

IGC Steward Report

16th FAI European Gliding Championships

17th to 30th July 2011, Nitra, Slovakia

Contest Director: Vladimír Foltin

1. ORGANIZATION

1.1. Overall organization

The competition organization was on a high level. The administration was efficient and all organization matters were solved in calm atmosphere and with mutual agreement.

1.2. Quantity of officials

Number of officials was sufficient.

1.3. Experience of officials

CD, Deputy CD and also all organizers have experience with setting up gliding contests – each year they arrange Pribina Cup competition. In this event around 150 gliders take part. There was organized EGC and GP, too. Some members had experience from WGC 2010 in Prievidza – especially scorers. Both CD and DCD had experience from European and World organization like pilots, too.

1.4. Suitability of meetings and briefings

Briefings were held in a hangar. They were factual and short. Main focus was on analysing dangerous situations. A projector showed presentations of these situations – low approach, etc.

The local procedures were presented in the first meeting of captains. Some explanations were given and the finish ring was discussed – see below. On the second practise day and in the first competition day the captain meeting was assembled half an hour before the official briefing, next days it was assembled if needed by SMS message.

1.5. Suitability of weather informations

The information about weather were presented by a young professional meteorologist, who isn't a glider pilot but a paraglider pilot. His forecasts in a complicated weather were adequate and understandable. All the informations were presented in a video sequence and on paper to every pilot.

1.6. Suitability of facilities

All facilities were in good shape and prepared for the contest.

Briefings were held in a big hangar with sufficient equipment. Audio system assured that all informations could be heard and understood. The competition office was located also in the hangar. Same goes for a shop, where you could buy quick meal. The official notice board was put in the same hangar.

Captains' meetings were also held in this hangar, where sections were created to ensure privacy for the discussion. A video which presented well the discussed topics was available in this area. During the meetings there was enough space for discussion and reaching a consensus.

Scoring office, office for the Jury President and members and for the Stewards was located near this hangar.

On the airport there were two camps – inner and outer. The outer was protected by a fence to stop unwanted visitors. Sufficient number of showers and toilets was at hand. Accommodation was possible even in cabins on the airport. A little trouble appeared after the rainy days when mud, especially in the outer camp, complicated access.

Feeding was well organised in the aeroclub restaurant and in the airport bar with the option to sit outside. The food was very good and prices reasonable.

The whole airport was covered by Wi-Fi signal, so the internet connection was sufficient including the connection speed.

1.7. Transportation

Both stewards were housed directly on the airport in a cabin with sufficient equipment and the ability to connect to the internet. There was no need for transportation. The Jury members was accomodated in near hotel in the town. They used own car for the transport, leased car for Angela Sheard, eventually.

1.8. Information dissemination (announcements, schedule and decisions)

During training and the whole competition all important documents were made public on the official notice board along with results and important announcements. Everything was signed by the director of the contest.

Printed informations were distributed to boxes of the national teams (including the information for the team's captain) and seperated boxes for the FAI representatives. Entire distribution proceeded so there was enough time to familiarize yourself with the materials. Communication between the organiser, team captains and FAI representatives was also provided by SMS and e-mails.

Urgent informations during the contest day were announced through loud speakers and a broadcast on the airport frequency was also used (especially for changes of launch times and competition tasks). The possibility was offered to Officials to use local cheaper GSM cards for communication.

1.9. Pilot assistance

Pilots and crews always found adequate and friendly help in the competition (info) office.

1.10. Retrieval

Because of the weather there were a lot of outlandings. All of them did without damage. No problems appeared.

1.11. Launch control

We can say that the launches proceeded without difficulties. Twice the launch time appeared only 3 or 4 minutes before the launch time was announced. This event was happened in the classes 20m and Standard, which used also tow planes Z 137 TurboCmelak for launches. These planes had problems starting their engines and the fuel consumption while the engine run with the plane still on the ground was very high. This fact didn't lead to complaints from pilots, because early launches were started only when the pilots in the first three lines gave a sign that they are ready to take off.

Launches of 91 gliders never took more than 40 minutes, because it was possible due to the size of the airfield to start from both sides of it (the middle narrow strip worked as a landing site for gliders and tow planes). On one side of the airport 20m Multi-seat class and standard class – tow planes: 2x Z-137T Turbo Cmelak, 3x Z-37 Cmelak, on the other side World and Club class – tow planes 1x Z-226 Trener and 4 micro-light aircrafts (3x Eurofox and 1x Dynamic).

On several occasions pilots needed re-launches but the launching was fair and without problem.

1.12. Finish procedures

The method used was the Finish ring. The landing procedure was clarified in the first captain briefing, where it was decided the whole area of the finish ring is going to be the Contest Side Boundary. This way the time penalty for landing inside the ring would be eliminated. The minimal altitude when crossing the border of the ring, which was modified after the first training day in the captain meeting (more note see Chap. 2, par 2.2), was set with penalty 1 point per 1 meter. This fact was consulted through e-mail even with the IGC Bureau, which agreed with this solution.

Arrivals were controlled by CD, stewards and President of Jury from the airport tower. All hazardous approaches were penalized and analyzed on briefing the next day. There was a problem. During the contest a road near the airport was being repaired and all the traffic was directed next to the border of the airport. Because of that the pilots were warned in every briefing and arrival to hold the proper altitude over the road to avoid collision with cars, especially the trucks when landing. Even though low approaches were detected, accident with the vehicles on the road never occurred sure because pilot was after finish ring, yet.

1.13. Opening ceremony including presentation of Jury and Stewards

Opening ceremony took place on the airport. Present were all representatives of the city, the province and the Slovak Ministry of Transport. In the ceremony participated even the President of the Slovak National Aeroclub. All the members Jury and both Chief Steward and Steward were there, too. They were introduced during the ceremony.

The ceremony passed in early-evening time and was well organized. At the end of the ceremony you could have seen performance of formation flying of 4 L13 Blaniks gliders, acrobatics of glider MDM Fox and then show of 4 generations of gliders.

During the ceremony the FAI flag flapped and at the end of speeches the FAI anthem was played.

President of Jury, Members of the Jury and Stewards were introduced one more time during the first day briefing.

1.14. The prize giving ceremony and closing ceremony.

The winners were announced in the briefing hangar and this event was connected to the end of the competition. This event had very festive atmosphere.

All protocols of FAI were met, the FAI anthem was played. President of Jury gave the flag of FAI during the ceremony to the Polish organizer of the next EGC.

In the scheduled prize giving ceremony only the champions in classes Club, Standard and 20m Multi-Seat Class could be named, because World Class only had 3 valid contest days and for that couldn't announce the European Champion in this class.

Even the reserve day wasn't valid for the class World championship and couldn't announce the European Champion. In afternoon hours on 30th July a celebration with small audience took place, where pilots in the class World were given prizes for the first three places.

1.15. Other social events

A Slovak evening was arranged, where you could try traditional Slovak cuisine and drinks. Pleasant cultural fillers were folk dance, orchestra and late night swing orchestra.

The most successful social event of the competition was International evening, in which 16 national teams participated. The entire evening had very friendly atmosphere. The music band, which allowed some members of the teams to sing, added to the night's entertainment.

Due to poor weather that accompanied the contest, CD organized Werner Scholze's lecture – Safety pays, which was presented in this year's ICG meeting. The lecture was carefully watched and at the end a discussion was started, in which many contestants took part. Some conclusions and suggestions mentioned in the lecture were criticised. More discussions will be required before ICG meeting can accept precautions, which will be correctly understood and be of use in FAI sanctioned competitions. It would be appropriate to spread Werner Scholze's lecture to contestants, who took or take part in FAI sanctioned competitions in gliding and afterwards try similar question form like the one created by the Country Development Committee.

1.16. Total number of scheduled days and number of contest day

The competition was followed by bad weather and with that corresponds the number of valid competition days. In World class they used the reserve day, but they still didn't manage to get the prescribed number of 4 valid days and they couldn't announce the European Champion. Other classes accomplished only the minimal required 4 valid championship days.

Number of scheduled competition days: 12 + 1 reserve day (for the World class only)

Class:	Announced task	Valid competition days
World	8	3
Club	7	4
Standard	7	4
20m Multi-Seat	7	4

1.17. Media liaison, newspapers and internet coverage

During the Championship one article showed up in the local newspaper, the Slovak TV broadcast a short report about the course of the Championships. Unfortunately, there wasn't a big media interest for the contest, even though the organizer tried his best in advertising it.

Internet coverage was covered by a small group of young people. They did a good job taking care of the competition website, videos, photo gallery and tracking.

During the contest a young photographers took big amount of great photos, which helped bring the atmosphere closer.

1.18. Public and Internet display of real-time aircraft position and information

Lithuanian tracking system based on GPRS was used during the contest. There were 18 transmitters at hand, which were placed only in gliders of the 20m Multi-Seat class for the duration of the competition. Unfortunately, the tracking worked not too good and often break appeared, mainly when gliders flew higher.

1.19. Task setting and operation

The track planning was very difficult in the bad weather. The lengths of the tracks reflected that. When planning the task setter used the knowledge of the terrain. The ratio of speed and competition tasks was met.

Changes to the variants of the tracks were announced in time and the shift of launch time corresponded with the provision of the Annex A.

Daily weighing ran fluently every day on one scale and one reverse scale. The scales were removable and precise even when placed on grass. Weighing was carried out with an accuracy of 5 kg. The wind had no significant influence on the weighing.

1.20. Scoring system (use and application)

For the rating of the competition we were using the SeeYou Competition system. Organizer used his own scoring script. Every contest day the results were checked by the stewards on their computers, where the SeeYou Competition system and own scripts were also used. Results were checked and differences analysed. These differences were eliminated before releasing of unofficial results. The validity of all IGC files which weren't downloaded by the scoring team was examined.

The scoring team had their own room equipped with computers, 2-3 experienced scorers did the scoring. Each of them had his task. Delayed release of the results on Soaringspot during the first days was caused by it's fallouts. This situation was solved by releasing the results on the competition's website. The situation was consulted by e-mail even with the Naviter representatives, who promised to fix the system to suit the higher demands.

Next problem the scoring team encountered was late delivery of IGC files from secondary FR, when the primary file showed corruption. Communication through captains of the teams, especially with those not living in the area of the airport was problem and the release of the results was often delayed because not all contestants were counted.

During the competition the scoring team, stewards and President of Jury discussed about the scoring script. Compared to Strepla, SeeYou Competition is open system, which allows usage in contests that don't use IGC-FAI formula to calculate results. In the past that led to problems, when scoring teams used scripts that didn't match the IGC-FAI formula. From a discussion came a simple solution. IGC will create a scoring script, which will fulfill requirements of the Annex A. This script will be put in the scoring system (SeeYou Competition). After the insertion of the script by the Chief steward, the system will be sealed so the scoring script can't be changed. This matter must be consulted with Naviter to make them create conditions for this storage. Strepla compared to SeeYou Competition (two most used systems) doesn't allow interfering with the scoring script – the computational algorithm is a part of the program.

1.21. Protest handling and registration

All matters were well handled in local procedures, during the competition there wasn't a single protest or complaint.

Following problems were the only needing solution:

- Pilot Dmitriy Timoshenko and Ilya Ershov in DuoDiscus cs: OM didn't check engine during the 1st task. CD decided to do not give them penalty. His explanation was accepted.

- Second problem was find on IGC file pilots Jiri Snirc and Tomas Bobok in Duo Discus cs: DUO, during the 2nd task. They used check engine just after 15 minutes but not more than 2 minutes of running. They received penalty warning. This was accepted.

- We find during the regularly check violation against the mandatory configuration in World class. First violation was punished by warning, second by penalty. We recommend not to prohibit the sealing of the gliders in World class because the correct check some inside sealing parts (inside of wings) is not so easy for regular and fast check on grid.

2. RULES

2.1. Adequacy of Local Procedures

The local procedures were adequate and covered all eventualities

2.2. Addendums and changes

On the first captain briefing these changes were approved:

- The minimal altitude to cross the finish ring was set. It was difficult to find a match because of 4 classes with different performances. Finally, consensus was found suitable and the altitude was set at 200m QNH.

- Contest site was increased by area of the Finish ring.
- The penalty for the crossing the Finish ring under the set altitude was decided:
 - 1 pts/m - 1st offence
 - 1 pts/m - 2nd offence
 - Disqualification (maximum)

These changes were approved by the Bureau.

- New version of airspace was valid from 17th July
- There were renamed some airspaces
- There were added 2 new airspaces
- Clarification of airspace penalties:
- Entering airspace from above or below = airspace violation (1st offence is outlanding)
- Flying above max. altitude (eg. FL95 SVK, POL, CZE) standard penalty (1st offence is 1 m = 1 pt)
- Next TC's meeting (27th July), they agreed to use the reserve day only for the classes which will not be valid 4 tasks after Friday on July 29th. TC's meeting decided after a discussion that the reserve day will be used for the World class, only.

2.3. Possible improvements of Rules and/or Local Procedures

Reserve day – Annex A and any other document IGC-FAI don't know the term Reserve Day. It's important to define the Reserve day, if it is suitable terms. In Nitra only the TC's meeting decided on rules of the Reserve day for EGC in Nitra. The problem is the reserve day in EGC 2011 was used only for one class and the competition day was announced after the official championship closure. The aim is to avoid different interpretations of the Reserve day in the future.

Finish Ring – since the event in Szeged 2010 IGC recommended the usage of Finish Ring. The problem is still finding safety when using it. Both Championships JWGC Musbach 2011 and EGC Nitra 2011 showed, when different rules not corresponding with the Annex A were set. It's still difficult to select the penalty for crossing the border of Finish ring under the set altitude. First off, the penalty for meters is very difficult due to measuring the altitude by devices for capturing the flight. Second off, it's very complicated to set the correct altitude due to the classes with different performances – STD, 20m class, Club and World class. Next, the pilots unofficially complained that concentration to the compliance of the altitude of final ring during the final glide is contraproductive because it is against safety. There will be sure better when the pilot concentrates to area around him due to a big density of other gliders or watches the terrain due to the possibility of outlanding. Furthermore, it showed that even keeping the altitude didn't stop dangerous approach in small height in the final stage of the flight before landing. If there won't be a change in Annex A, too, then penalty for Finish: crossing below height or altitude limit is only a warning.

Another option is current rule from Annex A, which says landing outside of the contest site is penalty of 5 minutes. This is also a contraproductive situation, which will force the pilots to reach the contest site and that will create sometimes dangerous scenario. Mainly because hazardous maneuver/flying for the first time is penalized by a warning, only. During EGC Nitra 2011 one landing inside the ring happened. If penalty of 5 minutes was used the contestant would be for 6 places lower.

Both Chief Stewards and Steward are from the Czech Republic, where we have used the finish ring without any altitude restrictions and penalty for about 15 years. The organizer always carefully selected such diameter of the finish ring and arrival directions which is safe to land from direct flight. Selection of the last TP is very important, of course. The pilots appreciate the very low load during the final glide, when they can focus on possible outlanding in terrain or look out of glider to view the other gliders on final, only.

Specification of paragraph 5.4.d.1. – where it's stated that both FR submitted on the first competition day show a positive record of the engine run. The problem is in the words first competition day. The definition doesn't exist, which would specify what is it competition day. If competition day is the day, when the competition task was announced, then possibly no competition launches start and it's impossible to fulfill the provision of the paragraph 5.4.d.1 on this day. But in the next days it's not mandatory to bring FR with positive record of ENL based on the current version of the paragraph.

Adjustment of current penalties – most likely it will be necessary to change some penalties in the manner that the first offence will be penalized by point loss instead of a warning. This includes mainly penalties for these cases:

Finish: hazardous maneuver – right with the use of finish ring this penalty prevents dangerous approaches on the airport in low altitude. We witnessed that a lot in Nitra. Still, some penalties – warning caused unofficial complaints of the pilots, because penalties were given from the tower point of view. This view wasn't upright with the direction of the landing and some penalties could be marked as discussion. The clear evidence were photos taken upright with the landing direction.

Finish: crossing below height – if there isn't a change in this penalty then pilot can use this advantage once during arrival to the finish and increase his point gain with only a warning penalty. It was decided on JWGC 2011 and EGC 2011 with the approval of the Bureau to change this penalty but it still isn't supported in Annex A.

Late start of MoP after release from tow – in Nitra this penalty-warning occurred once. The pilot definitely gained an advantage in bad conditions, where late start of MoP allowed him to fly to better wind and weather conditions (against wind) and only with a penalty warning.

Change the value of fix interval in paragraph 5.4.c. from 10s to 5s. Current FR allow it with enough memory and lower interval to more easily identify the problems that occur during flight

3. SAFETY

3.1. General safety of the event

There was a usual problems with safety: Flying near bases of low clouds, sometimes aggressive behaviour in gaggles. The launches were safe and the finishes were also safely managed. Pilots came with low load after crossing the Finish ring. All operations were monitored from the control tower.

The safety committee was formed according to the rules. The following members formed the committee:

- Jiri Cihlar – steward
- Luca Urbani ITA – World class
- Olivier Darozze FR – Club class
- Mario Kiessling GER – Standard class
- Visa Matti Leinikki FIN – 20m Multiclass doubleseaters

The safety committee took proposals from the pilots during the contest: All proposals are placed in the proposal of changes to the Annex A.

3.2 Occurrence of incidents and/ or accidents

Nil

3.3 Availability of medical personnel

A medical helicopter service is located at the airfield providing the medical service also to the competition.

3.4 Use of safety officers

Either the Contest Director or his Deputy acted as safety officers.

3.5 Launch safety

During the first days some pilots forgot support facilities for gliders along the runway which was dangerous for launches. There was a necessary for safety to wait with the beginning of launches until these facilities were removed.

3.6 Pilot skills relating to safety

No problems.

3.7 Suggestions for future safety enhancements

Nil

General Recommendation

Organizer with big experience and with tradition in organizing of Championships has not a problem with safety even in bad weather and big amount of classes and pilots. One from stewards would be skilled in scoring, computer program, scripts and would be capable to check results and IGC files.

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14th Sept. 2011

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