European Microlight Championships 2006, New Classes
Chozas de Abajo, Leon, Spain.
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International Jury Report

Jury
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Participants
The participants included 34 pilots in class PF1, 13 in class PL1, one crew in class PL2, and one crew in class PF2. Only in classes PF1 and PL1 did the numbers of competitors fulfill the requirements of SC10, par 4.3.2. The crews of PL2 and PF2 were scored separately.

Venue
The airfield Chozas do Abajo is situated on the highland of the altitude of approx 900 m AMSL surrounded by mountains. Leon, the main town of the province Leon, is situated approx 15 km from the airfield used for the Championships. Small towns and villages are located within few kilometers. The land surrounding Chozas de Abajo is relatively flat, covered by farm fields and scattered groups of trees. The majority of the area is suitable for emergency landing.
For general aviation one grass runway is used (see Fig.1). For microlights classes PF and PL, requiring various takeoff directions depending on actual wind, three square decks were prepared. Other parts of the airfield were used for camping, parking and other facilities, including a swimming pool and resting places sheltered by trees and pavilion roofs. They were very helpful during hot and sunny weather.
The camping was not overcrowded because of a reasonable number of competitors and accompanying persons. Sanitary containers with toilets and showers were situated nearby the camping. However, when many guests and spectators visited the site, the lack of sanitary facilities was uncomfortable.
Other facilities: catering room, briefing room, scoring office, registration office, jury and stewards office - were located in the hangar divided by a number of partition walls. A large part of the hangar with separate gate was used for fueling.

Services
Worldwide known Spanish hospitality was supported by very well organized services for competitors, guests and officials.
The registration procedure was fast and efficient, similarly as information services. Competitors, beside maps and documents, received gift parcels containing useful souvenirs as a championship T-shirt, cap and electronic watch witch stopwatch function. Three Internet terminals were installed in the catering room for the public use, additionally, a wireless Internet connection was available.
The jury and stewards worked in small but sufficiently comfortable office. The room had permanent, solid walls, offering good protection against noise and hot weather. Two cars were rented by the organizers, another two cars were brought by a steward and jury member. Good transport considerably improved the mobility of the stewards and jury.
The meals were delivered by an outside caterer and served in an adapted part of the hangar twice a day: lunch in the afternoon and dinner late evening. The quality of the meals was excellent, prices low comparing to similar facilities. Additionally, a bar serving cold and hot drinks was

open all day.

Briefings

The sufficiently sized briefing room was well prepared with necessary equipment, no acoustic problems appeared except noisy music coming sometime from the catering room. The music, mostly "disco" type, occasionally could disturb normal-voice communication between people.

The new idea of the Competition Director was to begin competition with a long briefing, explaining all planned tasks. Additionally, a detailed description of the tasks was printed and distributed. The purpose was to make subsequent briefings shorter, but practically it was not achieved. Briefings were usually excessively talkative and prolonged by unnecessary details causing additional, more detailed questions and discussions. When briefing was finished after 2200, the competitors did not have enough time for rest.

Nevertheless, information given to the competitors was complete and clear. The basic publication was "General Flight Operation" (6 pages) including a safety notice and describing the organization of the event, take-off and landing procedures, low flight tasks: slalom and slow – fast. Instruction for MLR flight recorder and equipment inspection were added. Descriptions of 14 tasks of 3 types: navigation, economy and precision were published in a 24-page document "Task Sheets". A detailed description of every task was delivered to the competitors before each take-off. Changes in the tasks were immediately published and delivered.

Airspace

Airspace (Fig.2) around Chozas de Abajo was open up to 300 m AGL. It was sufficient for most tasks, except "Pure Economy" (duration) task 6 and "Distance with Limited Fuel", task 10.

Flights in the task 6 were planned in the direction of the airfield of Santa Maria del Paramo, where the competitors had to land (FP). They had to maintain the required altitude 300 m (+100 m as a margin of GPS accuracy) until they reached the border of the restricted airspace. Then they could climb up and fly as long as possible.

The takeoff for task 10 was planned within the time window 1430–1600, when airspace restrictions were suspended due to the agreement with Control Tower of the Airport Leon.

Tasks

Navigation tasks were prepared very carefully. A list of 79 ground features with coordinates measured by GPS was prepared. Waypoints, used in certain tasks, were clearly shown on the map and briefly described. The employed maps were considerably outdated: the new highway and associated junctions were not displayed, many country roads marked as unpaved were reconstructed and paved, a number of new water channel installations was found during the inspection of waypoints. Nevertheless, changes confusing for foreign drivers, caused no problems for pilots, because permanent objects used as waypoints (churches, cemeteries, chapels, road crossings), well visible from air, remained unchanged.

Ten tasks were flown in the Championships, more than a number needed to validate the event. All the tasks were compatible with the Task Catalogue officially accepted by CIMA and described in the above-mentioned document "Task Sheets".

Low flight tasks: precision take-off and landing, *Japanese slalom* and *Slow–fast* were observed by many guests visiting the airfield. Navigation and economy tasks were well prepared and interesting for the pilots. However, planning a long distance task immediately after the *Japanese slalom* or S*low–fast* was criticized by the pilots. A full tank of fuel and complete navigation equipment disturbs low flight maneuvers causing unnecessary risk. These remarks were considered by Director in planning the 11-th task, which finally was not implemented on the last day because of the weather conditions.

The jury members were every day present at take-off decks, as well as near landing targets during precision landing tasks. The *Japanese slalom* and S*low–fast* were carefully observed.

Twelve waypoints from the list used in tasks were randomly selected and checked by the jury using GPS. No error in coordinates was found. Additionally, the midway waypoint of task 9 (No. 23) and the outlanding airfield for task 6, Santa Maria del Paramo, were visited by Jury.

Championships Records

During the Championships, in two tasks the best competitors in class PF1, PL1 and PL2 claim the World and Championship Record, see FAI Sporting Code, Sec. 10, par.11. The tasks were:

- Precision Circuit in the Shortest Time (the *Japanese Slalom*), Sec10, par 3.11.8.5, claimed in classes PF1, PL1 and PL2.
- Distance with Limited Fuel, Sec. 10 par 3.11 8.1, claimed in classes PF1 and PL1.

The documentation of record claims was prepared by Championship Director, verified by the jury and sent to FAI.

Scoring

CIMA-accepted GNSS flight recorders type MLR were used for scoring all navigation and economy tasks. Only few pilots had their own recorders, others could rent them in sufficient quantities from the French team. Generally, no problems appeared with recorders, one case was a matter of a complaint when GNSS record file was lost, but then was recovered using a special procedure. No protest was necessary, according to the new edition of SC10, par. 4.29.8.

The scoring office, working until provisional results were published, performed the readout of GNSS data, evaluation and scoring efficiently and fast. Usually it took only few hours. Comparing some recent experiences (an example - classic classes scoring during WMC 2005 in Levroux), scoring and publishing of the results were excellent. It is a significant achievement of Jose Luis Esteban, Championship Director, the author of *Micro FLAP* software used for data readout and scoring. His personal work in the scoring office eliminated possible problems with the new software he developed.

Publications

All preliminary documents were delivered to the competitors in the beginning of the Championships in a printed form and on CD. The second CD, prepared after finishing competition, contained all the public documents issued, tasks scoring, general, individual and team scoring and all tracks in the *.igc format. All current documents were distributed in pigeon boxes and displayed on large information board in the hangar. Tracks were available on the website of the Championships. Generally, the publication service was arranged in an excellent manner in the contents, editorial quality and distribution.

Safety

Variable wind caused problems for takeoff, disturbing the timing and order. A number of failed takeoffs happened. Aircraft damage, mostly to propellers, occurred several times. A wing of PL1 was seriously damaged and had to be replaced in one case. Nobody was injured; the damaged aircrafts were repaired and continued competition.

A seriously looking crash happened during the *Japanese slalom*, when a PL1 trike hit the ground with a wheel. Fortunately, the pilot was all right and successfully repaired the damaged trike.

The *slow–fast* task was situated in two parallel routes along the main runway and arranged in the kicking–sticks version. Sticks of 2 m high, kicked close to the ground, were damaged in several cases; replacement took sometimes too long, causing delays in the running of the task. A spectacular case was observed, when broken part of the stick was carried up into the air by a PPG. The pilot landed, threw the stick away, took off again, and continued the task.

When the wind direction changed, the direction of takeoff from the *Blue* deck became perpendicular to the routes of the *slow–fast;* visibility for the pilots was partly obstructed by the

hangar (see Fig 1). An observer from jury drew attention of the marshals to careful coordination of takeoffs and running the *slow–fast*, to avoid collision situations.
A general remark on the tasks using sticks is that using longer sticks (3 m instead of 2 m, for example) would reduce the risk of maneuvering extremely close to the ground (down to several centimeters).

Complaints and protests
Director received and held 17 complaints, one was turned to protest. It concerned the *slow-fast* task, where the marshal reported one stick not touched. The problem could have been solved on the complaint level, but the video record was delivered after the required time. The video, reviewed by Director and the jury, clearly displayed the movement of the kicked stick, which could be not seen by the marshal observing from another direction. The protest was upheld.

Fatal accident
The accident happened after task 10 - distance with limited fuel. Carlos Cotoruelo, a member of the Spanish National Paramotor team, successfully finished the task landing approx. 17.4 km from the initial gate. He could return to Chozas de Abajo using a service car, but he decided to refuel and return by air. On the flight, he crashed and died on site. The person who reported the accident described a type of “whirlwind” causing the canopy to fold.
In the evening, the Spanish team gathered for a meeting, after which the team leaders of the other teams joined them for common discussion. Finally, it was jointly decided to continue with the competition on the clear understanding that the best tribute to Carlos would be to continue flying.
Before midnight all the pilots and organizers held a highly impressive ceremony, during which they lowered official flags to half-mast as a tribute to Carlos.
During the closing ceremony, a short but impressive movie was presented, in remembrance of Carlos and his life.

Conclusions
Chozas do Abajo and the surrounding area is an excellent place for microlight championships. Airspace restrictions practically did not disturb flying class PF and PL, but could affect some tasks of classic classes, where using higher altitude is more convenient. I believe that such problems will be solved by the organizers if the next Championships would be organized there in the future. More important, however, is a human aspect of preparation and running the event.
Spanish organizers collected an exceptionally good team, led by Event Director Jose Luis Roldan, Competition Director Jose Luis Esteban and Deputy Director Francesco Setien.
Tremendous work was done not only during a several days of the competition, but for many months before. The cooperation of organizers, local authorities, sponsors and a great number of individual persons yielded remarkable results, an event to be remembered.
In view of the few remarks written in this report, the Championships in Chozas do Abajo are a good example to be followed in the future.

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President of the International Jury

Attachments:
Fig.1 Airfield, pdf file
Fig.2 Airpace, pdf file