

REPORT BY THE FAI JURY ON THE FAI WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

FOR CLASS F3A (Radio-Control Aerobatics). Sauce Viejo, Santa Fe, Argentina. November 2007.

Overview

The first R/C Aerobatic world championships on the South American continent, the 25th anniversary, was a successful and enjoyable event. It was organised and executed by the Argentinean Aeromodeling Federation (FAA), from 8th to 18th November 2007, in collaboration with Club Aeromodelistas Newbery, the largest club in Argentina. The ideal facilities and layout of the civil airport at Sauce Viejo afforded excellent flying opportunity for 82 competitors from 32 nations. Although the location was 400km from the entry port of Buenos Aires, this posed no major problems. The number of participants was significantly lower than previous events in Europe, and several teams did not participate.

Pre-event information

Several hard copy bulletins as well as the website, conveyed general and specific information to participating nations. All aspects of the championship, lodging, transportation, costs, rules, local rules, and procedures were covered. Some teams queried the lack of availability of rental vans, but other arrangements were possible. Considerable effort was made to ease the temporary importation of the model aircraft and equipment. A few participants were affected with late arrival of model aircraft, an aspect not under the control of the organizers. Several of the teams had difficulty in transferring funds, since intermediary banks were involved in the process. At the time of registration, at least four teams were required to settle outstanding amounts. The organizers contracted a professional event management company to handle some of the events, functions, transportation, sponsorship, etc. but due to lack of experience, several small items were either not done, or overlooked.

Accommodation, food

Competitors and supporters/helpers were accommodated in the city of Santa Fe and surrounding towns, within easy driving distance of the competition site. Participants were able to choose between various accommodation options. Judges were accommodated in a modest hotel, and transportation was provided on a regular basis. The accommodation in the various hotels was of an acceptable standard and at reasonable cost. Day-time meals for participants, staff and officials were provided at two on-site restaurants.

Practice fields and competition site

Ten practice sites were made available to competitors within reasonable driving distances.

Two flight areas, both facing due South, were arranged on taxiways perpendicular to the main runway, to avoid flying into the sun. Simultaneous flying on two flight lines was possible, due to a requested frequency separation. Not all teams adhered to this request, and as a result, team members were separated on different flight lines. The two sites were adequately separated in distance, and were easily accessible via tar roads. The manoeuvring areas on both sites were clearly and correctly marked. The organisers provided shelter for competitors at each site, and interested spectators had access from a safe vantage point that did not interfere with the smooth running of the event. Crowd control was not always effective and non-accredited spectators were allowed to enter out-of-bounds areas. Both flying sites had a good working layout (judging seats, shade, transmitter impound, frequency scanning, ready boxes, and sound measuring areas). Publicity prior to the event ensured a steady stream of spectators. The local newspaper (*El Litoral*) was signed up as one of the sponsors, and ran regular articles before and during the event.

Model aircraft processing and official practice

Model aircraft processing took place in a large aircraft hangar, primarily on Friday 9th November, with a few more model aircraft being processed on Saturday 10th November. Processing was professionally handled, with two stations in operation, with identical equipment. All procedures were correctly conducted and equipment was of good quality, certified, and calibrated. A few teams arrived late for processing, and some still without the proper documentation. One jury member remarked that model aircraft enthusiasts are not avid readers. Official practice was conducted at the same time, and intermittent light rain caused five teams to miss official practice on Friday, but they were given opportunity on Saturday.

Organisation and execution

The championship was conducted in a very friendly, yet professional way. The contest director was also the event director, and four complete teams were assembled to handle each line and each session of flying. There was no public address system, but competitors were advised in good time to occupy the ready boxes for their flights. Those using electric propulsion devices had their equipment tested for voltage prior to each flight and the model aircraft weighed after each flight. There were no weather delays. A few scheduled commercial flights arrived and departed daily, with no significant disruption to the programme. Frequency monitoring was done at each site, using professional software that was able to record and store data for later analysis. Not a single incident of interference was reported, and a few competitors were using the 2.4GHz technology.

Line directing, timekeeping and sound measuring was done efficiently. Score tabulation was expertly done using the GNAMI TBL-programme, with raw scores appearing within 20 minutes of the conclusion of flights. Flight results were pinned to the inside of two marquees. There was unfortunately no daily bulletin, and no central notice board to convey competition standings and general notices. The standard of flying was high, in spite of the strong wind conditions on all of the competition days. There was a diversity of model aircraft, equipment, and flying styles. Three bi-planes and about 40% electric-powered model aircraft were entered, of which two used contra-rotating propellers. There was only one crash during the competition rounds, equipment failure being suspected. Continuous random checking during the competition for conformation to the specifications, took place.

After six days of intensive competition, new individual and team champions were crowned.

Communication

The line directors were in constant communication with each other, and enough English-Spanish speaking personnel were on site to handle language difficulties. The officials were always willing to answer queries from team managers, contestants, supporters, and officials. Members of the model press had access to most information, and had been afforded free internet access from the administration centre. The championship web site was regularly updated with scores.

Conduct of jury and judges

Two protests were lodged, and after deliberation by the FAI jury, both failed. Detailed proceedings of both protests have been forwarded to the FAI secretary general. The contest management adequately dealt with a few informal queries. The jury members were well versed in the Sporting Code requirements and complemented each other in their different fields of expertise and experience. The jury members were always on-site and available to answer questions and queries at all times.

Twenty judges from five continents were used in the competition, with four groups of five judges each, for a morning shift, and an afternoon shift. The reserve judge was never called for duty, but was available on site. Judges' briefings, with visual aids, and several training flights were conducted prior to the start of the preliminary flights of the championship, and again prior to the semi-finals, and finals. A post-competition judges' analysis of the preliminary rounds was generated, and initial indications are that most of the judges performed well, with a few scores being thrown out by the TBL-system. Some of the newcomers did not perform well, and two experienced judges showed variations in their scoring patterns. Only one judge showed great national bias. This preliminary judges' analysis was distributed to all judges, and once the analysis of the semi-finals and finals have been received, the interpretation will be sent to all judges. Recommendations may be made to the CIAM Bureau. The Sporting Code requires rotation and representation of judges on the FAI register, and the sub-committee chairman will endeavour to work more closely with the organisers of the next two continental championships and the 2009 world championship in Portugal. More accent should be placed on inviting experienced judges, rather than fulfilling a quota.

Award ceremonies, functions, closing banquet

The informal opening ceremony was conducted on the apron of the airport, taking on a carnival atmosphere. The FAI anthem was played, and the FAI flag displayed prominently for the duration of the event, amidst the flags of the 32 participating nations. At least two nations did not provide their national flags, with one team hurriedly modifying a flag for display in time for the ceremony. The Russian team made no attempt to secure a flag for display during the championship. A short fly-by of military aircraft entertained spectators, followed by a cocktail reception.

The awards ceremony took place on the airfield, where FAI medals, diplomas, and the perpetual individual (newly-restored) and team trophies were awarded to the winners. This was followed by a banquet in the arrivals/departure hall of the Sauce Viejo airport, with excellent food. Several other awards were made to team and individual winners. The judges and jury members were presented mementoes for their participation in the championship. The full hard-copy results were distributed to all teams.

Conclusion

It is the opinion of the FAI Jury that the 2007 FAI/F3A R/C Aerobatic World Championship was well organised and executed. The FAA, its partners, and all its personnel who were involved, are to be congratulated for a memorable event, the first of its kind on the South American continent.

The FAI Jury: Bob SKINNER
 (South Africa, chairman of the CIAM F3A R/C Aerobatic sub-committee)

Daniel FALCO
(Argentina)
Jury report read and approved

Michael RAMEL
(Germany, F3A sub-committee member)
Jury report read and approved