

FAI SANCTIONED MEET STEWARD'S REPORT

(Confidential within the FAI and CIVL, this report is only published to the FAI Secretariat, CIVL Delegates and the relevant Competition Committee)

The purpose of this report is to inform the CIVL Delegates and Competition Committee of the successes and problems occurring in FAI sanctioned meets. From such reports, ideas for improving rules, organisations and the fairness of meets will develop. This report is in no way intended to be used as criticism of a given meet, but simply is one source of information useful for raising the standards of future competitions. For practice competitions it also highlights the organizational aspects which will need to be put in place or improved for the forthcoming Category 1 event.

- A. Steward Name: **Flip Koetsier**
- B. Competition Title: **FAI Pre-European Class 1 Hang Gliding Championships**
- C. Location: **Sierra de Arangoiti, Lumbier (Navarra) - Spain**
- D. Dates: **August 12th to 18th, 2013**

Please provide a complete report to include answers to the following questions.

I – ORGANISATION: Comment on the meet organisation including the following:

1. Overall organisation

Section 7A, 4.1.1 clearly states following: “ 2nd Category events that are also practice events for 1st Category events shall be run in accordance with Category 1 events rules and sample Local Regulations except for entry requirements and those for additional FAI officials”.

Although this rule is clear, this practice event was not run in accordance with Category 1 event rules. I have observed that the following category 1 rules were not followed:

- The quantity of officials that needs to be present to run a competition of this level was not sufficient and the in the bid information announced key officials were not all present at the competition. This could be solved a few days before the start of the competition by changing some names for key officials functions (with approval of the CIVL bureau and supported by the steward) (see also paragraph 2 in this report).

Juaki’s argument is that “it is impossible to run a category 2 event with the same requirements as a category 1. The competition is run solely on the pilot entry fees and the entry fees for a category 2 are half the entry fees of a category 1.”

- The Safety Director had more functions (take off marshal and driver for the German team)

- Helmets were not checked for EN 966 certification at the registration or during the competition. It was not clear to the organiser that such checking is necessary for category 2 competitions. S7A, 4.1.1 applies.

- A general safety briefing was not held before the start of the competition.
- A Task Advisory Committee that has to include at least two pilots and the steward has not been elected (see S7A, 2.6.2)
- A Safety Committee has been formed, but has not always been consulted about the safety in the tasks to fly (immediately after the task setting).
- An English speaking emergency doctor or medical technician has not been available at all during this competition (see S7A, 2.6.6)

2. Quantity of officials

As mentioned in paragraph 1, there were not enough people to run the practice competition. The organizer had the following argument for the lack of enough people in the organisation: “ *It is impossible to find volunteers for running such events for free and because all costs have to be covered from the entry fees and because till the start of the competition the organizer had no idea about the numbers of competitors, it was impossible to contract many people for running this competition*”.

See more details in following paragraphs in this report.

Officials:

Organizer and Competition Director	Jose Javier Alvarez Castillejo (Casti)
Organizer and Scoring	Jose Manuel (Juaki) Sanchez Garcia
Safety Director	Carlos Ganter
Meteorologist	Jose Javier Alvarez Castillejo
Goal marshal	Bea Garcia
Take off marshals	Carlos Ganter, Bea Garcia and Marije Ispizua
Scoring assistant	Manuel Garcia

3. Experience of officials

Casti is a very experienced competition organizer. He organised many (mainly PG) competitions (including 2 national HG competitions) in this area and knows the area and the XC possibilities very well. Main problem with Casti is that he hardly does not speak English. Because of that Juaki held the briefings and answered the pilots questions. Because Juaki will be the Meet Director next year, Casti will be able to focus on the organisational aspects of the competition and Juaki will be the person doing the communications with the pilots and team leaders.

Juaki is a very experienced competition organizer, meet director and competition pilot; that makes him very qualified for the function of MD next year at the 2014

HG Europeans. Juaki's experience in organizing and running successful competitions, which he usually seems to run with a very small organisation staff or even alone, cannot be an excuse for minimizing the organisation of this competition and not following the rules in the sporting code, that also apply to practice competitions for category 1 competitions (see also paragraph 1, overall organisation).

Because Carlos does not know the area and because he had some other tasks in this competition, he was not the best choice for Safety Director. I have been informed that next year Tony Webb will probably be the SD. Tony was the SD at the HG Europeans in 2010 in Ager.

The take-off marshals did a very good job. No more launch assistants were available for this event.

4. Suitability of meetings and briefings

Briefings were held on the take-off and, if necessary, at the "Iru Bide" hotel restaurant, where the organisation, the CIVL official and some teams were accommodated.

The competition organizer can use the well-equipped and nice recently built town hall as competition headquarter, briefing room etc. There are separate rooms available for for example the CIVL officials.

In Lumbier we can use the large local "sport hall" for sprog measuring.

5. Suitability of weather information

Weather information was gathered from the internet and Casti's "experience" with the local weather. Especially this experience appeared not to provide adequate information about the weather, which sometimes resulted in different conditions from what had been briefed. I have not been able to get good prove of that, but was informed about that by a number of pilots.

6. Suitability of facilities

The "unofficial headquarter" was located at the Iru Bide hotel. This hotel was a good place for some briefings, the GPS downloadings etc. The hotel has a bar, a terrace and good kitchen, which made it possible for the pilots and staff to order late dinners.

7. Transportation

The majority of the teams organised their own transport. Transport, organised by the meet organiser, was available for pilots who paid around € 200 for the transport (it included retrieval).

This is a good service for the pilots and I have been informed that this service will also be provided in 2014.

8. Information dissemination (announcements, schedules and decisions)

Scores were published at the hotel Iru Bide and on the competition website and

decisions etc. were announced in the daily briefings. This is not enough for a category 1 competition and the organizer is recommended to prepare a “publication board”, pigeon boxes for the teams and everything that is necessary to provide clear publication of everything that needs to be known to the teams. It is advisable to base the communications to the teams about scores, announcements etc. on a clear publication board, e-mail and electronic publication boards. That will eliminate the need for the use of pigeon boxes and will also prevent us from the need for the use of too much paper. It must be possible to provide the scores, announcements etc. on paper to the teams that request so. I recommend to have “pigeon boxes” available for written announcements.

9. Pilot assistance

The people in the organisation of the competition were as helpful as possible to assist the pilots.

10. Retrieval

See paragraph 7.

11. Launch control for fair access and efficiency

Because (only) 63 pilots competed in this competition and because the rigging areas and launch areas are big enough to handle such a group of pilots, no real problems were observed with the fair access and efficiency. The launch control was carried out by a few people and was adequate, but would be completely inadequate for the European Championship in which around 100 pilots will be competing.

My advice for the 2014 championship will be that the (large) north take-off will have at least 3 start lanes and that free (unordered) launching will be possible. To prevent chaos in the rigging area the organizer is requested to take into consideration to set up an ordered rigging system.

For the south take-off I recommend to set up ordered rigging and ordered launch. The south take-off is only safe to be used when the launch conditions for that take-off are optimal. Launching from the south take-off in not optimal launch conditions like no wind or cross wind will have to be avoided. To increase the numbers of launchable days from the south take-off, the organizer is requested to take into consideration to build (simple) start ramps on the south take-off.

12. Opening and closing ceremonies including presentation of Jury and Steward
Not relevant at the pre comp.

13. Other social events

Not that I know of.

14. Total number of scheduled days and number of rounds achieved
7 Scheduled days and 7 valid tasks were flown.

15. Media liaison

Not that I know of.

16. Facilities provided for FAI officials e.g. standards of food, accommodation, transport, incidental expenses etc.

The steward was accommodated at the hotel “Iru Bide”. This hotel meets the minimum standards that can be found in the sporting code for accommodation. Incidental expenses for the steward were reimbursed by the organizer. The meet organizer provided the steward a car.

17. Other organisational comments

There are clear rules for running category 1 (practice) competitions. For mainly economic reasons (worldwide economic crisis and therefore a lack of sponsors) the organizer has not been able to run this practice competition in accordance with the cat 1 event rules. The organizer has stated that it would be very advisable for the “survival” of cat 1 HG events if a more flexible ruling for especially the practice competitions could be possible. I have advised the organizer to contact his NAC / CIVL delegate to make the necessary proposals to the CIVL Plenary meeting for changing or easing the rules.

18. Recommendations for organisational improvements for future events

- Appoint a Safety Director who meets the standards in S7A, 2.6.1.2, whose sole responsibility is the function of Safety Director. Note for the CIVL Bureau: after I supported the appointment of Ignacio de Ruiz Guordiola as Safety Director I realized that Ignacio’s English language skills are not of the required standards in the sporting code (S7A, 2.6.1.2). The choice (or change) of the Safety Director will need the approval of the CIVL Bureau.

- Check helmet certification during the registration

- More people will have to be available in the organisation of the championship. Especially the low numbers of launch officials is a worry and enough well trained people will have to be available on launch. The in my opinion necessary numbers of launch officials / assistants will have to be 3 per start lane. That will include officials who will be responsible for preparing the list of take-off order in case of free (not ordered) take-off.

The organizer and I do not agree about this point. I recommend the steward, Claudia, to communicate about this with the organizer and come to an acceptable figure for necessary launch assistants.

One of the responsibilities of the launch officials will have to be “hang checks”, which will have to be carried out.

- For the large north take-off I recommend to set up an “ordered set up” system and a free launch system.

- For the smaller south take-off I recommend to set up an ordered set up system and ordered launch system.

- An English speaking emergency doctor or medical technician will have to be available on the take-off and at a later strategic location during the tasks.
- After setting the task in consultation with the task advisory committee (at least 2 pilots and the CIVL Steward) the safety committee will have to be consulted about the safety aspects of the task that will be flown. Note for Juaki and Casti: the task advisory committee only has an advisory function.
- During the competition the head quarter in town was not used for daily briefings and / or the downloading of the GPS tracklogs. This was carried out at the hotel Iru Bide, which is a very convenient place for such work. It is recommended to take into consideration to use the competition headquarter in the town hall for that work at the HG Euros in 2014. If necessary, it must be possible to do the work at the comp headquarter instead of the hotel.
- Have toilets available on the take-off.
- It is recommended to have somebody from the “scoring team” available on the goal fields with a lap top to make it possible to download GPS tracklogs. This will reduce the work for the scorer(s) at the competition headquarter.
- It is recommended that after every competitor took off the MD and SD are in contact with each other and reachable for pilots / team leaders and the meteorologist to be able to respond to quickly changing (unexpected) weather conditions that might risk safety in the task area.
- A general safety briefing, including local special advise, will have to be held before the start of the competition (S7A, 2.6.1.3).
- A publication board (or more) for every announcement that has to do with the championship will need to be prepared. The Coca Cola vending machine at the hotel Iru Bide is not the best publication board.
- Pigeon boxes will have to be available for the teams for the dissemination of announcements and scores. See also point 8 in this report.

II – RULES: Comment on rule issues, including the following:

1. Adequacy of local regulations

Except for some minor inadequacies the LRs were adequate.

The bid information package (Annex A) is completely not correct in paragraph 21, that states that all key officials speak English fluently. This is most definitely not the case for the Organisation/Event Director, Casti, and the at the pre comp not present Safety Director, Ignacio Guardiola (see also point 18, recommendations).

The organizer is reminded that a change of key officials, which will differ from the information that is provided in the bid information, will need the approval of the CIVL bureau.

Because the awarding of competitions will for a big part be based on the information in the bid package, I wonder if sanctions for providing incorrect information in such official documents can be possible.

2. Addendums or changes

No addendums or changes.

3. Fair application of local regulations

Nothing to report.

4. Use of Section 7 and General Section (how and why)

It was clear that this practice competition was organised in the way it is always done by this organizer and that the sporting codes have not been consulted.

5. Your need to provide rule interpretations (how and why)

Because of the short notice for me to go to this practice competition and the lack of involvement in the preparations and communications with the organisers, I have only observed this competition with the objective to express my observations and recommendations in this report. I have not discussed the running of the competition and the following of the rules with the organisers, because organiser Casti does not speak English and organiser Juaki did not have the necessary time, because he did not have much time for me, because he flew in the competition and he was the only scorer, which resulted in much work for him in the evenings.

6. Goal set-up and operation

Virtual goals with at some goal fields physical finish lines as a reference for the pilots.

Except for 1 of the possible goal fields and the main landing field in Lumbier, which is located at the local airclub, I have not checked any goal fields. This goal field and main landing field are suitable for the championship.

7. Timing regulation

GPS

8. Scoring systems (use and application)

FS software and GAP 2011 scoring formula.

9. Protests handling and resolution

No protests

10. Changes important to Section 7 that you think will improve fairness or effectiveness.

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11. Other rule comments

The are no airspace issues in the task area, except that along the ridge to the east crossing a sailplane and parachutist airfield will have to be avoided. This appears not to cause problems.

III – SAFETY: Comment on safety issues including the following:

1. General meet safety

**See paragraph 8, suggestions for future safety enhancements.
This was in general a safe competition.**

2. Occurrence of accidents

Nothing to report

3. Availability of medical personnel

Despite the fact that the presence of medical personnel is mandatory at competitions like this one, there was no medical personnel present at the competition.

4. Use of safety officer

The, at a late moment appointed safety director, did not have any ideas about his responsibilities and did have several other functions in the organisation of the competition like launch marshal and driver for a team.

5. Launch safety

Despite the fact that there were not enough launch officials to avoid unsafe launch conditions no unsafe launching was observed. See also in paragraph 11 in this report my recommendation to only use the south take-off, if launch conditions for the south launch are optimal.

6. Pilot skill relating to safety of completing all phases of the tasks (launch, X-C flight, landing).

Pilots were skilled for flying in this competition.

7. List of pilots given an exemption from entry qualifications for the championship.

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8. Suggestions for future safety enhancements

In this competition not much attention was paid to the safety rules that can be found in the sporting code and which have to be followed for competitions like this one:

- A Safety Director was appointed, but he was not briefed by the organizer about his responsibilities. Despite the fact that the sole responsibility of the SD can be his function of SD, he had also been appointed for more functions in the organisation of the competition (S7A, 2.6.1.2 and 2.6.1.3 refer).

- As far as I know a general safety briefing has not been held before the start of

the competition (S7A, 2.6.1.3)

- Helmets were not checked for the certification (S7A, 12.6.3).

- A safety advisory committee was elected, but not involved in evaluating the tasks that had been set (S7A, 2.6.3)

- There was no medical personnel present at the take-off during launching and at strategic locations during the task (S7A, 2.6.6)

Conclusions:

As already stated in the 1st paragraph of this steward report the practice competitions for category 1 competitions will have to be run in accordance with the cat 1 rules in the sporting code(s).

The organizer and the responsible NAC have signed the Organiser Agreement, which includes that “The Organiser shall observe and enforce all provisions contained in the FAI Statutes, By-Laws, Sporting Code etc.”

It is clear that for the organisation of this practice competition the rulings in the Sporting Code, Section 7A, have been ignored.

An (in my opinion valid) argument of the organizer for not having a complete organisation staff running the practice competition (without medical personnel present at the competition) is that that is too expensive and cannot be paid from the entry fees, which are the organizers only financial source for running this competition.

Because I have not been involved in the preparations of this competition, it is very well possible that I missed possible communications between the organizer and the CIVL bureau about easing the rules, because of financial reasons.

Despite the fact that the organizer of this competition has chosen to ignore the rules in the sporting codes, I am confident that he will be able to organise a successful European HG Championship in 2014.

I recommend the CIVL bureau to go on with the organisation of the championship and keep an eye on the preparations of this championship. By signing the Organiser Agreement the organizer has agreed that “The Organiser may be required to bear the reasonable travel costs for at least two visits by the Steward” and I recommend the CIVL bureau, the organiser and the originally appointed CIVL Steward, Claudia Mejia, to come to an agreement about a visit of the steward to the site and organisation to check if the steward recommendations and rules in the sporting codes will be followed in the 2014 European Championship.