

Handicap committee basic methodology

July 2024

Handicaps are based on individual glider performance and do not account for the benefits gained from “following or gagging” in competitions. That issue can only be addressed in the rules and task setting.

Likewise, handicaps do not allow for the detrimental effects of some weather conditions (such as windy days, early convection cut-off or low convection height) on lower performing gliders. These effects can only be addressed in the task setting.

Glider handicap inputs come from many sources including:

1. High quality tested polars (Idaflieg or Johnson tests). Note: polars do not address handling qualities.
2. Comparison with overseas handicaps with consideration of Australian conditions.
3. Aircraft handling qualities.
4. Wing loadings.
5. Observed performance in high level competitions.
6. The current generation of new gliders in a class is given a uniform handicap.
7. The pub test – does it seem fair and reasonable.

The handicap committee does put a lot of effort into the handicaps, hence the significant changes in ballasted handicaps in recent years.

Of course, handicap selection is not an exact science and there will always be other opinions.