

22nd FAI - World Rally Flying Championship

***Brits, South Africa
13th - 19th November 2022***

Int. Chief Judges Report – Ralf Grunwald



Participants

35 teams from 11 countries participated in these 22nd World Rally Flying Championship held between 13th - 19th November 2022 at Brits Airfield in South Africa.

Teams from 7 countries were eligible for the Team Trophy.

General Comments

I landed in Johannesburg on 9th November in the morning and was personally picked up by route manager Frank Eckard. Arriving at the Brits airfield, I found a highly motivated team and a well-prepared competition site. There were already some teams doing their validation and first training flights. Unfortunately, the weather was very rainy at the beginning of the training week and only allowed a few flights.

Accommodation

The entry fee for this world championship did not include accommodation and transport. As a result, the participants looked for accommodation in the vicinity of the airfield from a list of recommendations and organised the transport themselves. There were enough offers in all price categories. The officials were accommodated together in a lodge very close to the airfield (4km).

Airport

The Brits airfield was familiar to many participants from the World Precision Flying Championship 2011. Especially in preparation for the championship, some improvements were made to the clubhouse and the runway was given a new layer of asphalt and new markings. A few metres away from the clubhouse was the hangar for the briefings and quarantine. The sunny weather with high temperatures took a lot out of those waiting in the quarantine. However, the organisers did everything to make the time as pleasant as possible. The area for the debriefing was on the other side of the clubhouse and was spacious. Quarantine after the debriefing was not necessary.

A runway with a length of 850 meters was available. The parking areas were well marked. However, due to the persistent rain, they could not be used as planned. The landing fields were marked in advance for both directions. The taxiways also suffered from the heavy rainfall and were kept in good shape by the organizer as best as possible.

Competition Routes

Route planner Frank Eckard prepared enough training routes and 4 competition routes. The routes had names of the mineral resources mined in this region and led in all directions. This also meant that they covered a large variance of the surface and were very varied.

Frank had already sent me all the routes and competition documents in advance. As soon as the photo flights were completed, I also received these from Frank. So I had enough time to check all the routes. All routes were prepared according to the current Rules and Regulations Rally Flying. Together with the route planner, I also checked one of the four navigation routes in detail by plane. The quality of all routes was at an exceedingly high level - adequate for a world championship.

There were 3 stations in the debriefing room. After a certain amount of training, longer waiting times for the crews could be avoided. The individual results including the logger printout were handed over to the participants immediately after the debriefing. Complaints were dealt with immediately afterwards by the route planner or myself. The jury also always dealt with protests immediately and quickly.

Landing Test

Frank had prepared 2 outside landings and selected sufficiently dimensioned bush fields for them. Due to a protest, these could not be used for scoring because the landing field did not correspond to the 12-meter width indicated in the sketch. The interpretation of this value was viewed differently. At least the landing fields corresponded to the Aims of the rally flight and the conditions were equal and fair for all participants. On the other 3 courses the landings were scored in Brits. The evaluation was carried out by means of 3 high speed cameras. My big thanks go to the two Intern. Judges Jacques Jacobs and Jiri Dodal for their good work over the whole period.

Results

In the entire period, we received 6 protests and 41 complaints. The unexpected rainfall changed the landscape in some places in such a way that important landmarks could not be recognised or could only be recognised with difficulty. Among other things, this led to the high number of complaints.

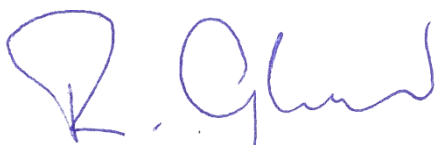
Conclusion

The design of the 12-meter width of the landing field has directly and decisively influenced the overall result of this FAI World Championship. This does not correspond to my wish to win a world championship in the air and not on the ground. Nevertheless, the decision based on the valid rules and regulations was correct. I strongly recommend moving away from such fixed values and instead making recommendations within a range. I also recommend using an integral software to evaluate such complex competitions. Frank has proven that Excel can also be used for this purpose, but to reduce the susceptibility to errors in connection with time pressure in the case of short-term changes, a software solution is better suited.

In my opinion this championship was in the highest level of Rally Flying. It was a very difficult but also a beautiful event. I am very sorry that we had to cancel the outside landings.

One reason for the success of this event was the excellent organization and the good cooperation between Championship Director, Route Planner, Jury, International and Local Chief Judge and Team Managers.

The contribution of all un-named people to run the logistic around the event was also outstanding.



Ralf Grunwald, Germany
Int. Chef Judge of the 22nd WRFC
February 04th, 2023