

2017 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP FREE FLIGHT F1A F1B F1C JURY REPORT

FAI Jury

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Dates

August 6 to 12 2017

Location

Szventes, Hungary

Information

Three bulletins were produced. Additional information was posted on the web site, particularly in the weeks before the championships. This is not an efficient way to guarantee that all teams have seen the postings, which also generally had no date reference.

Participation

In F1A there were 113 competitors from 39 nations.

In F1B there were 110 competitors from 40 nations

In F1C there were 79 competitors from 30 nations

In each class the defending champion competed outside his national team. In F1A there was also the junior champion who was too old to defend his title at the junior championships.

Accommodation

Teams, jury and organisers found accommodation at a range of hotels in the region, often entailing 30 minute journeys to reach the flying field or the organisational base. It was reported that the available camping facilities were of a very low standard.

Food and drink were available on the field, although it was most unfortunate that, with temperatures of 40C and a real risk of dehydration, bottles of water were being sold at more than 10 times the cost in supermarkets.

Flying site

The flying site was in a national park. The surface was grass covered but with some large cracks in places and some water channels. While the site covered a large area there were apparently limitations on launch positions so that it could not be fully utilised. During the World Cup event preceding the Championships many models were lost in an area of swamps and dense undergrowth. The wind blew in other directions in the Championships and some of these had models landing behind trees.

There was a single rough track to access the field. On one practice day when there had been rain overnight cars became stuck on the track, although no warnings had been given that it could become impassable in rain. The field was then closed for the day and that practice time was lost. After that there was no more rain until the evening of the closing ceremony by which time access to the field was luckily no longer required.

The organisers had insisted that to access the flying field all people including children would need to be registered as supporters including payment of the €50. The actual charging of this appears to have been done

on a basis which varied between teams. Identification was by armbands to be worn for the duration of the Championships. The access was only controlled on one day and then not rigorously. There had been no such limit during the World Cup event.

A condition of the site was that cars were allowed to use the access track and park in the marked car park only. The organisers complained against one team for apparently driving elsewhere on the field and imposed a large fine. However, during the championships flying days no action was taken against the teams who were using motor vehicles downwind to retrieve models.

A very effective sound system was used to indicate the start and finish of the rounds and for other information. It could be heard clearly over the whole length of the starting line. A countdown was given before the start but not before the finish of the round, which is usually more important for competitors. The start and finish sounds were similar and could not be identified easily.

Weather

The maximum temperature each day was around 40C. During the Championships flying days it was dry with light or moderate winds on F1C and F1B days, but stronger winds during the F1A day (but at no time approaching the wind speed limit).

Competition

The F1C flying started on time but in the first round the wind was blowing along the line. It was rotated to face into wind for the next round, but with some delay because it was rotated about the middle of the line and this meant the line ran through an area of competitors' tents and equipment which had previously been well behind the line. The round after the delay was finished 6 minutes early. One competitor was still to fly and after complaint he was allowed to attempt to make his flight in the gap after the following round. A number of timekeeping problems arose, as described in the section below. 29 flyers reached the flyoff. During the afternoon break a draw was made for the first flyoff which was made in two groups. 12 flyers progressed to the next flyoff and this determined the final places.

On F1B day the contest director established a starting line with one end of the line very close to the organisation tents, car park and other obstructions. The line position was justified by the other end of the line being close to a water channel. However, the jury president observed that there was at least 120m available before the water channel. The contest started from this line but was soon stopped in the face of complaints about losing sight of flights behind the obstructions. A simple move of the line away from the obstruction could have been adequate, but instead a new line was established far out into the field (which would have been a much better position to have used from the beginning). However, the position and conditions were now very different and the handling of this round had to be decided. Before stopping the round there were flights in three categories: successful maximum flights, flights which were less than a maximum for reasons not connected with the obstructions, and flights which were less than a maximum because of losing sight behind the obstructions. Jury President considered that the most sporting approach would be to continue with the maximum flights retained and competitors with flights less than a maximum allowed repeat flights. The other Jury members pointed out that this option did not exist within the rules which allows only to complete, repeat or cancel the round. There was plenty of time to complete five rounds so cancellation was not appropriate. If the round was completed it would penalise those who had their flights lost behind the obstructions. If the round was repeated then it could penalise those who had successfully completed their flight in the round. It was decided to repeat the round and, in view of the different conditions, the easier maximum of 3 minutes was specified. Inevitably, some competitors who had made a maximum in the initial flying failed to do this again in the repeated round. There was general dissatisfaction with the problem which could have been avoided so easily, but no protests resulted.

The remainder of the F1B flying continued smoothly. The Jury noticed during the day that there was an additional pole (number 42) inserted in the middle of the line between poles 20 and 21. It was found that this was for an Indonesian flyer, accommodated in this way because the starting positions had been allocated very

early before the start of the Championships. It would have been courteous to have notified the Jury. The Indonesian flyer did not actually make any flights.

There were 41 competitors in the flyoff, again held in two groups. For the next round there was confusion about the recorded time of one competitor who had apparently made a maximum. If his time was rejected it would also eliminate an innocent competitor who had been told he would progress to the next flyoff. All the timekeepers involved in the incident could not be found and so it was accepted that both continue, making a total of 14 in the flyoff. At the scheduled time for this flyoff the wind was blowing directly towards the sun, so the start was delayed. The wind shifted away from the sun but towards some trees. Some models were clocked off at the top of the trees and others were seen in front of them.

F1A day started with very light winds but this began to increase during the first round and soon reached about 7 m/s. Models were now going about 2km and an increased break between rounds was given to aid recovery time. After the five rounds there were only 28 flyers for the flyoff, which would require 84 timekeepers. Since there had been 40 poles with 2 timekeepers this meant that a group flyoff could be avoided if 4 more timekeepers were obtained. This would have been very popular with the competitors, but the CD announced that he had released some timekeepers and so there would be another group flyoff. 12 went through to the second flyoff and a winner was determined at that stage.

Model processing in the random checks during the competition were made but not fully recorded and the processing of the winning models left several key parameters unchecked.

Timekeeping

It quickly became apparent that many of the timekeepers were inexperienced in the task and had not been thoroughly briefed on their duties. Common shortcomings included not concentrating on the model for the whole flight, often seen to look away during the flight when it would be obviously very difficult to pick up the model again; not timing independently when one timekeeper said stop then the other timekeeper stopped their watch despite not even having been watching the model; not timing motor runs correctly, either by taking the time to model attitude changes which may be more than one second after motor stop, or not acknowledging when it was impossible to determine a run time.

Few of the poles had tripods, in contravention of the rule that there must be at least one tripod at each pole. The binoculars were generally of a low quality.

Opening and Closing Ceremony

The opening ceremony was kept to a very brief basic ceremony in order to minimise the time teams spent standing in the hot sun.

The closing ceremony was planned to be held after the banquet in a hall in Szentes, so that it could be attended by those who did not want to pay for the banquet. However, this plan was confused when the lights failed in the hall at the start of the banquet. After considerable delay meals were served in the dark and did not appear to represent value for money compared to local restaurant charges. Three hours after the start of the banquet some lights had come on and the award ceremony was started, with the hall itself still in darkness. As the F1A winner took to the podium the lights returned in the hall and the remainder of the ceremony proceeded smoothly.

Protests

There were several complaints but no formal protests were received.

Observations

At model processing F1C competitors were asked to confirm that their models had radio DT as required by the current rules. One competitor had only one of his models equipped with this and he was allowed to register only that model. During the F1C competition there were about three cases of models being radio

DTed to avoid a crash, but there were at least ten crashes without intervention. Thte requirement to be able to stop the motor by radio does not com e into force until 2020.

Communication with the contest director were possible only via the Hungarian member of the Jury, which sometimes limited discussions.

Scores were displayed at some time after the end of the rounds on a display screen (which was often blank and was difficult to read) or on a printed A4 sheet on a noticeboard which could be read by one person at a time. A large scoreboard with scores entered by hand is more effective for mass viewing.

There was no meeting place, chairs or shade for the jury. Consequently the jury spent most of the day standing in the sun (average age 75) and sitting down only when an empty chair was found or in their own cars.

Conclusion

The competition was successfully concluded with worthy winners in each class, but with problems arising during the Championships.

Annex to the Jury report - Recommendations for 2018 European Championships

The 2018 European Championships for F1ABC have been awarded to Hungary and are to be run on the same site at a similar time of year. Based on the experiences of the 2017 World Championships the following changes are recommended:

1 Timekeeping

- A When timekeepers who are not experienced at timing free flight models are employed, they should be given some practical training. This should include when to start using binoculars, how to use tripods, how to time motor runs, how to observe F1A line release, and to give the benefit of doubt to competitors (e.g. when a motor run cannot be timed accurately). A readiness to acknowledge mistakes or doubts should be encouraged in order to aid discussion of any difficulties which might arise. In addition it should stress the need to time the flight independently, to concentrate for the whole flight, watching the model without taking eyes from it and not succumbing to any distraction during this time. In 2015 Mongolia showed how effective a training programme could be in achieving efficient timekeeping by people previously unfamiliar with free flight.
- B Provide equipment of adequate quality and with one tripod at each start position.

2. Display of scores

There should be a clear scoreboard displayed which can be seen readily by a large group of people.

3 Food and drink

- A Hot weather is to be expected again and in these conditions, water should be made available to competitors at a price which does not represent profiteering at their expense. It is the health of participants that is at risk.
- B As well as the obvious need to have a reliable venue, the cost and quality of food and drink should be commensurate with that available in local restaurants.

4 Flying Site

- A There should be a clear and consistent policy for access by non-participants (e.g. family members). Any registration should be accompanied by, at most, a nominal fee which represents no more than the cost of recording the access granted.
- B Control of the use of cars on the field should be consistent and extended to include the areas of model retrieval.
- C Plans or guidelines for access to the field in the event of rain should be drawn up and publicised.

5 Communications

- A If important late information is published on a web site, it should be identified with a date and registered team managers should be notified by email.
- B With teams accommodate in different towns, a list of team manager contact details (SMS or email) should be maintained and use for any changes of schedule during the championships.
- C It is unnecessary to make and publicise the starting positions in advance of the championships. It is not information that the team managers need in advance and is subject to change from last minute changes of entries. It should be established after registration and lists printed for distribution at the team managers meeting.

6 Staff

There were too few people in positions of contact. An immense load of interfacing with foreign teams fell on one English-speaking lady, who had to address problems on many aspects of the event.

There should be a number of people who can act as contact points for competitors on specific subjects (e.g. entry, field organisation, accommodation).