

New OLC Features, March 2023



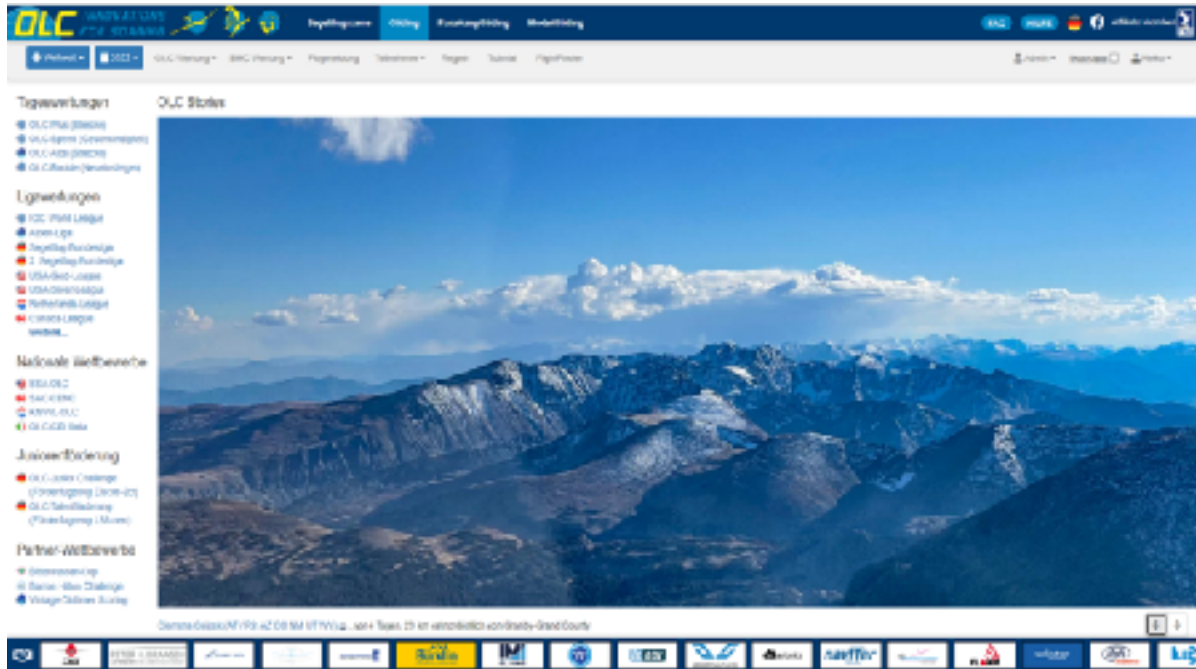
This article introduces some exciting new features that have been added to the world's leading online gliding contest - the OLC - in recent years and recently. Among other things, it highlights powerful but often little-known features and introduces and explains innovations such as cloud animations over flight paths, flight comparisons and OLC Live.

1. The Gliding Landing Page

The Gliding entry page has been redesigned:

On the left in the selection list the most important daily and league ratings, National and Partner Competitions as well as the relevant lists for the sponsorship awards.

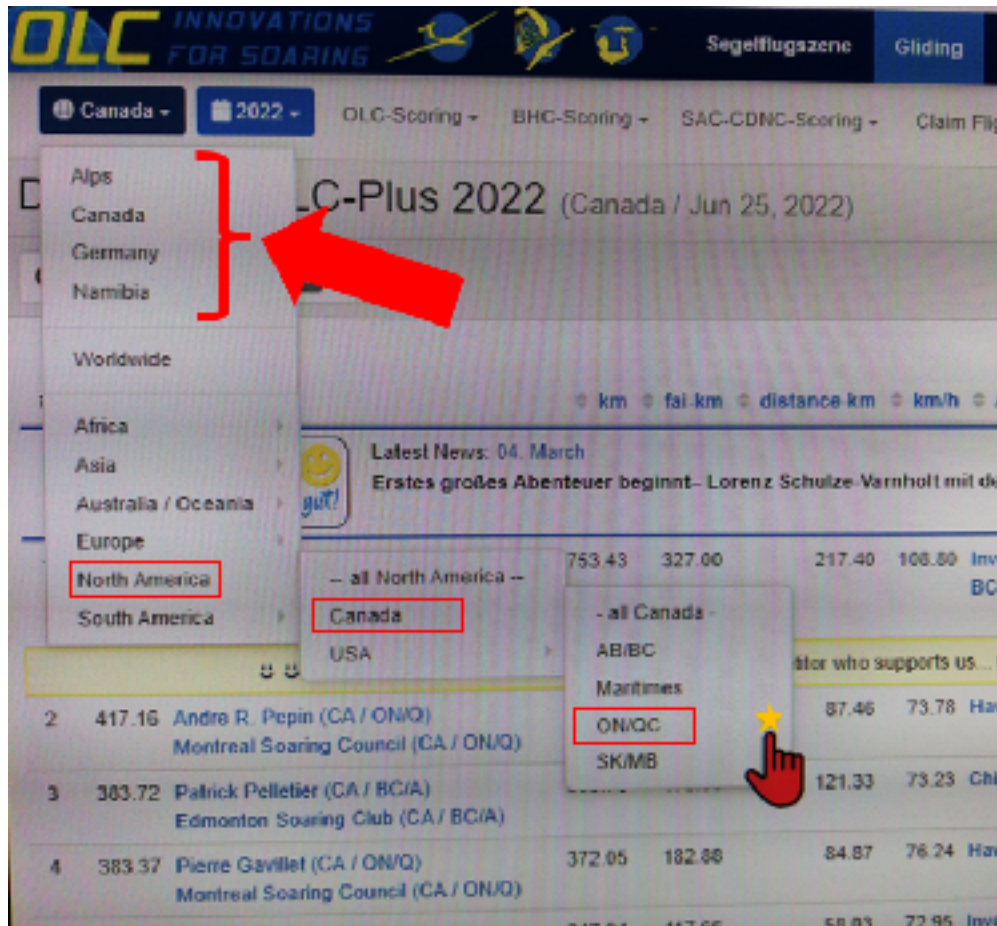
Furthermore, a large image of recently reported flights is displayed, which is constantly renewed.



One can click this also with the help of the arrow keys on the right independently further. Clicking on the image will immediately take you to the corresponding flight information page.

2. Country Favorites

The selection of certain countries through the three menus, e.g. "North America – Canada – ON/QC" can be saved, if logged in and click on the star to the right of the selected country. This way, the next time you click on the country selection ("Worldwide"), the selected country will immediately appear as a favorite in the first selection window and can be opened with just one click.

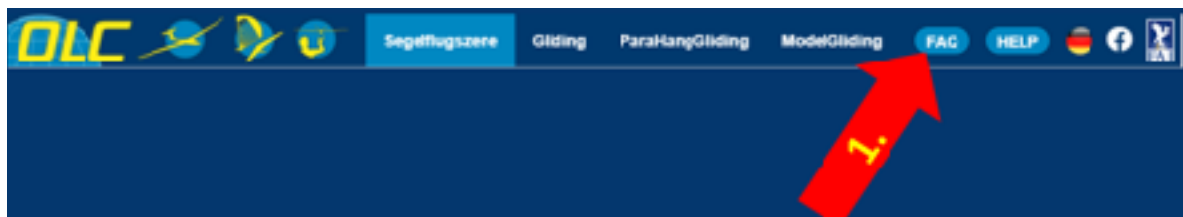


In this example "QN/QC" is selected and marked - "Alps, Canada, Germany and Namibia" are added to the favorites list, already.

3. Helpdesk

The OLC helpdesk handles around 600 tickets a year. At peak times, this can be as many as 30 to 40 per week, with some tickets often requiring more than an hour to analyze the problem and resolve it.

In order to minimize the workload of our volunteer HelpDesk staff member Jürgen Wilken, we ask that you always study the FAQ first to see if the problem is described there and if a solution is suggested.



We found that around 90% of all tickets can be solved by standard FAQ answers – if the person requesting would have taking a closer look at the details. 25 potential cases alone are described in detail in the FAQ flight section, and another 20 or so cases in other sections. If you still get stuck despite all the help in the FAQs, it is best to select the Help button from the flight information page. This way, the relevant flight link is directly integrated into the email and facilitates the analysis of the case for Jürgen. Even if the problem is not related to a flight at all, the flight and personnel data still enable a faster analysis!

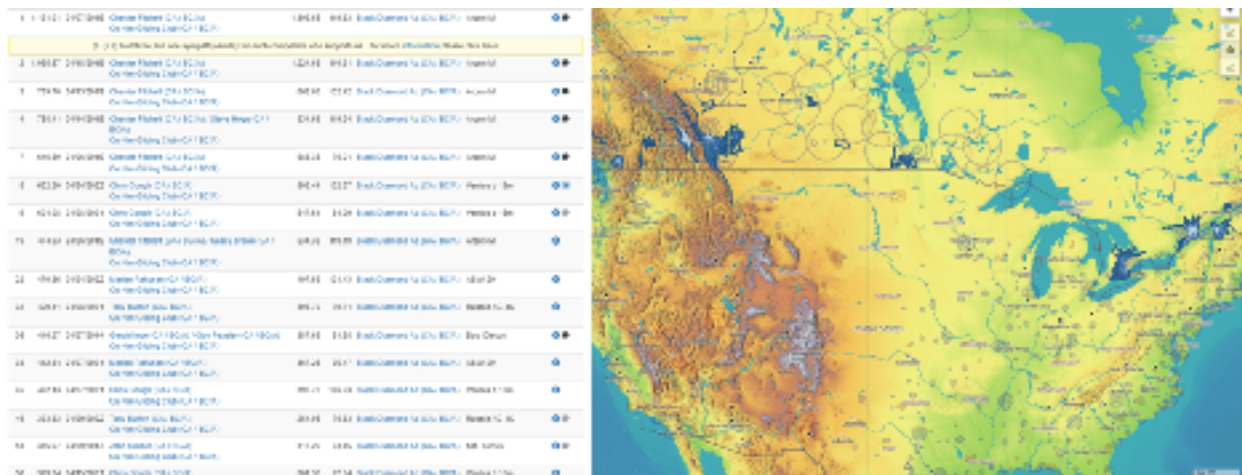
4. OLC-FlightFinder

The FlightFinder, which was introduced a few years ago and is very popular, has been redesigned somewhat. As an example: In the "Scoring Region" window, a single or multiple countries can now be selected, but also, for example, "Alps".

Here is a processing example to see what has been possible so far in the Canadian springtime (March and April):

 A screenshot of the 'FlightFinder' web application. The interface is light gray. At the top, it says 'FlightFinder' and 'Test result: Query: 145 Computing Time: 3762 ms'. Below this is a 'Scoring region' dropdown menu, which is circled in red and shows 'Canada' selected. Below that are four input fields: 'Club', 'Target location', 'Pilot', and 'Aircraft'. Further down are 'From' and 'To' date pickers. To the right of these is a 'Season' dropdown menu, circled in red, showing '2018' selected. Next to it is a 'Minimum points' input field, also circled in red, with '200' entered. At the bottom right, there are two buttons: 'Filter' and 'Reset'. A red arrow points to the 'Filter' button.

The result shows 345 flights over 200 points since 2007, most of them from Invermere, but Hawkesbury, Black Diamond and St. Dominiques have also been doing well:



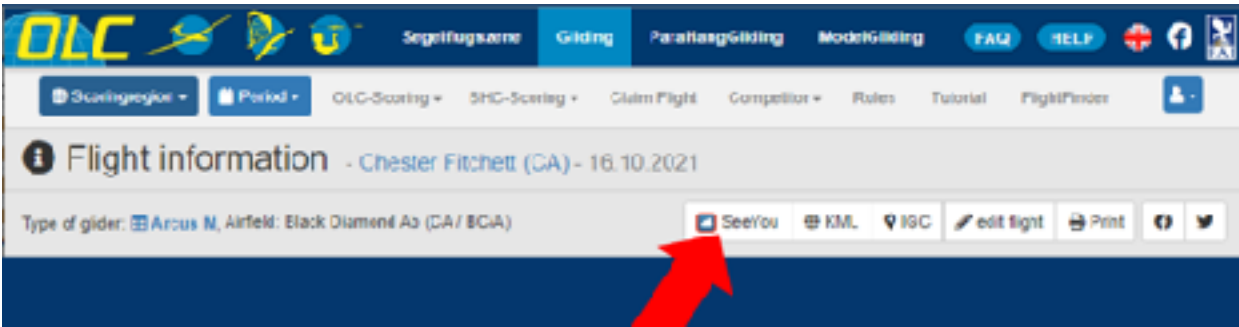
By clicking on the flights and on the "+" button on the right side of the map, the related barograms are displayed (more about this later).

The numbers from the OLC-FlightFinder database speak for themselves.
Oct. 2006 – today:

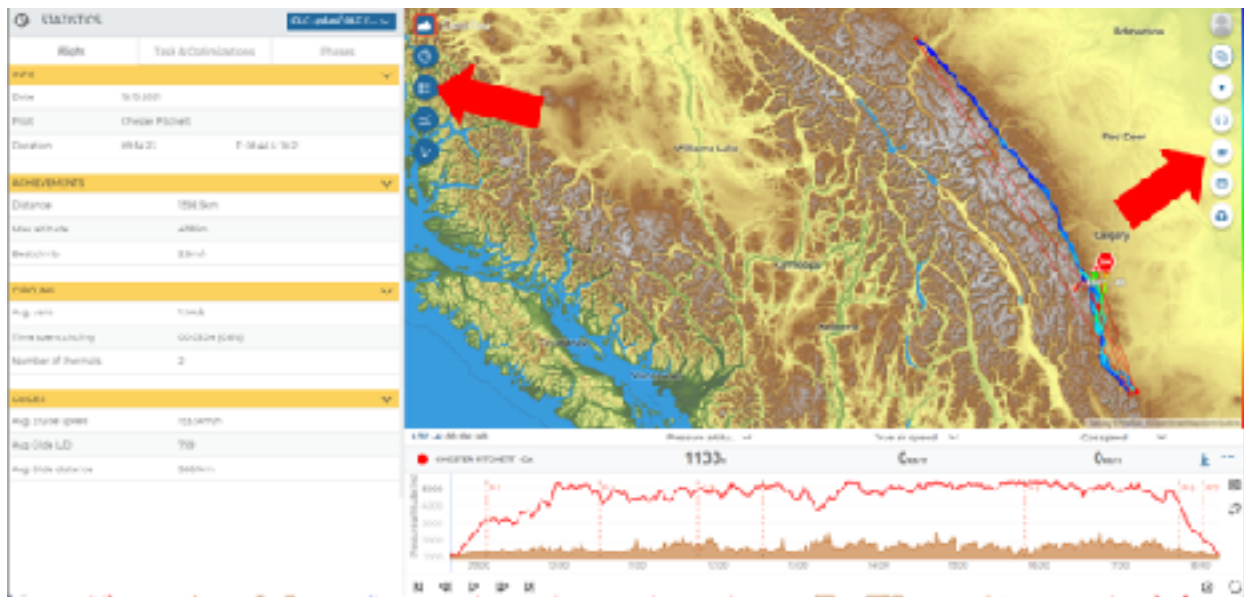
- > 1.77 million flights!
- > 30,000 pilots
- > 2,000 airfields
- > 2,000 clubs
- > 800 aircraft types

5. Open in SeeYou-Cloud

Selected flights can be opened from the flight information page directly in SeeYou with one click:



There the various SeeYou analysis functions and the 3D option can be used without further SeeYou login data and without requiring a SeeYou license:

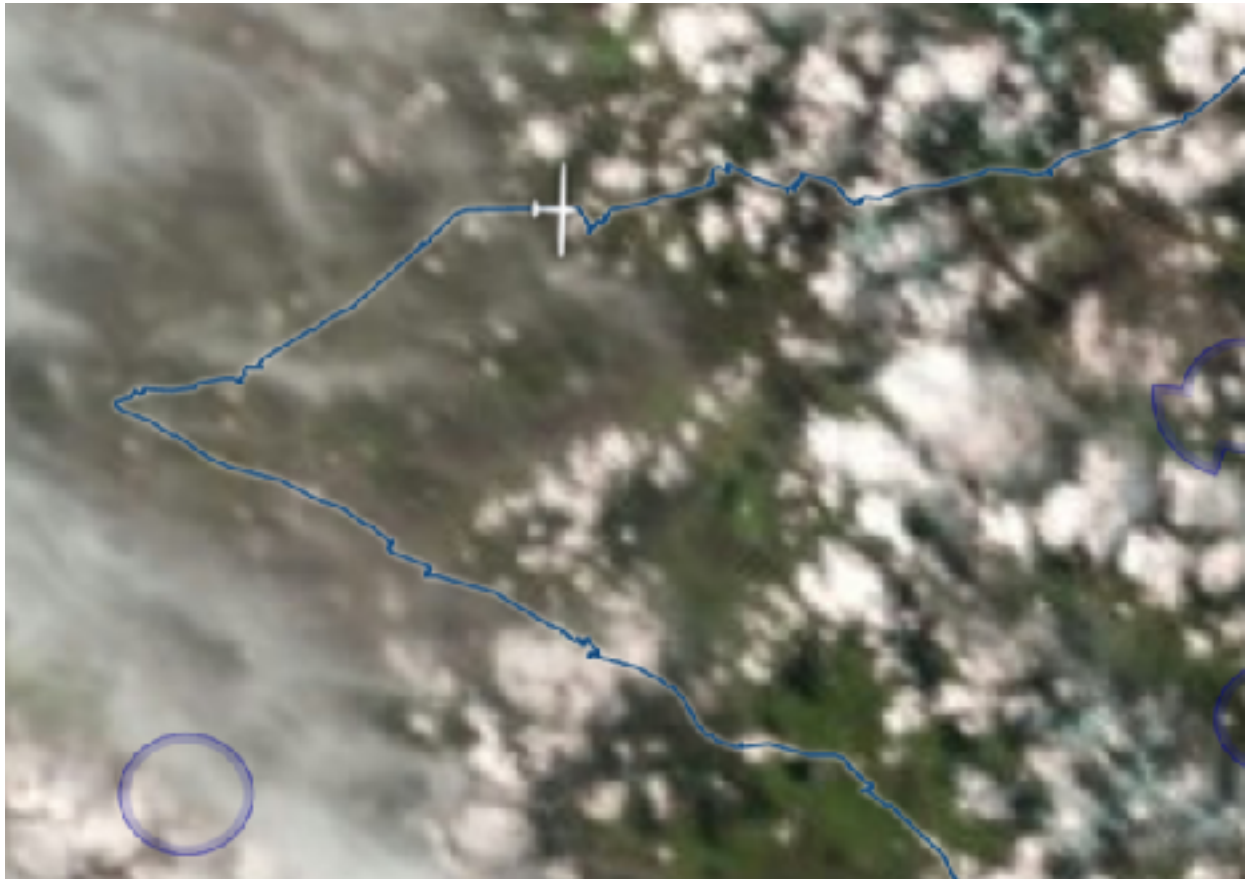


6. Cloud Images & Animation

By click on the cloud symbol,



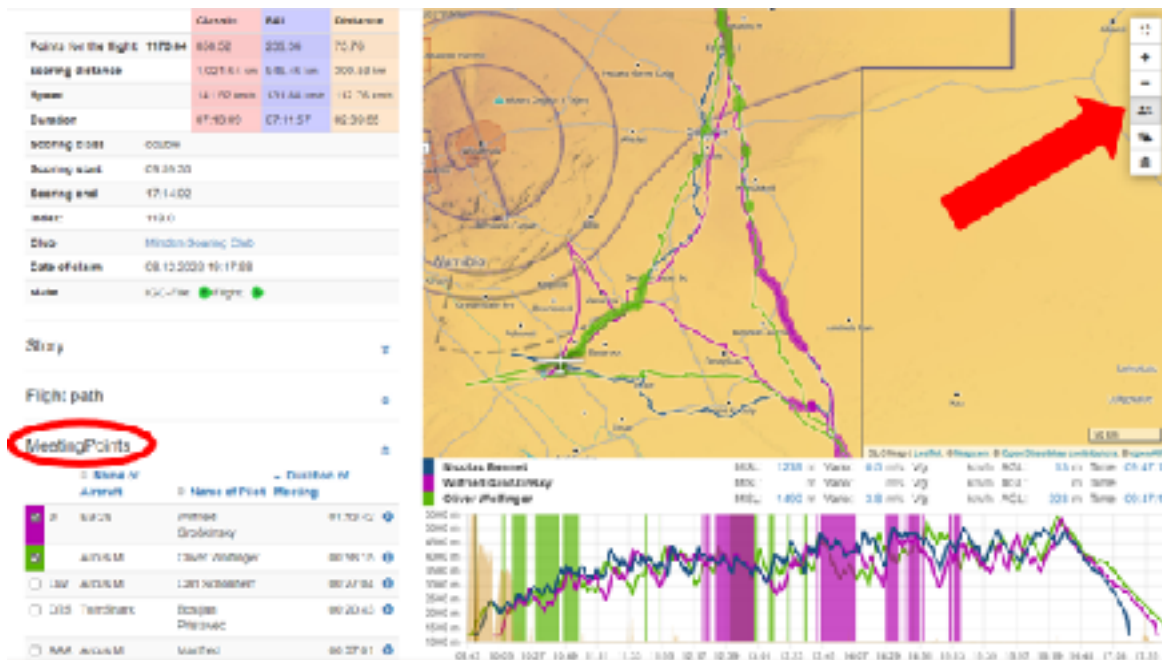
.... a high-resolution TopMeteo satellite images is displayed over the flight area:



Moving the mouse along the time axis of the barogram, will deliver a good overview of the cloud layer in 15-minute increments. This function is provided free of charge for all logged-in OLC users in cooperation with TopMeteo.

7. Compare Flights

Comparing flights was previously only possible via the MeetingPoints. This function has also been improved: Clicking on the button marked with the red arrow below, displays the respective meeting points in color in the flight path and on the barogram:



New is the possibility to compare flights, even if no MeetingPoint could be determined. Multiple flights from a ranking list can be selected and animated on the map and barogram. This means, not only select flights from the Meeting Points list can be selected, but flights from any list, such as the daily ranking list, the FlightFinder result list, the pilot's own flight log or the club sport profile. This makes quick analyses and comparisons possible.

To do this, best way is to click on "Map" from a list (daily rating, flight log, club sport profile, etc), first.



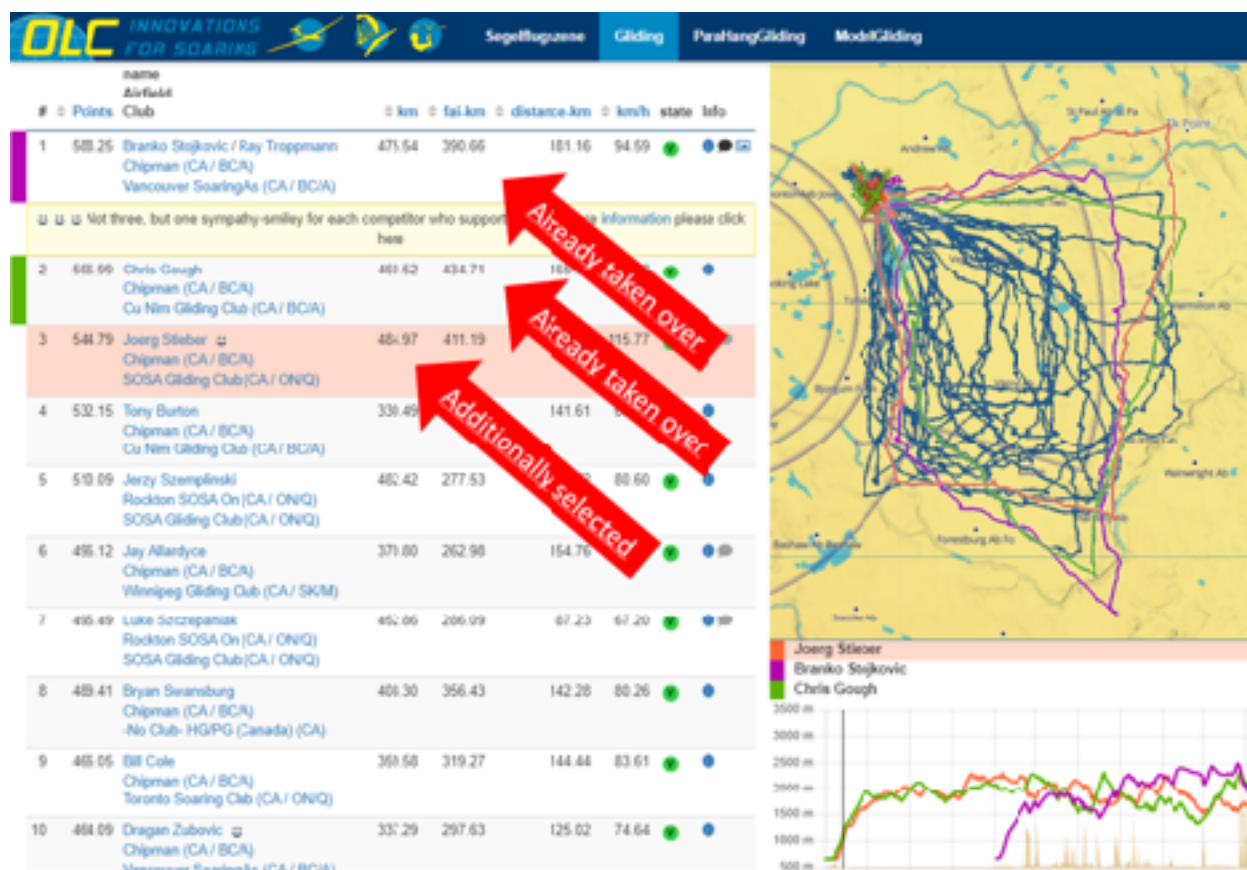
There the first desired flight can be marked:

#	name	Airfield	Points	Club	km	km	km	km	km/h	state	info
1	588.25	Branko Stojkovic / Ray Troppmann	475.54	390.66	181.16	94.59					
		Chipman (CA / BCIA)									
		Vancouver Soaring As (CA / BCIA)									
2	566.99	Chris Gough	462.52	434.71	165.93						
		Chipman (CA / BCIA)									
		Cu Nim Gliding Club (CA / BCIA)									
3	544.79	Joerg Stieber	484.97	411.19	151.39	115.77					
		Chipman (CA / BCIA)									
		SOSA Gliding Club (CA / ON/O)									
4	532.15	Tony Burton	330.49	246.79	141.61	68.06					
		Chipman (CA / BCIA)									
		Cu Nim Gliding Club (CA / BCIA)									
5	510.09	Jerzy Szemplinski	482.42	277.53	154.72	80.60					
		Rockton SOSA On (CA / ON/O)									
		Rockton SOSA On (CA / ON/O)									

Zoom and center the map a little bit and keep the flight path with the "+" button to open the barogram display:



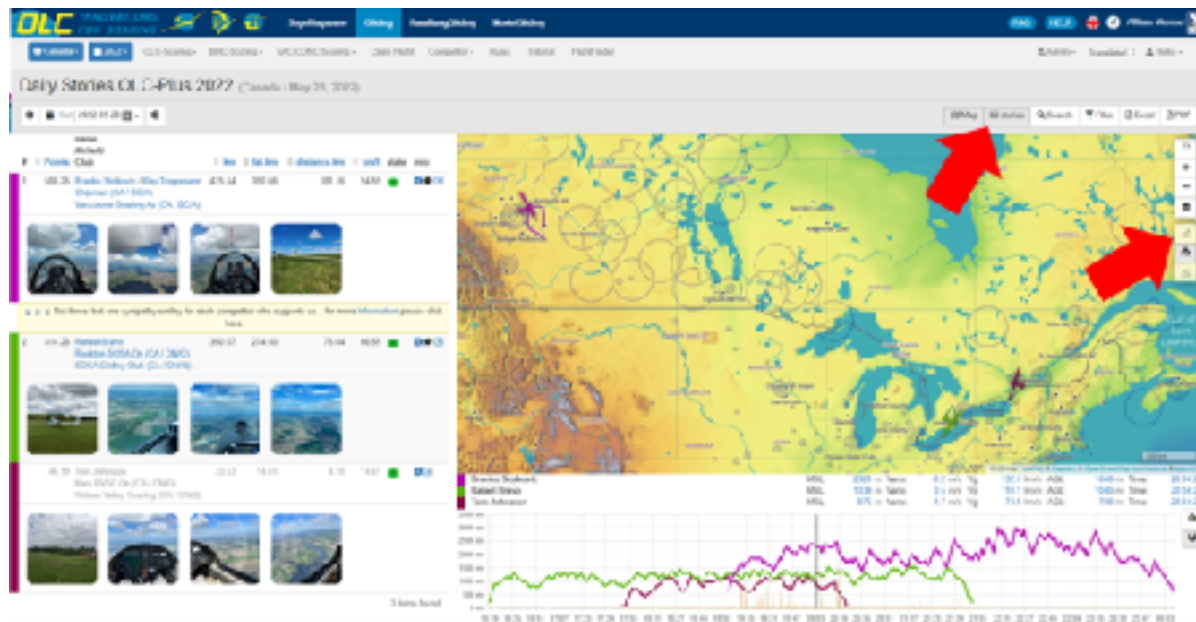
A second and further flights can be marked and displayed on the map and barogram in the same way. The flights are marked in the same color in the list as in the barogram and as a flight path:



This example shows how Nick Bonniere's five best flights in 2022 out of Hawkesbury/ON were marked and displayed:

With "Stories" all flights are then provided with shortcuts of the uploaded pictures and thus allow quick comparisons of the weather conditions in different areas.

For this, the map and the previously described inclusion of the flights in this map is helpful:

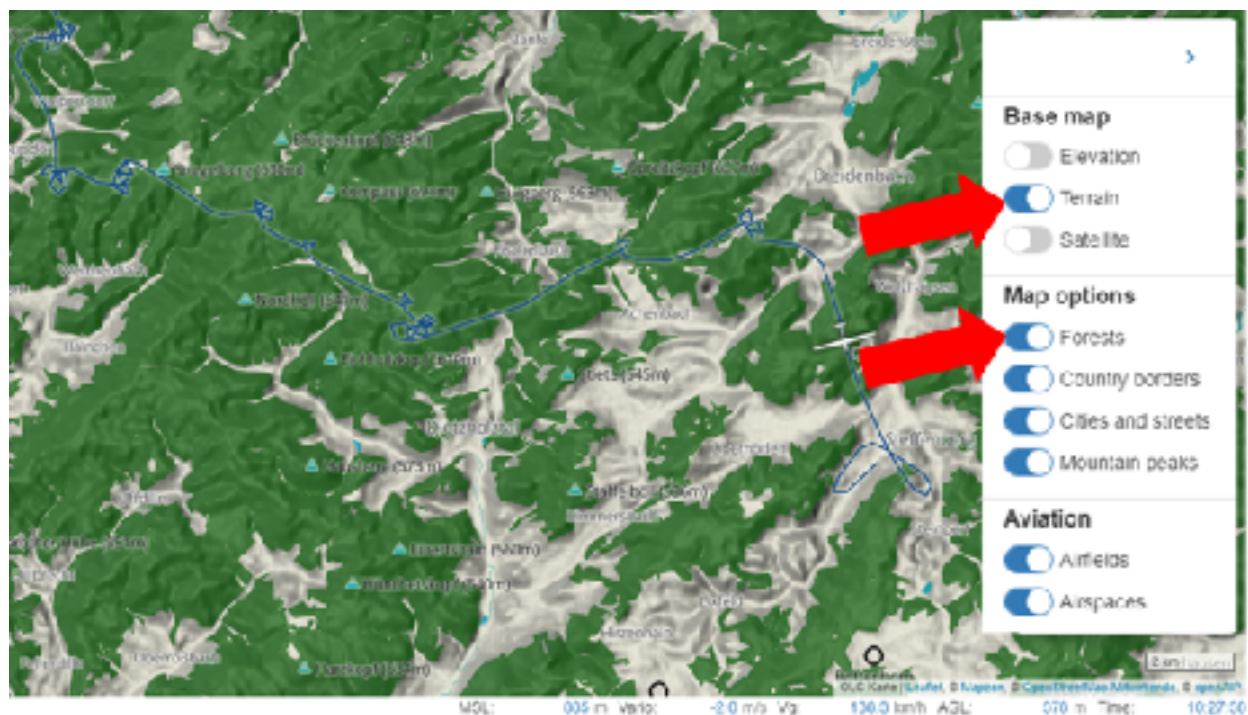


This example compares three flights at same day by pictures, one in BC/A, the other two in ON/Q.

9. Map Management

As a preparation tool for foreign flight areas (for example to prepare for a competition or a soaring camp), the map display "Forests" has proven itself. Remark: Best to set "Terrain" beforehand.

Here is an example flight path that led to an outlanding (in Germany, where there are much more relevant forests to trigger thermals).



If you want to analyze the outlanding in more detail, the elevation or terrain maps are available up to 500m resolution.

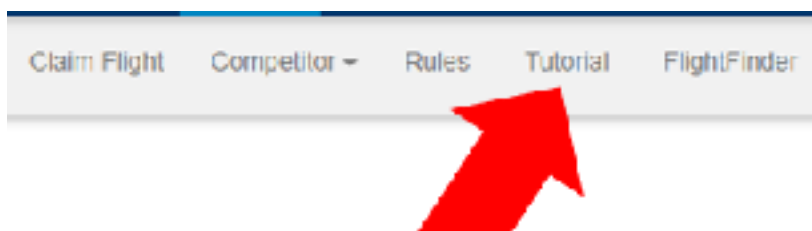
Above the 300m threshold, OLC automatically (!) switches to the high-resolution satellite photo mode. With this, details are now much better visible.



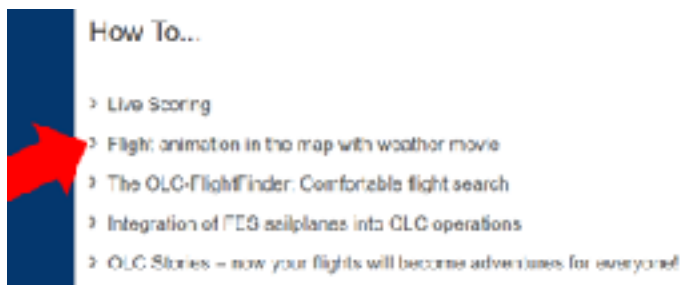
Have a look: The resolution and visible details up to the 10m scale is fascinating!

10. OLC-Tutorial

One feature that is to be expanded piece by piece is the OLC tutorial.



The example "flight animation"



..... describes very nicely and in detail the possibilities of the new map displays and flight comparison options.

11. Communication

The OLC Team acknowledges that communication needs to be improved. Some things have already been done, others are on the long list of ideas:

- OLC Magazine: Number of articles increased about tenfold
- League weather forecast (for Germany), league summary, national league reports, interesting flights, interviews, "... did you know?", etc.
- Facebook ("Onlinecontest",)
- Tutorial, FAQs, HelpDesk, mails,
- OLC Final Event, (seminars, contests,)
- planned: Views, Likes, Followers, Re-comments,
- missing: insta-stories/reels, YouTube videos, etc. (should anyone feel impassioned to support the voluntary OLC in this, please give us a signal)

12. OLC-Live - A vision has now become reality

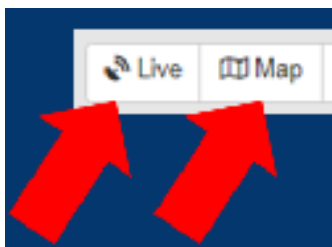
One item from the list of ideas will receive a lot of attention in the coming weeks and months: OLC-Live. The first version is live and can be activated by anyone.

The innovation to bring logger data and the internet together and thereby generate a worldwide daily updated ranking and many other innovations at one stroke was the basis for the development of the OLC more than 20 years ago. Already at that time, the dream was born to be able to present the sport of gliding not only daily updated, but also live. It was not only about a pure presentation of the current positions. Rather, the live presentation should be integrated directly into the current daily ranking.

The main features:

- Processing of FLARM/OGN data
- Live positions and flights tracks in OLC map
- „Online Race Data“ - Live scoring: brings uploaded logger data and live OGN internet data together

Simply click on the button "Live" and preferably also "Map" in the daily ranking list:

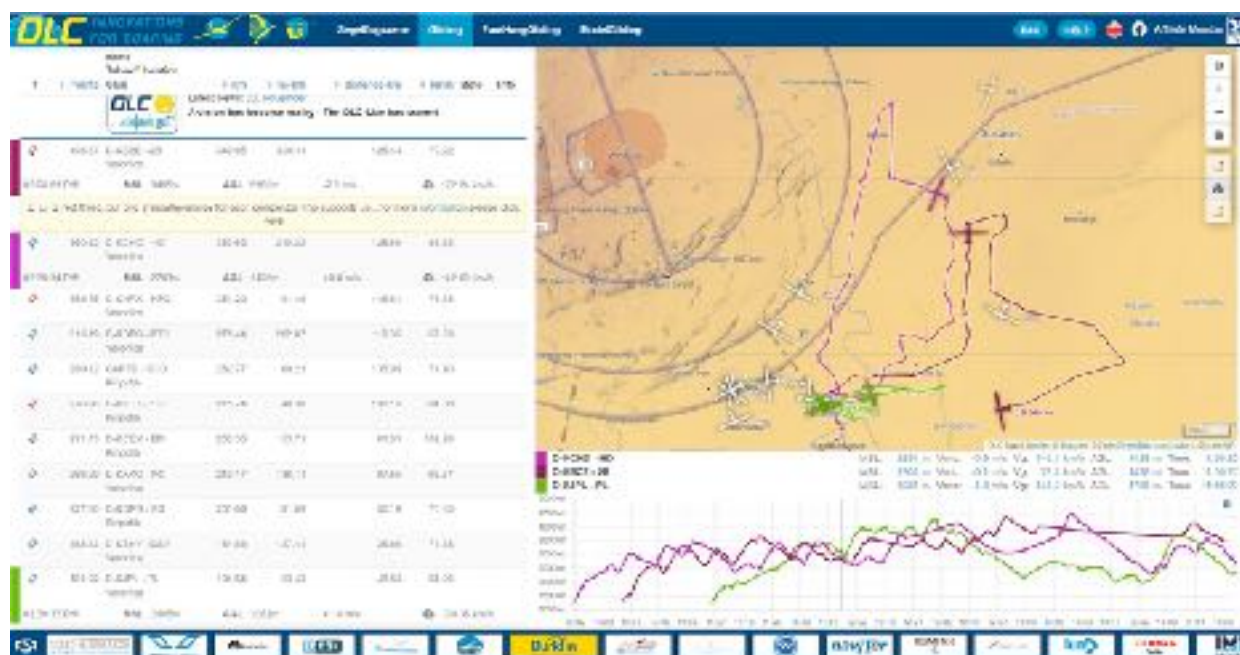


Selecting a glider on the map or in the list shows more live data and the flight path.

To fix the data and the flight path, proceed as already described under "Compare flights".

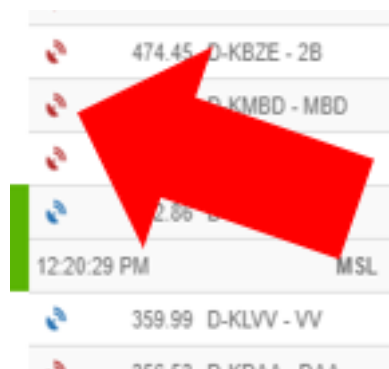
Of course, all proven filter and selection options of the OLC system are still available. For example, to follow the exciting races over Namibia, just select "Namibia" in the country filter on the top left corner and navigate the map into the desired section. Once configured, it almost feels like enjoying the fantastic conditions in Namibia in the cockpit.

Up to 5 tracks can be displayed and fixed, just click on the glider or in the list, then on the "+" button - remove the track by clicking on the "-" button.



With the CTRL key and a mouse click, individual flights can be selected and displayed overlaid. It doesn't matter whether the flight is still being received in live mode or has already been claimed.

The color of the antenna icon indicates the status of the position signal: current live data with good signal in blue, signal lost or weak in red, glider already landed in grey:

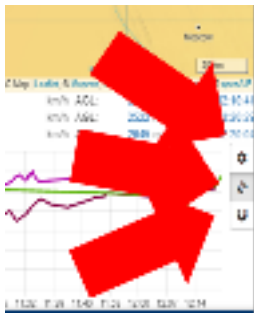


Greatest importance was attached to the performance. Thus, the goal has been achieved that the OLC-Live still works well on devices with weak performance. The update of all daily scores is now done automatically. A reload of the browser data by the user to see the latest flights is no longer necessary. By the way, this also applies if the live button has not yet been pressed.

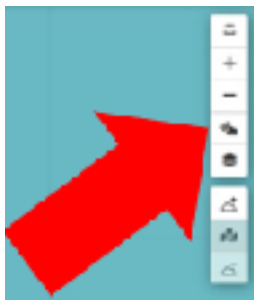
A click on the antenna icon on the right side of the barogram always sets the glider symbols in the map to the last transmitted position.

A click on the magnet icon lets the mouse pointer slide along the barogram and simultaneously shows the glider position in the map. Another click on the magnet symbol fixes the time position in barogram and map. This helps to zoom in and out of the map without losing the glider position.

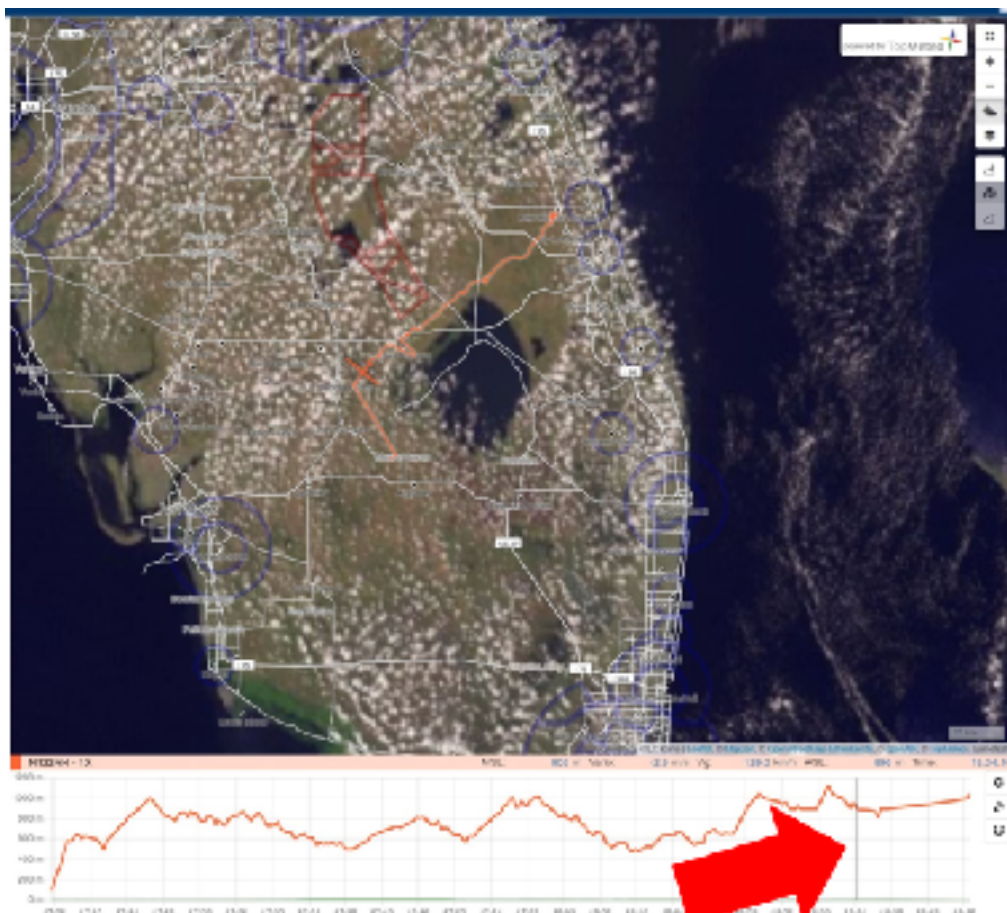
A click on the small gear icon also allows to synchronize the selected flights according to the start time or to switch back to real time.



And a brand new OLC/TopMeteo-feature: As with the flight information page, a live (!) satellite image of the clouds can now even be superimposed over the live flight path. You may switch it on and off by clicking the cloud icon.



When the mouse pointer is moved on the time axis of the barogram, you can see the current cloud development and follow the decisions of the pilot. This function is provided free of charge for all logged-in OLC users in cooperation with TopMeteo.



The current version of the live display is optimized for operation on a PC or notebook. Of course, the display on mobile devices is also very important as well. Optimization for smartphones and tablets will therefore be available in the very near future. OLC system designers are working at full speed on further innovations. Stay tuned for more!

13. Other New Ideas and Conclusion

The OLC is not standing still. New ideas keep coming up. The open points list is long! Unfortunately, in volunteer work not everything goes as fast as one would sometimes like and not every idea can be implemented immediately, but the non-profit OLC team has been a reliable and innovative partner of the worldwide Soaring community for over 20 years and will continue to be so in the future!

The OLC is made possible by a complex IT-system running in the background. The cost of the servers and external software services is significant. The costs are paid from sponsor donations and individual pilots who annually donate 12 Euros. Please help keep the OLC a fantastic archive of the many wonderful flights flown by sailplane pilots. The value of having your flights all cataloged and securely saved in the cloud is worth far more than the cost of a "smiley face."

Visit www.onlinecontest.org/smiley