7th World Paramotor Championships

Marugán, Segovia, Spain, 21st August - 1 September 2012

Report by the Jury President to the Air Sport Commission

EVENT DETAILS

TITLE/NAME:	7th World Paramotor Championships
DATE:	21 August - 1 September 2012
LOCATION:	Marugán, Spain
ORGANISING NAC:	Real Federación Aeronáutica Española
ORGANISERS:	Air Marugán, Altair Paramotor Club
NUMBER OF FLIGHTS:	10
NUMBER OF TASKS:	10
NUMBER OF COMPETITORS:	105 crews

EVENT PERSONNEL

EVENT DIRECTOR:	María Jesús Jiménez
COMPETITION DIRECTOR:	Nino Muelas
DEPUTY COMPETITION DIRECTOR:	Antonio Marchesi
CHIEF SCORER:	José Luis Esteban
CHIEF JUDGE:	Magi Miret
STEWARD:	Renatas Samulenas (LIT)
MONITOR:	Richard Meredith-Hardy (GBR)

FAI JURY

PRESIDENT:	Roy Beisswenger (USA) - President
MEMBER:	Jana Bobkova (CZE)
MEMBER :	Rohaizi Md Hussin (MYS)

COMPLAINTS AND PROTESTS

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS:	76
NUMBER OF PROTESTS ADMITTED:	2
NUMBER WITHDRAWN:	0
NUMBER UPHELD:	1
NUMBER REJECTED:	1
AMOUNT OF PROTEST FEES RETAINED:	50 EUR

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Roy Beisswenger
Jury President

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Venue

The airfield at Marugán, Segovia was built a few years ago specifically for ultralights and microlights, and was a great venue for the championship. The field included a 95 fuel station, hangars, a bar-restaurant, offices, and a swimming pool.

A nice touch was that the individual T-hangars had living accommodations built in as lofts. One of the T-hangars was used by the organizer for competition support. The lower level was used by marshals for their briefings as well as measuring and sealing tasks with competitors. The upper loft area was converted into office space for the competition director and scoring. That hangar was conveniently en route between the camping area and the decks. It worked out very well.

The Event Director's office was located in a suite on the airport that was close to the bar-restaurant and the campground. It was very conveniently located and space was provided in the loft above for the International Jury and the Steward to work.

The modern facility included a 600 meter paved runway and two runways (600 and 800 meters) of compact dirt. The decks were placed on these runways. They were a little close, but certainly adequate for the job.

The region was very open. Most of the land nearby seemed to be used to farm wheat, which was completely harvested and left lots of room to work. There was enough open space to put in two cloverleaf tasks, one dedicated to single place foot-launch (PL1) operations and the other dedicated to the other categories.

The normal operation of the airfield was suspended during championship flying to prevent interference from non-competing aircraft. There were a couple of transgressions from pilots who did not seem to be aware of the competition, but the situations were dealt with promptly by the organizers.

Large tents with electricity were provided to teams. The parking place was conveniently placed behind the team tents. Portable toilets and showers were provided. They were enough for the competitors and they were always kept clean.

The competition map was very accurate and it was available for download from the competition's web site.

Accommodations

Participants had their choice of staying on the airport, in Marugán, or they could seek accommodations even further away. Teams seemed to seek out their own best solutions depending on tastes and budgets.

Services

The main office was open most of the time with staff always available for registration or other administrative tasks.

Team Leader briefings were held in a space in the main hangar. The space was more than adequate, with seating, white board, and computer access when briefings weren't being held.

The jury and steward were provided with two cars, a rented villa, office space, and full access to the event. Since most of the 'paperwork' of the event was managed on the championship website, there was little need for printing services. When things did need printing, files were delivered to the event directors office via memory stick. The event director's office was always very helpful and made sure things were done promptly.

A WiFi network was installed to provide connection for the whole area. It worked well with few users, but as more users tried to connect, there was a problem with limited bandwidth. The bandwidth would probably have been completely adequate for competition activities. However, many users wanted to perform high-bandwidth activities like Skype. Several protocols were attempted starting with organizers requesting that users not attempt high-bandwidth tasks. Eventually, the organizers had to establish higher security on the network so that they could reduce the number of devices able to access the internet. That was done by having their dedicated IT guy enable each authorized device, normally at least one computer per each national team.

That of course frustrated a lot of pilots used to high bandwidth and immediate internet access. Organizers tried to help by providing access in the main hangar/briefing area. That was not popular, but other solutions would have cost a lot more money.

Competition staff

The competition staff was –to their credit– completely headed up by Spaniards. Much of the team had just come off from running the 2012 World Microlight Championship which had just wrapped up shortly before the WPC2012. That was a double edged sword since the team was certainly well-trained from having run a competition just days earlier. However, they had to be tired from that initial work. You would not know it to see everyone at work, though. Everyone was professional and kept the competition moving.

The event director, María Jesús Jiménez, was in charge the logistics for the competition such as services, food, registering competitors, etc. Her and her team did a great job in that department and freed the competition director and his staff to do his job.

Nino Muelas was the competition director and did a great job of organizing tasks. He worked closely with Antonio Marchesi. Antonio did the pilot briefings and it would serve future directors if they could observe his briefing style. He was very polite and responsive to team leaders, but ultimately he was very firm in his briefings. And he did his best to provide adequate written documentation as well as explain things at the briefings. He also worked to keep briefings brief.

Briefings for all of the next day's tasks took place during the afternoon prior to the events. That meant that he and Nino would actually have to prepare at least two tasks worth of events ahead of time to keep that schedule. But by holding the number of briefings down to (normally) one a day and providing them at the same time each day, it helped move the competition along.

José Luis Esteban was the chief scorer. His work was manageable during the event mostly because of the preparation work he, Nino and Antonio did before the championship.

The marshals did a fantastic job and there were enough of them to get the job done. Their hard work, fairness, and good nature contributed largely to the success of the championship.

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Competition System

Much of the competition was prepared in advance. The design of tasks and operational rules were published on the **championship's intranet** and all the participants had the opportunity to review and comment on the local rules through a discussion list for months before the competition. The idea was to discuss he competition and the tasks before actually arriving at the championship venue.

Teams were advised to bring at least one computer. During the championship the competition intranet effectively replaced both the official board, the traditional stack of mail boxes for teams and even the more modern internet café. There was a minimal internet café, but it went largely unused.

Detailed information for every task (turn-points, times...) was published on the intranet before each briefing or shortly thereafter. Weather information was available via the internet which made it unnecessary to specifically brief weather conditions.

GPS logger technology has advanced and it became apparent this year that the older style loggers may need to be retired. The older loggers were not popular with the people who needed to download the tracks, but acquiring new loggers was not a popular idea with those who invested in the old technology.

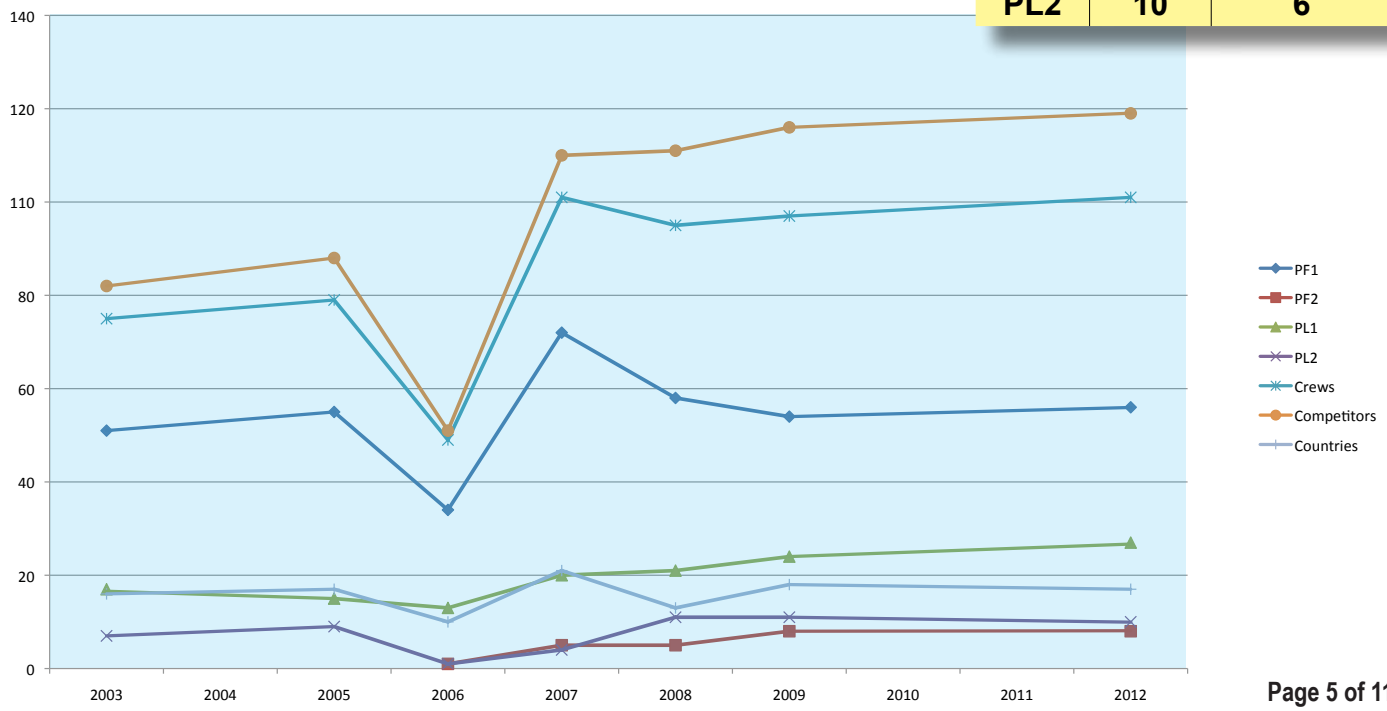
Track analysis was performed using MicroFLAP and scoring was done using spreadsheets. Tracks were **published for public review** in Google Earth format where they can still be found.

The competition intranet was also used for placing complaints and responding to them. The system proved very efficient and all teams could be aware of all the complaints, something practically impossible using the traditional paper system. The electronic system also was very quick. Competitors were able to find out the resolution to their complaints rather quickly.

Participants

Entries included 101 aircraft with 119 competitors from 17 countries. The graph displays the evolution of the number of competitors in the different paramotor classes and the total number of competitors and countries. This year marked the first year for the PF1f class.

Class	Crews	Countries
PF1	56	16
PF1f	4	4
PF2	8	4
PL1	27	7
PL2	10	6



Running the Tasks

There were three decks for take-off and landing. This is a lot of space to be watched by marshals and not every pilot was properly controlled at all times, although that improved as the competition progressed.

Navigation tasks were run differently and effectively. A quarantine area was set up for flight planning. The navigation information was provided to the pilot as he stepped into the quarantine area and the planning time was monitored. Penalties were assessed to those who took longer than allotted. Flight planning had to be done without electronic niceties like cel phones and computers. Also, individual pilots and crews could not assist others or receive assistance from non-participants. That was also monitored by the marshals. This was a great idea for many reasons. First, instead of one person for each team doing the planning for the whole team, it assured that each pilot or crew performed this critical pilot function themselves. It also kept pilots from staying up late at night doing 'practice runs' on Google Earth. This kept them fresher for the morning's flying. Finally, it kept technology out of the equation and forced pilots to work without the tools that make us all a little lazier.

Ground tasks were performed in two simultaneous areas. There was plenty of airspace as waiting area before the task. Numbers were displayed by the automated clocking system as a final signal for pilots to enter tasks like the cloverleaf. For precision landings, things did not work out so well with pilots forgetting their place in the order and not wanting to commit to an engine out approach unless certain it was their turn. This caused the event to take a lot longer than expected.

Precision tasks relying on the sticks worked pretty well. The timing system was not bulletproof, but the competition director took care of that by having a scorer do a manual timing as a back up. The big, inflatable pylons were used for the tasks which made everything far more visible and entertaining to those on the ground. It took up to eight of the pylons to keep two competition lanes open simultaneously. Although it was not strictly necessary, the same pylons were used in the Economy and Distance task (laps around the airfield) with the same effect.

No	Task	Date	Valid Classes	Canceled Classes	Nav	Eco	Pre
01	Precision Navigation	26 Aug	All		1000		
02	Precision Take Off and Bowling Landing	26 Aug	PF2 PL2	PF1 PF1f PL1			500
03	Pure Navigation	27 Aug	All		1000		
04	Precision Take Off and Bowling Landing	28 Aug	All				500
05	The Eight	28 Aug	All				1000
06	Area Triangle and Speed	28 Aug	All			1000	
07	Clover leaf Slalom	29 Aug	All				1000
08	Duration	29 Aug	All			1000	
09	Navigation with unknown legs	30 Aug	All		1000		
10	Economy and distance	30 Aug	All			1000	
	Total Points				3000	3000	2500/ 3000

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PL1

1st	Petr MATOUŠEK Czech Republic	Airframe: Nirvana Instinct Wing: Dudek Hadron 22 Engine: Simonini mini 2
2nd	Karin STACHOVÁ Czech Republic	Airframe: Nirvana Instinct NS 200 Wing: Dudek Nucleon Engine: Nirvana Instinct NS 200
3rd	Daniel CRESPO Spain	Airframe: Paratrike Airfer Wing: paramania gtr 24 Engine: Polini Thor 200,

PL2

1st	Kirill EKIMOV Pavel RUSINOV Russia	Airframe: Strike by Ekimov Wing: Dudek Nucleon Cabrio 42 Engine: Rotax 503
2nd	Walter HOLZMÜLLER Peter METZGER Austria	Airframe: Fresh Breeze XCitor Wing: XWing Engine: Hirth 3503
3rd	Luboš ZÁVORKA Michal SPURNÝ Czech Republic	Airframe: Nirvana Cruise Carbon Wing: MAC Para Pasa 4 42 Engine: NV360 Nirvana/Verner

PF1

1st	Pascal VALLEE France	
2nd	Alexandre MATEOS France	
3rd	David MUZELLEC France	

PF1f

1st	Emilia PLAK Poland	Airframe: PAP, PAP 1400 Wing: Ozone, Speedster 19 Engine: PAP, PA125
2nd	Coralie MATEOS France	
3rd	Karen SKINNER Spain	Airframe: PAP RM80 Wing: Parapente NIVIUK KOUGER 21 Engine: PAP RM80

PF2

1st	Yann LEUDIERE Audrey FOURNIER France	
2nd	Ryszard ŻYGADŁO Patrycja LEJK Poland	Airframe: Paramotor Inox Wing: Ozon Speedster Engine: Polini Thor 200
3rd	Vladimír PROČEK Michal BEDNAŘÍK Czech Republic	Airframe: Dakr Quatro Wing: Jojowings Quest Engine: Simonini mini 2 plus

PL1 (Team)

1st	Czech Republic
2nd	Poland
3rd	France

PL2 (Team)

1st	Czech Republic
2nd	France
3rd	Russia

PF1 (Team)

1st	France
2nd	Spain
3rd	Great Britain

PF2 – (Team)

1st	France
2nd	Poland
3rd	Lithuania

Championship Results

Ten tasks were run and valid in every class and the competition was valid in all five classes. The number of entrants was enough to award four team prizes as well. Full results can be **found here**.

Competition records

Four competitors' performances resulted in times eligible for competition records:

Competitor	Country	Class	Task	Performance (corrected)
Alexandre MATEOS	France	PF1	Precision Circuit in the Shortest Time (Clover Leaf Slalom)	36.31 seconds
Emilia Plak	Poland	PF1f		43.70 seconds
Ryszard ŻYGADŁO / Patrycja LEJK	Poland	PF2		82.34 seconds
Marcin KRAKOWIAK	Poland	PL1		44.92 seconds

The record claim forms were signed by Roy Beisswenger as official observer. Unfortunately, the official barometric pressure and temperatures were not immediately available.

Complaints and Protests

73 complaints were presented through the electronic system and they were dealt with very quickly. 32 were denied and 41 accepted. All complaints and their responses can be read online.
Two protests were presented. One protest was found to be valid after some research. The other protest was rejected, and its summary can be read online.

Media coverage

Most of the media coverage seemed to be for online veiwing. There were plenty of video cameras on site. Some were there for media, some for personal video, and some for evidence in the case of protests. All were given wide access to the event.
There were a series of videos that were put together by someone apparently associated with the organizers. There was a public presentation of some of his work and it looked very good.

Ceremonies

The opening ceremony began with the team's parade and was followed by speeches from aeronautical and local authorities. As part of the opening ceremony there were aerial demonstrations from microlight and paramotor aircraft. A hot air balloon was also invited to do tethered flights. Afterward refreshments were served by the hosts.

The evening before the closing ceremony we enjoyed a dinner party and then a dance. The cooler evening temperatures encouraged even more people than normal to dance. Before the closing ceremony began the next day, there were was an airshow performed with historic warbirds. After moving into the hanger for the main ceremony, things began with a great performance from traditional Spanish dancers in costume. The ceremony itself was well done and performed according to FAI standards.

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Recommendations

The following recommendations reflect the opinion of the Jury president. Some are original thoughts, others came up in conversations or in meetings with others. In any case, these are ideas and recommendations that seem most relevant from the Jury president's point of view.

1. There are huge benefits to having the competition staff all from the same nation. With all of the challenges a competition director has, communication with his own staff should not be one of them if it can be prevented. While not possible for all nations considering a championship, the staffing for this competition seemed ideal.
2. There has been some talk about having 'professional marshals.' I believe that while it may seem like a great concept, in practice a championship cannot afford the quality of people who end up volunteering for the effort. This is true for most aviation events I've organized, been a part of, or casually observed. Instead competition directors should understand up front that staffing will always be an issue. That means that staff recruiting and job training are possibly the most important competition preparation tasks. This championship showed the benefit of that kind of recruiting effort.
3. Internet access is no longer 'leading edge' or a luxury. It is expected by competitors, spectators, and everyone in-between. The competition seemed to have adequate equipment on site to handle the internet traffic, but not the bandwidth. Bandwidth requirements continue to grow, not shrink and planners need to take that into account. It can be an expensive proposition and obtaining a sponsor willing to provide the service for a short term may be the ideal solution. There were 700 devices constantly trying to access the internet at one time at the competition. This would only increase with added spectators.
4. If WiFi cannot be made available, a limited area hot spot or internet cafe might be the best solution. If users have to go to a special place to use the internet, it makes things less convenient, but that lack of convenience will translate into people spending less time on-line.
5. Light guns! This old technology can be used to signal pilots that it is their turn to enter into a precision task. Light guns are easy to acquire or build and would be far better than flags (which after all signal everybody at once) or number signs which can be very difficult to see at altitude.
6. In the case of automated scoring, always keep a back-up person on an old-fashioned stop watch. This can be very helpful if technology doesn't work out.
7. Keeping briefings down to one a day and a specific time seemed to work out very well.
8. The effort in getting the big pylons was well spent. It may be worthwhile to design tasks around them since they are very spectator friendly.
9. The quarantine area for flight planning was a great idea. This benefits both organizers and pilots with good planning skills. This should be used more in the future. However, it demands that the information be presented in a way that people of any language can understand. That means a standardize format and glossary of terms would be helpful.
10. It may be time to officially retire the MLR loggers.

11. Don't penalize what you can't measure. For example it is difficult to measure the altitude that someone is supposed to turn off their engine for an event like the bowling task. Since that is the case, another approach is to require something that can be measured. For example, require that the pilot shut off the engine and execute a 360º turn before landing. That is easy to observe and measure and will achieve the same desired result, in this case pilots shutting their engines off at a reasonable altitude.
12. In low-wind condition, flags can be useless as signals and they can't be seen at a distance. If the task uses the pylons, deflating them can be a clear signal to competitors that the task is cancelled. If a pylon isn't required for the task, it may be a good idea to use one as a generic signal. If it is deployed, the task is on. If it is deflated the task is cancelled.
13. Some kind of notice of new information coming up on the bulletin board would be a convenience that may keep some from constantly checking and loading up the WiFi.
14. FAI should be more generous with media rights for competitions. Right now they are starving the golden goose. If there was a six year period during which organizers could sell media rights to their events, it could help budgets as well as develop interest in the sport.

Conclusion

From an International Jury point of view the best indicator of a good championship is the fact that the Jury didn't have to make any difficult decisions. The organizers, the competitors, the vendors, and the especially the volunteers can all be very proud of the job they did.