15th FAI World Glider Aerobatic Championships
3rd FAI World Advanced Glider Aerobatic Championship
Dubnica nad Váhom, Slovakia
August 9th – 18th, 2012

Report of the Contest Director

Introduction

This Contest Director report is focused on all phases of WGAC&WAGAC 2012 organization and specifically on issues we faced. Thoughts, ideas and opinions are based on experience from the point of view of the CD and organizing team. Report should be also understood as thanks to all people who participated at WGAC&WAGAC 2012. Special thanks are to the pilots. Without pilots, there will be no championships.

WGAC&WAGAC 2012 website: http://www.wgac2012.sk

Pre-championships operations

Due to my personal issues, Bulletin no. 1 has been issued 14 days after deadline stated in FAI Sporting Code, Section 6 Part 2. As a Contest Director, I fully accept this misconduct of rules.

Bulletin was prepared with care to provide all necessary information in one attempt. Organizer goal was to issue as less bulletins as possible. One month before competition was issued Bulletin no. 2 just as information reminder with minimum of newly added information.

Simplification should be as much as possible in favor of competitors. Real experience is showing that minimum of participants (Officials as well) are reading Bulletins carefully or they are not reading Bulletins at all. I was able to produce complex Bulletin, but only thanks to help of friends and demanding experience from previous championships where I served in the contest office or as CD (Contest Director). CIVA as Organizer's supervisor should provide more help during all stages of Championships. In fact, as Organizer I am missing any kind of supports from CIVA despite the fact the all executives are wise and highly experienced. Also from the point of active help GASC (Glider Aerobatic Subcommittee) was for me like yeti (everyone heard about him, but nobody saw him yet).

I would like to point out help provided from Mr. Manfred Echter, Mrs. Madelyn Delcroix and from Mr. Philippe Kuechler in this stage of preparation. Without their experience and help will be impossible to cover all possible scenarios and will significantly decrease WGAC&WAGAC 2012 level.

Familiarization and Training Flights

Training flights were possible starting from August 1st till August 4th with fully marked box. Familiarization flights started on August 5th till August 8th. There were 100 training takeoffs and 286 familiarization takeoffs. First three days of familiarization flights were not necessary to arrange priority list, because tempo of takeoffs was reaching 12 pilots per hour. Everyone who wants to fly have opportunity to make more than 3 flights even with 65 competitors in total. Priority list was

strictly followed on the last day due to upcoming GASC meeting and proceeding practical part of judging seminar.

No complaints were received regarding training and familiarization flying days organization.

Competition days

Competition was proceeding smoothly thanks to performance of used towing aircrafts. Usual tempos of flights were around 8 per hour. Close to the end of the day we were able to reach 12 flights per hour, but this was absolute maximum regarding safety, towing effectiveness as well as from the point of judges.

Judging line operations runs smooth and were supporting demanding contest tempo incredibly. This was achieved mainly due to outstanding effectiveness of Chief Judge, Mr. Phillipe Kuechler. All matters regarding interaction between judging line and Organizer was smooth and effective. As person with final responsibility also for Scoring Office I have to admit there were no paperwork issues like missing marks on scoring sheets or other issues. I enjoyed cooperation with Chief Judge and his assistants as well as with rest of judging line.

Two flights of whole Championships were interrupted due to unsuitable weather conditions (precipitation and low cloud base). Those flights were postponed according rules with presence of International Jury and proceeded later same day.

One flight was interrupted due to operations of HMD device. Flight was postponed according rules with presence of International Jury and proceeded later same day.

In total there were 65 competitors form 14 countries. 38 pilots in Advanced (WAGAC) from 10 countries and 27 in Unlimited (WGAC) from 12 countries. During competition days we made 401 takeoffs. 6 programs have been flown. In last 6th program was last group of pilots (9) canceled due to fact that Judges refused to proceed. I personally do not accept this situation, because there were still enough time to finish program and pilots were ready on start line. First three were already ready for takeoff. Chief Judge let judges vote and majority refused to continue. In fact it was about the worst of three groups of competing pilots. Where exactly have pilots such a good opportunity to fly in front of full international line of judges in Championships conditions as well as with completely marked box? From my point it was really unfair regarding pilots, but according rules, we must accept Judging line decision in case of this situation.

Weather conditions were ideal to handle all six programs allowed by FAI Sporting Code, Section 6 Part 2. There was one day off canceled in the middle of the day due to forecasted weather conditions. Beginning of flights almost each day was influenced by unsuitable weather conditions like low cloud base or wind conditions for no more than hour.

During a last day were no official competition flights; however we organized Freestyle programme for pilots who wish to fly. It has been flown with music and smoke systems installed. In total 12 pilots were competing. Modified power freestyle rules we applied. Freestyle was organized as a part of airshow.

Airport

The grass airfield Dubnica is well known place in aviation mainly as a successful Organiser of FAI Championships like Precision Flying, Rally, Gliders Cross-country and Para Buggy. In 2011 airport hosted 7th FAI European Advanced Aerobatics Championships. The site is well equipped with a good infrastructure, capability and capacity. Manpower is at the excellent level.

Airport infrastructure was capable to accommodate whole competition without any issues. Hangar space was limited and first day shows aircrafts storing as demanding job. In following days we were able to store 24 gliders, which was still insufficient due to total number of 28 aircrafts. Remaining aircrafts stayed anchored outside.

Airport restaurant was capable to serve all participants as well as other observers without issues. No complains in this matter has been received.

HMD (Height Measuring Device)

HMD device was provided by Aeroclub Poznan (Poland). Their system was in use for second time at International Championships. Device mounting was slightly different and provider had enough modification kits for all competitors who need it. From my point of view, operation of HMD was not perfect and didn't meet our expectations.

PHMD (Poznan Height Measuring Device) was offered officially by Poznan Aeroclub for 1500 EUR. Organizer accepted this offer with belief that we are buying regular service. Part of a deal was also requirements from side of PHMD operations.

Only four units were provided. This was stated in deal, but the real meaning was, that they have physically four devices only! At second day of competition, there was a total malfunction of one of the device which means three units available only. With tempo of flights we were able to achieve it was absolutely insufficient.

In deal was stated that two persons will be present at contest site to provide smooth operation. Two persons crew was present only during first day. This caused overload of person operating PHMD on judging line. He was giving outstanding results, but when something went wrong with units at flight line, he was unable to be on two places in same time. Also normal operation needs calibration with every change of judging position. Even though we have delays in the morning due to weather, we were then facing delays due to PHMD operations as well as in the afternoon after change of judging position.

Organizer provides two persons at start line according to previous agreement with PHMD provider, but later it was necessary to have even three persons available to exchange units. This basically means complication in Organizer's team arrangement.

Couple of pilots reported that they didn't hear beeping or they hear beeping in altitudes where beeping should not be active. One flight was interrupted by pilot during tow. Maybe it was a problem of noise in cockpit or real system malfunction, nevertheless if it was due to noise, than device must be equipped with stronger beeper, if this was caused by system malfunction, than it's inappropriate. In both cases, device is not meeting requirements of HMD purpose.

Presentation of PHMD operations has been made during morning briefing of first flying day, but due to my experience, the presentation was absolutely inefficient. Pilots were personally asking me for explanation during rest of the whole event. There was definitely missing responsible person available for pilots as well.

Scoring Office

Scoring office was operated by Mr. Paweł Szczepanowski (POL) accompanied by Mrs. Lenka Jiraskova (CZE) as his assistant. They are both well experienced and did outstanding job. There were no issues at all with scoring office operations. All kind of results were published in appropriate time without mistakes. Paperwork for judging line was prepared on time with perfect quality.

We were facing minor problems with ACRO software used. Biggest issue was a problem with starting order creation where with every new generated start list was need of manual input of operator accompanied by member of Int. Jury. This problem rose during automatically generated start lists based on results from previous programmes. Short time delay was crucial to publish new starting order for pilots prior to start next programme. We were capable to handle it smoothly thanks to good job of Mr. Szczepanowski and help provided from Int. Jury members.

Contest Office

As a Contest Director, I have two assistants. Mr. Stefan Pohanka was taking care about all matters from the position of President of Dubnica Aeroclub. Second assistant Mr. Jiri Dodal was putting big effort to take care of box markings, line judges and judging line setup. Thanks to a long aviation experience as well as tremendous experience with international championships of both assistants, I was not overloaded and I was able to focus on the top level of championships management as well as on sporting part of the event.

Mrs. Katarina Pohankova was serving as head of the Information center providing registration, support and payment handling. This was also done with tremendous efficiency and she was one of the most important pillar of all championships stages.

Championships Operations

Launch officer was Mr. Miroslav Porubcan. He and his team were able to hold fast tempo of flights during training, familiarization flights as well as during competition.

Official judging video was recorded by professional camera by experienced cameraman Mr. Jan Machula who spent in his function whole competition alone. There were no complaints about his work despites the fact he made in total more than 26 hours of video recording.

Line judges were only two persons who served on their positions for whole championships. Mr. Jan Danihel and Mr. Juraj Danihel (brothers) are both aerobatics judges. Quality of service was tremendous and there were no complaints during whole championships. Aiming devices were kindly provided by Mr. Manfred Echter (Swiss Aerobatic Association).

Accommodation for Int. Jury and Judges were arranged in different hotels in Triencianske Teplice. We were facing big difficulties with accommodation booking for Judges. Many of them were not able to inform us about their traveling plans prior to championships. Some of them were not responding to emails and they just arrived without notice.

Same problem as with accommodation we have with their transport from Vienna/Bratislava to airport Dubnica. I have no problem to understand those particular people are very busy and didn't have time to inform us about traveling plans, but everyone should understand that early booking means less costs! I am sure that CIVA is able and should provide help to organizer by gathering this information. CIVA should improve the judge's management system to help organizer and thus also to pilots.

Upper wind measurement has been done by ariborned GPS under continuous supervision of Mr. Kari Kemppi as a Int. Jury member. Thanks to his help and supervision there were no complaint and all measurement were smooth and effective.

Towing

Towing was arranged by two Z-37T "Turbo Čmelák" aircrafts which were capable of 4 minute tow from liftoff till glider release. Two pilots Mr. Robert Slosiar and Mr. Július Kováčik who made most of the towing flights were both professional pilots with big experience in crop dusting and glider towing. They were providing tows with shortest flight time possible and with perfect accuracy of towing into the box. One of the two spare pilots was replaced back by Mr. Slosiar after complains of competitors about precision of towing into the box. No other complaints were received.

Two more towing aircrafts were ready as backup. One of them onsite and second one available within two hours airport.

Sequences drawing and submission

Free sequence submission, checking, publication and use at Judging line was without any mistakes and all procedures were smooth. All pilots submitted their sequences in advance and all the necessary check was done without time pressure. I am sure this is a crucial to avoid problems that arose in the past.

However, free sequences submission was not done as written in FAI Sporting Code, Section 6 Part 2. Buletin no. 1 statement 6.3.5. allows submission in PDF format. Paragraph 4.3.3.5 a) of Section 6 Part 2 is prohibiting any other submission than in MS Visio or OLAN. MS Visio + ARESTI drawing software is quite expensive piece of equipment and OLAN is not up to date. Majority of the pilots submitted their sequences in PDF together with OLAN file. Thanks to the effort of Mr. Dirk Maslonka (GER) was available rules/catalog update for OLAN in gliders category in advance before championship. Checking was done only by me. All PDF versions of sequences were redrawn to OLAN (with update) unified and then passed to Scoring office as one PDF file. This procedure looks like the most effective; however it can be even more automatized using additional software features. Same situation was also in case of figures for unknown programmes and in case of submission of sequence proposals.

From my point of view, the biggest problem is inability to follow rules. In this case rule book is losing its legitimacy.

Closing and Awarding Ceremony

All ceremonies have been organized at the airport. Closing and awarding ceremony was done according to FAI Sporting Code, Section 6 Part 2 as well as according to other FAI rules and guidelines. Mr. Lars-Goran Arvidsson as highest representative of CIVA was closing the contest. Mr. Philippe Kuechler as Chief Judge was announcer of results and awards.

There was couple of problems we faced regarding closing ceremony. Numbers of diplomas sent by FAI were not according statements in rules; respectively rules are very unclear in this matter. There is no specification if particular diplomas should be FAI or Organizer's diplomas, but competitors were expecting to by award by FAI diplomas. In fact rules are not in compliance with FAI guidelines for awarding. In both categories we awarded first three positions in various programmes and first ten positions in overall, but according to rule book it should be first six places in various programmes as well as overall. Advanced teams were awarded without issues.

I decided to pass FAI diplomas to first six places in various programmes in Unlimited category, because there was no teams awards and thus we have some spare to use. In category Advance will be passed Organizer diplomas for various programmes. Those additional diplomas will be passed to NAC's by post or through delegates at CIVA plenary meeting in Lausanne 2012.

During awarding ceremony was played different version of Polish national anthem than is usually used. There were rumors that anthem was not correct, it was, but as long orchestra version. I already apologized during closing ceremony, but I would like to apologize once more to all participants for this regrettable mistake.

Conclusion

Organization of WGAC&WAGAC 2012 was a big experience for whole Organization team and especially for me. I really enjoyed this competition thanks to all friends who were participating.

Issues that I stated above in this report were mostly caused by inauspiciously patched rule book and missing any kind of guidelines for the Organizer. CIVA in current situation is not helping at all, just restricting what Organizer should not do. I am really missing Contest Organization Handbook which should help to all Organizers to avoid of reinventing the wheel again.

CIVA delegates as well as executive board should understand that rash decisions in rule making process are increasing costs of whole contest. It must be paid by someone. I am sure that it's not an intention to ruin Organizer, so it must be reflected in future amount of the entry fee. I don't agree with payment for HMD service or other similar technologies. If there is a must for organizer to have it, than CIVA should buy this kind of system in to own property and then provide it free of charge to Organizer as well as to the pilots. This also applies to MS Visio with Aresti drawing software. By forcing Organizer and competitors to use something that must be paid to third party is creating conflict of interests. This is unacceptable. Especially when the service quality is not meeting rules requirements.

There is also question about creditability of all software/hardware used during championships. CIVA did some kind of undocumented validation process. No detailed documentation is publically available about this certification and what is worse, only initial versions were certified. Since initial validation we have experience with lot of new versions of all systems. On the other hand, this equipment is crucial for aerobatic community and championships. Producers of those HW/SW systems are putting their own resources and time to demanding system development. CIVA must adopt management of those SW/HW tools to help with versioning, testing and user support. Certification as well as systems should be publically available (or just for aerobatic community). CIVA should focus on the problematic from professional point of view or we can run into same problems like with OLAN this year.

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October 29, 2012
Brno, Czech Republic