

JURY REPORT

14TH EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP (2008) FOR RADIO CONTROL AEROBATICS, FAI CLASS F3A

Overview

The 2008 European FAI/F3A R/C Aerobatic Championship was organised by the Italian Aeromodelling Federation (FIAM) under the auspices of the Italian Aero Club. The championship was conducted on the premises of Casa Bianca, 9km from Brescia, near the village of Calcinatello, and had the largest entry to date in this class, with 69 participants representing 26 nations. The weather conditions were superb for the entire duration of the event.

Pre-contest information

Four timely bulletins were issued by the organisers to European NAC's and officials, covering all aspects of the competition, lodging, travelling, costs, procedures, etc. This was supported by a very functional website, and a vademecum issued by the contest director before arrival of the teams.

Lodging and meals

Competitors, supporters, helpers, and officials were accommodated in several hotels within a short driving distance from the competition site. All the hotels were excellent and other options were available to competitors as well. Breakfast was taken at the hotels, and a superb lunch of the highest standard was served in the airconditioned restaurant on site. Evening meals were taken at the various hotels.

Competition site and practice facilities

Several practice sites were made available to contestants before the championship, and the competition site had been available for some days prior to the championship, and utilised in full by some of the competitors.

The site of the Casa Bianca flying club was perfect for the competition, with a concrete runway and soft grass surrounds. The manoeuvring area was clearly marked, except for the two end markers that could not be placed at the correct distance since they would have been obscured by tall trees. Two sets of ready boxes and sound-measuring circles ensured a smooth flow of competitors, but the near-windless conditions did not require the use of the second site. Spectators had easy access to the competition, and the beautiful gardens, zoo, play park, beer garden, and restaurant was enjoyed to the fullest by everyone. Motor vehicle access to the flight line was excellent and allowed off-loading of equipment. Competitors, supporters, helpers and officials were transported at regular intervals to and from the site, in two buses.

Aircraft processing and official practice

Model aircraft processing took place on Friday 22nd and Saturday 23rd August. No specific problems were encountered, but one team did not appear for processing. Teams were able to participate in the official practice sessions. All but one team used the opportunity during official practice to check their equipment against the official apparatus. The random spot checks during the championship highlighted no problems.

Organisation and execution

The competition was conducted smoothly, with one panel of five judges for the morning, and the other panel of five judges in the afternoon. The contest director was a distinct asset to the event, with a firm, professional, yet fair and humane approach, always mindful of the requirements of the Sporting Code. His competition staff members were keen, willing, and knowledgeable, and accepted help and direction from the jury members readily.

Competitors were called in good time to execute their flights, by the contest director, and by digital display. It was not necessary to use the rain day for completion of official flying. Frequency control and monitoring was handled expertly. Sound level monitoring proved to be no problem. All score tabulation was done from an office, and scores were available shortly after the completion of flights. The scoring software worked well, and there were no queries. The flying standard was high, and a wide variety of equipment was used. Electrically-powered model aircraft accounted for more than 60% of the entry. A simple clarification of an erroneous paragraph in the Sporting Code regarding the timing procedure was necessary, but this did not adversely affect any competitor.

Communication

An informative newsletter was issued each day. Results and all scores were displayed on a bulletin board, as well as general notices, start lists, etc. The officials were in regular contact with each other.

Conduct of judges and jury

One protest was lodged, and after consideration by the jury, it was over-ruled. This concerned the late delivery of transmitters to the impound. The jury members were in constant touch with the contest officials and there were no infringements of the Sporting Code. The judges performed their duties well, and even if a few scores were discarded following the TBL calculations after each round, there is no reason to suspect gross national bias or incompetence. There is no reason to recommend suspension of any of the judges. Judges received two classroom training sessions and practical flying sessions, with warm-up flights by non-competitors before each session of flying. Regular refreshments were supplied to the judges, jury, and staff, to maintain mental alertness.

This jury report would not be complete, without mentioning the conduct of the Dutch team manager, who, without insight, knowledge and interpretation of the judging performance analysis, saw fit to formulate a protest, which he threatened to deliver if two judges were not removed from the panels. Upon his instigation, three other team managers supported this subversive activity. This person also used the public address system without authority to broadcast his intentions. This undermining of the championship and the judging corps, was viewed in a serious light. With effect 1 January 2009, the Sporting Code provides for disqualification of an individual or an entire team for such conduct, after due process.

Opening and award ceremonies, functions, closing banquet

The pleasant opening ceremony was conducted at the flying site, with the customary speeches by visiting dignitaries and local councillors. The local postal authority issued a special stamp and postcard to commemorate the event. The FAI-flag and flags of competing nations were displayed prominently for the duration of the event. Two fireworks displays delighted the participants. A very enjoyable sightseeing tour to a wine estate and a museum was arranged by the organisers. The on-field closing ceremony took place on Saturday 30th August, with the awarding of trophies and championship medals. A well-attended banquet in the Casa Bianca restaurant was memorable for its superb food and live entertainment, and a fitting closure to the 14th F3A European Championship.

Conclusion

The 2008 F3A European Championship was a resounding success, and the organisers, staff, officials, participants, and sponsors need to be congratulated for their collective share. It was conducted in an atmosphere of excellent organisation, planning, and near-perfect execution, with sporting results.

FAI Jury, comprising:

Bob SKINNER, South Africa (jury president)

Massimo SEMOLI, Italy

Pierre PIGNOT, France

7 September 2008