

CIVL President's Report to the FAI General Conference 2008

Sporting Activity and Competition Review

Once again, worldwide sporting activity in both Hang Gliding and Paragliding was high, with more than 200 Category 2 competitions sanctioned.

Overall, the numbers of pilots in Paragliding Cross Country, Paragliding Accuracy and Hang Gliding class 5 (Rigid wings) are increasing, as are the number of competitions. Conversely, Hang Gliding class 1 (flex wings) pilots and competitions remain static.

In 2008 CIVL sanctioned five Category 1 World and Continental Championships, three test events for Category 1 championships planned for 2009 and the test events for the HG and PG disciplines for the World Air Games 2009.

2008 Category 1 Championships were:

- 1st Pan American Paragliding Cross Country Championship at Castelo in Brazil
- European Championships Hang Gliding Cross Country at Greifenburg in Austria
- European Championships Paragliding Cross Country at Niska Banja in Serbia
- World Championships Hang Gliding classes 2 & 5 and class 1 for women at Sigillo in Italy
- 1st European Championships Paragliding Accuracy at Niska Banja in Serbia

Due to lack of funds, the World Championships HG & PG Aerobatics at Voss in Norway had to be cancelled.

2008 Test events for 2009 Category 1 Championships were:

- (Pre-)World Championships Paragliding Accuracy at Ivanec/Trakoscan in Croatia
- (Pre-)World Championships Paragliding Cross Country at Valle de Bravo in Mexico
- (Pre-)World Championships Hang Gliding Cross Country at Laragne in France
- (Pre-)WAG: HG Speed Run, HG Aerobatics, PG Aerobatics (solo & synchro) and PG Accuracy

For the 2008 events, we were able to find enough volunteer officials from our jury and steward database, but it is likely that CIVL will soon experience a real shortage of volunteers to function as jury members or stewards in our championships. This may risk the validity of future championships. We are asking NACs and national HG and PG federations to help find

volunteers for these roles. Training will be provided. From my own experience, I can assure potential volunteers that being involved in the championships as a CIVL official is largely enjoyable and rewarding work.

Future Championships

During the CIVL Plenary Meeting in February 2008 in Manzanillo in Mexico the following Category 1 competitions for 2010 were scheduled to be awarded:

The European HG Championships, the European PG Championships, The European PG Accuracy Championships, the Pan American PG Championships, the HG & PG Aerobatic World Championships and any not scheduled (new) Continental HG or PG Championship.

The CIVL bureau only received two bids: from Turkey for organising the European PG Accuracy Championships and Japan for organising the Asian PG Championship. Both were accepted. Although the organisation and running of a category 1 competition can be a time consuming and costly exercise, the bureau is surprised that the number of FAI member countries interested in organising such competitions is decreasing. CIVL Internal Regulations, state that “if the CIVL has not been able to award a championship 2 years ahead of the competition, the CIVL bureau should try to find an organiser”. The Bureau, has started to seek suitable organisers for the other above mentioned competitions, with some success..

The following 2010 Category 1 competitions have been awarded:

- The 2nd European Championship Paragliding Accuracy to Turkey
- The 2nd Asian Championship Paragliding Cross Country to Japan
- The European Championship Paragliding Cross Country to Austria

At the moment of writing this report the CIVL bureau is in contact with possible organisers for *the European Championship Hang Gliding Cross Country, the World Hang Gliding class 2 & 5 and Women's class 1 Championships and the HG & PG Aerobatic World Championships.*

WXC: A World XC online contest

In the HG/PG sport, XC league contests have been around for decades and many have moved online. Most are organized/operated by national HG/PG associations, but there are a number of privately operated online contests. The CIVL Software WG last year initiated a trial project to interconnect the online XC contests around the world, to form a CIVL World XC online contest.

The basic philosophy is that pilots submit their flights to their local online XC contest, which in turn, automatically submits the flight claim to the CIVL WXC using the open source WXC protocol. Although it took longer than anticipated, the system is now up and running, with a number of contests signed up to the WXC and working on the WXC protocol.. The work in progress is to add new online contests to the WXC network.

The aim of the CIVL WXC is to motivate pilots to attempt more challenging flights and compare flights between pilots and different parts of the world. Additionally, it should create more interest in online competitions at a national or continent level.

The online contest server will be improved with more functionality, in particular to automate 'badge' flight claims and to show tracklogs of current and past HG/PG World records.

Requests for sanctioning competitions

Many competition organisers want their competitions to be "FAI sanctioned" and therefore eligible for WPRS points for the competing pilots. For inclusion on the CIVL international competition calendar, and to give enough notice to interested pilots we rule that sanction applications and sanction fees must be received at least 30 days before the start of the competition. This normally works very well, but we sometimes receive sanction applications after this deadline. Although we realize that, in some cases this is unfortunate, we have to stay strictly within this rule, and that includes late changes to events already sanctioned.

WPRS the World Pilot Ranking system

HG/PG pilots are ranked by the World Pilot Ranking System (WPRS) using the results of FAI/CIVL sanctioned competitions in each discipline over the last three years. We have more than 10,000 pilots registered and the results of all sanctioned competition since 01.01.2001, all available on the FAI/CIVL web pages.

Managing the results of more than 200 sanctioned competitions every year is critical to CIVL as this maintains the World Pilot Rankings on a monthly basis. The system continues to evolve, to ensure the WPRS formula is optimum for each discipline.

FS the CIVL Flight Scoring software

New software, developed by CIVL, for scoring HG and PG competitions, was formally released at the last CIVL Plenary meeting in Manzanillo, Mexico. Called FS, it is available free of charge at <http://fs.fai.org> . It includes pilot registration, task definition, flight verification and scoring of Cross country HG/PG competitions. It has connection to the CIVL pilot database, and is intended to connect to the new FAI sporting licence database. The FS

competition software will be developed to handle other CIVL disciplines including PG Accuracy and HG/PG Aerobatics.

FS has been used successfully in many competitions during the past year, including the test competition for the 2009 World HG Championship in Laragne, France, this summer.

As with all software, it will evolve, to meet the changing demands of the sport and take advantage of new technology developments. We expect FS to be approved for use in Category 1 competitions at the Plenary meeting in 2009.

The Sporting Codes

The sports of Hang Gliding and Paragliding continue to evolve, and we need to constantly update our sporting codes. Information on rules that need amending or adding is gathered by the Stewards and Juries during category 1 competitions and test events for cat 1 competitions, and by each discipline's Subcommittee. We realize that updating the four sections of our sporting code (Section 7) and the many annexes is an ongoing mission and they cannot possibly cover every eventuality. Updating the Sporting code is a high priority for the bureau .

The FAI Sporting License

Despite frequent reminders via CIVL delegates, NACs and Federations and competition organisers, we continue to see pilots trying to register for FAI sanctioned competitions without a valid FAI Sporting License. The CIVL is looking forward to the forthcoming implementation of the FAI sporting license data base. The CIVL bureau hopes that, providing the NACs cooperate, it will make life much easier for competition organisers, FAI officials and, in our case, for maintaining the competitions results database and updating the World Pilot Ranking System.

Team sizes

In Hang Gliding and Paragliding cross country competitions, we are increasingly having to limit the numbers of participating pilots. This is primarily due to an increase in the number of qualified pilots from a greater number of FAI member countries, and at times, due to limitations on specific sites for safety reasons. As a result, the national team size has to be reduced.

After completion of the pre-registration process, re-allocation systems are used to make sure that the maximum numbers of permitted entries are made. In most cases re-allocation is based on the nation rankings in the World Pilot Ranking System.

Safety

- Hang Glider Sprog angle measuring: To improve safety in Hang Gliding by increasing pitch stability, the CIVL started tests to measure the angles of the sprogs (tip devices that assure a minimum of twist in the wing) of the hang gliders.
The sprog angles, that can be changed, can contribute to the hang glider having less pitch stability, leading to the possibility of unexpected tumbles.
We have found out that a majority of the pilots, especially competition pilots, are not fully aware of the possible consequences of incorrect sprog angles and the impact of their own sprog adjustments. Almost all the competitors in the 3 major HG competitions in Europe in 2008 summer were very enthusiastic about the sprog angle measuring and this contributed to safety.
- I want to emphasize (again) that safety is also a matter for the NACs. It is their responsibility to make sure that qualified and experienced pilots are sent to international competitions.
- For some years the appointment of a safety director is mandatory in category 1 competitions. The safety director is a dedicated person in the organisation with the power (and the obligation) to stop tasks, when conditions become unsafe. Because the safety director must be an experienced competition organiser, knows the local conditions well and has much knowledge about meteorology he/she has made a significant contribution to improving safety in CIVL sanctioned category 1 competitions.

The World Air Games

The CIVL will take part in the WAG with 4 media attractive HG and PG disciplines:

- Hang Gliding and Paragliding aerobatics
- Hang Gliding speed gliding
- Paragliding accuracy

Dennis Pagen, the CIVL HG Subcommittee chairman, and Louise Joselyn, the CIVL bureau secretary and former chairman of the PG accuracy Subcommittee, are in a frequent contact with the FAI and the WAG organisers to take care of the organisation of the HG & PG contributions to the WAG.

Volunteers

In the 2008 CIVL Plenary meeting the FAI President, Pierre Portman, who attended the meeting, remarked in his opening speech that the future of the FAI depends on the work of the Air Sports Commissions and their bands of volunteers.

I fully agree with these words and want to emphasize that the smooth running of our highly active air sports commission is due to a hard working band of visible and invisible volunteers. I want to thank all these people such as competition organisers, people assisting in competition organisations, people investing their free time to contribute to competition safety including the very necessary team leaders or team assistants, people in working groups and subcommittees, the delegates representing the pilots of their country, the members of the CIVL bureau and of course the enthusiastic staff at the FAI office in Lausanne. All the work of all these people make it possible for us to enjoy our sports in a responsible and safe way. It is a pleasure and an honour to work with these people.

Flip Koetsier
CIVL President