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Street Racing

A Story of How the OLC Injected New Life into Soaring at Moriarty by Brian Resor

Glider pilots everywhere have been seeking out an easy way to make soaring fun for the pilot who has advanced beyond solo and private license stages. The brilliant pilots and programmers of the German *Aerokurier* magazine have created a solution in the Online Contest (known commonly as the OLC). At Moriarty in 2004, the OLC inspired a much-needed, fresh new environment filled with support, teamwork, and friendly competition among our pilots of all skill levels.

Check out the OLC webpage to get a detailed look at what it's all about, but the basics are as follows: put a GPS data logger in your glider, fly as far as you can, then upload the IGC format flightlog to the OLC server. It's really very simple.

Scoring is done automatically in a manner that optimizes your points, with a point being one handicapped kilometer. The task scheme is basically simple: the first four legs are scored at 100% full handicapped distance, the fifth leg at 80%, and the sixth leg at 60% of the handicapped distance. Notice that nothing about declared or designated turnpoints, start gates, or FAI sectors is mentioned. Again, simplicity is the name of the game here. This contest is not based directly on speed around a course, but long flights will necessarily require one to fly as fast as possible and to use their judgment of the weather in order to decide where to position themselves during any given part of the day.

Usage of this online contest by U.S. pilots has been growing

fast in the last few years. At first, a few computer-savvy pilots around the U.S. were using the OLC to share their flights, but usage was relatively infrequent. This year clubs all over the country are starting to take part in the fun and promoting use of the OLC among their pilots.

The OLC was originally promoted within the Albuquerque Soaring Club as a very simple way to manage our annual cross-country contest and have an easy way to award trophies at the winter banquet. It evolved into much more than that.

After a few weeks of posting spring flights, other pilots at Moriarty also took interest in the OLC. The forces of the Albuquerque Soaring Club and Sundance Aviation were joined into one OLC "club" called Albuquerque Soaring. None of us realized just how well our team (which consisted of 24 pilots) would come together to provide mentoring and challenges for each other during the next few months. In the process, we would eventually rack up almost one hundred thousand miles in the air together.

OLC as a learning tool

The files on the OLC server are an enormous resource for fledgling pilots who are trying to understand how cross-country flight is done. When flight logs are submitted to the OLC server, the files are available for download and analysis by anyone with internet access and the proper software (SecYou, Strepla, etc.). If other pilots flew in the same area as you did, then compare their flights to yours to learn what everyone did wrong and right. Find out who nearly landed out or find out what it was like in a different part of the task area where you did not venture.

The OLC is also a learning tool even when you cannot be in the air. My favorite is to take a look at the sounding in the morning and then check the visible satellite loop during the afternoon at work and try to guess where all the retired guys were able to fly. Then, that evening go home and check the OLC webpage for their flights to see what really happened. You will learn much about weather forecasting in the process. Unfortunately this can also be very painful when you know your friends are out flying huge tasks and you are stuck at work!

Teaching old dogs new tricks

Everyone in the soaring population is not a computer whiz and the OLC is based on modern internet technology. Plenty of good pilots in the past had never taken part in, or even heard of, the OLC for that reason. I am proud of the Moriarty pilots who

The screenshot shows the Aerokurier Online-Contest USA 2004 website. At the top, there are logos for 'Innovations for Soaring', 'SEGELFLUGSZENE', 'Aerokurier', 'FAI', 'DHFV', and 'USA'. Below the logos, there are navigation tabs for 'Home', 'Aerokurier', 'USA 2004', 'OLC', 'Contest', 'USBA', 'USBA/USA', and 'Help'. A table below the tabs shows flight log details for 'Daily Score 18.09'. The table has columns for 'R', 'P', 'Pilot', 'In', 'Inn', 'Task-off location', 'Club', 'Model of glider', and 'Begin-End'. The first row shows a pilot named 'Steve Chaska IV' with a score of 18.09, flying a 'Schweizer SGS 1-26A/C (FAI 885)' glider, starting at '150.00' and ending at '150.00'.

R	P	Pilot	In	Inn	Task-off location	Club	Model of glider	Begin-End	
1	1	Steve Chaska IV	US	180.00	150.00	FAI Association	Schweizer SGS 1-26A/C (FAI 885)	150.00-150.00	
2	2	Lorenz Lander	US	639.07	180.00	USA (US)	Black Forest Soaring Society	ASW 27 (017423)	1725.00-639.07
3	3	Frederic Steen	US	141.64	180.00	Phoenix Springs (US)	Phoenix Springs Gliders, L.S. 1818a (01818)	1800.00-27	000
4	4	Thomas Chack	US	128.04	180.00	180 Soaring (US)	Phoenix Springs Gliders, L.S. 1818a (01818)	1800.00-128.04	000
5	5	Stefan Steen	US	525.04	180.00	USA (US)	Black Forest Soaring Society	ASW 26C (01050)	1754.00-525.04
6	6	Clayton Carl	US	474.81	180.00	Phoenix Springs (US)	Phoenix Springs Gliders, Orosca (01050)	1800.00-474.81	000
7	7	Substantia Rick	US	422.33	180.00	180 Soaring (US)	Black Forest Soaring Society	ASW 19 (01040)	1927.00-422.33
8	8	Robert Carl	US	420.37	180.00	USA (US)	Black Forest Soaring Society	ASW 27 (01)	1744.00-420.37
9	9	Luca Carl	US	421.81	180.00	Phoenix Springs (US)	Phoenix Springs Gliders	ASW 27 (01050)	1844.00-421.81
10	10	Robert Steffen	US	338.12	177.00	USA (US)	Black Forest Soaring Society	ASW 26C (01050)	1827.00-338.12
11	11	1804	US	301.04	177.00	USA (US)	Black Forest Soaring Society	Orosca (01050)	1828.00-301.04
12	12	Abraham Mike	US	368.71	170.00	USA (US)	Black Forest Soaring Society	Orosca (01050)	1839.00-368.71
13	13	Parving Dav	US	345.09	180.00	USA (US)	Black Forest Soaring Society	ASW 26C (01050)	1828.00-345.09
14	14	Andrew Cook	US	400.83	180.00	Phoenix Springs (US)	Phoenix Springs Gliders, L.S. 1818a (C 180)	1827.00-400.83	
15	15	Robert Steffen	US	348.82	180.00	USA (US)	Black Forest Soaring Society	ASW 26 (C 180)	1806.00-348.82
16	16	Robert Steffen	US	368.84	180.00	USA (US)	Black Forest Soaring Society	ASW 26 (C 180)	1790.00-368.84

The 2004 Online Contest by Doug Levy

The OLC is an "on line," world-wide, computer-scored glider contest, run from Germany by Segelflugszene and sponsored by *AeroKurier*. OLC is unlike any other soaring competition. Not only is it easy (and free) to enter; there are no turnpoints, declarations, witnesses, official observers, or signatures required. Scoring is done online, and uses handicaps to even out glider performance.

The contest can be viewed by visiting <http://www.onlinecontest.org>. Via the banner marked "soaring," you can view the scoring and compare pilots by country, continent or internationally. Scores in the yellow band are pure gliders, while the blue band includes motorized gliders. Daily scores are listed throughout the contest year, which begins in mid-October. Pilots can be compared by total points or best single flight, while their contest standing, based on their six best flights, can be monitored. Every flight is available for viewing and downloading. Clubs are compared by their total points.

The rules are simple. Each kilometer flown is worth one point at 100% for the first four legs of the flight, 80% for the 5th, and 60% for the 6th leg. Total points are multiplied by 100 and divided by the glider's handicap to determine the score for the flight. Flights are submitted in IGC format and must be submitted by midnight on Tuesday following the flight. Pilots enter and compete in the country in which the flight originates. For further details read the rules online.

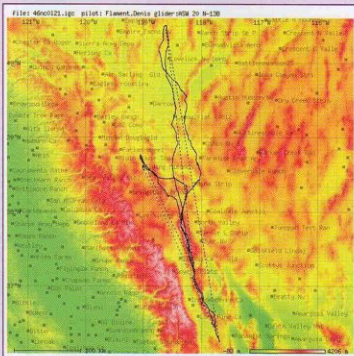
SeeYou or StrePla software can be used to calculate the flight points quickly from flight track data with little effort and no paper work or other calculations. Even if you do not own this software, the OLC computers can calculate the flight's points for you after the IGC file has been uploaded. Many GPS tracks converted to IGC format have been allowed in the USA competition. Only secure logger flights are acceptable for the International and Continental Champion competitions.

The 2004 contest ended October 10. Worldwide, over 52,500 flights and more than 15 million kilometers were flown by 8,216 pilots from 1058 clubs. In the United States, 256 flights from 66 clubs participated.

Some visiting European pilots have scored very high point flights in the USA this year. If they had been able to complete a few more great flights they likely would have won the U.S. contest. Don't be surprised to see them here in the years to come enjoying the great conditions and earning OLC points.

The longest U.S. OLC flight was by Denis Flament from France for 1,345 kilometers as viewed on the OLC web site. The dashed lines show how the score was calculated.

Here are a few tips to help you get started. When registering, be sure to go to the USA tab before entering as a competitor. Save your password: you will need it to register each year. When scoring a flight from the "SeeYou" program,

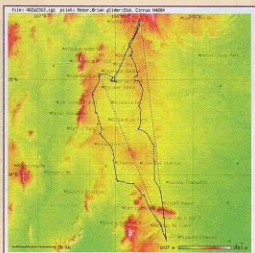
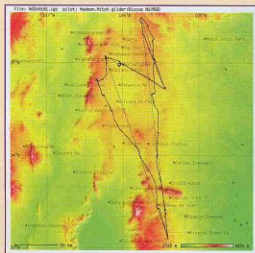


load your flight then press "Optimize" under the "Edit" tab. Your distance and a score will be displayed. Then press "Submit" at the bottom of the Optimize box. Fill in all the necessary information including your glider handicap on the next page, and then at the bottom connect to "OLC USA." Be sure to review each field when you are in the OLC web site entry area. After you have uploaded the IGC file, go back and press the "Check entry" tab before the "Claiming the flight" tab. I'm not familiar with the Strepla program, but am aware that OLC flights can be scored from it as well. The Albuquerque Club and the 1-26 Association web sites have detailed helping articles on entering and scoring.

The 2005 contest has already started. I encourage you to enter. Compare yourself with some of the world's best soaring pilots and learn from evaluating posted flights. I believe the OLC requires that you belong to a club to enter, but this should not be a problem; get some friends together from your gliderport to enter under an agreed-upon club name. Clubs are easy to enter and can be created at the same time the pilot registers. Participation in this contest will encourage cross-country soaring at your gliderport and should inspire the more experienced pilots to help the others so as to increase their club's total points. The real winner is the sport of soaring. This could be one of the great motivations to get more pilots out for more than a couple of hours close to the field.

It's easy to enter. It's free. And it's fun!

—Doug Levy



wanted to participate this year and so they buckled down and learned what they needed to make it happen. Not a single one of us avoided submitting flights just because we were afraid of a computer.

As our thermal weather started in the spring, we hosted a few informal tutorials to introduce the OLC and flight analysis with SeeYou. Everyone was eager and raring to go when they finally began to understand what modern technology could do for them.

Initially as flights are submitted, some will experience a huge variety of "problems" with the computer. Whether the problem is really the computer's fault or actually the user's fault, it is very frustrating to get all jazzed up about the new contest only to get errors everywhere when you try to submit for your hard-earned miles.

As a first line of defense, I have thrown together a detailed tutorial that explains how to get the job done (see references). When this does not work, it is important to have a local "expert" available that can personally make house calls to walk first time users through the process. Typically one trip is enough because

it is a simple process after doing it once or twice. Submitting a flight can be done as quickly as 3-5 minutes with just a few clicks of a mouse from the time the GPS logger is plugged in to the time the file has been scored with the OLC.

Required Equipment

A GPS datalogger is needed to participate in this contest. The best option, if you can manage it, is an IGC-approved logger such as a Cambridge, a Volkslogger, etc. Many hand held GPS devices, such as a handheld Garmin with pressure altitude capability, can also be used in the contest. Since these devices are not IGC approved your score will get painted red when the file is submitted. All scores that are painted red will not count in any OLC-International scoring, but they do count towards OLC-USA scoring (this is true as of the 2004 rules). If you want your individual score to count toward international level rankings, then a logger that is IGC approved will be needed.

Task Strategies

The underlying intention of the OLC contest is to encourage

#	pt	Pilot	US	km		pt		km		pt		Association	
				km	pt	km	pt	km	pt				
1	5431,97	Levy Doug	US	03.07	625.41	1024.05	02.07	568.72	922.08	04.07	555.10	891.12	126 Association
				05.08	537.72	880.51	23.07	529.90	868.14	11.09	517.05	846.07	
2	5035,44	Yanetz Ramv	US	02.08	1029.76	970.34	02.07	1030.48	965.45	01.08	1027.41	958.44	Hollister Gliding Club
				11.09	787.02	734.27	31.07	778.08	732.93	04.07	723.37	674.01	
3	4883,57	Schmetzer Wolfgang	US	10.07	1161.53	997.88	09.08	1026.89	864.36	02.07	1023.41	823.51	Kitty Hawk Airpark
				04.08	898.60	777.57	28.07	876.04	730.36	21.07	843.98	690.09	
4	4745,31	Jacobs Günther	US	10.07	1001.81	905.87	08.08	897.70	903.39	12.07	887.38	784.60	Parowan Gliding Club
				11.08	869.21	738.71	07.07	798.26	723.41	26.05	767.37	689.33	
5	4473,17	Dickson Gerry	US	05.08	650.81	1063.77	11.06	535.87	875.20	10.09	452.15	739.95	126 Association
				11.09	376.06	616.50	16.07	375.32	609.10	21.08	347.89	568.65	
6	4424,56	Larson Erik	US	11.08	1021.09	849.96	02.07	902.34	751.95	29.06	907.31	750.20	Warner Springs Gliders
				30.06	895.32	741.59	25.07	855.23	695.10	19.08	808.82	635.76	
7	4330,91	Garner James	US	09.05	1045.72	957.31	16.07	1087.31	952.98	08.09	708.90	648.35	Albuquerque Soaring
				14.07	654.87	605.26	25.04	638.58	585.24	13.06	629.16	581.77	
8	4254,60	Pare Daan	NL	21.07	1079.69	862.42	19.07	914.79	733.76	22.07	859.79	708.64	Amsterdamsche C v Zweervliegen
				23.06	810.15	671.47	23.07	782.95	650.12	20.07	757.06	628.19	
9	4217,62	Semans Robert	US	30.06	1146.45	954.19	04.07	969.36	801.17	23.07	878.78	719.45	Minden Soaring Club
				29.06	755.12	628.14	30.08	680.37	564.61	07.09	741.11	550.06	
10	4150,33	Schunk Mathias	DE (BY)	23.06	1118.16	1009.16	20.06	1003.85	915.75	19.06	875.51	808.85	SFZ Königsdorf
				22.06	598.91	561.03	21.06	584.81	515.38	18.06	400.08	340.36	

FAI badge and record type task flying (O&R's, 3 turn yo-yo's, FAI triangles), but it gives pilots the option to use up to two more turnpoints to rack up extra points at the reduced rate while close to home after finishing the "main task."

Strategies for flying for OLC points vary a lot depending on your task area and weather patterns. Learning those strategies is part of the fun of this contest. Because the fifth and sixth legs are devalued, the task should be flown in four legs if possible. At Moriarty, it is generally best to pick the direction that will give a nice long leg and go there first. Fly as far as you possibly can in a direction then turn around and head towards home. This will, hopefully, put you back in the vicinity of the airport later in the day with two full point legs left to work with.

Ideally, at some point during the day toward a nice street that will take you far from home. Scream down the street as long as possible, then either find another one or turn around and go another direction. Around Moriarty, the OLC game often turns into an all-out, high altitude drag race up and down our wonderful dry lines and convergences (thus, the title of this article).

It didn't take long for our pilots to switch from a MAT mentality to the OLC mentality. Those that are used to the old MAT-type tasks would typically bounce around the local area using multiple legs between designated turnpoints. Flying for big OLC points means flying long legs, covering lots of terrain, experiencing a variety of weather, and sometimes getting very far from home.

Some might argue that sticking to the streets does relatively little for soaring skill improvement. You don't stress out about getting to declared turns, or even trying to get to designated points as you do in a MAT or AST task.

I say, "Great!"

What this type of flying does do is give pilots the chance to rack up tons of miles and experience while staying close to weather that they feel comfortable with while having a blast the whole time. As the level of achievement increases, pilots continually push personal limits to fly farther and farther and are forced to deal with extra challenges along the way. Confidence grows dramatically as these important lessons are learned. There is no motivation for flying smartly like getting yourself stuck 100 miles from home, down a cloudstreet that has turned to fuzz!

Successes at Moriarty

The OLC has pulled our pilots closer together as a group and has made us all realize that we can do things in a glider that we never realized. Each of us watches how others are doing on the internet and questions are asked, "Why did you run up that side of the Sangres?" "Why were you using that particular altitude band?" "Were there safe places available to land when you were down on that mountain?" and "How did you get home through the OD from way out there!?"

The OLC helped our newer pilots to learn what is achievable in given conditions. In 2004, the 24 Albuquerque pilots flew 88 flights over 500 km, 47 over 600 km, 16 over 700 km, 9 over 800 km, and 2 flights over 1,000 km. The 1000 km flights were the firsts ever flown from Moriarty. Half of our cross-country

pilots flew more than 3,000 total handicapped miles during the season, with several racking up as many as 7,500 handicapped miles. As a group, pilots at Moriarty accumulated enough total points to take a commanding lead in the U.S. club standings and finished out the OLC season (running October to October) in 4th place of the international standings.

We already are dreaming of next year's goals, which include longer flights by experienced pilots and more flights by new pilots. The OLC is the perfect follow-up step for new pilots after the one-on-one mentoring stage written about in *Soaring* by Bill Hill and Mike Abernathy in February and January 2004.

Let's try to promote more use of this contest in the USA during 2005. With a little bit of technical computer assistance from those of us who understand the process, it will really catch on and will raise the level of participation and enthusiasm that we currently have in cross-country soaring to a new high. Even if your location does not provide access to premium soaring conditions, it's great fun to track the progress of friends in your area or pilots clear across the country. Albuquerque Soaring at Moriarty challenges everyone in the U.S. to gather your local flying buddies into an OLC club and try to steal the #1 standing in 2005. Fly safely, fly often, fly hard, and submit every flight!

—Brian Resor

About the Authors



Brian Resor learned to fly gliders in 1998 with the Illini Glider Club while studying Mechanical Engineering at the University of Illinois. Afterwards, he switched to Penn State for graduate school and ridge running. He is now a member of the Albuquerque Soaring Club and flies a trusty old Standard Cirrus. The activity levels at Moriarty in 2004 drove Brian to learn more about cross-country soaring than in all previous years combined, with over 100 hours and almost 5000 miles flown during the season.



Doug Levy is a consulting engineer living in Oceanside, CA. Doug started flying 1-26's in 1996 and earned Silver Gold Diamond badges in 1997. In 2004 Doug flew 8 OLC 500k flights. Also winning the Dust Devil Dash contest on September 11, 2004.