

IGC Steward Report

32nd. FAI World Gliding Championships

Adolfo Gonzalez Chaves Argentina 6th to 19th of January 2013

Contest Director: Eduardo Barrera

Competition overview.

The competition was well organised and successful despite storms and flooding in the weeks prior to the contest and difficult weather conditions during the championships. The conditions for first few days of the competition were low level blue thermals and windy, this created significant gaggles in turbulent thermals. There were many complaints of hazardous flying and some pilots flying with no respect for others, this was discussed at the main briefing and amongst the team captains. (see safety issues)

Pre Competition

A Continental Championships with overseas participation was held during 2012 and the site was open for flying in the weeks prior to the contest. There were some concerns over the importation of gliders for the contest but the organisation were able to find a satisfactory solution to all the procedural difficulties.

Practice period

The weather was poor during the practice period and a full operational practice day was not possible. The site suffered considerable flooding and some structural damage in the week prior to the contest that created a significant challenge to the organisers to maintain the infrastructure.

Scrutineering

The contest had an experienced scrutineering chief, initial and daily controls were well conducted and minor issues solved adequately.

Organisation

The contest organisation was efficient and well staffed and all the members of the organisation were well prepared for their role, extremely helpful and friendly. There were no issues with organisation staff but there were a couple of occasions when one or two of pilots and team members were less than polite and respectful to the organisers.

Suitability of meetings and briefings.

A team captains briefing was held on most mornings which allowed the main briefing to focus on the operational aspects of the contest. Briefings were well prepared, concise clear and **brief**.

Suitability of weather information.

The weather information was comprehensive and well delivered. The very difficult weather patterns during the event made forecasting very difficult and required constant updates from the meteorologist to the organisers.

Suitability of facilities

There were excellent facilities for the organisation staff and operations, the briefing room and social facilities were good. The significant rainfall prior to the contest left large flooded areas of the airfield, the organisers worked extremely hard to reinstate the runways and with the exception of some minor problems with holes appearing in the runway the contest was not disrupted.

Information dissemination (Announcements, schedules and decisions)

A briefing and daily schedule was sent to all TC's by SMS and announced on the radio, this system worked extremely well. Start line open times were announced by radio and confirmed by SMS to all team captains.

Launch control

The launching Grid was well organised and efficient; the towing was conducted safely and effectively.

Finish procedures

The finish ring worked well and the penalty structure seemed to be fair, by the end of the competition most of the initial criticism of the finish ring had been answered and the system widely accepted. (see recommendations)

We briefed for an extended finish ring of 10km radius on one day when storms were predicted at the airfield.

Opening and closing.

The opening ceremony was held in the local town and was very attractive and well organised.

The prize giving ceremony

This was held on the airfield on the evening of the last day, they were very lucky not to have any land outs which may have prevented the scores from being finalised in time for the closing ceremony. The ceremony was attractive and fun although a couple of anthems were omitted and not all the awards were dealt with. The closing ceremony was followed by a party and more informal presentations and awards.

Steward and Jury facilities

The office provided for the IGC officials was excellent for the three IGC officials to work in, the organisers made two cars available for use by the Jury and Stewards.

Social events

There was a very successful International evening and the Argentinean team hosted an evening of Tango dancing and traditional food

Public and Internet display of real-time aircraft positions and information.

There was a big screen in the briefing hanger with live tracking of up to 7 pilots in each class, this was also available on the Internet.

Media coverage

Local and regional newspapers gave constant coverage throughout the contest. A well known TV sports channel from Brazil (ESPN) has been on site for five days collecting material for non-live programs. The highlight was, once again, the radio broadcasting of glider arrivals on the airfield. This year more radio stations came to site and the organisation provided translators to help interviewing Spanish non-speaking pilots.

Task setting and operations

Due to the difficult weather conditions there were multiple changes to tasks resulting in a larger number of AAT tasks being flown.

Scoring system (use and application)

See Jury presidents report.

Protest handling and registration

There were no protests.

Scoring programme and integrity.

For the first four days it was not possible to finalise the scores due to problems in the scoring script, this was eventually resolved by the Jury president in communication with See You and the Uvalde scorers.

It reinforces the need for a secure scoring script and a set of test data to prove any future scripts.

RULES

Adequacy of Local Procedures

The local procedures were amended prior to and during the contest. Several additions needed to be made during the practice and competition periods, these were distributed to teams and covered in detail at briefing.

The changes included.

- Introduction of Start height for sporting purposes accompanied by a speed limit.
- Finish height to be determined at briefing and on the task sheet.
- Extended finish ring and procedures
- Left turn rule from airfield centre increased from 5km to 10km radius

Recommendations for improvements of Rules and/or Local Procedures

- Annex A committee should consider if the penalty applied to finish ring height infringement could be modified according to the day points. The 1pt per meter penalty is simple but carries a much greater penalty as a percentage of the day points on devalued days.
- There was some concern regarding the recency of some pilots, we recommend that the requirements to compete in WGC should be reviewed with consideration given to increasing the minimum number of hours and the introduction of a recency requirement.
- The IGC scoring committee may be able to use the data from this competition to create a set of test data, the combination of AAT, handicapping and World Class results provided some unusual results that were not foreseen in the scoring script.
- The Annex A rule on ballast in the club class should clarify if light pilots are allowed to carry fixed ballast in Club Class in order to reach the glider reference weight, even when not necessary from the weight and balancing requirements. In case they are not allowed, the 0.5 points per 10 kg criteria should be used to decrease their handicap indexes, thus enhancing fair sporting treatment.
- Team Cup points calculation can be improved (see Jury's President report)
- Local procedures or briefing announcements could state some criteria to allocate the on-line trackers in order to reduce pilot's resistance to carry them. This should include distribution among classes, chosen pilots in each class and public delay.
- IGC could compile a set of standardised scrutineering sheets (according to classes) in order to help the organisation to perform the job.

SAFETY

General safety of the event

The event was conducted in a safe manner with procedures being modified to improve safety whenever they were identified, during the first few days there were many complaints of hazardous flying. The stewards distributed a questionnaire at briefing on which pilots could nominate any pilot who they felt had been flying in a hazardous manner. Also, it was made clear that the information obtained from these nominations would be kept confidential.

The survey identified several pilots who received multiple nominations, the CS had a discussion with each of these pilots to consider why they had received several nominations. This was very effective and resulted in an immediate improvement in the behaviour in the gaggles.

At the beginning of the contest it was decided to waive the left turn rule but after the first few days this rule was reinstated with a resulting improvement pilot behaviour in the start areas.

A pilot safety committee was elected at the beginning of the competition and met once to discuss the situation after the first few days.

A Pilot comments Box was introduced already during the training period and pilots were encouraged to post any comments in the box either signed or anonymous. There were only a few comments received in the safety box but several comments related to safety issues were received via the team captain inquiry document.

Safety briefings were made during briefing by the Chief Steward when it was considered appropriate to do so. These were regarded by competitors as very effective, since they were concise and, by using videos, showed different risk situations, thus demonstrating how each pilot's attitude could actually contribute to his own safety.

As a result of several reported incidents the CS met with the TC and pilots from one of the competing teams to discuss the regularity with which they were mentioned.

After investigation of several incidents one pilot was given a warning that any further incidents would result in him being removed from the competition.

There were no further reported incidents from either the team or the pilots concerned.

As noted by many pilots and even by some bloggers, the final result of all the safety measures taken during this competition was making it the first WGC in many years where the number of gliders that closed the contest was the same as started it, even under the difficult conditions at the beginning.

Occurrence of incidents and/or accidents.

There were two field landing incidents resulting in damaged undercarriages. There was one incident in which two pilots reported they believed they had touched in flight but there was no damage to the gliders.

Availability of medical personnel

The local emergency services were present on the airfield during the operational period of the contest.

Use of safety officers

A safety officer was appointed by the organisers who also took the role of co-ordinator in the event of an accident. The organisers produced a document for the team captains outlining action to be taken in the event of an accident.

Launch safety

The launching was conducted safely and very efficiently.

Stewards.

The visit to the contest in the previous year was considered to be of great benefit to making this years contest a success from the outset.

The stewards continued with the preparation of standard documents to be used for all IGC Cat 1 events.

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