

Chief Judges Report for the 20th European Aerobatic Championship

20th to 27th August 2016, Airfield Moravská Třebová, Czech Republic

Nick Buckenham, Chief Judge

Overall the event was run to a good standard with few opportunities for complaint, and the organisers are to be complimented on the high standard of operation in each area.

Box layout and judging positions

To avoid airfield overflights during the championship the box was located immediately to the east of the parallel 08/26 hard and grass runways, with three judging points at the east, south and west positions. The view shown here pre-dates the hard runway, which has displaced the grass to its immediate south, and at the event itself the box had necessarily been moved some 50m to the east to accommodate local restrictions.



The judging locations themselves were well enough positioned –

1. The East / morning-only position was by far the best, with a good view over the whole airfield. It could however be used only until around midday, when re-location to either the West or South became necessary due to the sun.
2. The South position was also quite satisfactory, though placed in a beet field that made walking somewhat precarious.
3. The West / afternoon-only position was located in a mature maize crop being grown for bio-energy, with plants over 2m high. To access this location a wide corridor had been cut through the maize plantation, giving a somewhat restricted 'tunnel' view



toward the east. In practise this was fine, this and the east locations providing the most used solution as curiously the prevailing wind was most often generally north/south.

The judging team also had the use of a good size lecture room back at the airport with overhead projector facilities, providing an excellent solution for reviewing videos – but only once the team had vacated the judging line either at midday during the lunch break or the evening after all flights for the day had finished.

Accommodation and food

While the judging team stayed at a pleasant 3-star hotel in Moravska Trebova some 10 minutes from the airfield the pilots and other team members were all accommodated in Olomouc some 55km distant, requiring some care when planning their travel arrangements each day and making their start and finish times significantly more extended than our own.

Warm Up pilot

Although two warm-up pilots had been agreed with the International Jury at an earlier stage, one apparently suffered an industrial accident and could not fly and the other was replaced at a late stage by Alexis Busque from France. Alexis thus flew quite frequently for us and provided an excellent standard of service, including several ‘intentional mistakes’ that I requested to challenge the judges. He used one of the French team aircraft, and thus no additional burden was placed on the organisers for his services save that of his fuel and accommodation.

Communications

The organisers provided Motorola 3400 series two-way radios that enabled a good level of communication between the judging line, the staff at the flag-release point and the Contest Director at all times. For air-band comms with the competitors an excellent Dittel professional unit was available plus an Icom hand-held in case of problems with the former – though none were experienced.

Throughout the event great care was taken to ensure that no ‘hot-box’ situations could happen, but at an early stage this did unfortunately occur when the flag-release team misinterpreted some mid-sequence wing rocks following a competitors’ need to break after making an error, requiring rapid re-direction of the second pilot toward the southerly ‘Hold’ area. Subsequent to this my assistant Leif Culpin authorised the release of each pilot, a safer procedure though needing additional control throughout.

Judges Forms

As in Poland at WAAC we used the newer-style Left and Right forms throughout rather than the legacy A-B-C forms system, the judges and assistants finding this a good basis for their work.

Flight times and frequency

At EAC the Free Known sequence was operated for the first time at an Unlimited championship, and for this and all subsequent programmes the organisers provided an excellent standard of paperwork. For this first sequence the flight times were a little longer to accommodate the competitors’ entitlement to fly the allowed training figures followed by up to the first five of their own sequence figures. This process at the very start of each sequence presented an



additional burden on the judges, requiring them to be particularly observant from the moment the competitor entered the box, when they were often still completing the paperwork from the previous flight, to verify that no transgressions were seen that might qualify for a penalty. On this subject I believe that a simpler solution is required, and I will present some possible alternatives via the President's Proposals package.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Nick Buckenham', is positioned above the printed name.

Nick Buckenham
Chief Judge, EAC 2016