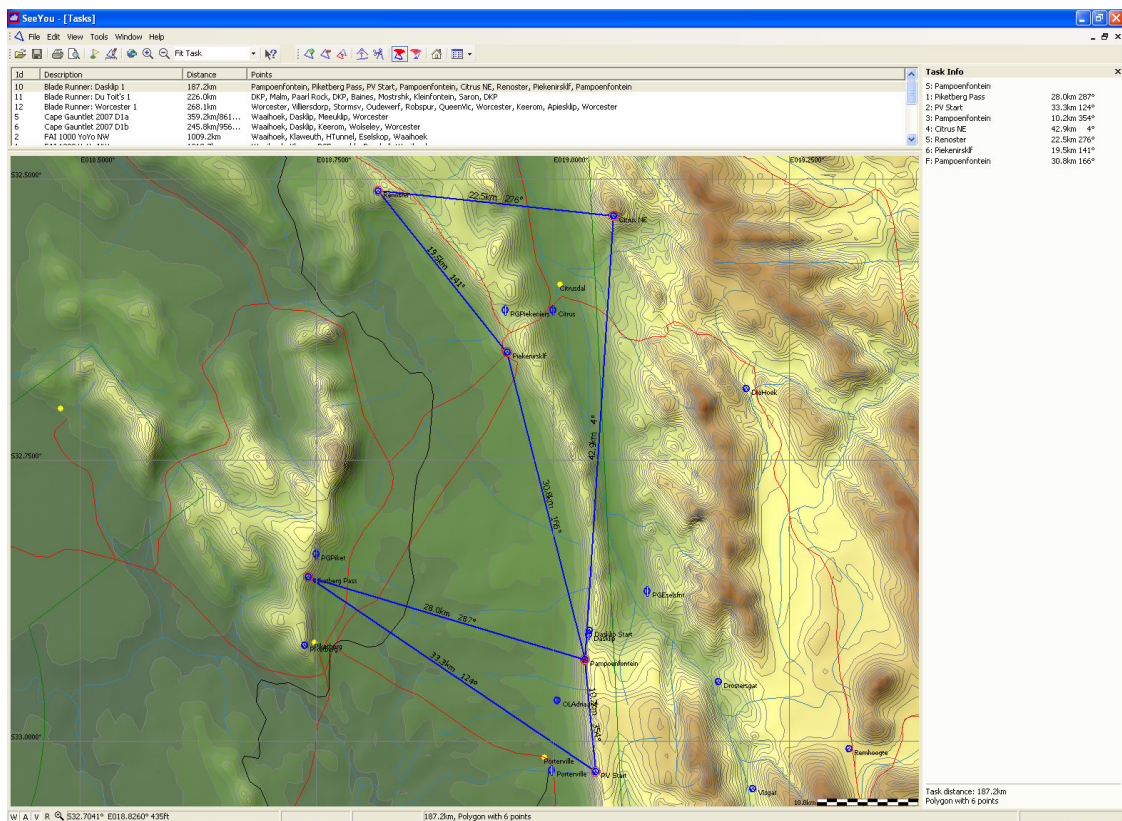
- 1) Ridge running as a significant part of the GP route will not create great separation. Mitigate this with a start perpendicular to the ridge and include at least 50km of thermalling to start.
- 2) Maintaining separation and avoiding the “double” blind spot is likely to be tough given the concentration of traffic. Mitigate with:
 - a. Clear guidelines on thermalling direction within 5km of the start, finish and any waypoint,
 - b. FLARMs to be mandatory,
 - c. Clear guidelines on overtaking on the ridge.
- 3) Visuals. Need too ensure the visuals ARE stunning. Identify “pillar box” waypoints and limited start / finish altitudes (min AND max) to ensure the gliders are “up close” to the audience. Use 200m beer cans at viewpoints, 500m elsewhere, 1km start line (max 150 kph).
- 4) This is not for the inexperienced pilot. Pilots should have plenty of experience ridge running (and demonstrate good XC speed) on the Cape ridges and preferably be veterans of multiple competitions. Current pilots fitting this description (who we will invite to the ‘test run’) include: Sven Olivier, Martin Grunnert, Dolf Pretorius, Alan O’Regan, Peter Farrell, Cornelius von der Heyden, Craig Fussell, Reinhold Lawrenz and Adriaan Hepburn.



6 The Cape Implementation: Blade Runner

- Make it fair: equalize the wing loadings (50 kg/m^3)
- Make it spectacular: pillar boxes & multiple times (minimum 3 times) past the primary viewing site, short laps, consider multiple heats per day
- Make it visible – fixed camera in some gliders, definitely a ground video at the viewing site. Later, telemetry enabling real time tracking.

Here is an example task from the Portville (start is Dasklip), provisional procedures agreed) area:



Gliders would launch from Worcester and fly to the location prior to the start. After completing the task the gliders would fly back to Worcester.



7 Making it touchable

- Create characterizations for the pilots (Martin “Grunt” Grunnert, Sven “Bullet” Olivier, Alan “Fat Rat” O’Regan, Peter “Ferret” Farrell, Adriaan “Machine” Hepburn) etc
- “Introduce” the pilots at remote starts, let the winner do a victory “signature” fly past at remote finishes
- Brand it strongly, invite international ‘ridge rats’ like Ohlmann, Delore, Galetto, Knauff
- Create a website with information on the pilots, gliders and links to the sport sites

8 Next steps

Canvas opinion from key individuals, principally including:

- Ian Forbes (CGC CFI) – *qualified support*
- Rob Manzoni (Airborne owner & owner of the Porterville launch point) – *supportive, co-ordination procedure agreed*

Conduct and initial demonstration run with some camera footage being taken 17 Feb.

Edit the footage to be used as part of a presentation to Red Bull. Consider getting one of the Red Bull team into a two-seater if the ‘test run’ succeeds on the 17th Feb.