

On the Philosophy of Sporting Rules: Six Features revealing Pre-declaring to be a Betting- and not a Sporting-Performance

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Abstract

The pre-declaring of way points - necessary for the recognition of Badges, Diplomas and certain World Records by IGC/FAI, and also necessary for getting more points at the Barron Hilton Cup or DMSt (German decentralized competition) - has six features common with games such as Roulette, Lotto, Toto, betting on the football pools, and any other betting and gambling game, suggesting pre-declaring not to be a sporting, but a betting game. Betting on a sporting performance is not considered to be a form of sport. Normally, betting and sporting activities are separated by strict rules and in some cases (e.g. football and the betting on the football pools or horse racing) the performing of both activities at the same time may be seen as a criminal act. Therefore, from a philosophical point of view, pre-declaring is suggested to be a fundamental problem for IGC/FAI because the basic intention of FAI/ IGC to be a sporting organization.

Introduction

OSTIV was calling also for papers on the *Philosophy of competition rules*. Therefore, the author thought it might be a good idea to present a paper on the *Philosophy of pre-declaring* which you have to perform for Badge, Diploma, World Record and decentralized competition flying. Such pre-declaring is something very special, something which you can not find in any other form of sport.

This form of pre-declaring shall not be confused with the pre-declaring of a task setter in a centralized competition like World Championships by which the way points of a distance or speed task are pre-fixed *by the task setter* for all pilots, enabling them to fly the same task under the same conditions.

The pre-declaring we intend to study and analyze in this paper is performed *by the pilot* and not by any other person – which makes a big difference.

It is also the intention of this paper to study pre-declaring in a more or less neutral, detached manner, using logic and philosophical methods.

Pre-declaring requirements

Pre-declaring requirements are contained in the following regulations.

Sporting Code (IGC / FAI) ¹

According to the Sporting Code of IGC (International Gliding Commission) the pre-flight declaration is required for

- **Badges** (Silver C, Gold C, Diamonds...)
- **Diplomas** (750km, 1000km, 1250km)
- **World Records**
 - **Distance Tasks** (straight, out-and-return, triangle, distance via 3 turn points)
 - **Speed Tasks** (out-and-return, triangle)

Exceptions from this rule are

- Free straight flights from the release point to the landing point
- Free Distance World Records (straight, out-and-return, triangle, distance via 3 turn points)

Barron Hilton Cup ²

The BHC accepts only pre-declared triangles.

DMSt (German Decentralized Competition) ³

The DMSt rewards pre-declared flights with a bonus of 10%.

No pre-declaring requirements

No pre-declaring requirements are contained in the following regulations.

OLC (On-Line-Contest) ^{4,5}

Contrary to the above mentioned organizations, the world's biggest decentralized competition, the OLC, does not require the pre-declaring of way points.

Sis.at (Austrian Decentralized On-Line-Competition) ⁶

It is interesting to note that Austria introduced in 1981 the first free turn point, in 1993 free way points for 50% of all tasks and in 1999 for 100%, abolishing pre-declaring of way points completely.

Controversial points of view

You can find a lot of controversial points of view on this subject. Here we will discuss just two.

Pilots for pre-declaring

Pilots who are in favor of pre-declaring use mostly one of the following arguments:

- pre-declared distance tasks are challenging, pre-declaring being something which just has to be...
- pre-declared distance tasks are much more difficult to fly and therefore are of much higher value, free distance tasks being of little or no value....
- you have to set goals. If you fail to achieve your goals you have just failed and your flight cannot count. To achieve your goals - and sometimes not - is the essence of cross-country flying, etc.
- pre-declaring is also challenging the meteorological forecasting abilities of the pilot.
- some pilots like to fly pre-declared *distance* tasks as a means of training for *speed* tasks they have to fly in centralized competitions.
- before the advent of GPS, it was regarded to be also a possibility to test the navigational abilities of the pilot

Pilots against pre-declaring

Pilots who are in favor of free *distance* flying say:

- in *distance* tasks the performance of the pilot is valued by the flown distance. Therefore, the goal of the pilot is to fly the largest possible distance. Now, pre-declared way points stand in conflict with this goal as the pre-declared way points are not allowed to be adapted during flight to the actual conditions.
- the weather is used much better without pre-declaring.
- pilots fly bigger distances and more often.
- since GPS, the “goal” in distance tasks is not to find and achieve pre-declared way points, but to fly the maximum possible distance of the day.
- since free distances have been introduced in Austria and OLC, the flown distances and flights literally exploded.

What is pre-declaring really?

As there seems to be no consensus between those “for” and “against” groups, we try to find an answer to the controversy.

Six common features of non sporting games

Investigating the subject in detail reveals (as shown below) that pre-declaring belongs to the group of non-sporting games such as

- *Roulette
- *Lotto
- *Toto
- *Betting on the Football Pools
- *Betting of any kind
- *Gambling Games

These games are defined by the following common six features:

1st Feature: Predicting (guessing, forecasting, foretelling, foreseeing) of future events

In each of the mentioned games you have to predict (guess, forecast, foresee, foretell) one or more of the following future events:

***Roulette:** one or more numbers from 0-36, even or odd, black or red, a set or combination of numbers etc.

***Lotto:** a set or combination of numbers.

***Toto, Betting on Football Pools:** result of 12 football games in advance, denoting each game with 1, x or 2.

***Betting of any kind:** any possible event according to agreement.

***Pre-declaring:** in pre-declaring - if you want to achieve the highest performance (distance) in your pre-declared distance flying - you have to guess the way points which enable you to fly the maximum distance of the day. Similar to filling in the numbers in the Lotto-form, you have to write the selected way points on a sheet of paper or store them electronically in a logger. (*Remark:* contrary to the pure games of luck (such as Roulette, Lotto, Gambling Games) we note that in Sports Betting (football, horse racing, boxing, golf, tennis etc.) the success depends also on the skill of the players. In this sense pre-declaring is a betting game in which the pilot has to bet on weather, flying skill and performance of the glider.)

2nd Feature: you have to put something at stake (pay, offer, sacrifice etc.)

An essential feature of the games is that you have to put something at stake - may it be money or something else you offer or sacrifice in case you loose the game.

***Roulette:** chips (money)

* **Lotto:** money

* **Toto, Betting on Football Pools:** money

* **Betting of any kind:** according to agreement

***Pre-declaring:** in pre-declaring you have to sacrifice the maximum distance you would be able to fly *without* pre-declaring. That is what you have to offer if you want to play the game of pre-declaring. (To make it clearer: pre-declaring of 1000 km might be compared to putting 1000 Euro at stake).

3rd Feature: your prediction was totally correct and therefore you win the game, getting a prize (reward or winnings)

Depending on the game your reward is:

* **Roulette:** one or more chips (actually money).

* **Lotto:** a multiple of that what you had put at stake. For instance, you paid 10 Euro and get now 10 000 Euros.

* **Toto, Betting on the Football Pools:** you win a lot more than you had put at stake.

* **Betting of any kind:** you get a reward according to agreement.

* **Pre-declaring:** if your prediction was perfect, you fly the maximum distance, but you do not “win” in this case a multiple of what you had put at stake like in the above mentioned games. (You don’t get for example 10.000km recognized, although you had flown the pre-declared 1000km). You just do not loose in this case - which is obviously also the maximum reward you can get (comparable to getting back the 1000 Euros you had put at stake without winning a multiple of it).

4th Feature: partial winnings if prediction was not correct by 100%

In most games it is possible to win partially, if the prediction was not totally, but up to a high degree correct. In

***Roulette:** you win fewer chips than would have been possible.

***Lotto:** if you haven't guessed all numbers, but nearly all, you might win for instance 100 Euro which is still more than you had paid.

***Toto, Betting on the Football Pools:** you get less than would have been possible, but still more than you had put at stake.

***Betting of any kind:** less, but according to agreement.

***Pre-declaring:** your pre-declared distance is, in this case, less than it would have been possible for you to fly. Example: the pilot pre-declares 600km although the weather is good for 1000km. He flies the pre-declared task, gets the 600km recognized, but 400 possible km are lost - comparable to "winning" 600 Euro, but actually losing 400 Euro. (*Remark:* At the DMSt the pilot would lose the 10% bonus for pre-declared distances, making it often not profitable for him to switch over to a probably longer free distance flight. Example: pre-declaring 700km instead of possible 750km would give 770 points instead of possible 825 points. But, the 770 points for the pre-declared 700km are still more than the 750 points the pilot would get after switching over to the longer free distance flight of 750km.)

5th Feature: Loss, if prediction was wrong

In case your prediction was wrong, you lose the game and therefore, you will not get any reward. You also lose what you had put at stake. In

***Roulette:** you lose all the chips you had set on the roulette table.

***Toto, Betting on the Football Pools:** you lose all you had put at stake.

***Betting of any kind:** you suffer loss according to agreement.

***Pre-declaring:** the pilot was not able to achieve one or all of the pre-declared way points and therefore, does not get his flight recognized, although he might have flown 1000km (comparable to losing the 1000 Euro). (*Remark:* At the German Decentralized Competition DMSt the pilot would only lose 10% of his points).

6th Feature: if prediction was wrong, all you had put at stake (money etc.) goes to the organizers of these games

***Roulette:** all the chips go to the bank. Therefore Casinos are very, very rich...

***Lotto:** Organizers make a lot of money

***Toto, Betting on the Football Pools:** the same.

***Betting of any kind:** according to agreement.

***Pre-declaring:** IGC, FAI invented the pre-declaring betting game (see Sporting Code¹). To be a little bit ironical, the consequence of this is that, if we look back the

last 50 years, all the millions of flights and millions of kilometers which were not flown, because the pilots had lost the pre-declaring game, "belong" to IGC, FAI as the organizers of this pre-declaring betting game. To be honest, if we take it with a smile on our face, we should actually congratulate IGC/FAI for this enormous success and the countless numbers of not flown or not recognized flights it has accumulated.

It is quite interesting to note that, unintentionally with the pre-declaring of way points, the sporting organization IGC /FAI has created probably one of the most anti-sporting and sport preventing rules ever.

In the Table all the discussed features of the non-sporting games are compared with the features of pre-declaring.

Conclusions

* Pre-declaring fits well into the Table.

* We note that Roulette, Lotto, betting etc. are not considered to be sporting games suggesting this to be true also for pre-declaring.

* Features in detail show (according to the method of analogy) that pre-declaring is a betting game the pilot has to perform before take-off. Betting is done on the waypoints and therefore on the performance (distance). The pre-declared flying performance will be recognized only if the pilot wins the betting game.

* Betting on a sporting performance is not considered sport. For example, sport betting includes Toto, betting on football pools, betting on horse racings etc.

* Normally, betting and sporting games are strictly separated. For professional football players it is forbidden to play football and at the same time to bet on games they are involved in. Jockeys will be put on trial if they do both - the horse racing and corresponding betting. The reason for this is that the sporting and betting goals may stand in severe conflict with each other, especially if a lot of money is involved.

* In soaring: For example, a pilot has pre-declared 750km to get a diploma, but although the weather during flight might be improving, promising 1000km, he still has to follow the "betting goal" of 750 km and not the "sporting goal" for maximum distance which would probably enable him to fly the 1000km.

* It is interesting to note that although IGC/FAI, Barron Hilton Cup, DMSt etc. are sporting organizations, they require "betting" prior to anything else for the recognition of sporting (flying) performances.

Final conclusion

From a philosophical point of view, it might be a fundamental problem for IGC/FAI that the "Pre-declaring Betting Game" stands in conflict with the statutes and basic intention of IGC/FAI to be a sporting organization – and not to be a betting organization demanding betting as a "*conditio sine qua non*" for the recognition of sporting (flying) performances.

Recommendation

From a historical point of view, pre-declaring was introduced in the early times of cross-country flying to enable Official Observers to go to the pre-declared turn points for evidence.

Later, photos taken of the way points would do the job as well. But, for better identifying the turn points, pre-declaring was still regarded to be necessary.

With the advent of GPS and IGC-approved flight recorders the pre-declaring lost its significance for the clear identification of way points.

As IGC now intends to remove photography from the Rules and also to rewrite the Sporting Code, this might be a good occasion to re-think the pilot's pre-declaring and consider its complete elimination.

Acknowledgments

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References

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Table

Non-sporting games defined by six features, in comparison to pre-declaring

GAME	PREDICTING GUESSING SETTING OF	STAKE PAYMENT SACRIFICE	WINNINGS PRICE, REWARD if prediction was 100% correct	PARTLY WINNINGS if prediction was partly correct	LOSS if prediction was wrong	WINNINGS of ORGANISATIONS
Roulette	numbers 0-36 even or odd black or red	chips (money)	one or more chips	less than would have been possible	set chips	CASINOS set chips
Lotto numbers pool	a set of numbers	money	a multiple of stake (maximum)	multiple of stake, less than maximum	stake payed money	Lotto payed money
Toto betting on pools	result of 12 football games (1, x or 2)	money	multiple of stake (maximum)	multiple of stake, but less than maximum	stake payed money	Toto stake payed money
Betting	one or more possible events	according to agreement	according to agreement	according to agreement	according to agreement	according to agreement
Pre-declaring	way points for maximum distance	maximum distance without pre-declaring	maximum distance (=equal to stake)	pre-declared distance, but less than possible	whole distance	IGC / FAI "whole distance"