

CIVA Strategic Planning Group Report

During 2025 a comprehensive paper was circulated to delegates with the aim of understanding and expressing the position that FAI's aerobatic commission CIVA has established, and to provide some clarity through a strategy for developing international competition aerobatics for the foreseeable future. Through this paper (download "Event Situation Review and Forward Strategy" from the CIVA News Document Store) a wide range of underlying areas were reviewed from which a refreshed set of aims and objectives for this commission were expressed.

Based on the last 25 years the key takeaways from this review can be summarised as follows -

- Competitor numbers have maintained well, though with some caveats:
 - The power Unlimited category has suffered a mild decline, whereas Advanced and Intermediate remain strong but the Yak-52 category is discontinued
 - Glider Unlimited is particularly affected, principally due to declining availability of suitable aircraft, whereas Advanced has maintained a healthy presence
- High strength, super-agile though high-cost carbon structured designs now dominate in the power categories, while suitable gliders generally still utilise glass pre-preg structures
- Top-class aerobatic coaching for power pilots is readily available from several well-established centres, and competition performance standards have generally improved to match the increased capability of the modern aircraft now widely operated
- Competitor satisfaction has been maintained at a high level, in power with tougher technical and personal skill challenges to match the increased aircraft capabilities
- The challenge and complexity of championship flights is mildly increased, with moderate development of the designated figure sets for each category and programme
- The scale of commitment for potential organisers to establish and run a financially secure category-1 aerobatic championship has become more demanding, CIVAs 2025 calendar for example notably lacking several normally expected events for power and glider aircraft
- Very few non-championship category-2 events have been run with CIVA connection, though a re-examination of how these could benefit the commission is being reviewed
- Judging standards appear adequate, skills being gained largely at national events to feed judges into the CIVA system which closely monitors relative performances to drive subsequent annual selection processes by a well controlled Judging Committee
- Safety in championships has been maintained at a satisfactory level, now under the guidance of an established CIVA working group; avoidable incidents however still occur
- CIVA finances have been securely managed, providing a satisfactory level of cost-cover for championship officials and support for occasional project developments as required

- Results calculation software and comprehensive local / online publication channels are reliable, speedy and readily available to organisers
- Video recording and playback standards of competition flights remains a tricky subject, where closer control by CIVA officials could establish better solutions and provide a sound basis for public streaming of all flights for media purposes
- Administrative information and regulatory resources are well established and easily available to all, and CIVAs dedicated social media channels (primarily via Facebook and Instagram) provide solid streams of text, photographic and video content

Among all of the above the matter the two topics most worthy of attention are -

1. The decline in entries to our top level Unlimited power and glider classes

The former perhaps an indication of the more daunting physical, skill, spare time and financial pressures than before, while for gliders it is the scarceness of available equipment that is increasingly limiting opportunities in the Unlimited class

2. The increased complexity and financial risk associated with successfully creating a project to run an international aerobatic championship

This is basically a tricky risk vs. reward situation that can be satisfactorily resolved only through the availability of suitable finance, plus high confidence and good planning supported by a well motivated local management team with many competent helpers. A cooperative airfield able to support this rather intrusive activity for more than a week is also a pre-requisite.

Championship bids are raised and the events created and run by NACs and/or aspiring local organising groups, for whom our respect and support must always be total.



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