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WORLD GAMES 2013 REPORT IPC LIAISON OFFICER

General

The Air Sports at World Games 2013 Cali took place from July 30th through August 4th, 2013 at the Marco Fidel Suarez Air Force Base in Cali, Colombia. Two air sports competitions took part, Parachuting – Canopy Piloting and Paragliding- Accuracy Landing.

While the value of real estate is decided by three factors, being location, location and location, the - marketing - value of a sport is decided by three factors as well: presentation, presentation and presentation. This was the key issue for me as IPC World Games Liaison Officer (WGLO). Now that the itself event has been concluded, I consider that we have met presentation nr. 1 and nr. 2 and that we fell short on nr. 3. Nr. 1 is the sport itself, Canopy Piloting, being visually highly attractive due to high speeds, the sound of canopies and the landings. Nr. 2 has been met as the course was really close to the public and that the event was explained and highlighted by two commentators. On nr. 3 we can improve however. Our results and standings were not instantly available, and not visible to the public on site. This of course is a very raw and basic evaluation but I wrote it down as such to get your attention. Yes, that is presentation too.

I will not repeat the information and recommendations of the report of the 2012 test event, unless this is still valid for the next World Games event, to take place in Poland, 2017. With our attendance in Cali being successful, I positively assume that parachuting will be still part of the Games at that time. Such an attendance I personally fully support.

Selection of athletes

Under the IWGA-FAI contract, 36 slots were allocated for parachuting. The selection event was to be the Mondial 2012, with 30 slots for the top males, 2 slots for the top females, 2 slots for Colombians and 2 slots for wildcards. I communicated this as such during my visit at the CP open meeting in Dubai. This was formalized at the 2013 IPC meeting and the wildcards were given to Israel (male) and the USA (female). Both athletes could not attend in Dubai for acceptable reasons. After that I contacted the athletes with selection information and I provided FAI with a contact list. FAI sent out the formal invitations later on, on behalf of IWGA. Five cancellations were received but replacements were found in line with the Dubai results list. Another last minute cancellation was solved by filling this slot by a qualified Colombian. As such a full roster was established. The formal invitation and registration was done in good co-ordination with FAI. However, there is no fixed protocol for this. This should be established for the future, explaining who does what when.

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Comprehensive event description

36 competitors, 2 Cessna C-208 parachuting equipped Caravans, full competition finished, 9 rounds, 3 rounds per day, finished in 3 days, 1 weather reserve day (not needed), no protests, overall good weather, one 90 by 20 meter pond of excellent quality, 8 judges, including a chief judge, a scoring judge and an electronic distance measuring judge, 2500 tickets for public sold for every day, FAI and IPC staff TV and press on site, 1 live TV program, 1 commentator and 1 translator, Swiss Timing scoring staff for internet results, 1 set of CP BTKS electronic scoring, 1 set of CP Williams sensor course equipment, etc. I could have written a day by day description but that is quite pointless. Everything was there and it all worked out nicely. It took however quite a lot of last minute arranging, with several mayor and frustrating logistic and administrative hurdles. Which were experienced by other sports as well. Me, the Chief Judge, FAI staff and the venue manager had lots of last minute work. I would like to make a special mention and thanks to venue manager Markus Graeber. Without his effort and expertise over the past 2 years we would have had quite some different airsport events.

Competition schedule

For the Games, 1,5 hours per event was envisioned, starting the days with parachuting. With just 36 competitors, this slot gives ample time. Paragliding needed more time, mostly because of changing the winch direction due to wind changes. This led to periods with no aerial activity which is actually a no-no considering public entertainment. With good monitoring of the weather situation and ample communication between both MD's this time can be kept to a minimum. Airsports are weather dependent so any weather hold would have upset the schedule anyway. The schedule was explicitly requested however by IWGA. My suggestion would be to leave this schedule open, with only start and finish times of the day. If IWGA does not allow this, a provisional time schedule would do the trick.

The Meet Director had 2 aircraft at his disposal. He tried two options, using either 1 aircraft, or 2 aircraft simultaneously. With 2 aircraft there was no time gap between all jumpers. While that gives a constant flow of action, the downside was that the CP time slot was left without jumping at the end, and there was not much time to do long interviews, explaining results or showing videos. There was time in between jump-runs of course, but I conclude that the use of 1 AC (with the climbing capacity) is enough. Of course, there should be 2 AC available total, in case of breakdowns or bad weather.

Before the start of the competition FAI had asked CLOC for 2 training days. This in order to let competitors get used to local conditions (heat, altitude) for safety reasons. These were granted by means of 1 official training day and 1 unofficial training day. However, this scheme was not incorporated into the official published IWGA schedule, and not known to local logistic providers. Therefore, on the 1st day of training, there was no food, no drinking water, no tents and no toilets. Only after a substantial and long formal battle some food arrived, late in the afternoon. All this relates to poor communication and decision making. For the next Games, 2 official training days should be officially scheduled, while the cost issue of this will be open for discussion.

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Another important issue in the schedule was that IWGA had put the IPC/CIVL reserve "weather" day as a normal competition day and had sold tickets to the public as such. With a 3 day competition for CP there would have been no real competition on the last day. This turned out to be the case. The last day there was no competition parachuting and only some competition paragliding. There were two loads with parachutists. This reserve day was also the official day of prizegiving. While IPC has advocated in the past the prize-giving should be Olympic style (that is, prize-giving right after the conclusion of an event) that is apparently not in line with IWGA wishes. Prize-giving was set at a specific time and date. This in a way makes sense in order to have the relevant officials and press on site at that time, as in the Games these people are not on site all the time.

The competition rules were established in co-ordination with the CP committee and published by April 2013. There was no carved course, and speed was divided between (water) drag speed and no-drag speed. Also, a semi-final of 18 competitors (no-drag speed) and a final of 9 competitors (distance) was included. The main reason for not having a carved course was the need to have the landings close to the public and to avoid time delays in redoing the course. The use of results from this different competition format is up to the CP committee.

Hotel, food and local transport

All competitors and staff were staying in one hotel. This of course is highly preferable. There were considerable complications with assigning rooms to competitors and staff, which were handled by Rob Hughes from FAI. Original lodging requests by FAI had been changed by the hotel. In allocating the hotel rooms, there should be one standard for all FAI Officials, i.e. either double or single occupancy. For local transport buses were used, with official police escort during the competition days. This shortened the travel times considerably as Cali is a big and crowded city. The hotel and the breakfast were of good quality. Lunch was at the AFB and of good quality, though lacking vegetables. Dinner was at the catering center. This center was a 20 to 30 minute ride from the AFB and by itself the same travel time to the hotel. On top of that, queues were up to 45 minutes. So, after one or two days, practically all jumpers and staff elected to go straight to the hotel for shower and rest and have dinner at one of the local restaurants at their own expense. The catering center was close to several venues for other sports, but for Airsports it was just too far away. A solution could have been to erect more catering centers, or to arrange vouchers for dinner at specific places.

CP and Paragliding had different times start and end times of competition. This led to different travel times from / to the hotel, which implicated separate buses. Furthermore, separate buses were available for staff and competitors. This is recommended for the future.

Venue

Several concepts for the venue were discussed in 2011 and 2012. For 2013 a final concept was decided upon by me and the venue manager, with advice from the course director and chief judge. Finally, during the last days the positioning of some infrastructure like tents and packing place was decided on site. The final positioning of the target area of Paragliding was agreed upon as well. The end result was close to perfect, with only a specific athletes interview area missing. This could have been in front of the grandstands, in the middle. This venue layout can be used for future events. For further information I refer to an aerial picture.

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Entry and exit procedures

Despite the strong 2012 recommendation to ease entry and exit procedures from the AFB this proved not to have been done. As usual, things improved during the event, but the first few days the time delays were unacceptably long. If future events take place at a military base this issue must be taken care of by an improved concept, considering the local circumstances.

Presentation

Commentator

As requested in my 2012 report a commentator and a local interlocutor/translator were present. This proved to be a major advantage in order to present our sport and relay it to the public. (note: this was already proven at the WG 2005 Duisburg edition). The commentator Regan Tetlow is a parachutist himself and was present at all Dubai DIPC and Gulf Cups prior to, and including the Mondial 2012 for the same purpose. He also commentated for the paragliding event - though with less technical knowledge - and aroused and entertained the public between non-Airsports periods. The local translator was bilingual. I strongly suggest, to maintain this formula for future events, if possible for FCE's too.

Competitors

Competitors were hosted in a row of tents where they had their equipment and could eat and relax. These tents were away from the public. The packing took place in a tent adjacent to the fences, so public could talk to competitors. This should be continued for the future, after all, packing is part of parachuting too and it gives the public (some) insight into equipment.

Competitors were instructed to pass the commentator after landing, and to pass close to the fences for interaction with the very enthusiastic public. This was highly appreciated. Also, on the day of the finals, after the last landings, it is essential that all competitors are gathered close to the landing area until the end-results are presented to competitors and to the public. This to generate a apotheosis in enthusiasm.

Public

4 grandstand were erected for the event. This was enough as more would have been too much in relation to the length of the CP course. All tickets were sold out for every day (1000 pax). There was however standing space as well, and not all spectators were on site at the same time. An IPC request to sell more tickets was alas denied by CLOC. Furthermore, the tickets were valid for 1 entry only, once you left you could not re-enter. The suggestions are: Sell 1/2 day tickets and full day tickets. All tickets must give right to leave the venue and re-enter at will. If standing space is available, double the amount of tickets as per envisioned capacity can be sold. In Duisburg 2005 spectators received re-entry stamps on their hand.

Big screen / TV

I had advised after the test event to discontinue the use of a big screen and to have TV's for presentation of scores and interviews. The scores were not readable in 2012. This, with hindsight was a mistake. The image of the TV's could not be seen in the bright light and they were too small to be seen from all places in the grandstands. Also, scores were not visible to public or (IWGA) officials. So, it would have been better keep the big screen and to change the font and format of the scores, and thus allowing live images of interviews, POV from competitors (not live) and images from landings. In principle, one big screen will do.

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Scores and results presentation

Scores for accuracy and distance were relayed from a judge to the scoring judge by means of verbal communication or paper, while speed was calculated by means of the CP sensor input. Furthermore, distance scores were also obtained by an electronic measuring system with 2 camera's in triangle position towards the course. After this, scores were entered manually by the scoring judge. All this is time consuming. We can gain considerable time by having a direct (radio/headset) relay from the judge in the course to the scoring judge. Or, the judge on the course could enter the score directly into the scoring system by means of Wi-Fi. This is something to explore for the future though. On top of this, an option for scoring distance is to use the electronic distance measuring system only. The system should then work with more than 2 cameras, leading them to be closer to the course.

For the scoring of the watergates as a back-up and test a Brazilian camera system with software was put up. This is based on 4 surveillance cameras in line with the 4 gates. The 4 images were put together on a split screen. The cameras gave images but alas the recording system (and therefor review) did not work. However, the images available showed that in this way the scoring of watergates can be done by 1 judge only. Furthermore, these images can be used for showing this scoring criterion by itself, both in real time and in slow-motion afterwards. The Brazilian system was a bit outdated, nowadays much better (even web-based) systems are available.

The available scores as entered into the BTKS scoring system were delivered to Swiss Timing. This company was on site with 2 people and they were responsible for making the scores and standings available on the IWGA result page through the website. These scores were entered manually - despite urges from me and BTKS to have some compatible software - which lead to time delays and needed double checking. For 2017 this should be arranged through one database only. That said, Swiss Timing did a great job.

Furthermore, I feel that scores should be presented in a way easier to understand for the general public. Right now, this is only the case for a score for an individual competitor. When you look at the result lists it becomes more complicated, especially if the overall list is presented together with the disciplines lists. I think that we can learn from other sports, e.g. ice skating. There, result lists with standings are updated automatically after each competitors result. This can be done both for the disciplines separate as for the overall list, with the overall list only showing the total per discipline. A breakdown of scores could only be done for explanatory purposes during pauses between jumping or at the start of the competition day. Also, while I do understand the reasoning for the use of percentage calculation, it does make it more difficult to understand and it slows down the final result of a competition round (let alone of an event). While raw scores have their downsides, they do have the advantage of being immediately available. I urge to CP committee to take action in this matter.

IWGA also had requested a ranking list of the competitors. Data were provided based on the 2012 Mondial results, and FAI provided CLOC with this list. Unknown is if this has been used, they were however published on FAI website on the participating athletes list page.

Information to competitors and staff

Information to competitors (and staff) was provided by means of good old paper prints, posted in the hotel. As there was wireless on the DZ, in the future whatsapp or a specific internet page could be used as well.

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Competition rules

The competition rules (CR's) were available by April 2013. Everyone who has read them must admit they are quite complicated. They have to be in order to describe the event criteria 100% fool proof and unambiguously. However, for media purposes a simplified version would be good. For the Games, FAI had ordered to make static and moving drawings, explaining the (4) disciplines in this CP event, based on input by the CJ and me. These drawings are well made (an example is posted below) and costs were born by FAI. However, they were not sent to IWGA as FAI got no reply from them on the use. The drawings are a really good explanatory tool and should be used for future events. Possibly for other parachuting events as well.

TV / Press

Before the start of the event a message was received that there would be no TV or press on site. The option was to hire a crew or an image switchbox, which was very expensive while FAI budget had already been passed. Fortunately, during the event there was indeed Colombian TV and press. It was very difficult to receive information on which media company would show up and when. Fortunately all parties involved were flexible enough to handle this all. In the end, positive exposure was reached with two live interviews on two separate evenings (female athlete and athlete of the day) and live coverage of CP and paragliding at a competition day. Live coverage of the competition is of course weather and scheme dependent, but the scheme should have this flexibility as in most cases live airing time is fixed.

The placing of TV cameras was an issue though, running with a tight balance between good images and safety. TV crew has a tendency fixate on the images, while CP staff sometimes is over cautious. After all, the judges stand right next to the course too. In my view, examples can be taken from other high speed sports with cameras close by, which incorporate measures like protected places, crash softening material, safety briefings of TV crew, etc.

FAI

As stated above, there were some issues on communication between IWGA and CLOC, and between FAI and IPC/CIVL. Time restraint with FAI staff also was an (understandable) issue. A clear work- and communication flowchart can help in this matter.

FAI had established an excellent internet athletes' page where all information regarding the games could be found. <http://www.fai.org/iwga/athletes-space> I suggest you all have a look at it, for both next WG edition, as for a guideline for other events.

The IPC and CIVL staff was agreed upon by the respective committees in co-ordination with FAI. There was a maximum of 22 allotted slots as per IWGA-FAI contract. Apart from those 22, FAI had sent FAI President John Grubbström, Sec Gen Jean-Marc Badan, Communication Manager Faustine Carrera and Senior Sports Manager Rob Hughes as competition manager. Costs of those 4 people were covered by FAI. While this is FAI's prerogative and protocol is an issue, 4 people might be a bit too much. This is a balance though between protocol and costs.

FAI had arranged for FAI world games clothing for all staff, consisting of pants and polo shirts. Although applaudable, there was no clear protocol for its use. It was used by some staff at the closing ceremony though.

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Staff

In the run up to both the 2012 and 2013 events a lot of internal Colombian strife was present with involvement of the local NAC and CLOC. Basic reasons were responsibility and costs. As can be assumed this can only be counterproductive. So, full cooperation from the local NAC and/or national parachute and PG organizations is a must. And of course, the NAC and national parachute organization must operate in good understanding.

The venue manager must be from or living in the organizing country, or at least be able to speak the native language plus English fluently. For CP this was the case which I think is part of the explanation between the difference of the running of the CP and PG events. If the meet director does not speak the native language, a translator or native assistant meet director must be there. Bottom line, for the meet director competition experience is paramount and should always prevail.

Red tape

Despite good contact with the military, it turned out that the contract for use of the venue was only signed about 1 week before staff arrival. Needless to say what would have happened without a signed contract. So, any contractual agreement for use of a venue must be legally in place for use at the test event and the real games, 6 months before the start of the test event. Contract between LOC and venue must be signed well in advance of the event.

At the time of writing this report there are still several outstanding financial issues between CLOC and FAI and the German Parachuting Federation (DFV), which pre-financed the rent for the distance measuring system to guarantee its availability for the event. FAI has covered all expenses born by CP staff which will appear on the 2013 budget results. A clear definition of expenses to be paid by the CLOC and FAI is a prime. A budget listing all expenses must be available both for the test event as for the Games itself which should be part of an agreement between a LOC and FAI. This agreement must be very specific on dates and status of the training days. A shared project plan with a venue management team including complete equipment/implementation list with clear dates for availability is a must too as this has a direct relation to expenses.

Total jump presentation suggestion

I would like to conclude my report with a suggestion for a total jump video setup: providing images of all parts of the jump, images to be handled and mixed by a producer with a video mixing panel.

- 1 camera on the plane, under the wing with a live connection.
- 1 camera on a high point, showing the final (360 to 540 degrees) turn before the entry gate.
- 1 camera on the ground on the side of the pond, showing the water dragging.
- 1 camera on the ground on the side of the sand course, showing the jump from the entry gate to the landing.
- 1 camera on the ground next to the commentator for interviewing jumpers.
- Scores per jumper and updated results lists with standings.

In this way, constant images can be shown on the big screen. This can be with direct comment on parts of the images, e.g. during exits of the jumpers. Non live images can be mixed with this, e.g. POV video from jumpers with GoPro like cameras.

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Future

Overall, the show of CP was a big success. Paragliding accuracy less so, on the presentation scale that is. FAI should evaluate the attendance of airsports at the World Games. This should include the format of airsports as well, other sports had this successfully adapted in order to generate exposure. Redbull is a prime example of how airsports can be mediatized. For sure, money comes into this equation. But nothing comes for free.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks to everybody who helped me to make the CP competition at the games a success as I perceive it. I would specially like to thank Markus Graeber, Exi Hoenle, Rob Hughes and the Colombian public. I thoroughly enjoyed the job despite the wobbly and sometimes difficult road to the success. I will step down as WG liaison officer at the IPC 2014 meeting, but will be more than willing to help the next man or woman in this position with advice, from a distance and if needed.

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