

IGC Steward Report

4th FAI World Club Class Gliding Championship
5th FAI World World Class Gliding Championship
Vinson-sur-Verdon, France
July 14–29, 2006.

1. ORGANIZATION

- 1.1. **Overall organization:** excellent.
- 1.2. **Quantity of officials:** sufficient, with exception of some short absences of some key persons. For future competitions: each key person should have a deputy in his/her team who is able to take over in case of absence (e.g. due to illness).
- 1.3. **Experience of officials:** generally very good; there were occasional language problems.
- 1.4. **Suitability of meetings and briefings:** The briefing room (hangar) was adequate and was also used for displaying the tracks and for the only two Team Captains' meetings.
- 1.5. **Suitability of weather information:** perfect. The presentation at each briefing was also available on the web site.
- 1.6. **Suitability of facilities:** there were some initial problems with the toilets, but their condition improved later. The catering was provided by one of the sponsors. The quality of the food (autoroute standard) was such that many teams preferred to cook for themselves or eat at the nearby restaurants. As a result, the canteen was often deserted in the evenings and hence was not the social centre of the competition as it should have been. The canteen closed all day on the one declared rest day.
- 1.7. **Transportation:** no problems, the stewards had their own cars.
- 1.8. **Information dissemination (pronouncements, schedules and decisions):** by SMS and on the official board. This system worked well, and there were no incidents caused by failure of the information to reach the teams.
- 1.9. **Pilot assistance:** very good. The friendly and tireless staff of the information office deserve special praise.
- 1.10. **Retrieval:** no problems. Aero tows were available at reasonable cost.
- 1.11. **Launch control for fair access and efficiency:** excellent. The launch team was very well trained.
- 1.12. **Opening and closing ceremonies including presentation of Jury and Stewards:** in all respects up to expected FAI standards.
- 1.13. **Other social events:** There were 4 team evenings, 2 special evenings arranged by the Organizers, and of course the farewell party. Although tickets were required for the farewell party (free for team captains and competitors, 20 € otherwise), the caterers had obviously planned for about half the number of people who actually came. As a result, there was a shortage of everything (chairs, tables, cutlery, food). An item for the Organizers' Handbook: planning the farewell party.

- 1.14. **Total number of scheduled days and number of contest days:** 11 contest days from 14 scheduled days. Two days were lost due to the weather, and one rest day was declared after 6 consecutive flying days.
- 1.15. **Media liaison:** The contact to the local press was good, and several articles appeared in the papers. There were posters advertising the event in all nearby towns. The information provided on the contest web site was, however, rather meagre. Recommendation for future Championships: one person with journalistic ability and good English should be concerned solely with writing texts (news, anecdotes) for the web site (and not with technical matters). This is a full-time job. On the other hand, the CD given to all participants at the end, with all tasks, results, teams, pictures and daily reports, is a model which should be copied by all future championships.
- 1.16. **Public and Internet display of real-time aircraft positions and information:** The software “Silent Wings” was used to display the tracks with a fixed time lag of 15 minutes on a big screen in the briefing room, with a running commentary by experts. The display on the internet was rather static, except for those who went to the trouble of downloading and installing Silent Wings (provided free of charge for a limited period) on their own computers. The possibilities provided by this software are really impressive. Unfortunately there were some technical problems; every day about 7 or 8 of the units stopped sending data during the flight. There were also suspicions that some pilots switched off their units, at least temporarily, to prevent the correct average speed being displayed. On some days there was some discussion about the selection of the pilots who carried the trackers. These problems prompted the stewards to make some suggestions for modifying the rules, see point 2.4.
- 1.17. **Other organizational comment:** On one day there were problems with flight log collection because the responsible person was absent (see 1.2 above).

2. RULES

- 2.1. **Adequacy of Local Procedures:** everything very clear.
- 2.2. **Addenda or changes:** none
- 2.3. **Fair applications of Rules and Local Procedures:** The new Club Class handicapping system with penalties for gliders exceeding their “reference weight” was used for the first time, and there was some discussion about some unusually heavy standard cirrus types. However, thorough checking revealed that all were flying within their legal limits, and there were no complaints or protests.
- 2.4. **Possible improvements of Rules and/or Local Procedures:** Paragraph 4.1.3 of Annex A to Section 3 of the Sporting Code, which regulates which parts of the glider may be replaced if damaged, should be clarified. The rule itself does not foresee the replacement of the whole glider if the damage is not the fault of the pilot. This possibility is mentioned only in the italic text, which, according to the “Preliminary Remarks” to Annex A, should contain only “explanatory text and notes”. Explanatory text should only clarify, not modify, the rules.

Specific rules should be introduced for the use of tracking units. It should be forbidden — and, if possible, be made technically impossible — for the pilot to switch off the unit.

The units should be distributed according to definite rules, e.g. to the leading pilots in the overall score.

- 2.5. **Task setting and operations:** The task setter did a good job under difficult circumstances (thunderstorms).
- 2.6. **Scoring system (use and application):** Apart from 1 bug which was corrected very quickly, no problems.
- 2.7. **Protest handling and registration:** No protests, registration and scrutineering proceeded smoothly.

3. SAFETY

- 3.1. **General safety of the event:** up to the highest standards.
- 3.2. **Occurrence of incidents and/or accidents:** One glider was broken when landing out and could not be repaired overnight. One pilot was seriously injured *after* outlanding (he stepped in a hole and broke his Achilles tendon). Two pilots withdrew for personal or health reasons.
- 3.3. **Availability of medical personnel:** A doctor was present at the site and was frequently consulted. The injured pilot received all possible help in obtaining treatment (an operation was required).
- 3.4. **Use of safety officers:** Part of the briefing each day was devoted to safety issues (outlanding fields, power lines, weather warnings, finish procedures etc.).
- 3.5. **Launch safety:** irreproachable.
- 3.6. **Pilot skills relating to safety:** excellent. The safety committee had no work.
- 3.7. **Suggestions for future safety enhancements:** The Organizers' Handbook should strongly recommend that a doctor should be present and that a part of the daily briefing should be devoted to safety issues.

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