



IGC PRESIDENT REPORT TO THE FAI GENERAL CONFERENCE 2009

The past year has seen significant developments and changes in the FAI. In our opinion the World Air Games represents a major advance in the ability of the “FAI” to promote airsports internally – so that we all learn from each other – and also externally – to the wider public and media.

The retirement of our long-serving Secretary General, Max Bishop, is perhaps the other most significant change, especially as far as the Air Sports Commissions are concerned. The IGC has benefitted immensely from Max’s dedication, knowledge, integrity and constant enduring support. We would like to take this opportunity thank Max for his years of support for IGC and to wish him and Angela safe journeys and fair thermals for their future.

IGC Initiatives and Opportunities

Pilot Decision-Making

Over the last two years gliding has had three serious accidents in IGC sanctioned competitions, two of them fatal. The IGC is determined to address this trend. As a result we are developing a short video to challenge pilots to think about their personal decision-making. The content will include glider flight-paths of incident flights derived from GPS tracker data overlaid on terrain graphics (like Silent Wings) with commentary from the pilots involved in the incidents.

This video will be launched at the IGC Plenary meeting in March 2010 and will be introduced at the first pilot briefing at all IGC sanctioned competitions by the Chief Steward. Our longer-term intention is that this format of safety briefing becomes an annual feature of our championships. We also plan to upload these briefings onto You-Tube and other interactive communication tools to make them readily available for all competition organisers at all levels of our sport.

Survivability and Injury Mitigation

IGC has also become increasingly cognizant of and committed to improving survivability and reducing the severity of injuries for all glider pilots in the event of an accident. We have had extensive discussions now with agents of the glider manufacturers and we are now developing a three-pronged attack on survivability:

- Education – Informing our pilots about what is being done; how to use the existing equipment appropriately; understanding the risks created by some activities; etc
- Installations – Arming our Chief Stewards with the knowledge to know what to look for in the cockpit to reduce injury risk; enabling the availability of simple items which are known to help reduce injury; etc
- Development – Understanding what OSTIV and the Manufacturers are doing and working with them to develop solutions to make our gliders safer

Oversubscription of Entries

We have a welcome problem with our World Gliding Championship events. Despite the apparent downturn of membership in gliding, we are getting more entries at our premium events than the hosts can safely accommodate. As a result we have developed a selection process to fairly reduce entry numbers at over-subscribed competitions. This process is based on our now very successful IGC Pilot Ranking List, which has 3795 pilots registered on the list.

Communication – getting the messages out there

There are some 115,000 glider pilots world-wide who are part of the “IGC”. It is somewhat concerning to know that only 700 are registered on our two internet discussion channels “igc-discuss” and “igc-news”. On face-value this means that we are currently only reaching about one-half a percent (0.5%) of all known glider pilots directly. Of course we also have the IGC website hosted on the FAI main website and also links to our pilots through the IGC Ranking List. The various gliding magazines help, but information carried there is dated by the time of publication.

We need to be doing better and we are going to start linking diverse tools like the website and the Ranking List with text messaging (SMS) and twitter to create a better information network. You-Tube and Facebook will also form part of this network, with the plan being to create dedicated gliding areas on these tools.

IGC Annual Meeting 2009

The IGC held its 2009 annual meeting in Lausanne in March. 33 NACs were represented and 60 people attended our annual IGC dinner on the Friday evening.

Awards

The Plenum was pleased to confer the following awards:

- The **Lilienthal Medal**, for eminent service to the sport of gliding over a significant period of time by a currently active glider pilot, to **Mr Roland Stuck**, France
- The **Pelagia Majewski Medal**, for eminent services to gliding over a long period of time by a female glider pilot, to **Ms Doris Grove**, USA
- The **Pirat Gehriger Diploma**, for eminent services to international gliding, to **Mr Maxwell Stevens**, New Zealand

Decisions

Significant decisions taken by the Plenum included:

- Sanction fees may be reduced by the Bureau to encourage the development of new competitions in emerging geographical areas
- A draft proposal was accepted to work on the introduction of an FAI 13.5M competition class
- The major overhaul of the Sporting Code Section 3, started in 2007, was extended to March 2010 to allow for additional review and editing
- In 2007 the IGC Plenum took a landmark decision to hold at least one FAI World Gliding Championships outside of Europe every 4th year. The Plenum this year then awarded the 32nd FAI WGC for 2012 to:
 - Ulvade, Texas (USA) for the Open, 18M and 15M classes, and

- Adolfo Gonzales Chaves, Argentina for the Standard, Club and World classes

Championships

Pilot Rankings

The top three pilots on the IGC Ranking List (as at time of writing this report) are:



1st

Gyorgy Gulvas
(Hungary)



2nd

Sebastian Kawa
(Poland)



3rd

Olivier Darroze
(France)

FAI Gliding Championships – 2009

The IGC congratulates the winners of the 2009 Championships, the World Air Games 2009 and the IGC-OLC World League. 2009 was a financially difficult year for many and we thank the hosts of these Championships for their tremendous efforts in presenting very successful events.

6th FAI Junior World Gliding Championships 2009

The 6th FAI Junior World Gliding Championships was held in June in Räyskälä, Finland. 82 competitors representing 20 NACs competed in the Standard and Club classes; achieving nine flying days.

The Junior World Champions are:

- Standard Class Felipe Levin (Germany)
- Club Class Volker Sailer (Germany)

5th FAI Women's World Gliding Championships 2009

The 5th FAI Women's World Gliding Championships was held in July in Szeged, Hungary. 49 competitors representing 11 NACs competed in the 15M, Standard and Club classes; achieving nine flying days.

The Women's World Champions are:

- 15M Class Susanne Schoedel (Germany)
- Standard Class Sue Kussbach (Germany)
- Club Class Nathalie Hurlin (France)

15th FAI European Continental Gliding Championships

The 15th FAI European Continental Gliding Championships were held in two locations: Nitra, Slovakia at the end of June; and, Pociunai, Lithuania, at the end of July.

Nitra hosted 84 competitors from 22 NACs flying in the Open, 18M and 15M classes. Again, nine flying days were achieved.

Pociunai hosted 79 competitors from 18 NACs flying in the Standard, Club, World and 20M two-seater classes. Thirteen flying days were achieved at Pociunai.

The European Champions for 2009 are:

- Open Class Peter Harvey (Great Britain)
- 18M Class Russell Cheetham (Great Britain)
- 15M Class Louis Boudierlique (France)
- Standard Class Mario Kiessling (Germany)
- Club Class Rene de Dreu (Netherlands)
- World Class Jędrzej Skłodowski (Poland)
- 20M Two-Seater Class Janusz Centka and Marek Szumski (Poland)

It is worth noting a couple of facts about the Championships held in 2009. The first is that, while these Championships could generally be called Eurocentric, it was pleasing to see pilots from Argentina, Australia, Chile, Japan and the USA competing in various classes.

The second is the success of the German team, with five Champions out of twelve. Our congratulations to the Germans; they have certainly created a challenge for other NACs to emulate.

FAI World Sailplane GP Series 2009-2010

The qualifying races have been completed for the 2009-2010 round of the FAI World Sailplane GP series. Races were held in Australia (Narromine), Austria (Feldkirchen), Chile (Santiago), England (Lasham), France (Saint Auban), Italy (Turin), Poland (Zar) and Slovakia (Nitra). 126 pilots completed in these eight qualifying events.

The 3rd FAI World Sailplane GP Final will be held in Santiago, Chile, in January 2010. The world economic situation created significant concerns from potential hosts for the GP Final as to whether they would be able to provide the necessary coverage of this event. We are very grateful to our colleagues in Santiago who stepped up with a firm offer to run the GP Final. It is worthy of note that, despite the fact that the qualified pilots will probably have to fund their own expenses to get to Santiago, we have 19 pilots flying in this event.

The FAI World Air Games 2009

Eleven competitors, all World Champions in their own right, competed in the GP racing at Turin in the FAI World Air Games. Five days out of five were achieved in difficult, relatively stable conditions, in a narrow corridor between commercial airspace and the mountains. Despite this the pilots flew well and achieved good tasks while fitting in with the need to integrate with other users on the airfield. The FAI World Air Games Champion is Sebastian Kawa (Poland) in a nail biting finish with Giorgio Galetto (Italy) and Giancarlo Grinzo (Italy).

The GP race was streamed live on the internet using tracking provided by the Italian organisers and supplemented by live commentary. Feedback was given from those viewing the racing via a live Skype feed. There were between 3,500 and 5,000 people on line for each GP race during the World Air Games, from Europe to USA to Argentina, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand and Japan. The success of this format for the coverage of the GP race has led the IGC to decide to require live streaming on the internet of tracking data to be mandatory for all IGC World Championships and Grand Prix Finals.

We recognise that gliding is a potentially difficult sport to fit into the World Air Games format, both because of the reliance on good soaring weather and the inherent limitations available to "manage" the departure and arrival of the gliders. Modifications to the GP for future World Air Games will include a greater use of tracking, the use of 18M motor-gliders and the further development of remote start and finish lines.

The IGC-OLC World League 2009

The 4th season of the IGC-OLC World League has seen the continued growth in this contest with recorded entries from 1067 Clubs and gliding organisations (up from 1050 in 2008). The top three placed clubs for 2009 were:

- 1st Albuquerque Soaring, USA
- 2nd Warner Springs Gliders, USA (who were also in 2nd place in 2008)
- 3rd Tucson Soaring Club, USA

Looking at the total activity for the OLC: 2009 saw 13,287 individual competitors flying 103,801 flights and achieving a total distance of over 28 million kilometers. This shows us that there is a tremendous level of activity in our sport world-wide.

Future Championships

In 2010 the 31st FAI World Gliding Championships will be held in Szeged, Hungary for the FAI Open, 18M and 15M classes, and Prievidza, Slovak Republic for the FAI Standard, Club and World classes. 2010 will also see the start of the 2010-2011 round of the FAI World Sailplane GP series.

Finally I would like to record a huge "thank you" to all the staff at the FAI Office for their assistance to us during the past twelve months. The management of our sport is not simple and the support available from Lausanne is greatly appreciated.



President
International Gliding Commission