

FAI Virtual Gliding - Annual Report 2023

Executive Summary

FAI Virtual Gliding has successfully completed another year of pioneering achievements in the realm of e-airports. In 2023, our commitment to innovation and the expansion of virtual gliding was reflected through two major events: the 2nd FAI Virtual Sailplane Grand Prix (VSGP) and the World Series 2023. These events not only showcased the skills of global virtual pilots but also set the stage for the upcoming 1st FAI Virtual World Gliding Championship (VWGC) in 2024.

Major Events of 2023

1. 2nd FAI Virtual Sailplane Grand Prix (VSGP)

- Qualifiers: The year saw the continuation of qualifying events, which replicated the 7 races per SGP events around the globe. We have received a total of 567 registration through the 9 Qualifying events, averaging to 63 pilots per event. The top 2 pilots from each event qualified to the World Final. The reigning champion Ben Fest (GER) and the best 4th Place in terms of points were invited to join the Final event.

- World Final: The 2nd FAI VSGP World Final saw 20 top pilots competing virtually in the skies of Pavullo, showcasing high-level virtual gliding skills and strategies. With the conclusion of Race 7 and a total of 37 points earned over seven fiercely contested races, Arne-Martin Güettler from Norway emerged as the Champion of the 2nd World FAI Virtual Sailplane Grand Prix Final. Wojciech Sołtysik (PL) and Wiek Schoenmakers (NED) completed the podium.

Final results can be found: virtualgliding.fai.org

2. World Series 2023

- Objective: Aimed at replicating the RT/AAT style of tasks, this series was instrumental in preparing pilots for the 1st FAI VWGC in 2024. Each race was scored with 1000 points. There were 16 races along the year, in 16 different countries, allowing the pilots and the fans to discover new flying areas worldwide.

- Rule Changes: Post World Final in September, it was decided to transition to RT with regatta starts only, featuring shorter tasks. This change was made to align better with the preferences of the live-streaming audience and the pilots.

- The event achieved all its initial objectives, allowing beginner-intermediate level pilots to discover the competition, and helped the organizers to find the most suitable rules for 2024.

- A total of 313 virtual pilots registered for the event.

- Witold Rozak (PL) won the championship with a total of 13 227 points (best 14 races out of 16 were taken into account to reduce the impact of technical issues/blue screen/disconnections). Arne-Martin Guettler (NOR) and David Redman (AUS) completed the podium.

More information can be found here: virtualgliding.fai.org

Looking Ahead: The 1st FAI Virtual WGC in 2024

The 1st FAI Virtual World Gliding Championship in 2024 represents a significant milestone for virtual gliding. This championship aims to bring together the world's best virtual pilots in a competition that tests skill, strategy, and a deep understanding of virtual gliding dynamics. This championship will be run on a calendar year.

The format will be as follows: Qualifiers (open to anyone) will feature 10 races from february to april 2024. The 20 best pilots will compete in a Pro Championship with 6 races. The 3 best pilots will be invited to compete on Stage at the Interglide 2024 in Karlsruhe (GER) in November 2024. They will compete throughout the week-end to several races to win the World Champion title.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.virtualgliding.fai.org/fai-world-championship-2024>

Global Development and Future Goals

FAI Virtual Gliding is committed to expanding the reach of gliding worldwide, with a particular focus on growth in Asia and America. This year, we observed an increasing interest from Japanese pilots, signaling a promising expansion in Asia. We plan to offer regional VG championships in select countries to foster the development of the sport. Additionally, National Aero Clubs (NACs) will be offered the opportunity to establish a national champion through a specific ranking in the 1st Virtual WGC in 2024.

Conclusion

2023 has been a year of remarkable growth and learning for FAI Virtual Gliding. As we look forward to 2024, we are excited to further develop virtual gliding on a global scale and continue to innovate in this dynamic sport.

Antoine Havet