

OPERATIONS

General

Mifflin County Airport (RVL) is located in central Pennsylvania near the small town of Reedsville, about 3 miles west of Lewistown, and 12 miles southeast of State College. The airfield is at 819' MSL and has a single paved runway 5000' long oriented 06-24.

A grass runway lies parallel to and just northwest of the paved runway for its full length. During tow operations, this is used by towplanes and is acceptable for glider landings.

A paved taxiway lies parallel to the runway for its full length; this connects with a ramp and fueling area, and additional taxiways lead to several hangars and grass areas used during contests for parking glider trailers. The ends of the parallel taxiway are acceptable for landings during the contest. In each case, a "dead line" is enforced, just short of the cross-taxiways: no glider may fly or roll across such a dead line (violation of this rule will lead to a significant penalty).

A landing on either end of the taxiway should be done such that the glider can be rolled near to but stopped short of the dead line; this will leave the remaining taxiway available for a subsequent landing. Pilots should take note of runway lights that are 60' apart along the taxiway.

Most administrative functions (registration, scoring, retrieves, etc.) take place in the Contest Office, located in the MSA club house.

The contest radio frequency will be 123.3 Mhz. Pilot-crew communications use 123.5 Mhz. For contest purposes, sunset will be considered to be 8:00 pm.

Meetings

Pilot meetings will take place in the maintenance hangar: the tall building furthest from the runway. A mandatory pilot meeting will occur on the evening prior to the first scheduled competition day. All entrants must attend and sign in.

Daily pilots meetings will normally last about 30 minutes and include the announcement of the previous day's winners, operational notes, a weather briefing, safety talk, etc. If announced, another brief pilot meeting will be held near the front of the launch shortly after grid time.

Staging and gridding

At each side of the paved runway grid numbers are marked, noting where the wheel of a glider should be placed. Each glider is assigned a daily grid number and rotated after every valid contest day.

No glider may be parked close to the runway prior to 10:00 am. After 10:00, gliders should be staged on the grass near the assigned grid number, leaving the pavement clear for the free movement of other gliders. Staging should be complete five minutes prior to the announced grid time.

The Competition Director (CD) may hold a pilots meeting on the grid. Once this meeting is complete, pilots should push gliders onto the pavement with the main wheel at the assigned grid position. If no such meeting is announced, gliders should be placed on the pavement at grid time.

Most commonly, gliders will be gridded at the northeast end of the runway for a launch to the southwest. Grid positions are rather closely spaced, so cooperative staging and gridding are essential.

Vehicles are allowed on and near the grid area as needed during glider staging. They should then be parked southeast of the runway, well clear of the pavement on the grass near the sloping bank and not on the grass runway northwest of the pavement. All vehicles must stay well clear of the launch area after grid. Please conform to the instructions of the CD and the launch crew.

Weighing

Scales will be set up on near the cross-taxiway ramp leading to the runway. Pilots selected for weighing (i.e. those whose overall or previous day's score places them among the leaders) should maneuver their gliders onto the scales enroute to the grid. Past the scales, ballast can be dumped but not added.

Safety checks

A critical assembly check (CAC) is a verification done after normal assembly to insure that items the pilot considers critical to flight safety are correct prior to takeoff. Completion of the CAC is indicated by initials or a mark on the left wing root tape near the leading edge. A CAC is required at this contest: a glider without a mark on the wing root tape may be denied a takeoff.

Launching

The launch will begin at a time designated by the CD. Once underway, it is essential that no one other than launch personnel be in front of the sailplane next due to be launched, and that all vehicles are well clear. Please follow launch crew instructions.

Towplanes will taxi in front of the next glider to be launched and line crew will hook up the rope. Pilots are expected to be ready in all respects to launch prior to this. This means that the pilot must be in the cockpit with all checks complete when fourth in line for launch. If for any reason you are not ready when the rope is hooked up, pull the release and tell the line crew; they will push you off the grid and you will use the relaunch procedures described below.

The launch crew check that spoilers are either closed and locked or open with the pilot's hand on the spoiler control. Pilots who wish to use spoilers during the initial takeoff roll should have their spoilers noticeably open; movement – "bouncing" the spoilers – confirms that the pilot has control of them.

Tows will be to 2000' AGL (except on a ridge day, when a lower release altitude may be announced), and to a place designated by the CD. Glider pilots are expected to release promptly when tow release altitude is reached. It is not desirable for a glider pilot to talk to a towpilot upon release; should this be necessary, the radio call should include the towplane's ID, so it is not misunderstood to apply to other towplanes in the air.

Relaunching

When the regular launch is in progress, pilots who need to relaunch should land on the taxiway and roll as close to the dead line as safely as possible. When ready to re-launch, inform the CD, who will track the order of these requests.

Relaunches begin after the last pilot of the class whose launch was in progress when the re-launch was requested of the CD. Normal procedure is to stage gliders on the cross-taxiway and to push them onto the runway just prior to launch.

Once the regular launch is complete, pilots needing to re-launch may land on the main runway and launch from the cross-taxiway intersection.

Start

Starts will be from one of five different start cylinders, as assigned by the CD and noted as part of each task. All start cylinders will have a radius of five miles. The standard Maximum Start Height (MSH) will be 5,000' (msl) though this may be altered by the CD (and noted on the task sheet) as conditions dictate.

Pilots are requested to report their start times on the contest radio frequency. Starts should be reported within 20 minutes, and reported times should be accurate within 2 minutes. False reporting can be penalized as unsportsmanlike conduct.

Cylinder finish

The finish cylinder is 1 mile in radius, centered on the published finish point. Pilots should finish at or above the minimum altitude of 1,300' (msl), then return to the field for landing. A pilot who crosses the finish cylinder below 1,300' receives a penalty proportional to the amount by which the finish was too low (a small miss yields a very small penalty).

Rules specify a radio call on 123.3 MHz when 4 miles from the center of the cylinder, and again when entering the finish cylinder. Other radio calls are appropriate when they will improve safety. Otherwise, keep radio chatter to a minimum so as not to block the calls of others.

Landing after finishing

Normal post-task landings take place both on the main runway and on either end of the parallel taxiway. Pilots should take care to leave landing areas clear for subsequent landings. On the taxiway, roll safely to the area just short of the cross-taxiway (the "dead line"). On the runway, roll onto the grass (preferably, to the southeast side of the pavement) or have your crew standing by to push you clear promptly.

It may happen that a pilot arrives without sufficient energy for a normal pattern. If so, announce a straight-in or "direct" landing and choose the landing area that is safest, paying attention to the need either to roll clear of an area that may soon be needed by other gliders, or promptly pushing the glider clear once it has stopped rolling.

The length of the paved runway means that touching down "on the numbers" may make it difficult to roll to the desired spot (usually, the cross-taxiway that leads to the ramp area). This is obviously true when landing to the northeast, since the distance is nearly 3500' – but even a landing to the southwest (for which the distance is around 1500') may offer problems promptly clearing the runway, especially with a meaningful headwind. Most gliders will do well if the pilot plans to touch down at normal speed around 800 to 1000' short of the intended stopping point.

Also note that a gully at the northeast end of the runway means it is a bad idea to plan a low and slow arrival to the threshold of Runway 24 on a windy day.

Outlanding

The contest task area includes a significant number of airfields; a separate document contains notes on some of these. Not all are listed on Sectional charts, and not all those on a chart are fully acceptable for glider operations. The task area also includes many good landable areas that are not airfields.

If you land in a farm field, please treat the landowner properly. Much of the land in this area is owned by Mennonites or the Amish. They dress more simply than the "English". Some folks tend to look down on them as unsophisticated, but this is a mistake – they are in fact hardworking and very sharp (two qualities required for success as a farmer). They tend to be friendly, but will not tolerate a condescending or inconsiderate attitude. They are devout, and will not appreciate profanity. Try to come across as a reasonable person politely asking a favor, rather than as an arrogant stranger.

Note that you may fly in this area only a couple of weeks a year, but many others pilots do too, and on a regular basis. If you treat a landowner badly, you can expect serious repercussions, as this can threaten the future of soaring in this area. If you do have a problem make it known to the CD or CM.

Retrieves

If you land somewhere other than Mifflin County Airport, the rules require that you fill out a Retrieve Card first and then telephone the Retrieve Office at one of the phone numbers listed on your task sheet. Only if it is truly impractical to find a usable telephone should you attempt to relay landing information via another pilot. Airborne pilots should not relay information when a relay isn't necessary.

You must either have a designated crew or make arrangements (i.e. another crewless pilot) to deal with the possibility of a landout. The Retrieve Office will only relay information, not seek out crew.

When the Retrieve Office hears from a pilot who has landed out, they will summon the crew by means of a radio call on 123.5 or a phone call to a number that the crew has left at the Retrieve Office. If the crew does not respond, it becomes the crew's responsibility to check with the Retrieve Office. Retrieve cards for outlanded pilots will be posted in a window.

If you reach your crew directly by phone, please give them your Outlanding Card information and make arrangements for the retrieve. Either you or your crew must relay this information to the Retrieve Office before the retrieve begins. Expect a penalty if your crew sets out before this is done.

The Retrieve Office will close when all pilots are accounted for and crews are dispatched to retrieve those who landed out – or 7:00 pm, whichever is later. If 7:00 is approaching and crew and pilot are not in contact, one or the other should call to request that the Retrieve Office stay open. Having done so, then call when together, so the Retrieve Office can be closed.

Aero retrieves will be available from contest towplanes and the per-mile. Please pay your tow pilot directly. You must be at an airfield deemed acceptable for aerotowing and there must be ample time to complete the retrieve before sunset. You must arrange your aero retrieve through the contest Retrieve Office. If you fail to supply the Retrieve Office with complete and correct information (i.e. you give the name of an airfield different from the one where you landed), expect to pay for all necessary flying.

Airfields

Per the SSA Rules, a contest landing at an airfield depicted on a current Sectional chart is eligible for an Airfield Landing Bonus. The Airfield Notes document provides a list of exceptional fields that may be on some charts but not acceptable for glider operations, and/or fields uncharted but acceptable.

Airspace

Within the contest turnpoints area, the only closed airspace is R5802A near Harrisburg, and areas R5801 and R5803 near Chambersburg. This airspace lies on the extreme southeast edge of the task area and rarely has a significant influence on tasks.

The University Park airfield (UNV) north of State College has seen significant increase in traffic in recent years, especially as a newly towered field. Pilots flying anywhere in its vicinity should be vigilant, especially at altitudes of 4000' and below, or when aligned with runways.

Scoring

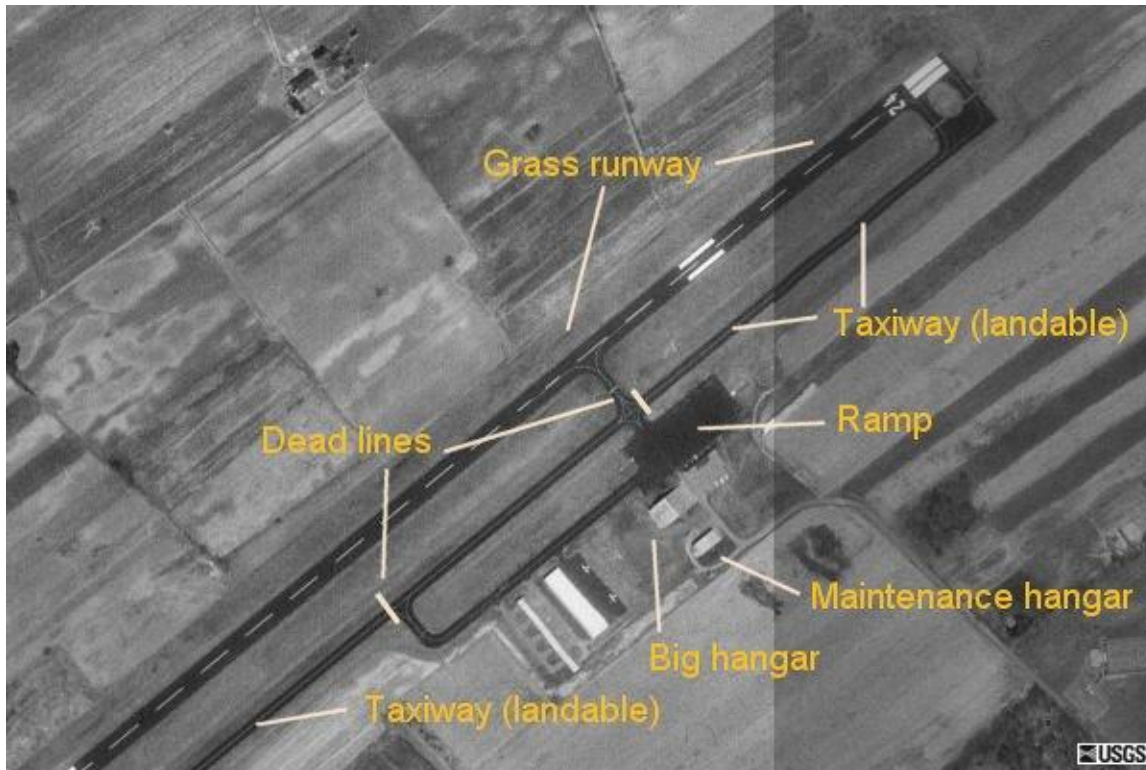
Scoring occurs the Contest Office, located in the MSA club house. Please insure that all flight logs (memory cards, thumb drives, etc) are labeled with the correct contest ID and pilot name. Should you need to submit a Task Claim card, they are available from the Scorer.

Rules require flight documentation be submitted promptly upon a landing and normally within 1 hour. This applies both to finishers and to pilots who land without a finish (i.e. those returning from an aero retrieve). Pilots who land elsewhere and return by trailer should turn in flight documentation soon as practical, but no later than 9:00 the next morning.

The Task Claim Card must be submitted to the scorer only for a Modified Assigned Task – Assigned Tasks and Turn-Area Tasks require only a flight log. However, carry a Retrieve Card on every flight, since one is required in the event of an outlanding for retrieve.

A valid Flight Log covering all flight time is required from every pilot who makes a launch. Note that a valid Flight Log must include the pilot's name and contest ID; files in IGC format are preferred unless different arrangements with the Scorer have been made. Also note that the Scorer has the right to request that a pilot re-transfer a flight log in the Scorer's presence as late as the morning after a flight.

AIRFIELD DIAGRAM



MISCELLANEOUS

Contest registration

Registration (in the Contest Office) is required of all entrants prior to any contest flying. Please do not grid your glider or take a tow until you are registered.

Glider parking

Glider parking slots are located along several taxiways, as marked. A few parking slots are reserved for contest organizers; all others are first come, first served. Slots can be claimed only by parking the trailer of a contest glider at the site. Four days before the first scheduled competition day is the first day that a trailer may be parked to hold a slot.

Please keep taxiways clear by parking trailers well away from the pavement, so that when a glider is at its trailer, others can taxi through. Parked gliders and trailers should be tied down.

Vehicles

Vehicles are expected to be operated safely and in a way that does not interfere with others. Several parking slots with electrical service are available – first come, first served. A charge is made for on-airport camping and for electrical service.

Ablutions

Please use port-a-potties. A shower is located in the maintenance hangar and in the MSA club house – first come, first served. As there are no professional cleaning services please keep things tidy.

Ballast water

At Regional contests, no-ballast rules are usually in effect. At National contests water ballast will be available from a water truck parked on the ramp near the terminal building.

Battery Charging

Outlets are available in the maintenance hangar and near the MSA club house. Please do not charge batteries in the Contest Office or the bathrooms.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted inside/nearby buildings or near aircraft.

Children and pets

Children on the ramp must be supervised by an adult. Pets are permitted on the field, but must be on a leash at all times, an airport requirement. Pets are not permitted at pilot meetings or at any event at which food is served. Owners are expected to clean up after their animals.

Field cleanup

Please take care to clean up yours and any other items. Trash cans are located at various points on the airfield. A dumpster is located near the parking lot behind the Terminal building.

Safety comments

These are welcome at any time from any contest participant – pilots, crews and others. Anonymous written comments can be placed in the Safety Box, located in the Contest Office.

Other airfield users

Mifflin County Airport has hosted many soaring events, but has other users. We have maintained good relationships with all users and we expect all pilots and crews to help this continue.

By NOTAM, the airfield is closed to all but glider operation between 10:00 and 2:30 each day. Outside of this time, non-soaring operations will be accommodated. During the NOTAM period, we will try to work with others as circumstances permit. Pilots should make a particular effort to park gliders so that taxiways are unblocked and to leave the area near the fuel pumps free at all times.

Please do your best to make non-soaring operations as welcome as is possible during this contest. If you have any questions about or problems with other airport operations, please let us know.

Weather information

Mifflin AWOS (automated weather observation system) - 123.85; University Park AWOS - 127.65.

The Amish

You can't drive for long in the Big Valley without encountering horse-drawn Amish buggies. Please be careful and pass them safely when other traffic is approaching. As most people know, the Amish do not like to be photographed. Please respect this.