



International Free Flight  
Competition Pilots Union

# **BALLAST MARATHON WEIGHT LIMIT AND CHECK MEETING**



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# AGENDA

Ballast limit and weight checks (Julien Garcia - 20 min)

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Q&A (40 min)



## International Free Flight Competition Pilots Union

# CIVL PRESIDENT

Edited Oct 17



**Bill Hughes**, CIVL President

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As for ballast and equalizers, the general feeling in the Bureau is that we need to reinstate the ballast limitation that was done away with in 2019 and mandate equalizers. This year there were several competitions that were planned to use equalizers either in the main competition or in test tasks before the competition. The equalizers were produced, they got shipped around, but none of the competitions ended up using them for various reasons. Basically, most pilots don't want their competition to be the first one using them, they want some other competition to prove them out first. And that's where we are now.

“In summary, the CIVL Bureau does not believe that re-introducing the ballast limit by itself is the best way forward. We simply believe that it is better than ignoring the clear safety issue associated with pilots carrying excessive ballast.”

**Bureau Position on Ballast - email 10/30/2025**



## Ballast Regulations and Planned Adjustments

Another aspect of safety, well known in our community, is the ballast issue. It is often forgotten that the relaxed ballast rule was introduced in 2019 at the request of lightweight pilots to enhance competitiveness. This concept is currently broken; the number of incidents in relation to the ballast is overwhelming, and action must be taken as soon as possible. The Committee is fully committed to improving this dangerous situation. The measures we are considering include implementing equalizers at one World Cup event, creating a lightweight class, or reinstating a limit on the amount of ballast that can be used. Some of those measures are highly unpopular, so finding a balance between safety and pilots' acceptance proves to be a real challenge, and any pilot's input is highly appreciated. If we decide to proceed with any of these measures, the decision will be communicated broadly. Pilots who join will be informed, in addition to the safety standards, about such a measure before the final registration and payment for the event in question.



**8.5.4 Ballast** Pilots must comply with the weight limitations set by the glider airworthiness standards. FAI Sporting Code, Section 7A - 1st May 2018 33 The pilot's weight is defined as body weight when dressed in jeans, shirt and underwear. Weight can be measured at take-off or landing at the request of the organisers. Pilots may carry jettisonable ballast only in the form of fine sand or water. A pilot must avoid dropping ballast at any time or in a manner likely to affect other competing gliders or third parties. The total weight, including all flight equipment and glider, must not exceed 33 kilograms in addition to the pilot's weight. As an exception, all pilots are allowed to ballast up to a total weight of 95 kg including all flight equipment and glider. It is the pilot's responsibility to ensure they have the competence and fitness to launch unaided at this total weight. Sporting Code section S7 9.14 and 9.15 apply.

Section 7 XC - 2018

[https://www.fai.org/sites/default/files/civil/documents/sporting\\_code\\_s7a-cross\\_country\\_2018\\_v2.pdf](https://www.fai.org/sites/default/files/civil/documents/sporting_code_s7a-cross_country_2018_v2.pdf)



## 17.8 Ballast

A competing glider may carry jetisonable ballast only in the form of fine sand or water. A competitor must avoid dropping ballast at any time or in a manner likely to affect other competing gliders or third parties. The total ballast, including all flight equipment and the glider, must not exceed 33kg in addition to the pilot's weight. The pilot's weight is defined as body weight when dressed in jeans, shirt and underwear.

## 2003 International Competition Rules

.pdf [Download](#) the 2003 Paragliding World Cup International Competition Rules (version 10.0, 424KB)

### Main changes:

- Ballast limit (33kg) has been reintroduced (17.8, page 13)
- Radios are now mandatory

## PWCA Rules - 2005

<https://musee.cquest.org/pwca/2006/Download/2005-WorldCup-Competition-Rules.pdf>



## **It happened before !**

- ★ Random check and pilots getting penalized
  - ★ Junk and fat diet
  - ★ Drinking / eating as much as possible prior initial weight check
  - ★ Hiding additional weight during initial weight check
  - ★ Steroid use
  - ★ Getting rid of the ballast before the landing check
- ...



## Some clear **CONS**

- ★ No more possibility to be competitive if you are light
- ★ 28 Kg or 33 Kg bags are still very heavy piece of equipment
- ★ Checks mostly impossible to enforce broadly (120 pilots)
- ★ Increase in cheat and poor ethics