

IGC 2025 Plenary Meeting

Report

Handicap Committee

Christof Geißler, Chairman

January 2025

The updated IGC Club Class Handicap List is in effect since Oct. 1, 2024 as agreed on plenary meeting March 2024.

The handicap committee has been tasked by the IGC Bureau to provide a technical opinion by investigating the arguments of the French proposal 6.2.15.

It is proposed by France that adding winglets in club class should not increase the handicap of gliders any longer.

Today SC3 AH increases the handicap by 0,004 when adding winglets.

**Opinion of the handicap committee to the arguments of the French proposal (flight safety, availability, modernisation) and conclusion / recommendation:**

**Flight Safety:**

There are no reports about accidents or incidents from spinning in IGC sanctioned Club Class championships where pilots fly without winglets; taking into consideration that wingloading is up to 38kg/m<sup>2</sup> at IGC reference mass and talking about pilots nominated by their NAC for int. championships.

The flight safety argument cannot be supported by the handicap committee.

**Availability of winglet kits:**

There are certified winglet kits from original manufacturers with optimized designs for a few types of gliders only. For further types of gliders there are winglet kits that do not perform as well as some others and for some gliders there are no certified winglet kits available at all. It is worth noting that winglet certification on individual gliders is possible and that has led to a large variety of different winglet designs being applied to many glider types with varying, and usually unverified success on performance and handling.

The availability of winglet kits with similar gains in performance cannot be ascertained for all types of gliders from the club class handicap list.

### **Modernization of the club class:**

The popularity of the IGC Club Class is because of availability of lots of gliders and where the monetary value is much below the value of competitive gliders in other FAI-glider classes. Contrary to other FAI-glider classes (except 20m muliseater class) the IGC Club Class handicap list tries to provide for every type of glider a fair and competitive chance for participation in int. championships. Any modifications on Club Class gliders that improve the performance have to be taken into account in terms of a potential handicap adjustment. Pilots who like to retrofit and „modernize“ their gliders by adding winglets in order to improve performance and/or handling, can do so – provided it is safe and legal / appropriately certified.

### **Conclusion and recommendation of Handicap Committee:**

The reason for adding winglets to a glider is to improve its performance and/or its handling characteristics. The magnitude of performance gain on optimized winglets cannot be ascertained by measurements from a neutral source for many winglet variants on club class gliders so far. As soon as the handicap committee will have credible reports which might show an increase in performance beyond 0,004, it will react. From today's perspective there will only be one handicap adjustment for well performing winglet kits based on credible measurements (ie. Idaflieg). Pilots with gliders with winglets of lower performance can choose to fly with or without winglets. In order to provide fair and competitive handicaps for all types of gliders in the handicap list, the adjustment of 0.004 for the addition of winglets to a glider model that has a handicap in its base configuration without winglets, should remain unchanged for now.

Handicaps are used to levelise performance differences between glider models in Club Class and are based, as far as possible, on measured performance data. Unless the IGC Bureau wishes to change the purpose of handicaps, any arguments like safety, availability and modernisation of the Club Class are difficult for the IGC Handicap Committee to consider as its task is to develop and maintain a performance based handicap system.

Many thanks to the members of the IGC Handicap Committee for their valuable expertise.

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