



Strategic Planning

A number of topics that can usefully be assembled under the Strategic Planning title have gained focus this year for the purposes of review. These are tough matters to develop; solutions are not obvious and will take a good deal of refinement and commitment to move forward.

Areas for review and discussion by all officers and delegates are possibly as follows –

Championship entry numbers and financial viability

Take a look through the detailed online records we now have for aerobatic championships each year, and one clear worry concerns the number of entries received and the viability for organisers to tackle the major workload and cost elements when creating and operating a major championship in the accepted FAI / CIVA style. With some notable exceptions organisers are rarely experienced in the publicity and media aspects of these tasks, and the event becomes a competitor focussed affair that is fine for aerobatic idealists but does little to reach out to sport tv and streaming resources that could help to grow our image and bolster the likelihood of some commercial success.

Other factors affecting aerobatic championship entries can be –

- a) Personal financial and free-time / family freedoms to engage in this sport
- b) Long-term negative effects from the Covid pandemic and the RUS/UKR military conflict that have significantly affected (a)
- c) The relatively high budget for championship entries due to high organiser costs. Should accommodation always be pre-booked by the organiser, a full 7-judge panel of judges plus a non-scoring Chief Judge, a full 3-person Jury, pre-event training sessions ... etc?
- d) The shift over many years from simpler historic aerobatic machinery to the universally adopted modern carbon-wing monoplanes that now dominate most categories, leading to significantly higher purchase, maintenance and operating costs
- e) The higher standards required to be successful due to increased use of high quality training regimes and some national teams with significant external funding
- f) Should we add an 'Excellence' class between Advanced and Unlimited to bridge the ever widening skill and complexity gap between these two categories?
- g) Championships that are perhaps too complex / take too long / could be designed to achieve higher interest and merit better directed commitment from eligible pilots

CIVA's focus is strictly confined to regulatory aspects of the sport. We are not organisers and don't have the financial resources to support or move into the operational side of championships. What can we do to adapt and re-focus international aerobatic championships so they are better placed to develop stronger ties to the media, and/or beneficially redefine the format of events? Our championship structure has changed little for over 60 years, is there now a better way to configure an international aerobatic championship to achieve more interest and impact?

Re-definition of Teams and possibly commercial investment in them

In recent years proposals have been received that seek to broaden the range of entries to include teams assembled from pilots of more than one nation, possibly intending to attract commercial interest by using trade or brand names in their titles. Creation of a working group to develop this topic was approved at the 2022 plenary, but extensive exchanges with FAI, CASI and other commission presidents has so far been unsuccessful. This is largely because the fundamental FAI basis for international category-1 events is integrated with the concept of nation vs. nation rather than the more commercial structure of, for example, Formula-1 or Moto-GP.

The FAI Sporting Code General Section includes a poorly-defined "FAI Teams" option, though this is primarily designed to provide an opening for pilots whose NAC is unsupportive of them. CIVA regulations are fundamentally established to provide only for national teams to be ranked, though if a realistic and viable solution could be found this might of course be developed to an alternative conclusion.

It would be extremely helpful for CIVA officers and delegates to further discuss and review what might realistically be acceptable in this area, following which a better defined approach could be made to FAI and CASI to see whether a workable solution can be defined and implemented within the historic FAI framework.

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