

Report for IGC Bureau on the 4th Sailplane Grand Prix final

Overview

The competition was held in conjunction with celebrations to mark 100 years of gliding at the Wasserkuppe, there were excellent facilities and attractions for the public and many spectators visited the site. There was a great deal of public interest in the racing and the organisers responded well to the public interest via an excellent public address system and timely presentation of information and events. Unfortunately the weather was very poor on both of the weekend days deterring a potentially very large public attendance and preventing any racing.

The excellent met forecasts enabled the organisers to make use of every available opportunity to fly which combined with excellent task setting produced 5 good SGP races. There was a daily prize giving as soon as the results were verified including presentation of the pilots to the public.

1. Facilities

The briefing hall was centrally located and used as a public theatre during the race with live commentary and projection onto a big screen, the sound system was excellent. Other public facilities both on and local to the site were good and despite there being no security or identity badge system no difficulties were encountered with the public access on to the airfield.

The facilities for the organising team were limited with both operational and media teams working from the same room.

2. Organisation

The media organisation, public events and public facilities were excellent and the local publicity for the event was comprehensive and effective. Difficulties with internal communication and lack of familiarity with the GP concept proved to be challenging for the contest operational team. The qualified pilots paid a rather high entry fee for this event and they also had to pay for the dinners at the opening and closing ceremonies, lack of financial resources meant that the hospitality was rather less than in previous SGP finals.

3. Day to day operations

After some first day problems the contest operation was well conducted and the public control was well co-ordinated but still relaxed enough for visitors to enjoy close contact with the operation.

During the race each afternoon there were aerobatic displays and on several days there were very enjoyable activities from vintage gliders and model flyers.

4. Rules

We would recommend some changes to the rules for the next series of SGP.

a) Any site bidding for an SGP final should have previously run a qualifying SGP. This is to ensure the organising team understand the timing and objectives of the SGP and have had the opportunity to test their systems and team.

b) The contest Director for an SGP final should be appointed by the IGC bureau and should have previous experience of directing a successfully run SGP event. It is evident that we should take control of the direction of the contest prior to any bid being accepted, this change would still allow us to appoint a local director but only when and if we feel they have the sufficient experience of SGP contests.

c) The finish system used during the Chile GP, based on a minimum altitude between a reporting point and the finish line, should be written into the rules with exceptions only

being allowed in extreme circumstances. If you do not have a hard altitude base for the finish line attempts to overtake during the last 2 km becomes inevitable.

d) The pilot entry system needs to be clarified, we suggest that:-

If there are more than 10 participants in a QGP, the 3 first pilots will automatically qualify for the final (if there are between 10 and 5 there will be 2 qualified) and if there are less than 5 the QGP will not be valid). There should not be any reserve pilot. If one of the qualified pilots does not want to participate he will not be replaced.

e) The IGC should retain the option to introduce some wild card entries.

5. Recommendations

- i. There should be a common web portal used by all contests in the SGP series and incorporating live tracking portal, results and SGP news. There were lots of comments on how difficult it has been to find any information on the SGP events and on the poor event publicity.
- ii. The IGC should provide a common tracker system for all SGP events with operational cost sharing by local organiser.
- iii. The IGC in co-operation with local organisers should seek partners to find sufficient finance to cover the basic costs of live race presentation.
- iv. The IGC should consider the creation of a foundation or association to promote, manage and operate the SGP series.
- v. The bid document should be modified to take into account the media personnel requirement for an SGP event, a requirement for an English speaking commentator and independent local commentator could be included.

Brian Spreckley
Referee 4th Sailplane Grand Prix final.