

20th World Rally Flying Championship

Santa Cruz / Portugal

September 4th – 10th, 2016

Report of the Int. Chief Judge – Paul Szameitat

Participants

51 crews from 18 countries participated in this 20th World Rally Flying Championship held between 4th and 10th September 2016 at Santa Cruz Airfield in Portugal.

22 crews were participating in the unlimited category and 29 crews in the advanced category.

Teams from 6 countries were eligible for the Team Trophy in the unlimited category and 9 in the advanced category (for the price giving only 6).

General Comments

Championship Director Joao Francisco with Filipa Oliveira, his Deputy and Route Planner Jaques Carriquiriberry with Michel Grosdemange had excellently organized this championship.

I arrived in Santa Cruz on August 29th and found a very good organisation team with helpful and friendly people.

During the training week the airfield preparation was almost completed. There were two parallel runways (17/35). The concrete one had a length of 635m and the grass one had a total length of 870m. So we could use the concrete runway 35 for departing and the grass runway 35 for landing aircrafts.

A marked landing strip was on the grass runway 35. The German electronic landing equipment was available and was working very well and exactly.

The parking positions for the aircrafts were marked and also described in a folder and at the information board.

The Registration- and Information Office was up and running.

At one side of the hangar was a restaurant for drinks and lunch available during the training week.

During the competition lunch and drinks were available in a big tent and were also served in the separation area in one part of the tent.

General Briefing and Daily Crew Briefing were held in the hangar, Judges Briefing and the daily Team Manager Briefing in the classroom of the main building.

The competitors and officials were housed in several hotels not far from the airfield. For the transfer between accommodation and airfield there were 60 bicycles for free available.

Competition Routes

Route Planner Jaques Carriquiriberry and Michel Grosdemange prepared four Official Training Routes and five routes for the Competition Navigation Flights.

I checked the five Navigation Routes very carefully with the Route Planners.

All routes were at a very high level - adequately for a World Championship - and excellently prepared. It was all according to the International Rules and Regulations Rally Flying, 2016 Edition.

It was flown in 2 categories:

- unlimited category and
- advanced category (for beginners and for crews with low experience)

The rules for the advanced category were easier for the competitors but it was much more work for the organisers (different TP-photos, - on route-photos, - descriptions, - time for preparing the map). The handling for the two different categories was difficult but without any problems.

The weather conditions were foggy at the beginning thereafter very windy, the visibility was good during the entire competition. At the third day it was foggy until noon, so only the unlimited class could fly on this day. There were nearly the same meteorological conditions for all crews on every day. The wind level was calculated only at the last day.

Afterwards the very fast logger download and debriefing, each crew got a preliminary result of the flight.

Landings

The wind for each crew was noted first when the aircraft was passing the beginning of the final approach and a second time at touchdown.

There were all the time nose wind conditions. The message about the wind was given to the crews by radio.

The measuring by the German System was in conjunction with visual judging and was very exactly. The video recording was done with two video cameras in sufficient quality.

Results

There were some complaints about the navigation flights and the landings. We were able to clarify some complaints, but there were also three protests. The protests were upheld by the Jury (see Jury Report).

Conclusion

In my opinion this was championship was carried out at a very high level of Rally Flying. It was a very difficult, but also a very interesting and beautiful event.

The attempt with two categories, unlimited and advanced, was handled well, the outcome of the event will be discussed at the next GAC-meeting.

One key for this successful event was the good cooperation between Championship Director, Route Planner, Jury, International and Local Chief Judge, Chief Landing Judge and the Team Managers. The contribution of all people not named, who carried out the logistics of the event, was also remarkable.

Paul Szameitat, Austria
Int. Chief Judge of the 20th WRFC,

September 15th, 2016