F1 Subcommittee

Report by Ian Kaynes, November 2014

The subcommittee was established with 17 members. There were just a few changes from the previous year, with some changes of national representation and new members brought in to take the place of inactive members.

Discussions included the organisation of competitions, timekeeping problems and particularly model performance. Most members acknowledge that current performance is excessive for flying on typical flying fields and in normal weather. Some members considered that performance is not a significant problem, with large flyoffs resulting only from exceptionally good weather, but also seeing a requirement for calm weather to ease timekeeping difficulties.

There was little appetite from members for the severe restrictions on models which would cut the flight duration to a much smaller ratio against the maximum time used in competitions. A number of measures were considered which would limit performance without rendering current models obsolete. For F1A a minimum diameter of the towline or a pennant of larger size and non-porous material were both considered for the purpose of reducing the launch height of F1A. Two members who fly F1A conducted tests and estimated a 10m reduction of launch height with a 5 sq dm pennant, but also reported that it was very unpleasant on tow and eventually recommended against a change. Limiting F1C performance reduction was considered by either restricting the air intake or by reducing the motor run. It was not possible to test venturi inserts in the time for a proposal in this cycle. A reduction of F1B rubber motor was considered but not adopted in view of no change being finalised for the other classes. A rule to forbid flaps on F1B was discussed but not adopted since some models are already using the technology. However a pre-emptive rule change were adopted to ban flaps on other classes which have not yet started to use them.

The subcommittee opposition to change results from the desire to maintain interesting technical advances and allow the continued the use of current models. This is a natural reaction of flyers actively involved in flying the current models, but equally it is not possible to have a representative subcommittee without such active involvement. A proposal has been submitted which would allow a greater notice of impending model changes and possibly make such changes more acceptable.

Other discussions were directed to the methods of running competition, including reducing the number of flights needed to achieve a result. This has resulted in a number of proposals, including changing the first round of F1A to a 4 minute maximum, reducing the number of rounds to 5 combined with introducing a second extended maximum flight, and changing the flyoffs to start with a six minute flight time instead of five. A further change proposed is to split the flyoff into two groups to make the numbers more manageable when there is a large flyoff.

The use of altimeters to aid timekeeping was discussed and will continue to be assessed. The advantage of giving an accurate indication of the landing time is offset by logistical difficulties and the risk that it will encourage longer flights to be considered the norm.

It must be noted that during the discussions and voting on potential proposals there was no contribution from 4 members. Votes on proposals have been recorded using the CIAM simple majority method. One member did allow some draft proposals to be posted on a social media site, which gave a distorted view of the considerations of the subcommittee.