



Best gliding competition

and logger system should have the latest turning point database, and if using an electronic airspace map make sure you use the same database as the competition scorer.

Trailer: don't forget to check your trailer to make sure it is up to the job of retrieving. Lights, brakes and tyres should all be serviceable and the trailer should hold your precious glider securely.

Understand the task objectives

The next step in preparation is to *understand the task objectives*. Read the latest edition of the competition rules (the British Gliding Association's *Competitions Handbook* is issued annually and can be downloaded from www.gliding.co.uk) so that you understand how to make a valid start, turning point and finish. More importantly, understand the objectives of the two types of task:

Fixed-course task: this is the classic race around turning points set by the task setter. The pilot who finishes in the shortest time wins and the others receive a proportion of the winner's points, depending on their relative speed. *You must aim to finish* because there are very few points for outlanding unless a lot of other pilots also fail to finish.

Assigned Area Task (AAT): arguably the most misunderstood task by competitors and task-setters alike. The task-setter defines the assigned areas and assigned time for the task. The pilot then chooses his own turning point in each of the assigned areas (in the right order) with the objective of going as fast as possible and finishing *after* the assigned time has elapsed. There is no penalty for flying after the assigned task time; indeed, if conditions are improving it might pay to fly further and increase your average speed. It is important to

plan to go far enough so that you don't finish inside the assigned time. Your actual turning point doesn't have to be a defined point; the scoring system works out the point in space that gives the best geometry to maximise your distance. It is also important to remember that meandering around inside the assigned areas in an unplanned way isn't adding to your distance and hence speed. A good way to keep focused on racing is to choose a "target TP" inside the assigned area, set it in your GPS and race towards it.

When flying an AAT your priorities, in order, should be:

1. *You must finish.* The task is a race and outlanders don't receive many points.
2. *You should not finish early.* Only consider finishing early if by doing so you can avoid almost certain outlanding. You should go far enough in each assigned area to make sure you don't finish early. This is because your finishing speed is calculated by dividing your marking distance by your actual task time or the assigned time – *whichever is greater*.

Although most points are lost by outlanding, the next best way to lose points is by finishing early.

As an example, on a 4-hour AAT, pilot A flies 300km and finishes in 4 hours. His finishing speed is 75km/h. Pilot B is much faster and flies 300km in 3 hours 45 minutes. His actual speed is 80km/h, but because he finished in less than 4 hours his finishing speed for scoring purposes is his marking distance, 300km, divided by the task time, 4 hours. This also comes out at 75km/h, so he receives the same points as the slower pilot, A. If he had just flown a bit further in any of the sectors in order to make sure he finished after 4 hours he would have scored nearly 20 per cent more speed points than pilot A.

A good rule of thumb is to plan to be starting final glide as the assigned time elapses.

