

Chief Judges Report

WAC 2015

France

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General Comments & Summary

The Contest was carried out safely and without any incidents, the organisation was excellent throughout.

It was very encouraging to see some major attendance by the general public for this event, especially for the Freestyle Programme, which was combined with an Airshow.

Scoring tablets were utilised for the first time at a Classic Aerobatic event.

The Judging Performance in general was excellent.

The Judges accommodation was also to a high standard and the catering facilities were excellent, in general the Judges were looked after very well.

A large passenger aircraft used for evacuation training (Boeing 747) was situated towards the centre of the performance zone, this caused the lower altitude limits to be raised 20 meters, which was the approximate height of the tail.

It was pleasing that no protests were lodged due to any judging decisions.

Judging Positions

Three Judging positions had been prepared to the South, East & West.

The preferred position was the Westerly position as it was close to all the airport facilities, including a terminal building, which was useful in conducting video conferences, unfortunately this position could only be used in the late afternoon due to the position of the sun, although when there was an overcast preference was given to this position.

The most commonly used position was to the East, this was in a field between industrial buildings, it was also at a slightly lower elevation to the airfield, and the main disadvantage was the time taken to transfer the judges to this position.

All the required facilities were available in this position.

The Judges Support Crew

This team was capably led by none other than ex-World Champion Christine Genin-Zanetta, I cannot overemphasise the excellent work done by this team, in getting the judging positions in place promptly and then looking after the judges requirements during the completion, this was much appreciated.

Video Team

The video Team was to a high standard and when required reviews were carried out without problems and with complete clarity.

Scoring Tablets

Much discussion had taken place before the contest concerning the exact use of these tablets, it had been agreed that the tablets would run in parallel to the normal paper scoring system, mainly due to concerns about the practicalities of their use and their reliability, not the least was the fact that no reference is made in CIVA Regulations to the use of such tablets.

It has to be said that by utilising scoring tablets, it adds additional persons to the Organisations Team in this case nine additional personnel, although not the direct concern of CIVA this adds to the cost of running a judging line considerably. The reason for this is a single assistant cannot call the aerobatic figures for the judge and operate the tablet simultaneously, therefore making it necessary to have a dedicated operator (this apparently applies to the French Nationals as well), whereas it is entirely feasible for the assistant to jot down the score onto the sequence sheet, transferring this to the A form after the flight has been completed

However the Organisers had made a considerable effort in getting suitable personnel to operate the tablets, for example a Russian speaking operator, so all that remained was to see how they worked in practice.

In practice the paper system was generally ahead of the input from the tablets i.e. we had all the scoring sheets at the Chief Judges workstation before all the scores had been input and confirmed as present at the Chief Judges control tablet. In some instances the system was backed up for several flights, although this had no impact on the flight operations, which carried on as normal. It also has to be said that on two occasions a judge's tablet failed technically and had to be replaced, again this had no impact on the scoring as we had the paper score sheets, but if the tablet had been the sole source of scoring data this would have presented a problem.

The main benefit of the tablets is that the scores do get into the scoring system at the scoring office considerably quicker, another obvious potential benefit is that if the system has been linked to screens viewed by the public and with a commentator (as at some CIVA Special Events) this can lead to more public interest and understanding, but this was not the case at WAC 2015 and had it been the case, the delays experienced in getting data to the Chief Judges workstation would have been problematical i.e. instant scoring for the public means just that, scores have to appear just after the figure has been flown, not minutes later, which entirely defeats the objective.

To summarise, the use of tablets in a classical aerobatic championship is highly debatable, the only benefit is that scores are transferred more quickly to the score room, the downside is that they add a complication to the judging process and at a considerable additional cost.

However for special events staged particularly for the public, they can play an important part (example WAG 2015), but this has to be accompanied by commentary and even more important an experienced operator has to input scores by each figure as they actually happen, again this adds to the complexity and cost of the judging line.

Flight Director

The cooperation experienced with the flight Director was outstanding, flights were dispatched generally before the previous competitor had landed, but always in a safe manner, no conflicts of airspace occurred.

Competitions Flights Programmes 1 to 4

Adverse weather unfortunately did play a part at this championship and programme 4 was not completed, nevertheless with three programmes flown in full the results were a true representation of the pilot's skills.

There were no incidents during the contest and all the flights were conducted in safe manner, without any concerns to the Chief Judge.

The line judging system worked well, this was controlled by Leif Culpin at the Chief Judges work station, in general the out calls were received just as we were observing a possible out situation. However we required the use of the units provided by Vladimir Machula as the original handsets were not proving to be very reliable.

Final Freestyle Programme

This programme proved to have some challenges, not the least being that it was part of the Airshow scheduled for the final day and as such fell under the Airshow Director, who introduced (as in the norm for Airshows) a deadline for the protection of the general public. It was briefed that the penalty for the crossing of this deadline was disqualification from the Programme.

Also there was considerable discussion as to where the judges were to be situated, the conflict being that ideally the programme should be flown for the benefit of the general public, which would have placed the judges to the west, but as this was on sunny and hot day this would also have placed the sun directly in the judges eyes, which was just not acceptable. Some compromises were considered, being to place the judges to the South and moving the eastern judging position closer to the crowd (but this also reduced the size of the performance zone), which in view of the deadline was unacceptable. In the end it was agreed to utilise the normal eastern judging position, which in effect meant the competitors would centralise their performance for the judges to the detriment of the general public, there was no way out of this dilemma.

It was also agreed the two line judges would be placed at either end of the deadline (presumably with the same sighting devices that were used throughout the contest).

A further complication arose at the briefing shortly before the programme was to commence as there was a request that music be played for the benefit of the crowd and this was agreed. However shortly before the first flight commenced the Organiser started issuing hand held VHF radios to the judges, this was a pointless exercise as music is not part of the CIVA judging criteria and I instructed the judges to take no account of the music, also being on the eastern side and slightly below the airfield elevation any transmission from the western side by VHF didn't work anyway due to line of sight issues. Also the question of whether the pilot could hear the music in the cockpit came into the discussion, this of course requires suitable equipment on a separate channel, which wasn't available, in the end a compromise was reached where the pilot could announce on the emergency frequency to the music centre to "commence music".

During the programme two deadline infringements were reported one by both line judges leading to the exclusion of the flight concerned and the other by only a single line judge, which was therefore unconfirmed. After completion of the programme a discussion started on whether the line judges had utilized the correct equipment, this discussion was quashed as being irrelevant as all checks should have been carried out prior to the commencement of the programme.

Judge Performance

The Judges

Stanislav Bajzic	-	Zuzana Danihelova	-	Czech Republic
Bernard Courtois	-	Gilles Guillemard	-	France
Marty Fluornoy	-	Peggy Rieder	-	USA
Michael Garbers	-	Isabella Borowick	-	Germany
Violeta Gedminaitė	-	Algis Orlickas	-	Lithuania
Vladimir Kotelnikov	-	Mikhail Bezdenezhnyth	-	Russia
Laszlo Liskay	-	Quintin Hawthorne	-	South Africa
Kimmo Virtanen	-	Hanna Raiha	-	Finland

The overall RI for programmes 1 to 3 was as follows:-

1. Laszlo Liskay - 12.96
2. Violeta Gedminaitė - 16.16
3. Bernard Courtois - 17.08
4. Kimmo Virtanen - 18.25
5. Vladimir Kotelnikov - 19.14
6. Stanislav Bajzic - 19.36
7. Michael Garbers - 19.92
8. Marty Fluornoy - 23.52

These results are quite good one is lower than the rest and one higher and the majority quite close together, the figures don't lie they are the overall result of all the programmes, but perhaps they do not tell the whole story.

On this judging line we had two judges appearing for the first time at an International Championship, it is a fact that they were probably under more scrutiny than they are used to and perhaps working with an assistant for the first time. Some Aero Clubs also work to different systems where consensus comes into play and HZ is not investigated to the same extent if at all. In other words it takes a little time to settle into a different environment.

If you look at the results for programme 1, the two new judges Fluornoy & Garbers ended up with quite poor RI 30.72 & 24.70 respectively, this was down to almost exclusively missing HZs and is really a function of how each judge is working with their assistant.

As the contest progressed these two judges improved quite dramatically and in Programme 3 they ranked as follows Garbers 2nd and Fluornoy 5th a marked improvement over Programme 1, almost certainly attributed to having settled down with their assistants and maybe changed slightly their approach.

I would not hesitate to have either on a judging line in future, as the learning curve has now passed and their true ability has emerged.

The Chief Judges Team

The Chief Judge was assisted by Irma Janciukiene of Lithuania and Leif Culpin of Great Britain, both did their jobs in an excellent manner and made the position of being Chief Judge an absolute pleasure, I cannot thank these persons enough.

The WAC Organisation

The Organisers team led by Contest Director Guy Auger, did their job very well and this led to the successful conclusion to the championship, no organisational issues arose during the championship.

The only slight criticism that can be made, is that is normal for the Organisers to provide a small souvenir to the Judges to mark their participation at the event, this never occurred at WAC.

Scoring System

Much debate had taken place prior to the contest on the use of the ACMS Scoring System used almost exclusively only by the French, as opposed to the ACRO system in general use throughout most of the World.

ACMS worked and produced the results so no problem with this. However post contest it has been the norm to be able to interrogate contest files, seeing exactly how judges performed and the construction of their RI, this is a simple task with ACRO but does not seem available with ACMS or at least it is not apparent on the Internet.

CIVA appointed an IT Group at the last CIVA meeting to investigate such issues, it would be interesting to receive their report on this particular issue.