11th European Microlight Championships

Sywell Aerodrome, Northampton, United Kingdom, 3–15 August 2010

Report by the Jury President to the Air Sport Commission

EVENT DETAILS

TITLE/NAME:	**11th European Microlight Championships**
DATE:	**3rd – 15th August 2010**
LOCATION:	**Sywell Aerodrome, Northampton, United Kingdom**
ORGANISING NAC:	**Royal Aero Club of the United Kingdom**
NUMBER OF FLIGHTS:	**9**
NUMBER OF TASKS:	**15**
NUMBER OF COMPETITORS:	**57 crews**

EVENT PERSONNEL

EVENT DIRECTOR:	**Rob Hughes**
COMPETITION DIRECTOR:	**Paul Dewhurst**
CHIEF SCORER:	**Richard Meredith-Hardy**
CHIEF JUDGE:	**Jeremy Hucker**
STEWARDS:	**Naaman Tam** (ISR)
	Gerhart Gerecht (LUX)
	Roland Schneider (GER)

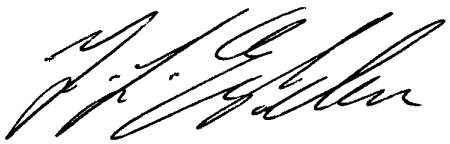
FAI JURY

PRESIDENT:	**José Luis Esteban** (ESP)
MEMBER:	**Tom Gunnarson** (USA)
MEMBER :	**Wolfgang Lintl** (GER)

COMPLAINTS AND PROTESTS

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS:	**48**
NUMBER OF PROTESTS ADMITTED:	**0**
NUMBER WITHDRAWN:	**0**
NUMBER UPHELD:	**0**
NUMBER REJECTED:	**0**
AMOUNT OF PROTEST FEES RETAINED:	**0 EUR**

12th October 2010



José Luis Esteban
Jury President

Venue

The competition was hosted by the Sywell Aerodrome, a certified airfield used for many kinds of aeronautical activities, and microlight-friendly.

The airfield was operated normally during the championship. Morning tasks couldn't start before the airfield was operational and the Competition Director had to take into account the general airfield traffic so that the competition tasks would not interfere.

The flying zone is nice and safe, with many no-fly zones as the worst concern for pilots.

Accommodation

The Aviator Hotel is located at the airfield and it's normally used by visitors of the industrial area around the airfield and for weddings. It is a nice hotel but too expensive for most competitors, so some of them went to other hotels in the surroundings and others stayed at the camp site.

The camp site was equipped with electricity for the tents and portable toilets and showers. Some competitors complained about the number of toilets and showers.

Daily meals were not arranged for competitors but there were two restaurants available at the airfield, one at the Aviator Hotel and another one, called the Pilot's Mess. Additionally, a large tent was used for the staff's catering.

Services

The main office was open most of the time with staff always available for registration or other administrative tasks. Flylight Airsports, one of the main sponsors, offered their office space for the Event Director and the Competition Director.

A larger office (a corner in Flylight's hangar) was used as the scoring room and logger download area. The briefing room was located in a quiet area. It was not big, but everybody had a chair during the briefings and the director didn't need to speak aloud. A nice room with views was used by the Jury and stewards.

A WiFi network was installed to provide connection for the whole area. It was not stable and was disconnected every few minutes, probably due to a *smurf attack* from one of the computers connected to it. The signal didn't reach all the areas, and this was partially solved using repeaters installed by the organiser, or with high gain antennas brought by some teams.

The connection of the WiFi network to the Internet was very slow and competitors could not take advantage of it most of the time, jeopardizing the whole competition system. Teams complained they couldn't have a simultaneous connection to the intranet and Internet. There is nothing in the rules saying the organiser has to provide Internet access, but both intranet and Internet were offered in bulletin 1. So the organiser bought an USB *dongle* for each team, but the phone coverage in the area was not enough for a broadband connection.

Competition staff

The Event Director, Competition Director, Chief Scorer and Chief Marshal did an outstanding job which started much before the competition days. But their job was even more outstanding taking into account that there were very few other staff. The Event Director did most of the administrative stuff himself. There was no Deputy Competition Director but, fortunately, the Director was in healthy condition throughout the whole competition.

The Jury and many teams were scared by the limited number of marshals. Even worse, they were kept busy all the time by the high number of precision landing tasks imposed by current rules and by the quarantines for flight planning before the take-off and for map declaration after landing. Luckily, they were extremely efficient and well organised by their Chief Marshal. There were no scorers other than the Chief Scorer, who received temporary help from energetic but untrained volunteers.

Competition system

A web site was established months before the competition where bulletins, task sheets, operational rules and general information notes were published. A mailing list allowed competitors to interact with the organiser since April. Teams were advised to bring at least one computer and a printer as long as no printed materials would be delivered. During the championship the competition intranet replaced both the official board, the traditional stack of mail boxes for teams and even the more modern internet café.

Detailed information for every task (turn-points, times...) was published on the intranet before each briefing, and briefings were also called through the intranet.

Flight planning for navigation tasks was done in a quarantine most of the times, so that planning was individual rather than a team practice. Many tasks involved spotting photos and marking their positions on the map. This required marshals to keep the quarantine after landing and to validate the declared positions.

Landing distance in precision landings was measured with a laser rangefinder which was found to be very convenient.

Three kinds of loggers were used, MLR, Air Observer and the new AMOD. The latter was introduced by Richard Meredith-Hardy, who also developed FRDL, an efficient download program for this logger model. The AMOD-FRDL combination was so quick and easy that a self-service was arranged where competitors could download their own loggers.

Track analysis was performed using MicroFLAP and scoring was done using spreadsheets. Tracks were also published for public review in Google Earth format. Results were automatically published on the intranet server directly from the spreadsheets. Not only individual task results, but also the overall scoring and the team scoring were immediately updated.

However, the slow internet connection delayed the backup of the intranet information onto the external server, so teams staying at hotels in towns had long delays waiting for scoring or news updates.

The process from logger download to the publication of individual, overall and team results normally took less than one hour. This quick delivery of results had already been achieved in paramotor competitions for a number of years, but this is the first time this happens in a microlight competition.

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 only drawback of this kind of *electronic competition*, as pointed out by some teams, was the fact that the old official board used to be a meeting point for competitors where they had cross-team discussions, and this no longer happens.

Participants

The official entry list included 57 aircraft totalling 98 competitors from 12 countries distributed as seen on the table. It is important to notice that there were no competitors in the AL1 class.

There was a demonstration class, the two-seater autogyros (GL2) which had only one entrant coming from France who flew most of the tasks.

Class	Pilots	Aircraft	Countries
WL1	16	16	8
WL2	48	24	11
AL1	-	-	-
AL2	34	17	8
Total	**98**	**57**	**12**

Tasks

The Competition Director decided to run as many tasks as possible from the first day. This was a good decision as long as the weather got worse as the competition went on.

Date	Flight	Task Order	Task No	Name	Nav	Eco	Prec
07/Aug	1	1	**1**	Spitfire	1000		
07/Aug	1	2	**2**	Precision landing engine on			250
08/Aug	2	3	**3**	Waterway to Sutton	1000		
08/Aug	2	4	**5**	Short landing over obstacle			250
08/Aug	3	5	**6**	Short takeoff over an obstacle			250
08/Aug	3	6	**4**	Sutton - Sywell pipeline	1000		
08/Aug	3	7	**7**	Powered precision landing			250
09/Aug	4	8	**8**	Snakes & Ladders	1000		
09/Aug	4	9	**9**	Precision landing with distance			250
10/Aug	5	10	**10**	Area triangle & speed		1000	
10/Aug	6	11	**11**	Precision landing with distance			250
11/Aug	7	12	**12**	Spider's web	1000		
11/Aug	7	13	**13**	Powered precision landing			250
11/Aug	8	14	**14**	Precision landing with distance			250
12/Aug	Cancelled		**15**	~~Zig Zag~~			
12/Aug	Cancelled		**16**	~~Rainbow~~			
12/Aug	Cancelled		**17**	~~Precision landing engine on~~			
13/Aug	9	15	**18**	Timed precision landing with distance			250
					5000	**1000**	**2250**
				Actual poportions	**61%**	**12%**	**27%**
				Expected proportions	50%	20%	30%

After multiple cancellations on the 12th of August the task proportions were rather biased towards navigation with very little economy (only one task).

There were many precision tasks (9), keeping all the available staff busy. But nine precision tasks out of 15 is not enough to reach the proportions specified in the rules. The balance established in the rules would have been reached with one more economy task and three additional precision tasks.

Championship Results

15 tasks were run and valid in every class and the competition was valid in all three official classes with entrants. Full results for all competitors and tasks can be read online. The following table summarizes the medals awarded:

	WL1	WL2	AL1	AL2	Team
1st	Richard Rawes (GBR)	Robert Grimwood / John Waite (GBR)	-	José Vande Veken / Julien Stervinou (FRA)	GBR
2nd	Lukas Hynek (CZE)	Przemyslaw Jurkiewicz / Dominika Jurkiewicz (POL)	-	David Broom / Crhis Levings (GBR)	CZE
3rd	Joaquín Orts (ESP)	Paul Welsh / Richard Proctor (GBR)	-	Dariusz Kedzierski / Anna Tatarczuk (POL)	FRA

Complaints and Protests

48 complaints were presented through the electronic system and they were dealt with very quickly. 9 were denied, 36 accepted and 3 withdrawn. All complaints and their responses can be read online.

No protests were presented.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the jury point of view the best indicator of a good championship is the fact that the Jury didn't have to take any decision as long as there were no protests. This is something more than a record or an anecdote as long as it implies a number of things:

Tasks were clearly defined and explained by the Competition Director during the team leader briefings. Something that greatly contributed to understanding the tasks was the fact that the Director didn't change them after they were published. Also, team leaders did a good job briefing their respective teams. The marshalling was excellent, even though they were very few. The scoring system had no flaws and has been faster than any previous microlight competitions. And last, but not least, all pilots competed in good sportsmanship.

If that weren't enough, three night parties contributed *to reinforce friendship amongst pilots of all nations* (S10-4.2.1), which is one of the purposes of our competitions.

The Jury makes the following recommendations for future championships:

1. It is important to find the balance between using an excellent airfield while sharing it with other aircraft, or using a worse airfield without any traffic interference or time restrictions.
2. In cases where the number of marshals is small there are some ways to reduce their effort:
    2.1. Marking the location of photos on the map requires a quarantine during the declaration and evaluation of the marks, all that done by marshals. But measuring flight accuracy can be done using hidden gates which are automatically analysed. Also, the the use of the PEV function of loggers, which allows the pilots to mark events, should be explored.
    2.2. Having so many precision landings takes too much time from the competitors and requires many marshals. A smaller value for precision in current task proportions would require less manpower.
3. Fast logger download systems must be encouraged. Not only they speed up the process but it also makes unnecessary for pilots to deposit their loggers, so the organiser doesn't need to care about logger handling.
4. In this time of high quality land images provided by Google, Bing and other services it becomes necessary to avoid their intense use trying to spot pictures before next morning's flight. Pilots feel forced to do so when they have the opportunity, but this practice doesn't improve airmanship at all. So planning for any photo spotting task should always be done in a quarantine just after receiving the photos.
5. The official board and the mail boxes can be replaced by an electronic counterpart so long as the official time is based on GPS, and there is a very high production of documents. However:
    5.1. It is important to have an audible sign (from sirens or loudspeakers to SMS messages) when there are many frequent changes in the scoring or other news, otherwise there must be a member in each team continuously checking for updates.
    5.2. Access to the information must be guaranteed by a reliable local network, either cable or wireless.
    5.3. It should be clarified that the purpose of a local network is to replace the official board and to offer additional benefits such as track review. On the other hand, providing Internet access is an option for the organiser, as it is to provide meals.
6. Many competitors expect track logs to be published and request that service from the organiser. However, at this moment there is no rule about the availability of tracks to competitors, making it mandatory, recommended or forbidden. CIMA should take a position on this.
7. There should be a common meeting point for pilots, probably in the form of a large tent with tables and chairs, good WiFi coverage and, maybe, a kiosk providing drinks and snacks.