

# **UK Armed Forces Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association**



## **Inter Service Paragliding Championships Handbook**



Revised Jul 2025

## Contents

<b>1. General</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Purpose of the Handbook .....	1
1.2. Aims of the Inter Service Paragliding Championships .....	1
1.3. Composition of the Championships.....	1
1.4. Eligibility.....	2
1.5. Guest Pilots .....	2
1.6. Senior Championships.....	2
1.7. Sports Class Task Philosophy .....	2
<b>2. Development Championships Flying Rules</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1. General Flying Rules .....	3
2.2. Flying the Task .....	4
<b>3. Development Championships Scoring and Results</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1. Cross Country Tasks .....	7
3.2. Individual and Team Champions.....	7
<b>4. Development Championships Panels</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1. Members.....	9
4.2. Responsibilities.....	9
4.3. Safety Committee .....	9
<b>5. Development Championships Penalties and Protest Procedure</b>	<b>10</b>
5.1. Penalties and Disqualification .....	10
5.2. Complaints and Protests.....	10
5.3. For the Pilot making the Protest.....	10
5.4. For the Team Captains .....	11
<b>6. Senior Championships</b>	<b>12</b>
6.1. Administration and Pilot Selection.....	12
6.2. Team Composition and Pilot Scoring .....	12

## **1. General**

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### **1.1. Purpose of the Handbook**

1.1.1. The Executive Committee of the UK Armed Forces Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (UKAFHPA) endorses the Inter Service Paragliding Championships Handbook (the Handbook). The contents should be reviewed and any changes approved by the UKAFHPA Executive Committee on an as required basis.

1.1.2. The Handbook is primarily intended for use by the pilots and officials participating in the Inter Service Paragliding Championships (the Championships). It may be used or adapted for use in other Service paragliding competitions.

1.1.3. The Inter Service Paragliding Championships Panel (the Panel) reserves the right to amend the Handbook as required in the interest of fair competition and to retain alignment with higher-level direction and guidance. All pilots and officials will be notified of any changes.

1.1.4. All references to gender in these rules shall be taken to refer equally to any gender.

1.1.5. The Handbook is not intended to be a substitute for UK Armed Forces Paragliding Safety Management Plans which must also be adhered to in the delivery of all Championships events.

### **1.2. Aims of the Inter Service Paragliding Championships**

1.2.1. To determine the Inter Service Team and Individual Champions.

1.2.2. To provide the vehicle for single Service competition.

1.2.3. To assist in selection of UK Armed Forces (UKAF) Teams.

1.2.4. To provide a pool of pilots from which teams for national events may be selected.

1.2.5. To familiarise Service pilots with national standard competition and tasks.

1.2.6. To improve the standard of flying ability within the Services.

1.2.7. To foster and encourage a spirit of sportsmanship between Service pilots.

### **1.3. Composition of the Championships**

1.3.1. The Championships will consist of an Open Class, Sports Class and an Intermediate Class. The entry criteria for each class will be clearly defined in the associated Defence Information Notice (DIN), which is published in advance of each event.

1.3.2. The Panel will be responsible for setting the entry criteria for each class prior to the event for publication in the DIN. These will generally be aligned with experience levels and the pilot ratings scheme of the British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (BHPA).

1.3.3. Unless precluded from doing so by external events, the Senior Championships (Open Class) will be run within the British Sports Championships, a World Air Sports (FAI) Category 2

event run the Paragliding Competitions Panel of the British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association. The Development Championships (Sports and Intermediate Classes) will be based out of the of Robson Resilience Centre Crickhowell (RRCC) in SE Wales, which is the UKAFHPA's approved Home for Sport.

### **1.4. Eligibility**

1.4.1. The Championships are open to Regular and Reserve Service personnel as defined in the eligibility criteria contained within JSP 660, Sport in the UK Armed Forces. All pilots must also be current flying members of the BHPA.

### **1.5. Guest Pilots**

1.5.1. Where capacity exists, a number Development Championships places will be open to guest pilots at the invitation of the Panel, with the aim of them acting as mentors and coaches for all Service competitors, with a focus on supporting the Intermediate Class. A guest pilot cannot become the Inter Service Paragliding Development Champion.

1.5.2. Former Inter Service Paragliding Development Champions and Service pilots who have competed at the Senior Championships must enter the Development Championships as a guest pilot.

1.5.3. All guest pilots must be current flying members of the BHPA and a minimum of Pilot rated or equivalent. Non-Serving guest pilots are strongly advised to take out adequate personal accident and life insurance.

### **1.6. Senior Championships**

1.6.1. The rules detailed in Chapters 2 to 5 of the Handbook pertain to the delivery of the Development Championships, which are run by and for the UK Armed Forces Paragliding community. As the Senior Championships are delivered through a third-party event, the rules for that event will take primacy and must be adhered to by all Open Class pilots, whether or not they are designated as a scoring team pilot. Chapter 6 contains additional guidance on pilot selection, team composition and scoring.

### **1.7. Sports Class Task Philosophy**

1.7.1. The Development Championships are designed to help prepare pilots for overseas FAI Cat 2 and Cat 1 national and international competitions.

1.7.2. Competitive cross country (XC) flying is the UKAF Sports Board endorsed paragliding discipline that will be used to determine the outcome of Inter Service competitions.

1.7.3. Tasks are set on the day of the competition and depend on weather conditions, terrain and the experience levels of the Championships field.

1.7.4. The aim is that all tasks should be achievable and ideally approximately **25%** of competing pilots should reach goal.

1.7.5. GPS logging, by a Championships supplied tracker and/or individuals' own tracker or GPS, is the only method for checking times and validating the course flown.

## 2. Development Championships Flying Rules

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### 2.1. General Flying Rules

2.1.1. **Registration and Briefing.** All Championships will begin with a formal registration and briefing process (whether third party or organic). Each pilot will be asked to certify that they are appropriately qualified, in current flying practice, fit to participate in accordance with single Service requirements and that they agree to abide by the rules contained within the Handbook. In addition, they will certify that their equipment has been maintained in accordance with BHPA guidelines. Registration will be followed by a series of **mandatory** competition safety and procedures briefs, equipment inspection, GPS/Tracker familiarisation and vehicle allocation.

2.1.2. **Responsibility.** A pilot accepts sole responsibility for their decision to fly any task. Neither the Panel members nor the BHPA can be held responsible for the consequences of any pilot's decision to fly a particular task.

2.1.3. **Fitness to Fly.** A pilot may only fly if they are fit to do so. Any injury, drugs or medication taken which might affect the competitor's performance in the air must be reported to the Safety Manager before flying. The Safety Manager has the authority to ban a pilot from launching if they consider it unsafe for them to do so. Any pilot who honestly believes that another pilot is unfit to fly is to report the matter to any member of the Panel.

2.1.4. **Paraglider Airworthiness.** Every paraglider used in the Championships must be airworthy. All other equipment must be of a suitable standard and comply with any existing BHPA standards or guidelines. In addition:

2.1.4.1. All paragliders must be AFNOR, LTF/DHV, SHV, EN certified (A-D or equivalent) or CCC certified. Paragliders certified before 2001 will not be allowed. CCC gliders will not be allowed without prior approval.

2.1.4.2. Pilots competing for the Royal Navy, Army or RAF in the Development Championships should only use paragliders that are EN A to EN C certified. Guest pilots may fly any certified paraglider.

2.1.4.3. Pilots may change their glider at the Meet Directors discretion. Normally the only reason would be damage or loss of a glider. Pilots may change back to their original glider if it is repaired or recovered.

2.1.4.4. All gliders and other equipment must conform to the [Gliding Safety Standards specified in Section 7 of the FAI Sporting Code](#).

2.1.5. **Helmet.** Each pilot is to wear a protective helmet at all times when connected to a glider. The helmet must be CE marked EN966 (HPG), EN1077 Class A, ASTM 2040, or SNELL rs98 (Snow Sports) in accordance with [current BHPA guidelines](#).

2.1.6. **Reserve Parachute.** An appropriate sized reserve parachute for the pilot's all up mass is to be carried on all flights. The reserve parachute must have been checked and repacked within the previous 12 months.

2.1.7. **Task Briefing.** A **mandatory** task briefing for all pilots will take place before each task.

2.1.8. **Task Board.** Details of each task will be displayed on the task board at or near launch. It is every pilot's responsibility to ensure that they have checked the task board before take-off for any last minute changes. Task details promulgated on the task board are specific rules for that task.

2.1.9. **Launch Window.** The window will be opened at the set time after the Task Briefing. It will remain open for the set period unless closed by the Meet Director or Safety Manager on safety grounds. In the event of such closure the Meet Director may authorise a window extension. The window may then be re-opened at their discretion. In the event of a stoppage made after the start of the launch window the Meet Director may only re-start the task and count the task as valid if the remaining pilots fly in similar air to their opponents. The Meet Director or Safety Manager may stop flying in mid-task if they consider flying conditions to be unsafe.

2.1.10. **Time Limits.** Pilots must comply with time limits set by the Meet Director, as briefed in the Task Briefing and as displayed on the Task Board.

2.1.11. **Meteorological (Met) Brief.** A *mandatory* Met Brief for all pilots will take place prior to any task.

2.1.12. **Validity.** A task will be valid if it meets the minimum requirements for both launch and distance:

2.1.12.1. The launch has remained open for at least thirty consecutive minutes of safely flyable conditions

*and*

2.1.12.2. The activating distance has been flown by a specified number of pilots.

2.1.13. **Sporting Spirit.** All pilots are expected to conform to the spirit of the competition. Any pilot found to be cheating or to have cheated may be expelled from the Championships.

## 2.2. Flying the Task

2.2.1. **Radios.** Radio transceivers are to be used by all competing pilots. Pilots must be aware of the possibility of having a stuck transmit switch. The Safety Frequency is to be monitored at all times in flight. Transmissions on this frequency are to be for notification of safety-related information only; there is to be no chat on this frequency.

2.2.2. **Refusal to Fly.** If a pilot refuses to fly, solely on the grounds that conditions are, in their opinion, too dangerous, they can appeal to the Meet Director. If the Meet Director considers that conditions are suitable, the pilot must comply with the order and timings for that task, or withdraw from the task.

2.2.3. **Relights.** Pilots may be permitted more than one attempt at the task, also known as a "relight", subject to the Meet Director's briefing for that task.

2.2.4. **Right or Left Hand turns in thermals.** These are obligatory whilst flying within the start cylinder or within such other boundaries as the Meet Director shall specify at the Task Briefing.

2.2.5. **Ground Signals.** When used, the following signals will be displayed in the take-off area and must be obeyed as soon as is safely possible. The signals will be used in conjunction with appropriate radio transmissions on the Safety Frequency and/or other means of communication:

**X** Task is cancelled or suspended (eg conditions getting dangerous or rescue helicopter arriving). Land safely ASAP.

**T** Pilots in the air to top land ASAP if safe to do so (eg task to be changed).

2.2.6. **Cloud Flying.** Pilots may not deliberately enter cloud. Should a pilot inadvertently enter cloud then he must return to a point of no advantage. This means leaving the cloud in a timely and safe manner, using “big ears” or similar technique, to return to a position lower than when the pilot entered cloud and no closer to the next turn point or goal. Flying up the sides of clouds is not permitted. Pilots who enter cloud should maintain their (cloud entry) course whilst flying in proximity to other pilots to avoid additional MAC risk. Efforts to show no advantage is gained, such as a 90 deg turn off of the course line, in clear air, will be assessed on track logs and witness pilot reports. “Spiral dive” manoeuvres are a potentially dangerous means of losing height when escaping from cloud in competition, again due to increased MAC risk; this rapid descent technique should normally be reserved for clear air or an abnormally dangerous situation within overdeveloping clouds.

2.2.7. **Assisted Flying.** Motors or engines may not be used in flying tasks.

2.2.8. **Airspace.** The Meet Director will try to avoid setting a task that could infringe restricted airspace. Pilots are responsible for ensuring that they have appropriate maps or suitable electronic alternatives to enable them to both fly the task and avoid infringing restricted airspace. It follows that they must make themselves fully aware of air law and provide themselves with current Air Charts, or current airspace data files for electronic devices, in advance of the Championships.

2.2.9. **Landing.** A pilot will be deemed to have landed at the first point of contact with the ground by either the pilot or the glider.

2.2.10. **Goal Lines.** Where a task finishes with the crossing of a goal line, the crossing will be deemed successful when the glider crosses the line without a landing taking place prior to this point.

2.2.11. **Landing Area.** If an area is designated as a landing area and is bounded by lines or hedges etc, the landing must be started and completed within the defined area.

2.2.12. **Assisting Injured Pilots.** A competitor who lands specifically to assist an injured pilot should not be disadvantaged by this action. However, any points awarded in compensation are at the discretion of the Panel who should take all the circumstances into consideration before awarding them.

2.2.13. **Local Rules.** Individual tasks may, for various reasons, have local rules. These rules will either be announced at the briefing, written on the task board, and/or published on the pilots' notice board at the competition base; they will operate for the duration of the competition concerned. These local rules will be effective immediately they are announced/published and may cover any aspect of the competition. They will take precedence over the rules published in

this Handbook. Local rules may be introduced at the discretion of the Meet Director, to be ratified by the Panel when time permits.

2.2.14. **Pilot Reporting.** Pilots are required to report in by the briefed method(s) to the Retrieve Coordinator before the "Report By" time specified in the Task Briefing. This is in order to ensure that all competitors are safely accounted for at the end of the task. Failure to report in by the specified time without a valid reason may result in the pilot being DSQ.

2.2.15. **Disqualification (DSQ).** In the event of a DSQ being given to a pilot for any reason there is to be no debating the issue until after the task is complete when an appeal may be made to the Meet Director.

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### 3. Development Championships Scoring and Results

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#### 3.1. Cross Country Tasks

##### 3.1.1. Measurement of Distance

3.1.1.1. **Scoring Distance** will normally be measured from the launch point. All distances will be measured via any turn points included in the course.

3.1.1.2. **Activating Distance** is the Scoring Distance that a specified number of pilots must exceed so that all pilots may start to score. This information will be specified at the task briefing.

3.1.1.3. **Minimum Scoring Distance** is the minimum score pilots will receive if they launch and fly in a controlled manner during the task launch window. This distance will normally be 1km unless otherwise specified.

3.1.2. **Measurement of Course Flown and Times.** This will be by GPS logging. Rules for GPS verification are at Section 4.

3.1.3. **Scoring Formulae.** The FAI approved GAP/PWC formulae will be used throughout the Championships.

#### 3.2. Individual and Team Champions

3.2.1. **Individual Champions.** After the last valid task of the Championships has been flown, the pilots with the highest overall scores in their classes will be declared the Inter Service Champions.

3.2.2. **Competing Teams.** The Development Championships will consist of four teams: Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and Guest. The Team Champions, which cannot be the Guest team, will be decided by the results from the Open and Sports Classes.

3.2.3. **Scoring Pilots for Teams.** For every validated task set in the Sports Class, the top X scoring pilots from each Service in that task will score points for their team where X is a number (ideally at least 3) agreed by the Comps Panel before the first task of an event is flown. The aggregate of each pilot's task score will form the team score for that particular task.

3.2.4. **Team Champions.** After the last valid task of the Championships has been flown, the teams with the highest overall score will be declared the Inter Service Team Champions for both the Open and Sports Classes.

#### 3.3. Development Goal Prizes

3.3.1. Due to the intentional pilot development nature of the Development Championships, prizes may be awarded to pilots who achieve specified 'development goals' in the course of a task, especially those competing in the Intermediate Class. Examples include a first XC flight, or personal best distance flown. These goals should be 'declared at the end of the task when pilots sign back in to the RRCC and return their tracker.

### 3.4. Flight Verification

- 3.4.1. Each pilot will be given a GPS tracker before each task. They will be required to sign their initials against their name on a pilot list to acknowledge receipt of the tracker. This signature will be taken as his acceptance of the task, also known as "Sign to Fly". The Retrieve Coordinator will then retain the pilot list for use.
- 3.4.2. Trackers must be returned to the Development Championships Scorer as soon as possible following a pilot's return to the RRCC.
- 3.4.3. Pilots are encouraged to carry their own GPS as backup should their allocated tracker fail.
- 3.4.4. For a backup track-log to be accepted it must contain on average at least one point for every 10 seconds of flying time (points taken prior to the start and after goal are not counted). Notwithstanding this, the refresh frequency used is entirely at the pilot's discretion, but one point every 2 seconds is recommended, which is well within the capability of modern flight instruments.
- 3.4.5. If goal is not achieved, the end of flight may be taken to be the point within the track-log closest to the next target or, if the task is an open distance, the end of flight will be the point within the track-log that gives the pilot his best position according to the type of open distance being used.
- 3.4.6. If a task is stopped, pilots may still be scored up to the point in time when the task was stopped, subject to other task validation factors.

### 3.5. Publication of Results

- 3.5.1. Provisional results, both task and overall Championships, will be displayed as soon as possible once a task has been verified and scored. After 24 hours of being posted as provisional, if no official protest is made, all task scores will be confirmed.

## 4. Development Championships Panels

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### 4.1. Members

4.1.1. **Appointment of Panel Members.** As a minimum the Championships Panel will comprise the members detailed below. The Championships Coordinator will be appointed from the Lead Service, which is normally a rotational commitment. The appointment of the Meet Director is a matter for the UKAFHPA Committee. All other panel members will be appointed by the Lead Service in consultation with the other two Services as required.

### 4.2. Responsibilities

4.2.1. The panel members have the following roles and responsibilities:

4.2.1.1. **Championships Coordinator.** Responsible for the coordination of the event. This includes: producing the DIN and Championships Admin Order, liaising with RRCC staff and processing Championships applications. They are responsible to the UKAFHPA Executive Committee in all aspects of event administration.

4.2.1.2. **Meet Director.** Responsible for site selection, task setting, supervision of the launch site whilst the window remains open, mentoring and risk mitigation. These last three responsibilities may be delegated to the Safety Manager at the launch site if the Meet Director elects to fly.

4.2.1.3. **Team Captains.** Responsible for the organisation and high level supervision of their respective teams. They will liaise with the Meet Director before each task is briefed to confirm that they are content that is suitable for the majority of their pilots. They also act as judges in any protests.

4.2.1.4. **Championships Scorer.** Responsible for the scoring of the tasks and alerting the Panel to any potential infringements of Championships rules.

4.2.1.5. **Safety Manager.** Responsible for all aspects of safety management on take-off. They are to maintain a listening watch on the Safety Frequency (nominally 143.850) throughout each task. In addition, where possible, they are to remain contactable on the promulgated Safety Manager mobile phone number throughout the tasks.

4.2.1.6. **Retrieve Coordinator.** Responsible for all aspects of pilot retrieval. They are to maintain a listening watch on the allocated Retrieve Frequency (nominally 143.750) and remain contactable on the promulgated Retrieve Coordinator mobile phone number throughout each task and until all pilots are accounted for.

### 4.3. Safety Committee

4.3.1. The Safety Committee is made up of the Safety Manager and one member from each Service, nominated by each Team Captain. The Committee is responsible to the Meet Director for making decisions on the cancellation of a task based on a dynamic risk assessment. They will also act as points of contact for all pilots on matters of safety and must be contactable by mobile phone or radio throughout each task.

## 5. Development Championships Penalties and Protest Procedure

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### 5.1. Penalties and Disqualification

5.1.1. Failure to provide proof of current flying membership of the BHPA will result that competitor not being allowed to compete until such proof is made available.

5.1.2. Failure to attend the mandatory Championships Safety and Procedures briefs on Registration Day may result in Disqualification (DSQ) from the competition unless a suitable back brief can be obtained from a member of the Panel.

5.1.3. Failure to attend the pre-Task Met Brief will result in DSQ for that task.

5.1.4. Failure to attend the Task Brief will result in DSQ for that task.

5.1.5. Failure to “Sign to Fly” prior to take-off will result in DSQ for that task.

5.1.6. Failure to follow the briefed turn direction may result in DSQ, at the discretion of the Panel.

5.1.7. Failure to return to a point of no advantage after entry into cloud (inadvertent or deliberate) will result in DSQ for that task. Repeated offences will result in DSQ from the competition.

5.1.8. Failure to report in before the “Report By” time specified in the Task Briefing will result in DSQ for that task unless mitigating circumstances can be readily demonstrated.

5.1.9. Failure to return a tracker to the Scorer within a reasonable timeframe may result in DSQ for that task.

### 5.2. Complaints and Protests

5.2.1. Any complaint about scoring for a particular task must be made to the Championships Scorer within 2 hours of provisional scores being posted.

5.2.2. Complaints about other aspects of the Championships must be made to a member of the Panel who should bring the complaint to the attention of the Team Captains.

### 5.3. For the Pilot making the Protest

5.3.1. You should make it clear what you are protesting against; eg against a decision that you infringed a rule (or rules) or against a DSQ.

5.3.2. For each element of your protest you should state (where applicable):

5.3.2.1. The reason you believe the decision or penalty is wrong; for example it may be that the penalty is at variance with the guidance given in this Handbook or that you believe another pilot has been treated differently in similar circumstances.

5.3.2.2. Any witnesses you believe will be able to support your complaint.

5.3.2.3. Any mitigating factors.

### **5.4. For the Team Captains**

5.4.1. You should consider the matters under protest solely in the light of the rules and guidance contained in this Handbook.

5.4.2. You should consider each element of a protest separately. It is possible that one element may be sustainable and another misconceived.

5.4.3. You should examine the clarity of the rule that has been infringed and comment upon this if you feel it to be necessary.

5.4.4. Should you not be in unanimous agreement on the outcome(s) of a complaint a majority decision must be made and the pilot concerned informed at the earliest possible opportunity.

## 6. Senior Championships

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### 6.1. Administration and Pilot Selection

6.1.1. In April 2022, the UK Armed Forces Sports Board (UKAFSB) approved the delivery of the Open Class of the Inter Service Paragliding Championships within the framework of a European FAI Category 2 event, via a UKAFSB authorised Overseas Visit. This event would be known as the Inter Service Paragliding Senior Championships (the Senior Championships).

6.1.2. Through engagement with the British Paragliding Competitions Panel, the UK Armed Forces Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (UKAFHPA) Chair was able to secure an arrangement that guaranteed 15 places, five for each Service at a suitable FAI Cat 2 event, on an enduring basis, within which to host the Senior Championships.

6.1.3. Ahead of the registration opening for the chosen FAI Cat 2 event, each Service will select five pilots to compete in the Open Class. The pilots must meet the specified entry criteria for the event and ideally should also have completed SIV (aka advanced wing control) training on the EN rating of wing on which they plan to compete. Dispensations from this requirement must be agreed between the single Service RP and the UKAFHPA Chair.

6.1.4. Should a pilot become unavailable to take part in the Senior Championships ahead of the event starting, the relevant Service must inform the UKAFHPA Chair and propose a substitute pilot, who must also meet all the entry criteria. The UKAFHPA Chair will then contact the competition organizers and under the arrangement detailed in 6.1.2, to request a pilot swap.

6.1.5. Should a Service have been able to secure more than five places in the chosen event, which must not be at the expense of the other Services, they may elect to use one of these additional pilots in place of one who is no longer able to attend and so not request a pilot swap. This can only occur prior to competition registration at which point teams are confirmed as detailed below.

### 6.2. Team Composition and Scoring

6.2.1. **Team Pilot Declarations.** At competition registration, ahead of the first task, each Service must declare to the UKAFHPA Chair, which five pilots constitute its team. Any other eligible pilots from that Service who also have a place at the event, from that point forwards cannot be a scoring member of their Senior Championships team. Should one of the five nominated pilots not be available for a task, they cannot be substituted by another pilot. Should every Service have been able to secure places for six pilots, if all Services are in agreement, each team may constitute six pilots.

6.2.2. **Scoring Pilots for Teams.** For every validated task set in the Senior Championships, the scores of an agreed number of pilots from each Service will score points for their team. The aggregate of these pilots' task score will make the team score for that task. The default agreement is that the top three pilot scores from each team of five will be counted. It has been acknowledged that this 'three from five' philosophy to team scoring allows for pilot unavailability during the event which could be caused by minor illness or fatigue. It also reduces the potential for self-induced pressure on team member to feel that they must participate every day and post a decent score for their team to remain competitive.

6.2.3. **Variation to Scoring Pilots.** If all team captains agree prior to the event, the number of scoring pilots per team may be varied from the 'three from five' approach. For example this could be 'four from five' or even 'five from five'. As per para 6.2.2, when each team contains six pilots the scoring could be 'four from six' by default but could also be 'six from six' should that position be universally agreed. In all cases, the agreed position should be confirmed in writing to the UKAF Chair, prior to event registration. This agreed position will then be communicated to the event meet director and scorer so that they can generate the appropriate scoring tables for each task and the overall event.

6.2.4. **Overall Scoring.** Aside from the team scores, the highest ranked Service pilot in the Overall event results table, which should also equate to the Service pilot who scores the greatest number of points from all tasks during the event, will be crowned the Inter Service Paragliding Champion. Individual scoring will be based on the scoring method declared by the event organisers. As is becoming more common, should the event use the FTV (Fixed Total Validation) system to moderate scores, then this must also be used for the Senior Championships scoring. The same applies to any penalties or bonuses awarded by the meet director which carry through to task and overall scores.