

## 7TH F3C EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Horace Hagen – President FAI Jury

The overall organization of the 7th FAI F3C R/C Helicopter European Championship was handled by Dr. Georg Breiner the president of the Austrian Aeroclub's aeromodeling department. The contest director was Manfred Dittmayer and he enlisted the help of modelers from several clubs in the Vienna area to run the competition. Upon arrival, most of us were anxious to look at the novel flying site. The site was located directly in front of the grandstands of the Freudenu Thoroughbred Racetrack. This facility offered many advantages that our category seldom experiences. The site was located within the city limits of Vienna and near the headquarters hotel. It contained a wonderful grandstand, observation tower, restaurant, public address system, multiple television monitors and rooms for the computer scoring system and transmitter impound. The contest area was laid out facing slightly northeast which permitted its use from 10:00 hours to minimize the effects of the sun. The helipad initially consisted of soft carpet but this was later removed in favor of short grass.

The headquarters for the contest officials, FAI Judges, FAI Jury and most of the contestants was the four-star Holiday Inn Crown Plaza Hotel located within a few minutes of the flying site. Forty contestants from 16 countries were registered prior to the competition. Contestant registration and model processing took place on Saturday 15. August in the hotel. Every competitor and Team Manager received a tote bag containing several competition souvenirs and a full-color program.

Sunday was set aside for the official practice day. A zero round was flown to allow the organizer to measure the duration of a complete round. The zero round was completed at 17:30 hours. The opening ceremony took place between 18:00 and 19:00 hours after the Austrian Army military band marched onto the field. Dr. Georg Breiner, the Austrian CIAM Delegate and other government officials of the city of Vienna announced the official start of the competition. An air show consisting of a fly by of two full-size aerobatic aircraft, the landing of a military and civilian helicopter and two parasail equipped skydivers delivering the Austrian and FAI flags while landing right in front of the grandstands.

A demonstration flight for the FAI judges took place at 09:30 hours before the start of the first round on Monday. The first round of competition started at 10:00 hours. Everyone was anxious to see which pilot had improved the most since the 1997 World Championship (WC) in Turkey. After each flight the scores were quickly shown on television monitors and copies of the scores were given to each pilot. At the end of the first round, young Mark Christy of Great Britain was in first place. Mark was the only junior pilot to get into the finals at the 1997 WC in Turkey. His piloting skills had certainly improved a lot since then. He was followed by Ruediger Feil, a newcomer from Germany, Patrick Kessler of Switzerland, the defending European Champion Joerg Roessner from Germany and Efraim Kastiel of Israel. The first elimination round ended at approximately 17:30 hours.

The second elimination round on Tuesday followed the same time schedule and after the dust settled there was a change in the top five places. Roessner won this round but Christy was still listed in first place because the organizer chose to count all scores and his round two score was higher than Roessner's round one score. It should be pointed out here that there is more than one way to list the scores after the second round. At several European and World Championships we have ranked the pilots after the second elimination round by dropping the lower score. This was done because the FAI Sporting Code defines what to do if a contest is interrupted for any reason. There is no difference in the outcome if the contest is not interrupted. However, some pilots feel it would result in less disappointment if there were a contest interruption. Christy was followed by Kessler, Roessner, Feil and Hoenle of Germany. The third

elimination round took place on Wednesday and was also won by Roessner but Christy still held first place. The top five places were held by Christy, Roessner, Kessler, Feil and Hoenle.

The fourth and final elimination round was run on Thursday. This round was won by Feil and resulted in the following top ten pilots: 1. Roessner (GER), 2. Christy (GBR), 3. Feil (GER), 4. Kessler (SUI), 5. Hoenle (GER), 6. Graber (SUI), 7. Kastiel (ISR), 8. Johansson (SWE), 9. Livi (ITA) and 10. Schornsteiner (AUT). These ten pilots earned the privilege of flying in the three fly-off rounds on Friday. After the final elimination round the lowest score was dropped and the remaining three scores for each team member were summed. These sums were then added to determine the team standings. The top five teams were: 1. Germany, 2. Switzerland, 3. Great Britain, 4. Italy and 5. Denmark.

Friday was dedicated to the three fly-off rounds. Everyone was amazed to see the newcomer Ruediger Feil from Germany win each of the three fly-off rounds. This gave him the perfect score of 3000 points. What is even more amazing is that he flew a helicopter with a fuselage and he utilized fuel with no nitromethane. The final individual ranking was: 1. Feil, 2. Christy, 3. Roessner, 4. Kessler, 5. Hoenle, 6. Johansson, 7. Graber, 8. Livi, 9. Schornsteiner and 10. Kastiel.

This contest marked only the second time that the new 1997 rules were used. The flying standard observed during the entire contest was noticeably higher than at the 1997 World Championships in Turkey. The individual winner was not determined until the very last round. A protest regarding a unanimous decision by the FAI Judges was submitted during the first elimination round. The FAI Jury did not uphold the protest.

An informal award ceremony was held at the flying field where the individual and team awards were given. The daytime photographs of the winners and their awards were taken primarily by the magazine reporters but were also important for the other news media. After the photo session the medals and certificates were returned to the organizer. They were to be used again at a formal award ceremony during the closing banquet.

The entire group of contest participants was transported via two minibuses and three large buses to the City Hall of Vienna. To everyone's amazement this convoy was escorted by the city Police. The closing banquet began at 19:00 hours on Friday in the magnificent "Hall of Knights". Gold, silver and bronze medals sponsored by the Austrian Aeroclub were awarded to the team and individual winners. In addition, the winners were awarded exquisite trophies sponsored by the organizers. The FAI Judges and members of the Jury received souvenir plaques and medals. Every pilot and team manager received a certificate of participation from the organizer. Approximately 220 persons attended the banquet. The banquet included live entertainment in the form of a music ensemble playing Viennese music, a folk dance team and two opera stars. The dinner consisting of traditional Viennese food was enjoyed by everyone.

Some personal observations made at the competition: I hope that Feil's and Roessner's performances encourage other pilots to return to helicopters carrying a full fuselage. I overheard many spectators asking: Why do so many models look like "broomsticks"? I also hope that the false idea that the use of 30 percent nitromethane ensures winning a contest has passed. During one round the smoke generated by one of the models was so intense that the FAI judges complained and the next pilot requested a pause for the smoke to clear. One of the youngest pilots ever to attend a European Championship was 14 year old Elad Hayun from Israel. It appeared that not all countries fly the "B" manoeuvre schedule in national or local competitions. The event was the first (but hopefully not the last) to be blessed by the close cooperation of a Capitol City / State government, the owner of a private racetrack and the National Aeroclub. Because the competition was held at a thoroughbred racetrack, full use was made of the numerous TV monitors to relay the flight scores. The event received the most significant television and radio coverage to date. The third floor of the observation tower of the main grandstand provided a fantastic view of the flying site and especially the aerobatic manoeuvres.

The use of the magnificent "Hall of Knights" in the city hall for the official reception and closing banquet made the event very special and one that will long be remembered. The Holiday Inn Hotel provided the best breakfast and dinner buffets that we have experienced. A hot menu Lunch was served in the restaurant of the Freudenu racetrack. Although there were some tall trees about 150 meters to the north of the helipad (which gave some initial concern) they did not create a problem. We were very fortunate with the weather because it was sunny, hot and humid with little or no wind for almost the entire contest.

As president of the FAI Jury and Chairman of the CIAM F3C Subcommittee, I would like to thank the FAI judges: Lucio Della Toffola (ITA), Tobias Schulz (GER), Frits van Laar (NED), Jeremy Fox (GBR) and Peter Ableitinger (AUT) for their hard work. My special thanks to Dr. Georg Breiner, Manfred Dittmayer and the many other contest officials for a very well run competition.