

Jury Report summary and recommendations, 2011 events

From Jury reports and Event debriefing reports 2011. Names deleted and minor editing by Jury Board chairman.

World Balloon Trophy, Echternach, Luxembourg. 27-31 July, 2011

5 flights, 15 tasks, 31 competitors. One complaint. No protests.

Without observers

Jury comments:

A very well organised and well run event.

The event was run under the 2011 MER Rules, which are the combined Observer/logger version. The CIA (Flytec) loggers were used.

Some minor rule clarification in the use of the loggers was required by the Event Director and was given at the General Briefing.

The Jury was asked to give guidance to the Event Director about rules covering Take Off (9.19 to 9.22) and the dropping of a marker on the launch field. The Jury unanimously agreed that rule 9.20 was clear and no marker could be dropped until the balloon had passed over the boundary of the launch field.

EVENT DEBRIEFING

General:

Invitation procedure was very good, also the running and the atmosphere of the event.

Task setting was excellent, some time extensions to the launch period in flight 3 may have given some pilots a better chance

Meteo informations were very good

Loggers remarks:

very handy on flight.

bad to make the pilot responsible for the correct running.

Some logger failures were experienced (Note :Average 2 per flight had problems). Proposal to make a test of the functionality during the briefings and giving more information on use at the General Briefing.

In total the loggers were considered to be positive

Markers:

Should the markers stay on the Ground as long as the MMA is open, even though they could have been measured. Information in the COH indicates that the markers should be left until all competitors have passed. Obey the Guidance.

Food and drinks:

On the Saturday evening when no meal is available, could vouchers be given for a snack for the return crew. Proposal to plan a reserve nutrition.

The Jury President thanked the Director and all officials for the perfect leading of the event

55th Coupe Gordon Bennett, Gap-Tallard, France. 8-17 September, 2011

14 competitors. 1 complaint. No protests.

Jury comments:

The event, having had to be organised at short notice in Gap-Tallard (the initial place, Barcelonnette, had to withdraw in early May 2011), was plagued with many organisational shortcomings due to a lack of communication / understanding between the local organisers and the FFA. Although the sporting event was perfectly run by the Event Director and his team, the Jury had to note a marked lack in team-support, site arrangements, protocol, media relations and web-site.

Due to the short flights achieved in this event, the organiser decided to have the closing ceremony and prize giving on Wednesday Sept. 14 instead of Saturday Sept. 17. Maybe due to this fact the ceremony was poorly organised and was sub-standard for a Gordon Bennett event.

EVENT DEBRIEFING

A total of 28 persons were present, including 6 teams. Some teams sent in comments by E-mail :

E-mail comments:

Pilot A: We were told by Milan ATC to respect the NOTAM of not flying north of the 45th, therefore landed earlier. All other pilots flew on. Would like clarification. At debriefing it was mentioned that the NOTAM was up to FL165 only.

Pilot B: Nice infrastructure, it is good to have everything so close.

Recreation day is very good, but please make it possible to use the day, to fill sandbags etc big thumbs up for ATC for being able to fly into Italy at night.

Part 1. Comments before General Briefing

Pilot C: Would like to give comments in German and somebody translates. Request denied.

Pilot D: We got no information about the accident of Richard Abruzzo.

Answer: the CIA is not responsible for info. Since a conclusion has not been published, the CIA should not publish any info, so that nobody can make CIA responsible.

RJ: Part2. After General Briefing

Off.: Sand was too late, also the promised transportation of sandbags did not exist.

Crew C: There was no light on the field.

Pilot E: The 2 years preparation time was poorly used for preparation, especially website.

Org.: You are right

Pilot E: The additional day was wasted. Also: the organization made many empty promises, helpers to fill sandbags (none), trailers to bring sand onto the field (none), we bring food to the basket (crew had to rummage their way through the big crowd of 20000 spectators). It would be better to make less promises but to keep the promises made.

Pilot C: Three transponders did not work, there was no help available. Equipment should be checked more thoroughly before take-off.

Pilot C: 'No night landings' rule proposal rejected by the CIA AA WG. Are pilots in favour or against?

Pilot E: I made night landings, both were dangerous, but for GB it should stay.

Pilot D: Agree, should stay open.

Pilot F: Night landing more safe sometimes.

Pilot E: Basically, I am of the opinion that all the teams who went through the Alps have taken a very high risk. No one can predict the track of a storm front accurately. But from my perspective the flying on of the team France 1 through the night was more than negligence. The Event Direction has said that everything was under control, but anyone who thinks he can control a thunderstorm is massively overestimating his capacities. Flashes can be registered only 3-5 minutes after release. Then it's too late. The formation of thunderstorms within a front can be seen by experienced meteorologists maybe 5-10 minutes earlier. The balloon was at a high altitude, it takes too long to come down. Fortunately, the rain cell, which forced the team France to land, was without registered lightning. Flashes from cloud to cloud are not recorded. Last year we lost a team trying to fly through a thunderstorm. Even there, the actual storm was 20km away, but a flash was enough to kill them. When will we be reasonable?

ED: We have to realize that 'they (authorities) try to get us out of the air at night'. We must be politically careful. If we prohibit night-landings, and ATC finds out, there will soon be no more night-flying either (and no more GB?). The responsibility is always with the pilot.

Pilot E: 9 out of 11 balloons entered prohibited airspace in Italy without any consequences. They should all be disqualified.

ED: Maximum for VFR is FL195, some pilots flew at FL205! We left it open and did not call Milan. We must find a ruling in the future.

GER2: Think start time was too late, time was wasted.

ED: You are right, initially we thought to be on the airfield by 12. Firemen were fighting us. We also thought some pilots could stay south of the Alps.

Off.: We have to live with real life limitations. Organizers have to rely on locals. Organiser did a good job within his possibilities.

ED: There was much debate about Gap as launch site. I think it is a good site. I hope your view is better now, we could be back. There is no perfect site in all of Europe.

PilotC: Some pilots have only 1 flight a year, that is their problem. Pilots should have a minimum of 5 flights in the last 1 ½ year.

Off.: The second pilot should also have full (gasballoon) qualification.

Off.: What is more important hours or flights?

Pilot D: A pilot needs experience – GB is the best chance. He knew that in Gap he has to fly high.

Question: How do your NACs choose pilots?

Off.: US pilots qualify, GER qualify with flights last 2 years.

ED: All are qualified according to the rules. There are pilots who are legally 'passengers'. For safety reasons both should be fully qualified.

Debriefing Chairman:

Pilots are too modest about their ability to give feedback in English. My advice for future Gordon Bennett event debriefings: Detailed discussion of all possible aspects is not needed. It is enough to state your observations ("Volunteers for carrying sandbags were promised. None showed up.") and opinions ("Night landings should not be allowed. They are too dangerous."). I am confident that all pilots are able to do that in English. We are only collecting observations and comments; they are written down and passed on. Nothing is decided at event debriefings. It is important that you don't go home and think 'why didn't I say something'.

17th European HAB Championship, Lleida, Spain. 15-23 September, 2011

7 flights, 24 tasks, 77 competitors. 2 complaints. No protests. Four No-Shows Without observers

Jury President's Report

Summary

The Event Director and his entire team are congratulated on a very successful and technically excellent championship. The organizers were well prepared and met all their obligations to FAI CIA.

Invitation Process

The invitation process was smooth with numerous communications and updates from the Event Director.

No Shows

Four (4) entrants were qualified as "No Shows" by the Event Director and confirmed by the Jury. See attached document from the Jury. Perhaps the host country should be permitted to fill any "No Show" slots, provided that the invitation process was strictly followed.

Entry Requirements

After the second flight, the Event Director learned that a competitor's insurance might not be valid. The Jury was asked for advice on how to handle this situation. In fact, valid insurance was in place however the competitor wanted a lower price. This matter was left with the organizer and competitor to sort out – the competitor continued to participate so the Jury assumed that the matter was settled.

That being said, there does not appear to be guidance or rules on how to handle the general case of discovering entry condition problems after competition has started. We could take the position that if the organizer and competition staff do not detect a problem at registration, no action should be taken against the competitor. That position may not be tenable if the matter involves legal and/or aviation authority requirements (that an Event Director cannot/should not waive).

There appears to be two (2) ways to handle this: 1) "ground" the competitor until the issue is resolved and 2) disqualify the competitor from the event and rescoring all tasks. The potential longer term ramifications of a "DQ" need to be understood.

Pre-Event Communication

As above (for Invitation Process), pre-event communication with the Event Director was excellent. Pre-event communication with the organizers was not as good, with many things (such as travel arrangements) left until the last minute.

Travel Funds

The Jury submitted their travel receipts to the organizer on Sunday September 18 and the funds were not received until about 16h00 on Thursday September 21. The Jury Handbook and the FAI FIRST CATEGORY EVENT SANCTION PROCEDURES documents each have statements about what an organizers must agree to pay for, who is responsible for actually paying any monies and when any monies will be paid. There does not appear to be a corresponding section in the CIA Event Sanction Information document to capture this information from event organizers and to provide same to an event Jury.

FAI CIA Protocol

The organizers were provided with the FAI CIA protocols (for opening and closing ceremonies) weeks before the event however the Event Director did not know if the organizers had referred to them. The Jury was fortunate that the appointed CIA Event Development Service (EDS) Advisor (Gabi Slavec) was also present at the event, so the Jury was able to have her work with the organizers on the agendas for the opening and closing ceremonies. Perhaps EDS can develop "template" agendas for opening and closing ceremonies that organizers could use as a pattern, and perhaps EDS can ask organizers to submit agendas 1 or 2 weeks in advance of an event for review

by the EDS Advisor.

FAI provides the FAI anthem on CD – perhaps the FAI could also provide a CD with national anthems.

Network

Network connectivity at the Competition Center was very bad, at least for the first half of the event. Both the hotel network and the competition team network relied almost entirely on wireless connections. Wired networks provide much more reliable connectivity (not to mention increased capacity). Poor connectivity and capacity prevented the Jury from easily accessing information (such as track data). Network connectivity must be assured *if* on-line Official Notice Boards are to be used. While I am not a networking expert, I suggest that dedicated Internet access (such as provided by a telecommunications provider) be used rather than relying on shared network access (such as via existing hotel infrastructure).

The Scoring Team

The Scoring Team (lead by Marc Andre and with software by Tony Martinez) was excellent! The entire team was very easy to work with and modified their processes and competitor's results as suggested by the Jury. We detected no more than 1 or 2 issues per task – most requiring only a more detailed explanation of how a competitor's result was determined. A very (very!) minor scoring program error was detected, concerning the correct sharing of points below the median. The CIA Rules Sub-committees (the CIA Scoring Working Group) should better explain how to share points below the median and publish test cases for this case. (In addition, while looking at sharing points below the median, the Jury discovered that it appears how to handle ties at the median may no longer be clearly stated in the rules or the Competition Operations Handbook (COH). The appropriate CIA sub-committee and/or working group should clarify how to handle ties at the median.)

Loggers

The CIA Flight Loggers worked flawlessly! The “off/on” problem appears to be solved – there were no reported cases of this problem. There were two (2) cases of SD cards not being fully inserted and one (1) case of an SD card not being inserted at all – these “failures” were caused by the competitor(s), not the logger management team. No data was lost and no (0) competitor GPSs needed to be downloaded during the event.

Rules

There appears to be a conflict or inconsistency between:

Rule 9.20 VALID TAKE-OFF

A balloon is considered to have taken off and to be flying the task if it passes over the boundary of any launch area.

and

Rule 9.22 CLEARING LAUNCH AREA

Within three minutes of his basket first leaving the ground a competitor shall have passed over the boundary of the launch area or shall have climbed to 500 feet above ground level. He shall not re-enter the launch field below 500 ft before the end of the launch period or after all balloons have taken off, whichever is earlier.

A strict reading of the above rules would suggest that climbing to 500 feet AGL (without passing over the boundary of the launch area) does not constitute a valid take-off, and that a competitor must pass over the boundary of the launch area before any markers may be legitimately dropped.

Event Debrief

The Directors (perhaps the Steward more than the others?) wanted to collect feedback about this event via a “Competitor Sub-Committee like” survey, in advance of the official Event Debrief. The Jury requested that the survey not be distributed at the last flight briefing so as not to confuse the survey with the Event Debrief, or reduce the number of attendees at the Event Debrief. We then worked with the Event Director and Steward to incorporate the survey into the Event Debrief. See the Event Debrief for additional detail and commentary. This activity may indicate that the Event

Debrief process is not meeting everyone's needs to collect information. Perhaps the Event Debrief should be conducted by the Competitor's Sub-Committee, rather than the appointed Jury. At the very least, such data collection should be conducted in unison.

Event Debriefing

Administration:

- In communication was it hard to understand the English language used by the organisers (translations?)
- Slow response on email.
- Organizers setting up a VISA card account to simplify money transfer.

Communication:

- The officials had very little or no communication with the organisation pre event.

Social:

- There were no social event except the opening and closing ceremony.

Briefing Facilities:

- The tent was warm, hot, sticky, ...
- Noise from the wind and from the high way.
- The parking area was a disaster, a mess, with iron bar sticking out of the ground. No police to help enter and exit the area.
- There should have been signs to advertise that there was an event.
- There was nothing in the city about the event as there were not any local sponsors.
- The closeness to the event centre was good.

Event Director:

- All participants in the event debriefing applauded the Director for a job well done.
- He picked a very interesting number of tasks.
- Question: Why no solo flight?
- Answer: The director believes that 4 eyes in the basket is a safety measure. But he was impressed with all pilots' behaviour in the last flight. This may make him change his mind.
- The event was set up so you needed highly complicated equipment to make a good score. Maybe solo task can change that as the pilot has to do everything.
- Solo flight is good but balloon competitions today is very much a team event.
- Many pilots believed that there needs to be solo flights in a competition.

Flying Area:

- It was an interesting area.
- Landowner relations: It was very hard to find landowners and communicate with them, even with translator.

Loggers:

- "They were good, thank you for them"
- They were simple to use.
- The time on the display can be hard to read, the text is too small.
- The Director: We did not have any problem with the logger at all, except for the pilot that forgot his in the hotel room.
- Surprised how fast the loggers were "debriefed".

Maps:

- Good.
- Nice if the PZ was printed on the maps.
- Why no PZ on the highways.
- No PZ over the prison
- Make zero runners thicker.

Scoring:

- Great, excellent job, great team.
- “Scoring grate and fast”
- One problem was that there was not published totals at every publication
- Place of notice board was not good.
- Did not like online notice board as it was hard to get connected.
- Us Nationals has used online notice board and it was good. It all up to the internet access.
- The scoring of Elbow and Angle task was optimistic. Result for Angle task shall only be in full degree.
- How do you fly to an angle it’s a virtual goal?
- In task 17 shall the top pilots have the same point.
- It’s silly to go down to a fraction of a degree.
- Land run works good at the accuracy.
- Precision in Elbow and Angle tasks are a task setting problem. Max length of elbows shall be 1 – 2 km.
- If rounding to decametres had been done had that solved the problem?
- Task sheet was good but there was a problem with the logger goal was declared in the text.

Safety:

- Refuelling was good but not safe.
- To closed area.
- The hoses were not long enough.
- There was a need of a manager for the refuelling.
- “Did see a lady with a child walking thru the area smoking”
- “Fast but not managed correctly.”
- Take-off without launch masters worked good.
- Reckless flying:
- “The upper balloon is always responsible to give way”
- “If a balloon is climbing to fast is it hard to see this and react.”
- Both balloons have a responsibility.
- Safety on ground: The organisers shall check the parking area.
- Pilots need information about accidents, this is important. As pilot you want to have a general information about this and not read about it in newspapers.

Information on Briefing:

- The met sheet with mixed information was not good. We must improve on the format, precision trends, ..
- Confused with different variants of the met sheet.
- There were no local models all were general.

Team managers:

- Team manager shall have the possibility to register before the event.
- Small countries do not have a team manager. It will stop us from having a individual sport.
- This is a way to work together. Using wind-readers etc. It is good if the organisation can register them.
- Information management is getting more important. In next event let the team managers/coordinators sit close to their teams.
- Limit the team coordinators per country.

Cost:

- The expense for extra team members was high.
- It’s good to know before the event what to pay for.
- Information on the web site was not good. The fuel for the practise flying is one example.

2011 Tochigi Hot Air Balloon Championship, Tochigi, Japan. 22-27 November, 2011

7 flights, 25 tasks, 32 pilots. No complaints, no protests

With observers

Jury Comments:

The event was well organized and well run in every respect. The team of officials were very experienced and worked together well and did an excellent job.

Event debriefing:

Attendees: (30) persons including pilots, crew, observers and event officials. Countries represented by the attendees included: Australia, Canada, Japan, UK, USA and Sweden.

Pilot M opened the comments. She stated that Tochigi is still the best organized event. It is wonderfully organized and a very good venue for flights.

The Safety Officer complimented the pilots and their flying. This was the first year in 11 years that there were No Powerline Accidents.

The general consensus was that the Observers were a really good set of individuals. The number of foreign observers was smaller than past years. But it was felt this was due to the conflict, in terms of holiday time for participants. There was a pre-Worlds in August in Battle Creek, USA where Observers were also used. The August 2012 Worlds may create the same problem for the 2012 Tochigi event and recruiting Observers.

Pilot P complimented the task setting. Good Variety and Challenging, including on the last morning of the competition. And it seemed less crowded at the targets, possibly from the types of tasks called and the spacing for competitors. And the calls on the marginal weather days were handled well.

There was agreement that the measuring, scoring and weather officials also did a good job. Result publication was quick and efficient.

There was a discussion of the Marker Toss versus pushing a button at a specific height in a logger-scoring task. Comments that it was better for the spectators, and more interesting for the pilots to toss a marker.

Comments related to CIA AX-MER Rules:

- a) Fly-On Task - Rule 15.5.4 & 15.5.5- Provisional Declaration versus dropped marker versus lost marker.

The discussion centered on the issue that since the goal declaration must be written on the previous marker tail, there are serious consequences (no result) if the marker is lost or the goal is not written on the marker tail. There was a request to change this task to include that the pilot May write a provisional goal on the Observer task sheet or declare to the officials before launch. It was felt that this would NOT be an advantage for the pilot but could be insurance for a lost marker. And this provisional result would be the goal scored to, if there were no coordinates on the marker tail.

- b) Comment on the merging of the AX-MER and AX-GPS rules. CIA Rules Sub-Committee started with the Logger rules and added in the older AX-MER rules. Comment made that the AX-MER rules are older and more settled and should have been the basis. This has caused some strange blending of rules.

NOTE: Tochigi used the old AX-MER rules (pre-2011) for the 2011 event.

Central-Eastern European Balloon Cup, Wloclawek, Poland. 28-31 July, 2011

3 flights, 10 tasks, 23 pilots-4 nationalities. No complaints, no protests. Without observers

Note by Hans Åkerstedt.

From: CIA Minutes 2011, 28.2 SANCTION PROPOSALS: CIA SPORTING EVENT
Event Name: **Central-Eastern European Cup**

From: EDS minutes, CIA meeting 2011

c) **2011 – Sporting Event**

Central-Eastern European Cup, Wloclawek, Poland (28 – 31 July)

Jury Comments

Just like last year there was big confusion on the title of this Event.

The Rules for the Event (posted on the website one hour before General Briefing) said 1st Central-Eastern European Balloon Cup, 12th Wloclawek President's and Anwil President's Cup.

The official website moreover added the titles Ladies Polish Balloon Championship and Junior Polish Balloon Championship.

We enforced to solely use the name of the CIA Sanction: Wloclawek President's and Anwil President's Cup.

Last remark: 2010 was the 11th Wloclawek President's and Anwil President's Cup.

The 2011 Event was erroneously presented for sanctioning as 11th.

In respect of the past and future continuity of this Event we decided this 11th was a typing error.

So, here follows the report on: 12th Wloclawek President's and Anwil President's Cup

This Event is an approved CIA Sporting Event.

The Event website (link published on the CIA website) did not allow non Polish speaking officials/competitors to gather information prior to the Event.

We advise the link published on the CIA website be to an English version website.

The English version of the website was not enough developed in view of a CIA sanctioned Event.

The Event is widely appreciated in the local community.

The Event Manager, Mr. Marek Kozinsky, apparently has excellent relations with the Town Mayor and sponsors.

He is very willing to meet the demands of the ED and the Jury, but doesn't speak English.

Perhaps this lack of communication is one of the factors that this meeting doesn't appear to improve its standard over the years.

This poor communication was also shown in the Sanction procedure and in the invitation of the Officials: f.ex. I never received an invitation to be Jury President of this Event. I learned from the ED that my name and function appeared in the proposed Event Rules...

We believe that with solving these communication problems the Event will have more chances to grow to a higher standard.

The Event Director (LTU) was excellent. His attitude towards competitors and officials is very fine.

Yet the weather conditions did not favour interesting task setting. Under the given circumstances he did the best possible.

There were only 3 flights with 10 tasks.

The Event suffered from bad weather:

exceptionally bad weather all previous month, resulting in very wet fields and many fields still unharvested.

In order to prevent damage for landowners the ED directed flights so as to maximize landings on the large and fairly dry local airport. With unchanging wind directions this limited the opportunities for task setting.

Overall cloudy flying conditions.

It was an Event without Observers.

The Chief Scorer (PL) was excellent.

The flight logger data were efficiently and consistently analysed.

Event Debriefing, with Officials and Competitors, upon invitation by the Jury President

- ⤴ **Invitation process:** should be English/Polish.
- ⤴ Direct link on **website** for English version required.
- ⤴ Change **dates of Event**? No, just bad luck with weather.
- ⤴ **Hotel?** 3 hotels: pilots/ ED / Jury
 - ⤴ Pilots: very ok.
 - ⤴ ED: no key for access during night. Had to call for access.
 - ⤴ Jury: very ok: night access, distance, quiet, clean, good food.
- ⤴ **General Briefing** was postponed but timing not well communicated. There should be more time between end of Check-in and General Briefing.
- ⤴ No comments on **Task Briefings**.
- ⤴ **Maps:** somewhat outdated (streets and power lines). Will be improved for next year. (renewed map + combination correct grid)
- ⤴ **Meteo Briefing:** Too general information, mostly copy from internet. Should be more local and precise. Previous years team was better.
- ⤴ Task Briefing/**Safety:** in case of low cloud base blue PZ should be set.
- ⤴ **Refuelling:** gas ok and connections ok = improvement versus last year.
- ⤴ **Targets:** last year we stated they were too small, not according to Competition Operations Handbook. This year some were of the correct size. We again advise the use of marker flags.
- ⤴ **Flagpole** was not according to Competition Operations Handbook (1 flag missing)

Facilities for Jury that could be improved

- ⤴ Access to Jury room was only possible when Competition Room was open. Need separate set of keys.
- ⤴ Officials cars should be identified.
- ⤴ Phone cards that were handed to Jury were inadequate.

Pilots general impression is that the Event is improving in quality.