IGC Steward Report

10th FAI Women World Gliding Championships

Lake Keepit Australia

Contest Director: Mandy Temple

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Jury President: Gisela Weinreich

Competition overview.

In general it was a good and nice competition, good atmosphere. The host was very friendly and helpful to all the people. Lake Keepit is situated in a beautiful area, a flat country with a few hills as well, and a simple airspace. The airfield was sufficiently equipped to host the competition although the catering facilities on the airfield itself were very basic.

Two special items should be mentioned here: these will be more specified in the report itself.
- the drought Australia was suffering from for already a long time. The lake was only filled with 0,4 % of its normal size. This caused a lot of dust storms especially when the seabreeze was coming in, and the fires. Fortunately the fires were not in the neighborhood, the competition only had to deal with smoke and the related bad visibility .
- the unsavory thing with the Australian TC and one of their crewmembers, using the live data of the official tracking system to inform their pilots. Everybody was shocked, especially because the TC was the very well respected AUS IGC delegate for 30 years. He should have known that this was ethically very wrong.

For the Australian Gliding this was a big drama in general, but also on a personal level, especially for the CD and deputy CD. Every decision they would take was destined to be food for discussion. On one side there was the AUS GFA/gliding community, on the other there was the international gliding world, a Salomon's judge for them. Nevertheless they did a wonderful job which deserves all respect from the world.

Preparations

The only contact before the competition was most of the time via email only, mostly about the Local Procedures.

Practice period

During the practice period the standard was set, together with the TC's operational rules were defined.
At the beginning the CD was very strict in people obeying the rules, which resulted in well-organized operational procedures during the competition. And clarity for the pilots.

Scrutineering

Scrutineering was organized very well. A form was used, 1 A4, and it was very clear what and how it should be measured. *Next time the form should be digital.* There was one problem with a JS1. It's wings fully loaded were bending so much that the measured wingspan was too big. Without water it appeared to be OK.
During the measuring the question came up, how much is it allowed to push the wings upward to correct the bending of the wings? Maybe a technical picture can help with this.

Organization

The volunteers, members of the Lake Keepit Soaringclub as others from different clubs did a great job. Nice to see that the grid runners were youngsters from the Australian Air League. Everything went smoothly, the different teams such as scrutineering, weighing, operations towing, LK ground control, competition office, tracking, task setting, scoring, all were competent to do their job. And with a lot of enthusiasm and friendliness. Special attention for the (both female) CD and deputy CD/Safety-officer, a very good combination of different skills.

Facilities

There was an arrangement with the local Sports & Recreation (S&R) center to use their facilities. Several teams stayed at the S&R center, others in the “neighborhood” which means in Australia 30 till 45 km away.
There was a possibility to have breakfast and dinner at the S&R center, with a good price/ quality rate. On request of the TC’s the well-equipped briefing room at the S&R center was replaced to the airfield in the tug hangar. The distance was too big (7 km) from the airfield itself which caused organizational problems for the teams. It appeared to be a good replacement despite the basic setting.

The catering on the airfield itself was very minimal, the coffee bar was halfway to the grid and the clubhouse, only open until after launch. There was a kiosk/bar, which was a nice setting under the trees, but this opens around task finish time and closed at 7.30 pm. On the other hand the kitchen of the clubhouse could be used by the teams. For a WGC it was minimal, more guidance from the NAC in this should have been done.
Question is, what are the minimum standards? At least there should be one place where people can meet with a basic assortment.
Nevertheless, the hospitality and the friendliness of the people of the Lake Keepit Soaring Club softened this a lot.

Communication

A competition without a webpage, WhatsApp groups and a public digital scoring system are not of this time anymore. So the WWGC2020 used all these features. It makes life much easier. Especially WhatsApp with the possibility of making different user groups such as TC’s, a general for everyone, for organization only, scoring, you name it.
Recommendation is to rewrite Annex A and to implement the possibilities of the digital world. For example, is an official notice board still needed? There was one but nobody looked at it.

Briefing

Pilots Briefing was well organized. Every morning at 9.30 sharp briefing started. The day winners were put in the spotlight every day, receiving daily prizes which were generously made available by different sponsors, all organized by one of the pilots.
The CD used a template for the ppt. of the briefing. Before briefing the daily ppt. was posted on the WA group and the website. This makes the briefing very efficient. For the non-native English speakers this was very helpful to understand the things which were mentioned. Everyday there was a special Safety item from the day before.
The tasksetter explained the task with extra attention to the go- and no-go areas. This was very helpful for the pilots.

The weather

In general the weather conditions were very good, strong thermals, high (cloud) base. First period there were high temperatures >40^{0}C. As mentioned before the situation was extraordinary because of the drought and the smoke of the bushfires 300 km. away. Because of the smoke and dust the weather models were not always reliable.
Sometimes at the end of the day the seabreeze started which caused a lot of dust storms because all vegetation was gone by the dryness. This caused challenging landing circumstances, but finally everybody managed to come home safe.
Special attention to the smoke caused by the bushfires was needed. The bushfires caused areas of smoke and

depending on the wind a smoky area was “somewhere” during the day. In these areas the VFR conditions were very bad. It was rather unpredictable where and on what time of the day the smoke would be. Or maybe new bushfires were starting. Because of that and the pilots have to fly under safe circumstances the CD/DCD together with the TC’s developed a protocol on how to deal with this phenomenon.
See picture below.

What is the process? (Local Rules)

- Special Circumstances: Smoke or Dust storm visibility

1. In the case of visibility being impaired by smoke or dust, the organisers will use 10km visibility as a safety limit.
2. The Organisers may, with Steward Agreement, authorise a member (or members) of the organisation to launch in a glider or power plane to gather information about the conditions in the task area.Explanatory Material/ Procedures (not in the rules but an agreed process):
(a) The task setter will be cognisant of any threat of smoke or dust and task away from risky areas where possible.
(b) Any decision to launch will be mindful of the conditions in the start area.
(c) The start gate will be open if the organisation is satisfied it is safe to do so.
(d) A task may be cancelled after the start gate is open, including when gliders are on task if there is a threat of a serious reduction in visibility impacting on the safety of any competitor.
(e) If it is expected that a task may need to be cancelled, the organisation will launch the organisation observer(s) to provide information on the task area, including any change in condition (such as a swing in wind direction impacting visibility).
(f) Any cancellation mid task will be done with the intent to give pilots enough time to land safely.
(g) During Briefing:
a. The organisation will communicate any expectations of visibility hazards at briefing and will explain what they expect could happen, in which task area, at what time. They will communicate who they will launch, where they will track and how any cancellation would be coordinated, openly.
b. Provide suggestions about safe landing options.
(h) The cancellation will be announced on the safety frequency and on WhatsApp to the Team Managers, (including landing urgency). (i) The observer(s) will be available on the safety frequency for safety/landing.
(j) The observer(s) will at all times ensure they do not interfere or assist with competition aircraft.
(k) The observer(s) will carry a logger or tracker and the file will be published.

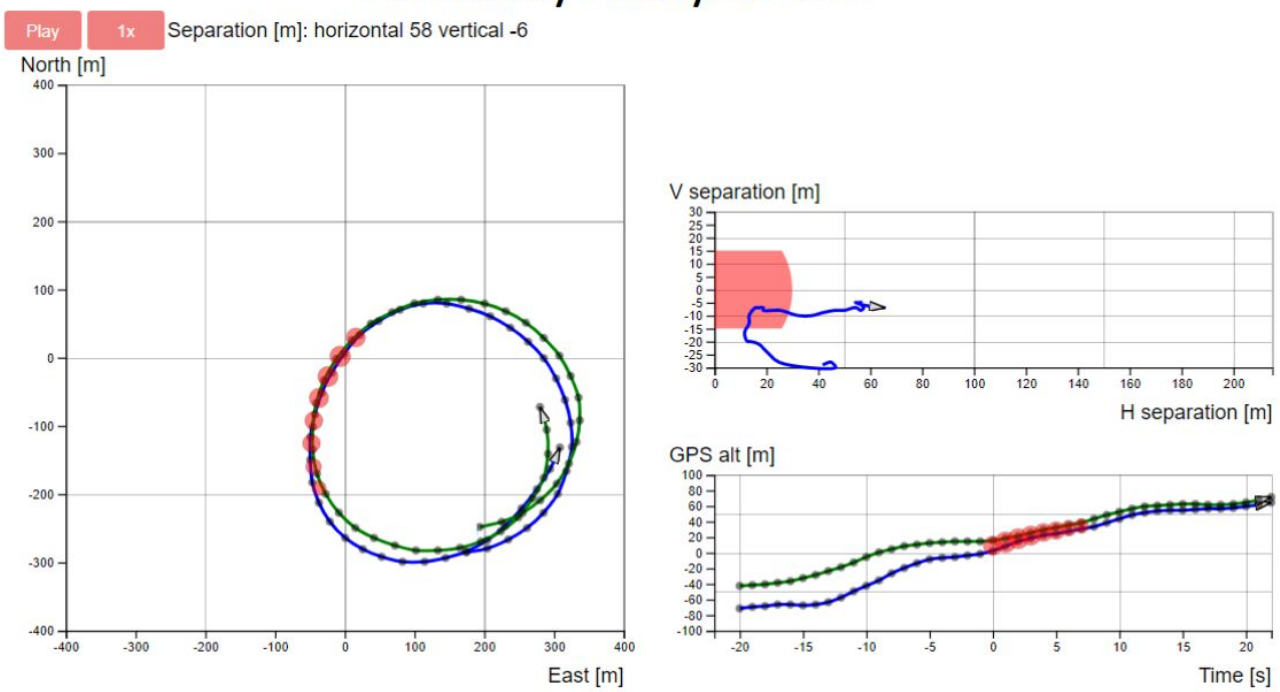
The accepted process was used two times, the first time the day was canceled in the air. After receiving several reports, in combination with the smoke forecast, the observer was sent in the air, who judged it was still flyable. After a while the forecast became worse on track of the last legs. Again the observer was sent in the air and bad visibility started on the last leg(s). On that moment the day was canceled so the pilots could fly home safe. Everything was done according to the described process. Because the pilot reports during flight on the first day were not clear, an objective system was introduced, a proven system developed by people of hang gliding. The second day we had to use the system, (i.e. the observer was sent into the air) the day was not canceled. The smoky areas were rather small which could be avoided, similar to a rain shower. Together with an AAT task this guaranteed safe flying conditions.
These circumstances were challenging for the organization, but after evaluation of the process we can say the system worked.

Tasksetting

Despite the difficulties with the weather models in general the tasks were set properly. Only one day the task setters were very optimistic, which ended in a day of total out landings. A contributing factor was the late start times. Even the gliders with engines have to land out because of the distance.
Because some teams didn’t have trailers for all their gliders, the last team arrived back at Lake Keepit the next day at 3.00 pm. Fortunately the next day was an official resting day. The task setters were thrown into the pool during the international evening.
But what if the next day was a normal competition day? Should the day be cancelled because not everybody returned home on time? That seems not fair to the teams who organized everything well, by having a trailer for all gliders.

Safety

As mentioned before, at every briefing a moment was spent on safety by the Safety officer.
Flytool, as the digital reporting system, was used together with the Australian Proximity Analysis System (PAT) to recognize dangerous situations. These situations were analyzed in SeeYou.



How was it used?
The tools were always used together. The reports were analyzed by SeeYou animations.
- Pilots tend to report wider encounters and not see the PAT encounters (Blind spot).
- Talking to Team Captains about daily observations.
- Being VERY mindful of privacy.
- Lots of interpretation that's needed.
- Still learning from the system.
- If the graph shows you are different, then think about why.

Are you: Aggressive/Unpredictable/Tentative ???
In most cases pilots were open to receive the observations and learned from it.
Twice a 100 point penalty was given to pilots who repeatedly flew aggressive, after having been given a warning.

A Safety committee was installed, three pilots of each class, plus the CS and DCD.

Scoring

Scoring was done by two people. The head scorer was on location, the other one was remote. At the beginning there were severe problems with the SeeYou scoring program because the update was just done before the competition started. After that the SeeYou people went on skiing holiday so there was no back up for repairing the system. Besides that, after the problems were solved, scoring went well.
It was unfortunate that the designated start time couldn't be used because of the update of SeeYou, it was not possible to test it before the competition. For Australian weather this was probably a good starting system to prevent the "waiting game" before the start.
Because of the digital scoring a standard day schedule for preliminary/unofficial/official scores seems to be possible.

Opening and closing ceremony

The opening ceremony was nice and short on the airfield in the morning with some local VIP's, ending with a High tea. Prize giving and closing ceremony was organized in the S&R center on Friday evening instead of the next day Saturday morning. The last two days were canceled, a prize giving on Friday evening gave the teams the opportunity to derig the gliders and make them ready for the way back home, packing containers etc..on Saturday.
Again, beautiful prizes for the winners, organized by the same pilot.

Social events

Several social events took place; an Australian evening, the Baba Yaga ceremony, twice a BBQ and of course the International Evening. The swimming pool was a welcome facility with the high temperatures.

FAI Flag email

I don't know what you did today... after the hole trouble yesterday I needed a break.
I had a really nice day next to the water .. Let's see what I'm doing tomorrow

Kindes Regards
FAI-flag

The FAI flag had a wonderful time in AUS!

Incident unsportive behavior - AUS TC and AUS Team member

During the competition questions raised about the live information the Australian TC gave to the AUS pilots. It was assumed they had a private OGN network. Because the rumors became stronger and stronger the information was not of an OGN network but something else, the AUS TC was asked to come to the competition office so we could talk about it. That moment the thought was, the AUS TC admits he has a private OGN network and the competition could go on without a further discussion.
It appears the AUS TC used the live data of the official tracking system of the competition. As said before, everybody was shocked, especially because the TC was the very well respected AUS IGC delegate for 30 years. At that moment it was not clear how the link which was used was obtained. During the following days things became more clear. Fact was the link which was used by the AUS TC was not meant to be for general use. The problem which occurred was that the current rules were not sufficient enough to punish according specific unsportive behavior rules. The range was between an apology of the TC and disqualification of the whole team. The CD decided, also after hearing the TC's to ask for an apology from the AUS TC. All AUS pilots got 250 penalty points for the last flying day because these scores were still unofficial. All the other scores were already final and couldn't be changed anymore. With the 250 penalty points all AUS pilots were out of sight of the podium. Some countries didn't agree with this decision and wanted a disqualification of the whole Australian team and filed a protest. The jury decided to give all AUS pilots 25 penalty points per competition day.
After the competition the Gliding Federation of Australia (GFA) did an investigation and published a report. The misbehavior of the AUS TC and one of the crewmembers was punished by (from the decision announced by the GFA President):
"*They will not be able to participate in Australian National Championships in any way for a period of 3 years and not be able to participate in International competitions in any way for a period of 5 years."*
To be continued……

Summary