

ANNUAL REPORT – 2000

IPC FORMATION SKYDIVING COMMITTEE

Due to the late dates of competition for the World Cup the FS committee only met for discussions in November this year. USA hosted the World Cup in of Formation Skydiving in 4 and 8 way, including the female event in Eloy, Arizona. The Committee conducted an open meeting with the competitors, FAI judges and organisers at the World Cup.

COMPETITION RULES

The changes made the recent years have been few and there is little dispute and arguments on the contents and workability of the current set of rules amongst the competitors and judges. Before the competition a meeting was held with the Chief Judge and Event Judges in regards of interpretation of the "double bust" rule, introduced last year, as this had been interpreted differently at various competitions. The judges at the World Cup were in agreement with the interpretation of the rule, thus following the intent of the rule from the FS Committee.

Although the weather was not always cooperative at the larger competitions this year, (US Nationals and World Cup), the new rule for allowance of flexible working time was not put in use at either competition.

Only minor changes are proposed for the rules for 2001. A lack in the rules for collating scores at the end of working time has been brought forward, and will be fixed. This rule change will not affect how teams train or are being judged, it will only affect how scores are collated when there is a major disagreement between the judges at the last point within working time. The new proposal will mean that there will be a minimum of three judges needed to either score a point, or to give an infringement, all other combinations of collations (NJ / NV / Out of working time) will lead to a non-scoring point.

Other changes that do not affect the competitors' performance regarding the judging system will also be proposed.

(See proposal for rule changes for FS 2001)

2000 WORLD CUP OF FORMATION SKYDIVING, 4 AND 8 WAY, AND 4 WAY FEMALE EVENT:

The 12th World Cup and 4th European Championships of Formation Skydiving was held in Eloy, Arizona in the United States from November 3rd to November 12th 2000, together with World Cup in the "Free" events. This was also the 2nd World Cup in the Female Event.

Few teams entered this event, with only 18 teams from 11 nations in the 4-way event, 5 teams from 4 nations in the 8-way event, and 5 teams from 4 nations in the 4-way female event (more than one team per nation is allowed at World Cups). For the European Championships, 10 nations entered in the 4-way event, and 3 in the 8-way event. There were no teams entering in the 16-way event.

The unusually low turnout was reasoned by a combination of high entry fees (USD 900), and a strong US dollar for the European teams, and the fact that the World Air Games is only 7 months away, it was reported that some teams could not afford both competitions.

The competition was interfered by unusual weather for the time and place, and even with the low number of teams, all the events completed the competition with little time left to spare. The competition was well run by Meet Director Bryan Burke, and Head of Organising Committee Larry Hill. The FS Committee wishes to thank the organisers for hosting this competition with the short time from the IPC meeting in Canberra in mind where the pending World Cup had no organisers.

The organiser spent considerable effort to use the live air to ground system for the judging and presentation, and had set up a convenient site for judges and spectators. With a thin wall between them, and windows directly into the judging rooms, the competitors had a good view to what was going on in a judging room, and the judges received instant response from the audience to their actions.

Regretfully, the air to ground transmission systems did not give the desired results in regards to the live judging. According to the judges, 60 out of 270 (22,2%) jumps were not judgeable from the live transmission. This had several reasons, both technical and operative.

Through the running of the competition it became apparent that some teams used the air to ground system tactically, where they did not turn on the transmitters and so had to use the dubbed tape for judging. This may have had a perceived tactical advantage for these teams; the reasons would be that the team could decide which of their cameras being used for the judging process (wide angle or normal lens), and also some teams felt it unfair that they be judged on a less than perfect live transmission signal, where if they used the dubbed video they would be judged with high quality digital footage.

This became very apparent in the final rounds where the whole concept of judging in reserved order of placing was about to fall completely through, where several teams turned off their transmitters. Dubbed judging of the final teams was used for the final round of the competition. Due to the tight positioning between the final entrants, the excitement was great when the participating teams also were inside the viewing area together with the spectators and were applauded through their feats.

The experiences from this competition, combined with the use of tailgate aircraft in Spain deem the use of air to ground for judging purposes unusable.

"Live dubbed judging" will be the basic judging system to be used at the World Air Games, where the judging will be done as the teams have landed and the tapes are dubbed with the teams themselves participating as onlookers as they are being scored.

In view of the low turnout, several suggestions, both from the competitors and the competition management, were made to the committee to split the competition entry fee in a "competition part" and a "logistics part". According to the meet director, if this were the case in Eloy, the competition fee would have been less than USD 300 if the teams were able to manage their own food, transport and lodging.

This may be a necessary exercise for the IPC to conduct in the future, both to re-evaluate the format we currently use for World Cups, which in many minds is the reason for the high entry fees and low turnouts. The exercise may give clarity if the costs are will be the same for the competitors since they still have to pay food and lodging, and that splitting the competition organisation with the food and lodging will cause more problems for organisers by not having control of all the participants.

The FS Committee wish to thank Barry MacAuely, (Canada) who served as Chief Judge together with his staff of Judges, and Rainer "EXI" Hoenle for the work as the FAI Controller.

2000 WORLD CUP IN THE FEMALE EVENT 4-WAY:

Four female teams participated in the Second World Cup of Formation Skydiving for the female event. This is again a lower turnout than hoped for in order to determine if there still should be a female event for Formation Skydiving.

This year, none of the four way nations from the World Championships last year entered. It was argued that the high costs, and relatively short time until the World Air Games were reasons why several nations did not participate at this event, but rather spent their money for training for the World Air Games.

Again, it is a difficult decision to continue with the event as there still is opposition from several countries to the event, and the female event does not seem to grow. In Eloy, during the open meeting, there was almost unanimous support of the female event from all the competitors. There were several teams that had been in contact with other nations (among others Sweden and Great Britain) that could confirm that teams were in training to the World Air Games, and would enter there. The support for the female event among the participating competitors was strong and direct, especially to include the event at the WAG.

It is also noticeable that there is a discrepancy between many of the team's positions, and the position of the corresponding NAC. From several countries, the support from the competitors is not backed by the NAC. In one case, for example, the NAC opposes the female event in general, but will support and send teams if the event will take place.

There is concern that the introduction of a female category also must mean that the general category we have today in Formation Skydiving must be changed to a male category, or a male category be added. This is an opinion that the IPC needs to consider carefully before any final decisions are made. If the introduction of a female category automatically should lead to a change towards a male event, then the committee will suggest the female category not introduced, as the results of this will make it even more difficult for females in several countries to compete, get competition practice, or be selected for national teams.

The FS Committee therefore suggests that the decision of the future of the female event will be based on the interest at and after the World Air Games, based on the participation there. With a four year process to test this event, there should be enough time for teams and nations to react to this becoming an event in general, meaning that there should be general support for the event, meaning considerably more than four nations should show at the World Air Games to prove this.

Due to an unclarity in the minutes from the IPC meeting in Canberra, there has been raised concern that the status of the female event during the WAG has not been formally accepted by the committee and Plenary Meeting as a World Championships. The committee is of the opinion that the female event should be included in the WAG 2001, and that the decision of its formal status must be decided in San Diego.

OPEN COMMITTEE MEETING

The committee hosted the open Committee meeting during with the teams and judges between round 9 and 10 of the competition. Several topics were discussed at the meeting.

The IPC President made a presentation to the competitors on the development of the Mission Plan and the future concerning media, including the arrangement between FAI and Discovery for filming on site. Information about this will be useful for competitors when approaching potential sponsors.

The general rules are well accepted and appreciated by the competitors and the judges, and due to the eight month lead time for changing rules before the World Air Games, only minor changes in the rules are suggested for 2001 regarding collation of scores, and formalising the judging method.

US teams were in particular in favour of a change of the allowed video format to also include NTSC. With the next generation of dubbing stations using computers and editing software, all video equipment already being in the digital format, and the possibility of these teams supplying their own converters, this possibility will be looked closer upon after the World Air Games.

The committee suggested that the dive pools for the 2002 be worked on at the IPC meeting in 2001, and be made available for the teams after the major competitions of 2001 (WAG and World Games), so teams can start their training for the 2002 season with the correct dive pool as early as possible for that season.

COMMITTEE WORK

My appreciation is extended to the members and advisers of the Formation Skydiving Committee that have contributed this year:

Mads Larsen (Denmark), Marc Hoornweg (Netherlands), Fiona McEachern (Australia), Exi Hoenle, (Germany), Sven Mörtberg (Sweden), Anatloy Zhiron (Russia) Frank Mahut (France), and Jerome David (France).

Oslo, 15.11.00

Pål Bergan

Chair IPC Formation Skydiving Committee