IGC Steward Report
17th EGC VINON 08-21 June 2013

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1. ORGANISATION

1.1 Overall organization
Acceptable – see details/comments below.
The change of competition director (CD) just a few months before the start of the championship had a serious impact on the preparations of this event.

1.2 Quantity of officials
The core organization team existed out of 15 persons and some youngsters to help on the grid (limited due to the examination period at school). Several tasks were taken up by volunteers coming from other clubs/area's, only a few were home based.
Due to this limited number, no back up was possible and the CD was often overloaded. He had to cope with all aspects of the event due to the shortness of people.

1.3 Experience of officials
The CD, a very experienced FI and former CFI of Vinon, visited the Pribina Cup to pick up practical experience for larger competitions besides his experience on local competitions.
The (retired) professional met-man in combination with the very experienced task-setting team formed a well balanced and accurate party.
The chief scorer and his assistants were well experienced, well organized and managed the processing quick and correct.
The initial technical inspection/scrutinizing was done by a FFVV-technical officer. The daily weighing went well after the second day after some practical adjustments.
Strange but some airworthiness documents had to be renewed during the competition! (Preparation of the teams/pilots?)

I like to emphases that the event was made possible thanks to these small group of volunteers who were utmost engaged and willing to help.

1.4 Suitability of meetings and briefings
All briefings took place in a large hangar. TC-briefings took place in a smaller meeting room. IGC-staff shared the club president's office.

1.5 Suitability of weather information
MET info was provided by a retired professional met-officer and different meteo internet sites were always consulted and sometimes phone calls were made to local clubs to verify the situation.
A daily meteo-briefing note was distributed during the TC briefing, and repeated during the pilots briefing. A short version was also published on the notice board.

Also during spring, Vinon was confronted with bad weather and during the competition the meteo conditions were not as usual and sometimes difficult.

1.6 Suitability of facilities

Participants were using the campground at the airfield or guest/holiday houses in the neighborhood.
FAI-officials were lodged in a hotel close to the airfield.
WiFi on the campground did not work profoundly and even with the special provided 3G-keys to the teams, some troubles popped up again and made some team captains nerveous…
Food (snacks and different warm dishes) and drinks were available from the 'Resto' near the competition office at acceptable prices.

1.7 Transportation

For the FAI-officials nothing was prepared although requested.
(Steward came by his own car and brought his own bicycle)

1.8 Information dissemination (Pronouncements, schedules and decisions)

Announcement of gridding and briefings were done by SMS and on the information board at the competition office. Results were published online via the "Soaring Spot" and at the competition office.

1.9 Pilot assistance

The CD, his staff and office staff did the utmost to help the competitors and crew.
Extra attention was given on the special aspects of flying in the mountains during the training period, the TC and pilot briefings and on special demand.

1.10 Retrieval

When not using the own engine to get back home, most retrievals were done by road, or using an aero tow at the airfield of the out landing.

1.11 Launch control for fair access and efficiency

After some adjustments during the first days, and a few corrections during the next days, all went well.

1.12 Opening and closing ceremonies including presentation of Jury and Stewards

A simple and with sympathy organized ceremony at the local market place. After short speeches by the club president and representatives of the city and the region, the president of the jury declared the championship open. Adjacent a drink was offered by the city of Vinon.
The closing ceremony at the airfield was also very modest. Short speeches of the mayor and a representative of the Region (without short translation).
After a well respected moment of remembrance for Alexis, initiated by the CD, the CD and club president took care of the price giving with the FAI-medals, cups, diplomas and some extra prizes. Only the national hymns for the champions were available, no flags …

1.13 Other social events

Halfway the competitions a well attended 'International evening' was organized in a very nice ambiance with the pilots a crews. Most teams offered some special food and drinks.
On Monday evening 17/06 a "French evening" was planned. This was redirected into a "common meal" with all the pilots and crews due to the fatal accident of AN.

1.14 Total number of scheduled days and number of contest days
In total 9 valid competition days for every class.
Due to the meteo conditions, the first day was cancelled and we had three days flying with one class only. A day off was announced after the fatal accident had happened.

1.15 Media liaison
There was no press officer. (short of organizing staff)
Local press was invited for the first competition day/briefing.
TF1 (national TV channel) broadcasted a 2 min. reportage in the news bulletins.
During the competition a lot of film shots have been taken to produce a movie about gliding and competition flying and will be released in the coming weeks.

1.16 Public and Internet display of real-time aircraft positions and information
The tracking system worked well. Initially a mix was made over the three classes; later on the tracking was dedicated to one class at the day.
Projection was foreseen in briefing hangar but stopped after a few days as there was no public interest.

1.17 Other organizational comment
Due to the changes in the organization, a closer eye on the process of the preparations and support from the FFVV - in fact the bidder of the EGC - had been more than welcomed.

2 RULES (Comment only where appropriate)

2.1 Adequacy of Local Procedures
OK

2.2 Addendums or changes
None, besides several updates of the airspace file (up to v8)

Many pilots were coping with the airspace structure although extra information was given during the TC and general briefings. Lack of preparation/studying the airspace in advance by the pilots?

2.3 Fair applications of Rules and Local Procedures
OK

2.4 Possible improvements of Rules and/or Local Procedures
The set up of a self-briefing tool with a rather short version of the LP but with schema's of procedures like gridding (how to drive via the scales to the correct spot on the active Rwy), finish and landing pattern (clear difference between direct landing and speed finish), how to drive and to park at the airfield/grid, were to land during launch is going on, how to get a re-launch, …
Besides a general TC-briefing, a general pilots briefing before the first competition day might be helpful to explain the general procedures and to solve/prevent problems with e.g. airspace…
It is really necessary that TC's speak English and that they can communicate with the organization and liaise between their pilots and the organization.

2.5 Task setting and operations

As mentioned before, the weather conditions were not as usual and often difficult.
Task setting was made very carefully and might be called 'conservative', but taking into account the meteo conditions and the level of experience of the pilots (this was a real big worry for the CD and the task setters) a well balanced job was done to the best possible.
Due to some incidents/accidents, the CD and the task setters had to make difficult choices.

2.6 Scoring system (use and application)

The 1000 points system was used without troubles;
The SeeYou software was working smoothly.

2.7 Protest handling and registration

No complaints, no protests were filed.

3. SAFETY (Comment only where appropriate)

3.1 General safety of the event

Overall OK. Some reminders were given about the discipline of the pilots and crew members…
The attitude / level of experience of some pilots were critical elements.

3.2 Occurrence of incidents and/ or accidents

Unfortunately the event was faced with incidents and accidents.

Day 2:
- Pilot refuses to park his glider on the right spot on the grid
- An engine driving belt broke down during initial climb after take off, and stopped the prop. The pilot reacted by a correct 180° turn and straight landing. While the engine still running, smoke and flames came out of the engine compartment. The pilot jumped out immediately and the arriving crew stopped the fire using the extinguisher. Participation over.
- Bad handling of the engine followed by an out landing in a non-approved out landing field causing serious damage. Participation over.
- Idem but could fly after some repairs

Day 3:
- Out landing in a non-approved out landing field - serious damage - Participation over.
- Extreme late decision to make an out landing in the last part of the finish some minor damage

Day 4:
- Bad flight path after finishing
- Dangerous finish with low energy, followed by dangerous landing pattern

Day 5:
- SLS - out landing due to engine failure before crossing the start line
- Aero tow upset - tow pilot released
- During aero tow, a pilot of a glider checking the turbo…

Day 6:
- Pilot made a loop after crossing the finish line (was returning after an out landing)
- Because of a bad flight a pilot launched a verbal attack beyond any respect and politeness to the CD, no apologies were made,
- Dangerous and low energy approach and hard landing on an airfield

Day 7:

- Pilot made autorotation inside a small gaggle before the passing the start line
- Pilot starts the engine at 80 m height above the Lac de Serre Ponçon
- Pilot was miss-aligned for crossing the finish line
- Collision with the mountains - fatal accident

Day 11:

- Pilot starts engine at 20 m height above the Durance valley..

Imagine what should have been noticed when all the files were examined in detail…
The CD and his staff were very upset and disappointed about the level of skill / experience and flight behavior of some of the pilots participating in an EGC-event.
A meeting was organized by the CD and safety officer with the delegates of the three classes, the steward, the jury president and other staff members to have an open debate about these incidents / accidents.
The outcome was what ambiguous from the pilots' side…
But the following items should be tabled on IGC-level:

- A rethink of the minimum requirements of experience to participate EGC/WGC's
- More responsibility of the gliding federation when selecting their pilots
- A system of yellow and red cards for hazardous, dangerous, non-sportive behavior.
  E.g. Serious infringement = yellow
  Two yellow cards = ban of competition participation for x years (e.g. 2 y),
  Three yellow cards = red = no further participation is allowed
- The CD needs tools/power to cope with modern problems as the actual list of penalties is only task related.

3.3 Availability of medical personnel
A GP (member of the hosting club) was present during the event.

3.4 Use of safety officers
The CD was assisted by a safety officer. He was present during the launches and arrivals.
Every day feed back was given during the TC and pilot briefings. Special safety information was given about the procedures and the use of the catalog with possible out landing fields in the area.

3.5 Launch safety
OK - from the third day, the traditional routine was there.

3.6 Pilot skills relating to safety
This might be the most important item of the report.
After a few days it was clear that the competitors could be split up in two groups: those who were well trained, having profound experience to fly in a competition in this mountain area, and those who were in short of experience – even the basics! -, short of knowledge of the mountain systems and safety attitude and behavior.

3.7 Suggestions for future safety enhancements
Mix of the replies above.

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