

Key Outcomes

The club addressed a serious near-miss incident on Saturday involving two motor gliders (Bob and Barry) that nearly collided over the runway 30/34 intersection with approximately 100-150 foot separation. *12* The meeting established new safety protocols including mandatory line chief operations, enhanced radio communications, improved sight lines, and a volunteer scheduling system to prevent future incidents. *134*

Incident Analysis

What Happened:

- Two motor gliders self-launched simultaneously: one from runway 34, one from the staging area on runway 30 *12*
- Neither pilot heard the other's radio call; Barry (on 34) first saw Bob when directly underneath him *15*
- Separation was only 100-150 feet vertically *2*
- Bob was carrying water (heavy), Barry was dry; reversed conditions would likely have caused a midair collision *2*

Root Causes Identified:

- Zero visual sight line between runway 34 threshold and staging area position 1 *67*
- Motor glider cockpit noise severely limits radio reception *8*
- Situational awareness breakdown during pre-takeoff checklist with unfamiliar configuration *8*
- FLARM ineffective on ground due to antenna orientation and terrain *910*

Infrastructure Changes:

- **Bush clearing project:** Airport manager will cut sight line from runway 34 to staging area using bush hog (estimated several thousand dollars) *1112*
- **Camera system:** Install Wi-Fi cameras at runway 34 threshold and weather station for real-time monitoring from staging area *13*
- **Motion-activated warning lights:** Install flashing lights on runway 34 visible from staging area to alert of taxiing aircraft *14*
- **Staging area layout:** Position 1 (ready position) must remain clear; first arriving glider parks in position 2 *1516*

Operational Changes:

- **Mandatory line chief:** Adult line chief required in staging area with radio authority to coordinate all departures *41718*
- **Radio protocol enhancement:** Runway 34 departures must contact staging area line chief (terminology to be refined to avoid FAA "clearance" language) *51920*
- **One glider at a time:** Only one glider beyond hold short line at a time; no more lining up multiple aircraft *21*
- **Radio check mandatory:** Must complete radio check with line chief before crossing hold short line *1722*
- **Visual scan required:** All departing pilots (both runways) must visually scan intersection during takeoff roll *523*

Equipment Purchases:

- Four new ICOM radios with rooftop antenna, 50 meters coax, and headphone jacks for line crew and backup tow pilot use *24*
- Sufficient radios for each line crew member to carry individual unit (not shared) *2425*

Communication Standards:

- Motor gliders must announce taxiing on Alpha or Charlie to runway 34 (intersection or full length) 19
- Wind noise mitigation mandatory: duck behind windscreen/car or cover radio with hand before transmitting 26
- All pilots must monitor CTAF 123.05 for minimum 5-6 minutes before departure 27
- Pilot-controlled lighting system explored (click radio 5 times to activate beacon/warning light) 2728

Volunteer Program Established

Motion Passed:

- Club members not serving as instructors or tow pilots will rotate as scheduled line chiefs 2930
- Schedule-based system (not purely volunteer) to ensure coverage 2931
- Out-of-area members and those unable to participate can opt out; participation requirements to be refined 3032
- Elizabeth volunteered for first Saturday shift 3334

Training Requirements:

- Adults will train new line crew (not youth training youth) 2531
- All line crew must complete wing runner course with certificate in personnel folder 25
- New volunteers must study operating procedures on mendensoaring.org before serving 35

Line Crew Standards

Responsibilities:

- Maintain constant situational awareness of all traffic (gliders, tow planes, jump planes, powered aircraft) 436
- Monitor CTAF continuously; each crew member carries individual radio on person (not in cart) 2536
- Rotate through line assisting all pilots, not just waiting for next launch 26
- Use PureTrack with "all aircraft" selected to see both gliders and powered traffic 2637
- Verify pitot probe installed, tail dolly/wing wheel removed, spoilers closed before each launch 38
- Watch landing gliders for gear-down confirmation 38

Equipment:

- Each line crew member brings own water, food, sunscreen for full day 36
- Cell phones prohibited on ramp except for PureTrack traffic monitoring 2536
- May use phones during lunch breaks in office building 36

Runway Crossing Discipline

Extreme Vigilance Required:

- Treat runway crossings as sterile cockpit environment; minimize conversation in golf carts 3940
- Do not cross immediately after glider/tow plane airborne; wait for potential rope break return or training pattern 41
- Watch for difficult-to-see aircraft profiles on final (especially without landing lights) 4142
- Golf cart passengers (tourists, students) must be briefed that crossing is critical phase requiring silence and vigilance 40

Crossing Reduction Targets:

- Tow gliders to staging area later in day (e.g., 10am vs 8am) to eliminate multiple back-and-forth trips 1743
- Use Bliss Road for car travel between staging area and main hangar when possible 43
- Double up golf cart missions; combine errands rather than multiple single-purpose crossings 17

- Consider cutting brush on golf cart road from Bravo taxiway to runway 30 as alternative crossing route *42*

Skydive Coordination

Current Situation:

- Jump plane now operates from staging area (runway 30), not runway 34 *4445*
- Performs straight-in approaches from 14,000 feet without pattern entry *44*
- Club pulled out in front of jump plane twice in past three days *45*

Actions:

- Communicate with jump plane operators about landing glider recovery trajectories to western staging area corner *46*
- Request radio upgrades (acknowledged as difficult given club's own recent violations) *4547*
- Explore requesting jump plane use runway 30R (dirt runway) - likely unsuccessful due to tricycle gear safety concerns *47*

Insurance and Liability

Club Liability Insurance:

- Club currently has only aircraft insurance, no general liability coverage *48*
- Jim L will obtain quotes from Heffernan (formerly Costello) for liability insurance and other club coverage options *2448*
- Insurance needed to support line crew operations and volunteer program *48*

Airport Relations

Control Tower Discussion:

- Jim L strongly opposes control tower but acknowledges it would have prevented Saturday's incident *10*
- FAA would likely mandate tower (or end soaring operations) if fatal accident occurred *1011*
- Proactive safety improvements aim to prevent circumstances that would trigger tower requirement *11*

Airport Manager Feedback:

- Generally pleased with club operations *21*
- Primary complaint: gliders remain beyond hold short line too long *21*
- New one-at-a-time protocol addresses this concern *21*

Hot Spot Recognition:

- Runway 30/34 intersection already identified as hot spot in airport diagram supplement *49*
- Sight line clearing project addresses FAA-recognized safety concern, potentially aiding approval and funding *49*

Pending Confirmation

- Exact radio terminology for runway 34/staging area coordination (avoid FAA "clearance" language) *520*
- Volunteer schedule implementation details (frequency, training, opt-out process) *303234*
- Liability insurance quote and coverage options *24*
- Camera system specifications and Wi-Fi connectivity in remote staging area *13*
- Motion-activated warning light system design and pilot-controlled lighting feasibility *142728*
- Bush clearing project cost estimate and timeline from airport manager *1112*
- PureTrack feature request: checkbox selection for gliders + free flight aircraft only (vs. radio buttons) *2937*

- Jump plane parking relocation from landing area to car parking zone 50

Action Items

- **Jim L:** Obtain liability insurance quotes from Heffernan; explore club insurance options 2448
- **Jim L:** Coordinate with airport manager to flag and execute sight line clearing project 1112
- **Jim L:** Purchase four ICOM radios with accessories (completed or in progress) 24
- **Stacy:** Create volunteer line chief schedule; identify pool of available members 1529
- **Club members:** Sign up on WhatsApp flying info section day before flying (including self-launchers) 5152
- **All pilots:** Download and review operating procedures from mindensoaring.org 35
- **Line crew:** Complete wing runner course; file certificates in personnel folders 25
- **Working group:** Define radio terminology for runway 34/staging area coordination 20
- **Club:** Communicate with jump plane operator about recovery traffic patterns and parking location 4650
- **Club:** Submit PureTrack feature request for multi-category aircraft filtering 29

Membership Requirements

Self-Launcher Integration:

- All self-launching motor glider pilots must join Minden Soaring Club (\$100 annual membership) 51
- Must sign up on WhatsApp daily flying list to support tow pilot scheduling and pilot accountability 5152
- Must monitor traffic flow before engine start and announce taxi on CTAF 1952

Meeting Context

Meeting dedicated to John Gatfield, Jim Lee's friend who died in sailplane accident during competition (won day one, killed day two). 1 The near-miss incident occurred during busy operations with eight gliders lined up in staging area and two line crew members. 53