

AGENDA ITEM 13.3

REPORT OF THE CHIEF JUDGE

18th European Aerobatic Championships
Dubnica nad Váhom, Slovak Republic

1-9 September 2012

Nick Buckenham



Box layout and judging line facilities

The CJ Team of Peter Macintosh, Jen Buckenham and I arrived at Dubnica airfield a day ahead of the event to check that the required box and judging line provisions met relevant CIVA standards, and also for me to attend the CIVA Rules and Judging sub-committee meeting.

As established at the 2011 EAAC event, three good judging locations were available to the south-east, south-west and north-west, enabling sequence judging to continue throughout the available flying hours.

Each location was situated a little over 150m from the near box edge, this being dictated by of the close proximity of the aerodrome service road at the south-west location and the need to give judges the same perspective at all three locations.



The corner and tee box markers were bright white plastic and reported as easily seen from the air. It was not possible to place a centre marker due to the close proximity of some trees.

Due to the presence of a chapel with a relatively small spire close to the box centre and within the north-west quadrant the box base height for this event was increased from 100m to 125m, and thus the disqualification height from 50m to 75m.

The judging team

The seven CIVA appointed and three invited judges comprised [* = invited]:

Stanislav Bajzik	Czech Republic	Vladimir Kotelnikov	Russia
Guy Auger	France	Michael Bezdenezhnyh	Russia
Francis Itier	France	Mike Forney *	USA
Isabella Borowik	Germany	Laszlo Liskay *	South Africa
Aldo Marengo *	Italy	Georges Brocard	Switzerland



Judges equipment

The organisers had prepared sets of adjustable plastic chairs and parasols for each of the judging stations. The chairs were generally satisfactory, though some were broken during the event and had to be replaced. An open-sided tent was also erected behind the CJ's station for refreshments and video review.



Overall the equipment was adequate, though the hard ground made it difficult to erect the parasols. The local team were proficient at moving it between the different locations, but occasionally not so accurate in erecting the correct number of judging equipment sets.

Video equipment

The equipment comprised one video camera that was held and operated by hand throughout the event, by the same operator who worked in that position at WGAC/WAGAC. The output was direct to SD cards, and individual sequences could thus be quickly selected and reviewed as required. The output clarity was certainly to an acceptable standard, but the long periods of intense work by the operator inevitably led to camera-shake and loss of the target aeroplane quite often, and the result was barely satisfactory. I'm again led to quote CIVA Section-6 para-5.1.6.3 which requires organisers to "... *provide quality equipment with qualified operators to ensure useful information is provided ...*" and would say that in this case the required standard was barely met – there were several instances where figures or manoeuvres immediately preceding or post the required target items were simply not viewable for one reason or another, and this is not good enough for a European championship event. The Video section in the forthcoming Contest Organisers Handbook must serve to define very clearly the absolute minimum standard of equipment and operator ability required here – we know only too well that the standard of video output could easily become a championship deciding factor.

The Judges Meeting

All judges and assistants were present at this meeting, but no Team Managers took the opportunity to attend. The meeting was quite short, serving simply to go over a small number of key judging matters and points of principle.

Judging the Championship

Once again only one warm-up pilot was available, a novice at unlimited level who nevertheless flew to a generally satisfactory standard on each occasion required. This normally involved the low and disqualification lines and a full sequence at the start of each day or a new sequence, then just the low and low-low lines on the major box axes when we changed the judging location.

Judge positioning on the line

I devised a preferred judge stations plan / layout prior to the event and sent this to the organisers, principally to ensure that the country and language pairs were suitably separated to minimise the opportunity for chat between flights. The layouts established at the different judging positions were not always the same, but in general an appropriate result was achieved; I do feel it is wise to prevent judging colleagues from the same or neighbouring countries to sit too close to each other.

All the judges and assistants worked extremely well together throughout the event. In general the marking was consistent across the team, though the analysis as usual shows considerable variations in style etc.. Once again the US judge – experienced IAC judge Mike Forney – was a first-timer at CIVA events and found the judging analysis something of an eye-opener. Although he was assisted by another knowledgeable US judge, being only a two-person judging team they struggled to move their RI down to the levels achieved by the other judges until for the final sequence I was able to add a ‘cut’ pilot to scribe for them ... and the result was an immediate improvement. This does underline the very real need for the judges’ assistant to commit fully to the judging process, especially at unlimited events, and thus the inclusion of a ‘scribe’ on each judging team is clearly an important topic. On occasion this function has been freely covered by the organisers, but this can be less than satisfactory unless the language barrier can be overcome.

Communications

Again there was one instance of a pilot whom we could not contact but who continued with his flight; apparently he had inadvertently left his radio on the aerodrome frequency after it had undergone a technical flight by a test pilot, but continued with his sequence as he had briefly communicated with the tower and thought that to be the CJ. The pilot was subsequently informed and I understand that no further action taken.

No technical or other problems were experienced on the box safety frequency.

The small digital comms units provided by the organisers worked relatively well, although their signal strength was clearly not as good as might be expected from Motorola type PMR’s.

Protests

There was one: I applied an ‘insertion’ penalty to a pilot who in mid-figure, when a 45° climbing line was required, flew a horizontal line agreed to have been around 3 seconds long, thus breaking the expected figure into an incomplete first part (awarded a CHZ) and a second part that was one of the possible options required to achieve the necessary 180° turn-around for the next figure. In this case the pilot flew the remainder of the zeroed figure, whereas the alternative would have been to take a break and reposition for the next figure in the opposite direction; the latter would have incurred a 150 point penalty equal to the insertion penalty that I imposed. The Team however protested my decision and the jury determined that the insertion should be removed; with the benefit of hindsight however I still believe the insertion penalty to be an appropriate sanction.



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Despite the relatively minor problems outlined above, I am satisfied that we were able to carry out the judging to a wholly satisfactory standard and without any significant safety issues occurring.

Nick Buckenham
EAC 2012 Chief Judge