

11th FAI European Microlight Championships **Sywell Aerodrome, United Kingdom**

Event Director's report

General

The 11th Fai European Microlight Championships were conducted at Sywell aerodrome in the middle of England. It was well attended and the event was considered to be a success.

Staff members

The event was overshadowed by the sudden and serious illness of the original Event Director, Keith Negal. Keith was unable to take part in the preparations, which led to a change in the organisational team.

We were able to draw on experienced people;

Competition Director Paul Dewhurst is the most successful microlight pilot at FAI championships and winner of countless medals.

Event Director Rob Hughes has been very active in FAI events for many years as assistant organiser or FAI official, as well as having worked in the FAI Secretariat.

Scoring Director Richard Meredith-Hardy has acted as Competition and scoring director on many occasions as well as being former FAI world champion.

Chief Marshal Jeremy Hucker is a previous FAI medal winner and acted as chief marshal at WMC2003.

We gratefully accepted help and support from many others.

Finances

Holding a championship in England is expensive and we would not have succeeded without outside sponsorship – the entry fees alone were not enough to cover the basic costs. We succeeded in attracting several sponsors who contributed €6500. This money helped pay for two social events.

A major cost is FAI officials' travel and accommodation. This represented some 27% of the total entry fees and was the highest single cost of the championships.

Infrastructure

The Local Regulations stated that the training week started on Tuesday 3rd October though many competitors arrived on site early. There were initial problems with suppliers, but these were resolved by the Wednesday.

A camp site was created for the period of the competition, including electricity for all team tents as well as hot showers and toilets. The electricity network cost some 15% of entry fees. This camp site cost (in total) over 30% of entry fees.



There were some complaints regarding the facilities but there was no more money to provide extra.

A wifi network was created for INTRANET as well as for INTERNET. There were significant problems with the two services; the wifi coverage was not reliable and the INTERNET feed to Sywell aerodrome was inadequate for the demands placed on it. Work continued all week on improving the wifi and INTERNET dongles were supplied free to team leaders in an attempt to improve access to the internet, but this remained unsatisfactory.

Apart from these problems, Sywell aerodrome offered a very good venue and the nearby towns provided a wide choice of shopping and activities.

Competition

Jury President Jose-Luis ESTEBAN has written a very comprehensive report on the event, complete with statistics.

Despite great effort on the part of the organisers and generous entry fee discounts for AL1, not enough AL1 competitors registered to form a valid class. The other three classes were well supported. We included an open class for GL and one French registered GL2 proved that GL aircraft can join microlight championships very successfully.

The Competition Director spent months planning the tasks, flying tens of hours in preparation. The tasks were well written and tested pilots with their difficulty and variety.

Whenever a task involved photos or other material that could be researched on the internet, this material was given out in quarantine. This has become a necessity due to Google Earth and other tools.

There was no official weighing before the start of the competition – there is little point in this - and instead the weighing equipment was made available to competitors to check their own equipment. Some aircraft were check weighed during the competition and were found to be overweight; currently there is no penalty for presenting yourself overweight for a task. This is wrong and Section 10 should be amended to ensure pilots do not attempt to start a task overweight.

The 'paperless' scoring system pioneered at WPC2009 was used. The system itself is very good and should be recommended. Unfortunately the poor wireless network detracted from this success but it should not be used as an argument against using the same system in the future.

There were no official protests.

Event Director's notes

For me, the major problem was a lack of money. We had no government support and had to survive on entry fees and sponsorship. This proved very difficult in

England. We relied heavily on the generosity of Flylight Airsports, part owned by Paul Dewhurst, for the use of their offices, hangar and facilities.

We would have liked to have a permanent social area for pilots. The social events (Monday night get-together, Wednesday night Italian pasta party organised by the Italian team and Friday night party) were well attended.

We tried to attract local media but there was little interest. A TV crew from FAI's media rights holder, Flying Aces, was on site for some of the competition days; they were given a lot of help in securing interviews, introductions to pilots, on-board footage and coverage of tasks. We have yet to see the resulting footage.

Thanks

I would like to thank everyone involved in the organisation of the event. It cost around GBP £40,000 and involved over 200 people over 10 days.

As well as the directors, chief marshal, helpers, marshals, scorers and sponsors, particular thanks must go to Dawn Dewhurst, Lorraine Hucker, Brian Barrass, Rebecca Vickers, Ann Magson and Geoff Weighell.

Finally...

This should have been Keith Negal's event. Keith bid for the championship in November 2009 and he would have been an excellent Event Director. We were delighted to welcome Keith and his wife Shirley to the Opening and Closing ceremonies when Keith made articulate and moving speeches. I would have been proud to have been on Keith's team.

Rob Hughes
EMC2010 Event Director