

**REPORT BY THE FAI JURY ON THE FAI WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
FOR CLASS F3A (RADIO-CONTROL AEROBATICS). Deblin, Poland. August 2003.**

Overview

This very successful world championship event was organised and executed by the aeromodelling section of the Polish Aero Club, from 8th to 16th August 2003. The magnificent facilities at the Air Force Academy at Deblin gave flying opportunity for 95 competitors from 35 nations. Several teams were not represented this year, and a few nations returned to participate again. Based on past attendance, it would not be unreasonable to expect that individual entries could number as many as 130, with 50 nations participating at a future event.

Pre-contest information

Detailed information was distributed via several bulletins. All aspects of the championship, lodging, travelling, costs, rules, and procedures were covered. E-mail contact made correspondence a lot easier, for organizers, officials, and entrants. Some concern was expressed about the importation of fuel, but the organisers took adequate steps in assisting teams in this regard. Arrangements had been made with the customs authorities for reasonably unhampered movement of the model boxes.

Accommodation and catering

Some competitors, supporters/helpers, and competition staff members were accommodated in the students hostel on the base, and judges and jury members were accommodated in two on-site military-style hotels. More accommodation was offered in Pulawy, about 25km south of Deblin. Although not offered in the pre-contest bulletins, other accommodation options were available. The accommodation was of an acceptable standard and at reasonable cost. For those staying on-site, all meals were offered in the restaurant Kasyo. Meals were of very good quality and quantity, and varied daily.

Practice fields and competition site

There was one official practice site available to competitors within a reasonable driving distance, providing for simultaneous operation of three flight lines, split by frequencies. Due to daily military operations, the competition venue was not available prior to the championship. The practice site was easy to find from the map issued by the organisers. Several other unofficial sites were available within a 100km radius from Deblin.

Two flight areas were arranged on the main 60m-wide smooth tarmac runway. Simultaneous flying on two flight lines was possible, and the two sites were adequately separated in distance. The manoeuvring areas on both sites were clearly and correctly marked. The organizers provided shade tents for competitors and helpers/supporters, and spectators were restricted to a good, safe vantage point that did not interfere with the smooth running of the event. Careful thought was given to the working layout (judging seats, shade, transmitter impound, ready box, and sound measuring areas) on both sites. Several tents and mobile container units were utilised for storage, administration, scorekeeping, and jury meetings. Both sites were easily accessible and ample parking and off-loading areas were available.

Model aircraft processing and official practice

Model aircraft processing took place on Friday 8th and Saturday 9th August in a large aircraft hangar, which also housed the model aircraft of teams availing themselves of this secure facility. Processing of the models was slow in getting underway and the processing officials were not fully equipped for their task (lack of Sporting Code, FAI stickers, specification certificates, test-weight). However, after brief instruction and sourcing the missing ingredients, processing could resume. Official practice was conducted at the same time, but competitors were not allowed the opportunity to check their equipment on the sound measuring apparatus, which created problems on the first competition day. No random checking during the competition for conformation to the specifications took place, and only the top three finalists had their model aircraft re-checked at the conclusion of the event.

Organisation and execution

The championship was conducted very well, and the contest director and his staff were friendly and accommodating. Pilots were called in good time to occupy the ready boxes and for their flights, but the pre-published flight roster made this almost unnecessary. No delays were recorded and flights were started each day as published. Mid-day wind activity never reached such proportions that the contest had to be stopped. Frequency monitoring was done at each site, and not a single instance of interference was detected. Line directing, timekeeping and sound measuring was done efficiently, even if the jury had to take steps to muzzle and re-calibrate the two measuring devices. The F3A sub-committee needs to seek a practical solution for the sound-rule in all weather conditions and under all circumstances. Score tabulation was expertly done, with raw scores appearing within 30 minutes of the conclusion of flights. Score sheets were pinned to the two notice boards but quickly removed/collected by competitors and team managers. The lack of a large, visible score board made it difficult to determine the contest standings. This was the second F3A world championship utilising the TBL statistical averaging system, and except for a first day indiscretion, no problems were encountered. The standard of flying was high, with a diversity of model aircraft, equipment, and flying styles. Three bi-planes and one electric-powered model aircraft were entered, the latter proving fully competitive against the internal combustion-powered model aircraft. One has to question the continued existence of the F5A class. During the competition rounds not a single crash or similar incident occurred. The participants at the championship were spared the western-European heat wave conditions.

Communication

A daily bulletin was issued with results, and flight draws. The event director was in constant communication with the flight line officials, and was available at most times to answer queries from team managers, contestants, supporters, and officials. External communication was limited, and the lack of experienced announcers on the public address system severely hampered spectator appeal. However, several local newspapers carried news in their sports sections.

Conduct of jury and judges

No protests were lodged, and the jury and the contest management adequately dealt with a few informal queries. The jury members were well versed in the Sporting Code requirements and worked well together, being on-site and available to questions and queries at all times. One warning had to be issued to a team who did not fully comply with the Sporting Code.

Twenty-one judges were used in the competition, with four groups of five judges each, for a morning shift, and an afternoon shift. The reserve judge was called to duty for the semi-finals and the finals, due to the death of a family member of one of the judges. Extensive judges briefings, with visual aids, and several training flights were conducted prior to the start of the championship on Friday 8th and Saturday 9th August, and again prior to the semi-finals, and finals. A post-competition analysis is being generated but initial indications are that most of the judges performed well with a few scores being thrown out by the TBL-system. Some individuals expressed unhappiness at zero scores being awarded for suspect snap roll manoeuvres, but these judges were consistent in their application of the rules. The judges need more instruction on the recognition of snap rolls, with practical demonstrations. There were a few cases of mild national bias but no real reasons for concern, and one case of inexperience. The results of the judges' analysis will be distributed to all judges, and a recommendation made to the CIAM Bureau. To ensure fair rotation and representation of all judges on the FAI register, the sub-committee will make a few recommendations to the organisers of the next two continental championships and the 2005 world championship.

Award ceremonies, functions, closing banquet

The opening ceremony was conducted in the sports stadium, to accompaniment of military brass band music. An Olympic-style oath of sportsmanship was delivered on behalf of competitors and officials, and a torch lit. The FAI anthem was played, and the FAI flag displayed prominently for the duration of the event, amidst the flags of the participating nations. A pleasant variety concert was held in the amphitheatre, followed by an air show.

The organisers arranged a sightseeing tour and a picnic on the reserve day (Thursday), which was very popular and well attended by those participants who did not progress to the semi-finals stage of the competition.

The awards ceremony took place in the sports stadium where the FAI medals and the perpetual individual and team trophies (individual trophy in need of repair) were awarded to the winners. Several other awards were made to team and individual winners and for the first time, an unofficial junior classification. This was followed by a banquet in the banquet hall, attended by approximately 300 people, with excellent fare, and a fireworks display. The judges and jury members were presented mementoes. The full results were distributed to all teams.

Conclusion

The competition format needs an overhaul, an item that has received considerable discussion in the sub-committee during the last few years, but without universal acceptance. It is the opinion of the FAI Jury that the 2003 FAI/F3A World Championship was splendidly organised and executed, and the Polish Aero Club and the Air Force Academy are to be commended for a good effort.

The FAI Jury: Bob Skinner
 (South Africa, chairman of the CIAM F3A R/C Aerobatic sub-committee)

Sandy PIMENOFF
(Finland, President of the CIAM)
Jury report read and approved

Dr Andras REE
(Hungary, 3rd vice president of the CIAM)
Jury report read and approved