

Event and Competition Accreditation Manual

“ACE”



USHPA
UNITED STATES HANG GLIDING
& PARAGLIDING ASSOCIATIONTM

Contents:

Introduction	3
USHPA Competition Structure	4
Accredited Competitions and Events	5
Event Organizer	5
Accreditation Requirements	6
Responsibilities of Participants	7
Accreditation Procedure	8



Introduction

The United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association Inc. (USHPA) recognizes the many benefits of hang gliding and paragliding competitions, events, and organized activities. These benefits include, but are certainly not limited to, the development and promotion of camaraderie among pilots and enthusiasts, advancement of pilot skills, promotion of hang gliding and paragliding in the public arena, member retention, and providing a means to select a U.S. National Team to compete internationally.

The USHPA has established two mechanisms by which organizers of hang gliding and paragliding events and competitions can, 1) promote their activities, 2) better protect the organizers, participants and the USHPA, and 3) have competition participants deemed eligible for national ranking points. These two mechanisms are **sanctioning** and **accreditation**.

Sanctioning is the process and brand USHPA uses to qualify and select those *competitions* meeting certain standards for quality, safety and fairness. Furthermore, USHPA maintains a pilot ranking system that is used to select the US National Team. Only the results from *sanctioned* competitions may be applied in this ranking system.

Accreditation is the process and brand USHPA uses to qualify *events* and *activities* which meet certain standards for quality and safety and which promote community, skill development, a positive public image, pilot involvement, and member retention.

This manual describes the procedure and requirements for USHPA event and competition accreditation. In addition, this manual contains the forms you will need to have your event or competition considered for accreditation. USHPA has made every attempt to make this process as easy as possible while maintaining important standards. We believe the benefits of accreditation far outweigh the inconvenience of completing the application process.



USHPA Competition Structure

The USHPA Event and Competition Structure consists of four primary categories as depicted in Figure 1 below. Event or competition organizers seeking to benefit from the USHPA brand, insurance, infrastructure and support will either accredit or sanction their events. The USHPA continually works to minimize the administrative burden for achieving accreditation and sanctioning. Event/competition organizers seeking accreditation are encouraged to start the process as soon as possible, using the tools and directions contained in this manual, to ensure your application receives full consideration.

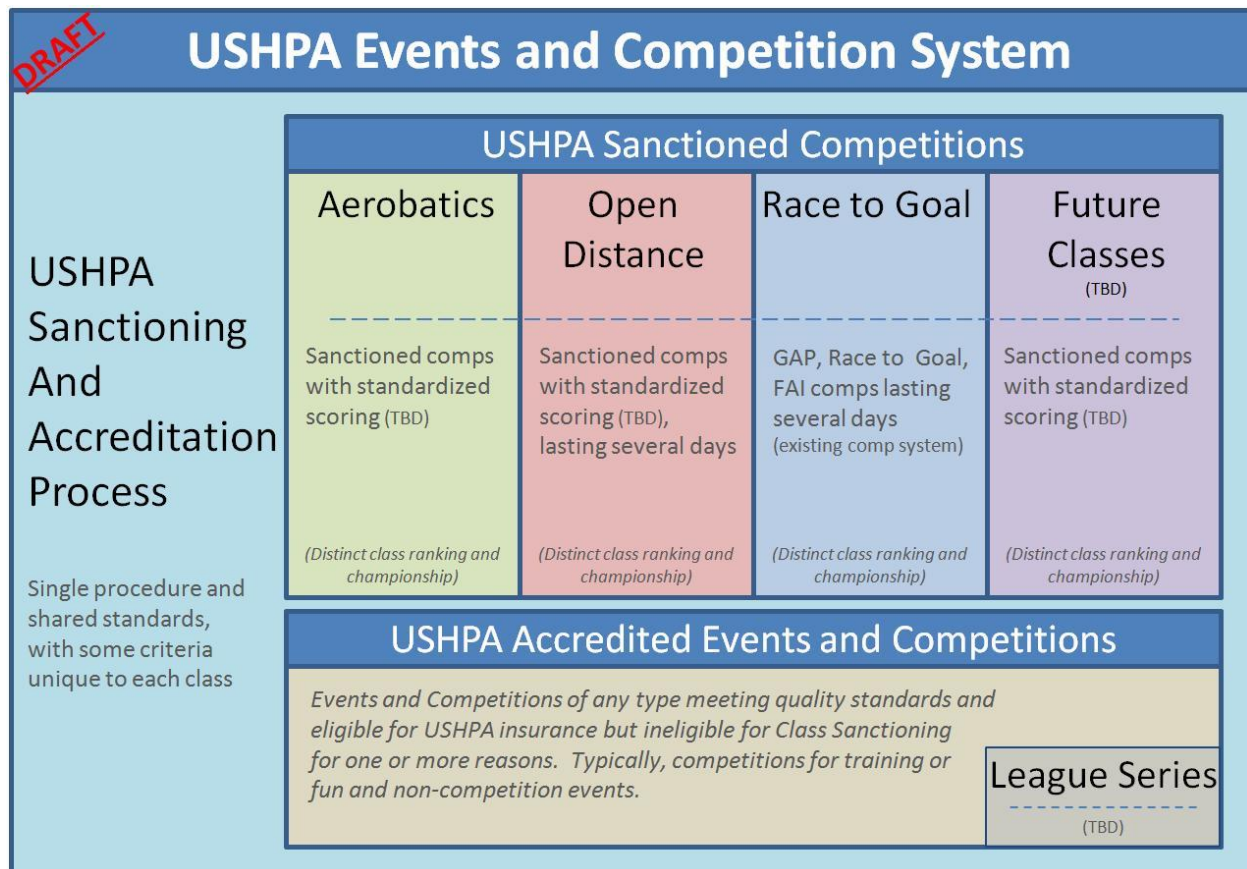


Figure 1: USHPA Sanctioning and Accreditation Categories.



Accredited Competitions and Events

Accredited competitions and events represent a broad spectrum of potential organized soaring activities. An accredited event (ACE) may be, but is not limited to, a fly-in, a developmental or local fun competition, a training event, a demonstration event, or league meet/competition. Generally for an event or competition to be accredited with the United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association it will promote:

- Safety
- Community
- Positive public image
- Pilot engagement
- Diversity of events and participants
- Growth of the sports
- Fun and skill development.

You will note in Figure 1 that accredited competitions and events is depicted as its own category separate from sanctioned Aerobatics, Open Distance, and Race to Goal competitions. Accredited events and competitions can consist of these competition formats. However, they simply **will not accrue National Team Selection System (NTSS) points nor do they in anyway contribute to pilot national ranking.**

Sanctioning for competitions and accreditation for events are contingent on obtaining insurance coverage under USHPA's CGL policy which is itself contingent upon review and approval of the event by the insurance underwriters. Accredited competitions and events will receive a variety of benefits and support from USHPA including, but not necessarily limited to, branding opportunities, access to web and magazine advertising, corporate sponsorship when available, and a variety of organizational and support tools.

Event Organizer

An event organizer is the person or group who shall be responsible for all the organizational matters of the event or competition before, during, and after the activities. These matters include, but are not limited to, completing the USHPA Accreditation Application, arranging officials, arranging and preparing takeoff and landing sites, arranging tow systems (where applicable), arranging event or competition venues, communicating with local officials and land owners, arranging transportation and food and toilet facilities when necessary, arranging for weather information, contacting pilots, and advertising the event.

The event organizer is also responsible for ensuring event/competition closure has been completed. Activities associated with closure includes but are not limited to, ensuring the event venue has been policed and returned to its pre-event/competition condition, all bills have been paid, all reports or documentation have been filed as necessary, thank you letters are mailed or acknowledgments made when appropriate.

The event organizer shall be familiar with all aspects of the manual and application and shall strive to ensure the spirit and word of the accreditation process is upheld to the best of his/her/their ability.



Accreditation Requirements

Below is a list of ACE requirements for your reference. Events and competitions receiving USHPA accreditation are obliged to meet or have these requirements. These requirements help ensure that minimum standards for quality and safety are maintained. Each of these points shall be integrated into your event or competition.

- A well-written brief description of your event or competition. The description should inform the reader exactly what he or she is getting into.
- A pilot/participant registration system with emergency contact information.
- A verification process to ensure all participating pilots are current USHPA members and that they have adequate ratings and special skills for the event or competition. This verification process should extend to foreign pilots who must possess a valid IPPI card with equivalent skills and 30-day USHPA membership.
- A verification process to ensure all participating pilots possess site specific requirements (signed waiver, club membership, site sign off, etc.)
- Accident and incident procedures.
- Verification that the site for the event or competition is appropriate for the activities being planned (e.g. permissions, permit, access, restrictions, airspace, have been obtained and are appropriate for the planed event or competition).
- A safety system that includes a pilot check-in and checkout procedure.
- A designated safety officer to be a point of contact, or who will manage any incident that may occur during the course of the event or competition. The safety officer may be the organizer if he/she is available throughout the event to serve in this capacity.
- A safety briefing as appropriate for event including:
 - A site briefing/orientation for all participants unfamiliar with the flying site.
 - Identification of emergency facilities nearest to launch and along the course if the event involves cross-country flying.
- All event officials (meet director, safety director, score keeper, launch directors, drivers) must be current USHPA members or have a current 30-day membership.
- All competitors, staff, volunteers and persons involved with the running of the meet are required to sign a USHPA competition/event waiver prior to any flying activities.
- Anyone under 18 must also have the signed consent of a legal guardian on the waiver.
- Meet organizer must supply wind indicators on launch & primary designated landing areas
- Event must be in compliance with all federal, state and local laws, including legal operations under FAA, Sport pilot, etc.
- When towing, the pilot's tow bridle shall be equipped with a weak-link and primary and secondary means of disconnecting the towline. A properly placed weak-link may serve as the secondary release. The tow pilot shall be equipped with at least one method of completely releasing the towline from the towing device.
- Radio receivers compatible with meet frequencies for all pilots are strongly recommended when a competition event involves cross-country flying.
- Organizations/sponsors/land owners who desire additional waivers to be signed may do so only where the additional waivers do not conflict with the USHPA competition/event waiver. A single (unsigned) copy of any additional waivers must be sent to the USHPA headquarters prior to the event.



Responsibilities of Participants

Event organizers must be familiar with the *Responsibilities of Participants* presented below. The event organizer shall determine the most appropriate method for ensuring participants are made aware of these responsibilities. Pilot manuals containing these responsibilities are proven methods of communicating these to the event/competition participants and are highly recommend. Please see the USHPA ACE Resource Guide for templates and tools. To assist you in disseminating the *Responsibilities of Participants*.

- All participants must have minimum pilot ratings or higher as required by event organizer and/or the site/weather conditions.
- Parental (or guardian's) written consent must be obtained if the participant is under 18 years of age.
- All participants shall understand that safety is the sole responsibility of the pilot.
- All participants shall fly with appropriate safety equipment that shall include at a minimum helmet and a reserve parachute.
- All participants shall use appropriate flotation devices when a water landing is probable.
- All participants are expected to attend all meetings, briefings, roll calls, etc. as requested, and stay informed of all schedule changes, course modifications, weather conditions/changes, rule amendments, etc.
- Each competitor must preflight his/her own equipment prior to launch. Each competitor must perform a hang-check or harness-check prior to launch in front of launch personnel designated by the meet organizer. **WARNING:** failure to preflight equipment or to perform hang-checks or harness-checks can, and has, resulted in serious bodily injury and death. Neither the Meet Organizer (or its staff), nor the USHPA undertakes any duty to competitors to ensure that their equipment is properly assembled or to ensure that the competitor is properly and securely attached to their aircraft. The competitor is solely responsible for his/her own safety, including the proper set-up and connection to glider, harness and other related equipment.
- All participants shall decline launch if they think conditions are unsafe or are too advanced for their skill level.
- All participants shall fly within their abilities and in safe mental/physical condition and must terminate their flight if conditions on course become unsafe.
- All participants shall follow generally accepted right of way and thermal etiquette rules.
- All participants shall notify the Safety Director and/or Event Organizer as soon as possible, when an emergency occurs.
- All participants shall be in contact with meet officials as required in the local rules.
- Participants willfully violating any of the above shall be subject to penalty or disqualification or ejection from the event or competition.



Accreditation Procedure

Event and or competition organizers seeking accreditation through USHPA will complete and submit the online USHPA ACE Event Application, followed by the online USHPA Event Insurance Application.

The USHPA has made every attempt to minimize the burden for event and competition organizers seeking accreditation and expect the benefits from will far outweigh the effort required to complete this application process.

The components of the accreditation application are:

1. **Online ACE Accreditation Application** (<https://www.ushpa.org/page/ace-application>) – A description of the event or competition including the legal agreement between you, the event or competition organizer, and the USHPA.
2. **Online Event Insurance Application** – Necessary information for the underwriter required to insure the competition or event. Approved ACE events will receive a link to the online Event Insurance application.

Dates for events and competitions, which have been accredited, will be posted on a calendar to better allow other organizers and participants to plan their schedule. Conflicts can be reduced by early submission of the accreditation application. Event and competition announcements shall be placed up on the USHPA web site and in the next issue of the magazine (when scheduling permits) immediately after accreditation has been awarded.

Please contact USHPA with any question you may have regarding the Event/Competition accreditation process.

