

Proposal to change the Loss of Height rule for speed records – Part 2

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Background

1. As well as simplifying the Sporting Code, the committee has a mandate to rationalize it in light of current technology and practise (“why do we still have this rule?”).
2. Based on the delegate poll, opinion is evenly divided on removing the “1000m for free” allowance, therefore this proposal is separate from the list of general simplifications.
3. Historically, speed records entered the sport after those for distance but carried over the distance LoH provision. Distance flights finished with a landing – originally there was no ability to do otherwise without GPS data – so an allowed Loss of Height (LoH) from start to finish was a necessary feature of the flight. Today, distance tasks still often finish with a landing long after convection has ended which justifies the retention of an allowed LoH.
4. In contrast however, speed records are closed courses, primarily using a flying finish, and flown mostly during the strongest soaring conditions of the day. The effect of an allowed LoH is to artificially increase the overall speed of the task (greater for the shorter distances). There is no logical or sporting justification for having a speed performance consist of the pilot’s soaring skill plus a speed increment derived from the time saved by not having to account for 1000m of climb during the task.
5. This proposal removes the “allowed 1000m LoH” in applying the time adjustment introduced in the *Part 1* proposal. The change removes the artificial benefit of climbing while the clock is not running, and levels the playing field for all speed records.

Proposal

For speed tasks, where the finish is lower than the start, a number of seconds equal to (START HEIGHT minus FINISH HEIGHT) divided by 2.5 shall be added to the time on course.

Discussion

The pilot may finish with any altitude loss, and proportionally rewards a higher finish over a lower one.

Clearly, the shorter the type of speed record, the greater is the effect of not having an allowed 1000 metre LoH. However, on its own, this is not a sufficient reason to reject the proposal – record types and requirements do change from time to time.

If accepted, this proposal does introduce the need to make a fair comparison between current and future speed record values. The Committee would continue discussions with pilots and advisors to set a new starter value in each existing speed record in order make the transition fair for the first attempts using the new rule. The result would be included in the Year 2 version of this proposal.