



Chief Judges Report for the 9th European Advanced Aerobic Championship

23rd July to 1st August 2015, Deva Airfield, Romania

Nick Buckenham, Chief Judge

Box layout and judging position

The box at Deva was situated a little to the south and west of that shown in Bulletin #1, the markers themselves being of white material pegged to the ground. The jury spent some time before the event inspecting the markers, and on several occasions the centre-front "T" in particular was seen to come loose in light winds and require attention.

Judging stations were said to be possible in the east, south and west locations, though only the south position was used during the event. The distance from the centre of the judging area to the front edge of the box was approximately 160 metres, and the judges were offset about 40m to the west of the cross centre-line to avoid local obstacles to clear sight. This judging position was easily reached on foot from the Deva airfield offices and briefing area, and thus no transport was required for the panel to assemble each day in their location. There was also a good-sized room in the main airfield building for the judges to use at any time, with a video monitor so that post-flight reviews could continue there after the day's flying was complete.

Boundary judging

Though no prior indication had been given that boundary judging would be implemented, the boundary judging positions were established and sighting equipment completed during the day before the event started and these were inspected and approved by the jury. The boundary judging team of eight English-speaking staff were instructed and subsequently managed very effectively by my assistant Leif Culpin, and together they provided a reliable service throughout the event despite some problems due to poor radio communications.

During the event there was an urgent request from one team that the Jury closely monitor the boundary judges to ensure impartiality of their reporting of box-outs. This was done for a while, and the Jury were able to report that no evidence of inaccurate or biased boundary reporting was detected. This did bring into sharp focus however the near-impossibility of ensuring that unbiased reporting can be reliably established when the boundary team are most likely to be local people and there are pilots flying for the host nation. Interestingly, present at this event was a team of Polish specialists who had brought an electronic system for real-time reporting of the aircraft X-Y-Z location said to be able to provide accurate box-out's not only for the four

vertical sides but also the upper and lower altitudes; the Jury was unfortunately bound to refuse its use except by the warm-up pilots as the system has not yet been checked and approved for use at CIVA events, but undoubtedly this is the type of solution that CIVA's ICT sub-committee should review and, if satisfactory, recommend for adoption at the earliest opportunity.

Organising team and judging line equipment



The team responsible for setting up and maintaining the judging line equipment were quick and very helpful, and the chairs and large umbrellas provided were to a good standard. I requested that the video monitor be raised so that the judges would all be able to see it clearly, and for this the team constructed a simple wooden stand that was very effective. The air-band and ground-staff radio equipment worked well. The team also provided a good supply of fruit, snacks, coffee and cold water (via a water-cooler and a fridge) to keep the panel refreshed throughout, especially necessary during the early days when the local temperature was frequently above 35°C.



Judges and Assistants

CIVA had appointed seven judges and assistants, though the assistant for Jürgen Leukefeld was unable to be present and was replaced at short notice by Ukraine observer Olga Romashova. The team thus comprised the acceptable minimum of seven:

Oleg Shpolyanskiy	Russia	Jürgen Leukefeld	Germany
John Gaillard	South Africa	Jerome Houdier	France
Violeta Gedminaite	Lithuania	David Kaftan	Czech Republic
Lars-Åke Allerhed	Sweden		

I should also note that with Leif Culpin unexpectedly required to devote all of his time to control of the boundary judging team, the second of my assistants (Jen Buckenham) was heavily occupied simply administering the judging line paperwork and thus the whole three-person judging line management team worked throughout with no margin for error. It follows that in future the organisers of continental championships, where boundary judging is not mandatory, should give clear indication in their initial bids and also their bulletins where this service will be

operated and either the Chief Judge or the organisers must pre-arrange suitably qualified staff to run the systems.

Video operations

The video operator provided by the organisers was not the same person each day, some had very poor ability in communicating in English, and also their camera and tripod were often not to the standard expected despite the clear instructions on this subject provided by the CIVA Organisers Guide. Most of these operators used a camera that recorded to tape cassettes rather than memory cards, the need to re-wind the cassette to locate a particular flight and then a particular figure for review by the judges being far slower and thus a considerable time-waster by comparison with the direct-to-SD card system.

One point made by the Jury was that each video recording must start with a short clip of the competitors flight number to identify the flight, and should then without a break pan quickly to the pilot taking-off and continue through the warm-up figures to the final wing rocks. In this way there can be no doubt as to the authenticity of the number and flight, and of course all warm-up figures and the entire sequence flight are recorded in case review of any aspect is required.

Warm-Up pilots

Jurgis Kairys (Sukhoi-31) and Tamas Abranyi (Xtreme 3000) were available to provide the necessary box demarcation and warm-up flights for the judges, and both provided an excellent service. I also allowed competitor Sean Wirz (Votec 221) to fly one warm-up sequence after he had been excluded from the event due to sub-60% scores in both the Known P1 and Free P2 programmes, but in my view this relatively low-quality flight was of little value to the judges and thus it was not repeated.

Density altitude and ‘free breaks’

With the airfield altitude at about 1,600ft and the high temperatures (several times above 35°C) and high humidity experienced at the event, frequent calculation by the meteo officer of the density altitude became essential to determine whether a ‘free break’ should be offered. When this was the case I made sure to provide this information to each pilot following the initial radio communication and “Box is free” instruction, as it was possible that it might not have been displayed in time before the pilot took-off.

Box incursion

While the programme-1 flight of Igor Shchutskyi was in progress there was an unsafe release of Igor Popov, the next pilot due to fly, into the air. I instructed the first pilot to continue flying his sequence, and gave repeated directions to the second pilot to fly away from the box toward the south and to remain clear of the performance zone; I chose to avoid use of the “Land, land, land” instruction in case this was misinterpreted by the first pilot. The second pilot however responded only with his competitor number, continued to climb and turned back through 360° to dive into the box to commence his warm-up figures. At this stage I heard a (non-English) instruction on the radio to which the second pilot responded by turning away from the box, after which he landed. I subsequently learned that the unknown instruction on the radio was spoken in Russian by another pilot who was observing the situation from the flight line.

At a subsequent meeting with the Jury it transpired that the second pilot had avoided the visual instructions given correctly by the designated flag-man at the release point on the airfield, and my response was deemed entirely correct. In accordance with section-6 para 1.2.7.4 I requested that this pilot be excluded from the sequence; the Jury approved this action, and I advised the scoring office and the Russian team manager accordingly. The team manager informed me that the second pilot believed he had communicated correctly and sufficiently merely by responding once with his competitor number, and thus at the following day's briefing I re-emphasized the mandatory nature of establishing two-way communication with the Chief Judge upon leaving the ground and the need to receive the instruction "Box is free" before any attempt could be made to fly toward or into the performance zone.



Nick Buckenham
EAAC 2015 Chief Judge