

<i>Subject:</i>	IPC Wingsuit Flying Committee Report	Annex No. -	35
<i>Author:</i>	John Smyth, Chair IPC Wingsuit Flying Committee	Agenda ref. -	17.1
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IPC Wingsuit Flying Committee – Chairman’s Report - 2017-12-07

Committee: - John Smyth, Chair (GB); Randy Connell, Deputy Chair (USA); Dennis Werenskiold (DEN); Klaus Rheinwald (GER); Sergey Pantelev (RUS); Sandro Boehme (GER); James Hayhurst (USA); Henne Wiggers (NL).

The effective 2017 Committee as above, was not the one that was voted in by Plenary. Jackie Harper (GB) resigned. However, we are grateful to Buzz Bennett (CAN) who assisted greatly during the year especially in his area of expertise, formulating rules. Buzz was also Chief Judge at the 2nd FAI World Cup of Wingsuit Flying Held at Skydive Fyrosity, Overton, Nevada, USA, between the 1st to the 9th of November 2017. On which I will now report. We are also very grateful to Michael Cooper (Flysight) for his invaluable contributions in the area of Tech support, scoring systems and rules.

So, to Overton. This was the first FCE to be held at this DZ. Indeed, it was the first major competition of any sort. A steep learning curve for the Owners; Sammy & Iva Vassilev, better known to you all as also the owners of “Skydive TV”. I was also FAI Controller for this World Cup and as such I was involved in the preparation right from the start. I have to say, from day 1, it was beset by problems, that tested the resolve of the hosts to the extreme and indeed me, in my role as FAI controller. It is not the purpose of this report to chronologically list them all but suffice to say, many were imposed by outside agencies, events and dynamics, that were beyond the control of the Hosts. I will mention a few that perhaps FAI/IPC and indeed potential Hosts for future FCE’s, can learn lessons from, going forward.

A huge debate with FAI about something as simple as the logo that took weeks to resolve, set the tone. In the end resolved by the return to the FAI office, from leave, by the person actually responsible for approving logos. Then a protracted debate about the Organiser Agreement, that went on and on bouncing between the Hosts, USPA & FAI. In my opinion, this was an unnecessary distraction as it appeared to me, the hosts just wanted clarification on a few paragraphs, that had not been changed from the generic FAI OA, for many years. The intent was to bring the FAI generic OA’s into the 21st Century. I respectfully ask FAI to re-examine their OA policy. As this protracted debate cast doubt on whether the WC would go ahead, especially when another concern became very apparent.

That concern was the number of countries participating and indeed whether the World Cup in Acro could even go ahead, given IPC’s own rules reference the number of Countries. Or indeed whether the number of participants in Performance warranted the WC to continue (Albeit the number of countries was not a problem) I think it is fair to say Sammy came very close to cancelling this FCE and accepting the loss of his deposit. With two hats on, (Chair of the Committee and FAI Controller) I resolved to work hard with Sammy to avert this potential outcome as I believe that if we had not had this WC, it would have set the disciplines development back years. So, after weeks of negotiation with Bureau, reference Acro, and the number of countries to warrant an WC, in that event and a lot of work, by me, to get Countries and Individuals to commit to both events; What did we end up with? In Acro we had 7 Teams from 4 Countries. I was so relieved to get an E Mail from Espen Fadnes

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informing me that the 3 Norwegian Performance competitors would also do Acro. That made four countries and saved the WC. In Performance, we had 38 Competitors from 11 Countries. With 7 Performance jumpers also doing Acro and 14 Acro jumpers only doing Acro, this meant a total of only 52 Competitors. Well down on last year's WPC & WC in Z Hills, which had 64 Competitors from 22 Countries in Performance and 8 Teams from 6 Countries in Acro; Allowing for some doing both events there was a total of 88 competitors in Z Hills. So why the decline? Well is this something IPC need to examine for all disciplines? We know that World Cups allow for more Teams and more Individuals from each Country. So, it may be a reasonable assumption that one would expect more competitors from each Country for World Cups. The trend, in all disciplines, indicates the exact opposite is the case. I ask, is this just simply that most Countries only offer some form of funding for WPC's and therefore Athletes chose to concentrate their limited funds on WPC's? Or is there more to it. That is the perception of the importance of WC's to IPC/FAI. Has their value been eroded? I believe it is worth a discussion because very soon potential Hosts may reconsider even bidding for WC's altogether if it means they sustain a significant Financial loss. Which is exactly what happened to Skydive Fyrosity and Sammy, at this WC. I tried to allay his sense of grievance about this by saying "before this WC, very few people had heard of Skydive Fyrosity, now you are on the Worlds Map, what price for that? I fear, small comfort, to Sammy.

Despite all that and many other hurdles, e.g. at the last minute the local council insisting on an insurance policy that reflected an Air Show!! At more massive cost, this WC did go ahead, Excellent facilities, no injuries, World Cup Winners declared and 2 new World Records and numerous Continental and National Records. Congratulations to Amber Forte from Norway on a new Female Speed World Record and Travis Mickle from USA on a new speed World record. Pictures and Videos speak a thousand words so I will show both at this stage in the open meeting to show how standards have improved in just the last 12 Months and to recognise the Medal Winners.

Also, there was a very successful FAI Judges Training course held at this WC. We have 9 new FAI Wingsuit Judges. Special mention must be made of Randy Connell, who ran this course. I received nothing but praise from all the participants. So well done Randy. Martin Dlouhy from Prostejov was also at this WC and spent a lot of time with Jimmy Hayhurst the MD and Buzz Bennet the CJ with his panel, to learn for next year's WPC. Thanks, to all, for this, the future looks good.

At the end, we had a Competitors Meeting. One of the longest I have ever been part of. We tried something innovative at this meeting. A live video feed on you tube and an attempt to record it all, by Sammy and Skydive TV. Many very valuable points were raised and we identified the need to clarify many rules, especially in Performance & relating to lane discipline, before next year's WPC in Prostejov. As I write this, the committee are working very hard to achieve this. I think this work will continue for the next 2 months, and all through the open meetings, to Plenary. But I am confident we will achieve it. However, as we had such a late WC and I am required to write this and the agenda now, I am sure you can understand why the attached agenda is non-specific, at this early stage, to allow the committee more flexibility.

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Finally, on Overton, I must state that the Media coverage was absolutely superb. Given that this is also the home of Skydive TV, not surprising really but Sammy has certainly set a benchmark for the coverage of future IPC FCE's. I hope IPC/FAI can support him on that journey. While talking about Sammy and his Team at Fyrosity. On behalf of all the Wingsuit Community; thank you all very much for facing up to the huge challenges that were thrown at you. It would have been easy to walk away but you did not. You overcame and in the end, gave us a very successful World Cup as the Discipline of Wingsuit Flying continues to evolve within the IPC/FAI Family.

I am not a Wingsuit Competitor or Judge and because of IPC regulations, I was happy to step up and take on the Chair of the Committee when no other delegate was available. However, I always said that whenever Delegates, who were either Competitors or Judges came to the fore I would step down and concentrate on the disciplines I have competed in. That time has come. It has been a steep learning curve for me but I genuinely believe that the current competitors are Pioneers in a discipline which will grow and grow. It is very exciting what is currently being developed. The true "Dream of Flight" I just wish I was 30 years younger because I know what I would be doing!!

So, the Committee have agreed to hand over the Chair to Dennis Werenskiold, the Delegate from Denmark and Wingsuit Competitor representing Denmark, after I stand down at the end of Plenary in Bulgaria. Subject of course to Plenary approval. He will then announce his Committee for, 2018, at Plenary.

John Smyth

Chairman: IPC Wingsuit Flying Committee