1st FAI World Drone Racing Championships Started Today in China

Shenzhen, China, 1 November 2018 – **The 1st FAI World Drone Racing Championships kicked off today in Shenzhen, China, with a fast opening round of racing in the spectacular Shenzhen Universiade Center-Stadium.**

A total of 128 competitors, including 44 Juniors and 13 women, from 34 countries are in China for the competition, which lasts four days, from 1-4 November 2018.

Alongside the drone pilots, there are 34 team managers, plus 72 extra helpers and 40 official supporters.

The morning of Thursday 1 November was an official practice session for the teams, allowing them to get to grips with the drone-racing track.

Built in the shape of a traditional Chinese knot and covered in 7,000m of LED lighting, the 650m race track is one of the biggest ever built for a drone racing competition. It takes pride of place in the centre of the Shenzhen Universiade Center-Stadium.

Fourteen-year-old Killian Rousseau from France said he had enjoyed the practice session: "I like this track; it's very impressive, technical and fast."

Following the practice flights, the first session of official racing, Qualifying Round 1, started at 6.15pm local time and lasted for three hours.

Germany's Daniela Seel was one of the first pilots to fly. "It was a difficult flight", she said. "It's raining a bit, so there is rain on the camera, so in the third lap I hit the tower and hit the quad. But yes, ok, I managed two laps."

She added: "The track is difficult but ok. It's something really new to fly at an international competition this large, and it's great."

Qualifying Round 2 will take place on Friday morning, with the third Qualifying round scheduled for Friday afternoon.

Each pilot will fly three laps of the track in each Qualifying round, making a total of nine laps flown across all three Qualifying rounds. Their official times will then determined by taking the average of their best three laps.

After Qualification, the top 64 pilots will move forward into the final competition rounds. These start on Saturday afternoon at 3pm local time and will be live-streamed on YouTube and Facebook.

In drone racing, a relatively new FAI-sanctioned sport that has seen phenomenal growth, up to six pilots at a time race battery-powered drones around a specially constructed track. Races last two or three minutes, and the fastest pilot wins.

Played out over several heats across four days, the competition will culminate with a Final on Sunday 4 November. The winner of this race will be crowned the first ever FAI World Drone Racing Champion.

Gold, silver and bronze medals are awarded in four categories: Overall; Women; Junior; and National Teams. Each national team consists of up to five pilots, including at least one Junior and one Woman.

Alongside the main competition there is also a Straight Line Racing competition: a drag race of a straight 100m in which the first pilot over the finish line wins.

FAI Global Technical Partner Noosphere is running the event management system and registering participants, as well as managing the website and online results.

The 1st FAI World Drone Racing Championships runs 1-4 November 2018.

Where to watch

Follow the race online on the dedicated competition website (faidroneworld2018.aero) and the FAI social media channels – from 1-4 November 2018.

Check out the live stream at these times:
- Friday 2 Nov 2018 – Opening ceremony: 7pm-8.30pm local time / 10am-11.30am Central European Time
- Saturday 3 Nov 2018: 3pm-7.20pm local time / 8am-12.20pm Central European Time
- Sunday 4 Nov 2018 (semi-finals and finals): 5pm-7.30pm local time / 10am-12.30pm Central European Time

Watch the live stream at: www.facebook.com/drones.fai or www.youtube.com/airsportschannel

Notes for the editor

FAI logo: bit.ly/FAI_logo

FAI World Drone Racing Championships:

- Logo: bit.ly/droneschps2018-logo
- Website: www.faidroneworld2018.aero
- Pictures: bit.ly/WDRC-pictures

FAI media channels dedicated to Drones

- www.facebook.com/drones.fai
- www.twitter.com/drones_fai
- www.instagram.com/drones.fai

About FAI

FAI, the World Air Sports Federation (www.fai.org), is the world governing body for air sports and for certifying world aviation and space records. The FAI was founded in 1905 and is a non-governmental and non-profit-making organisation recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

FAI activities include Aerobatics, Aeromodelling, Airships, Amateur-Built and Experimental Aircraft, Balloons, Drones, Gliding, Hang Gliding, Helicopters, Manpowered Flying, Microlights, Parachuting, Paragliding, Paramotors, Power Flying and all other Aeronautic activities and Space records.

For more details, please contact the FAI:

Faustine Carrera
Communication Manager
0041 21 345 10 70
communication@fai.org

<center>###</center>