

JURY REPORT

65th Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett St.Gallen, Switzerland. 10th September 2022

Overall this was a well organised first class event, the organisation team are to be congratulated on delivering such a spectacular show in the centre of St Gallen with large numbers of spectators.

Entry Process

There were a number of issues around the deadlines and the information required on the entry form. This caused entrants and the organisers some distress but eventually was resolved.

Check in

This was very smooth and well organised.

General Briefing

This was well presented and highlighted all scenario's for Met and ATC requirements. There was an additional "buffer zone" created along the Polish border ADIZ using roads and features on the map which could be easily identified from the air.

Opening Ceremony

This was well attended by competitors, crew, officials and city members from St Gallen. All flags were displayed, Oaths made and the draw for the launch was conducted by the selection of envelopes.

Inflation

Due to an approaching front, the Event Director and his team made the decision to pull forward the launch from 20:00 to 16:00, and therefore the inflation would commence at 09:00. Inflation was smooth and very quick, all 17 balloons were inflated in just over 4 hours. One competitor decided not to fly due to various reasons, but the overriding issue was the forecast freezing level and the damp sand.



Launch

Again the launch was very smooth and quick, with all 17 balloons being launched within 45 minutes.

The inflation and launch was very well organised by the Deputy Director, Safety Officer and their team. All competitors were ready and waiting for their respective slots due to the shortened time available, which I believe greatly improved the process.



Flight

The first night was completed without incident, but some lightning was observed in the area of the Alps by most competitors.

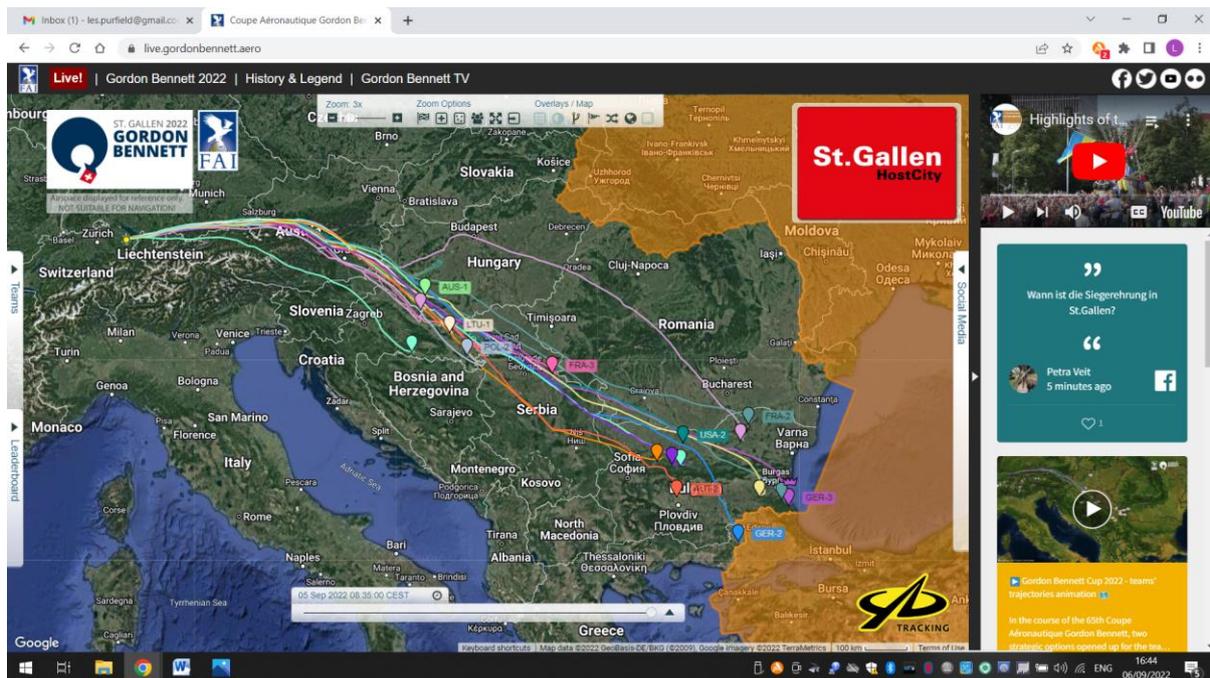
Many competitors flew high on the second day in order to implement their strategy to reach the Black Sea or Greece for the furthest distance.

In all countries the ATC support was excellent, thanks due to the team in HQ organising the flight plans and permissions.

There were two issues arising on the third day, when first the CAA in Serbia decided that the balloons could not enter and needed to land. Thanks to the ED and his contacts in the Serbian Aero Club, this was resolved in about 5 hours of discussion, but this did not impede the competition. The second issue was with Bulgaria, when a very angry customs / immigration police official decided that the balloons could not enter Bulgaria without landing at an airport to get their documents inspected. This again was resolved within an hour thanks to the ED and his Aero Club Contacts. In both of these cases the ATC people were happy and excited to have the balloons in their airspace and no issues were experienced. In case of any unexpected changes in the last hours, the ED also contacted the Turkish and Greek NAC's to advise them of the possibility that a balloon could enter their airspace.

All balloons landed safely, with the winners landing in the morning of the fourth day at the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria.

The ED and his invaluable list of NAC contacts should not be underestimated when issues arise in a Gordon Bennett race. Thanks to all that helped resolve the issues.



Media

Throughout the competition the media team were doing a fantastic job of producing content for live shows and social media feeds. 3 Live shows a day receiving content from the competitors in the race and interviews from headquarters teams on the ground. Live tracking was produced by YB Races and was followed by many balloonists and public worldwide. Overall an excellent production.

Results

The Official results were published at 17:00 on 5th September 2022, and in accordance with rule 8.4, were published Final at 09:00 on 6th September 2022.

Complaints / Protests.

No complaints or protests were received.

Jury recommendations:

That there should be a standard entry form for all CIA CAT1 events with mandatory fields and content description.

That the Gordon Bennett MER should be updated to reflect that if complaints from ATC or any other official body are received after the Final Results have been published, the complaint will be investigated, which may result in a change to the published Final Results, by a penalty or up to disqualification from the event.

That an update to the Jury Handbook maybe required, reflecting the change from the FAI Ellipsoid to the WGS 84 Ellipsoid for Gordon Bennett events.

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St Gallen, Switzerland
10th September 2022