



1996 F3C R/C HELICOPTER EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

By Horace G. Hagen, Chairman FAI Jury

A number of years ago my friend Matti Jyllila asked me if Finland should sponsor a European Championship for R/C Helicopters. I thought it was a great idea since we never had a Championship that far north and could certainly take advantage of the longer days. In 1994 the aero-modelling section of the Finnish Aeronautic Association offered to run the 1996 European F3C Championships in the town of Nurmes, only about 250 km south of the arctic circle. After the initial offer, Matti Jyllila became Contest Director, Raimo Makkonen assistant CD and Markku Virtanen event director. They selected the FAI Jury and Judges and other officials. The contest was scheduled for 4 through 11 August.

I received my Finnair tickets three weeks before the departure date of 31 July. Unfortunately, no one remembered that the Atlanta Olympic games had just ended and this created a shortage of seats. To make a long story short, I had to buy my own ticket to fly to Frankfurt, Germany and then continued on Finnair from there. My luggage did not make it to Helsinki on my flight, but arrived a few hours later. A week before my departure I had asked Matti about the weather and he told me he was very concerned because the weather was very cold and wet and the forecast did not look promising. I arrived in Helsinki

on 1 August on a sunny and warm day. I thanked Matti for ordering the good weather and we both hoped it would continue. I was supposed to continue my trip to Kuopio that day but since my luggage was delayed I spent a very nice afternoon and evening with Matti and his family just north of Helsinki and continued to Kuopio the next morning. Kuopio is the nearest city to Nurmes served by a scheduled airline.

Jari Vaahersola the owner of the only Hobby shop in Nurmes met me upon arrival at Kuopio airport and we drove about an hour to Nurmes. The organisers had made arrangements for me to stay at the Hyvarila Resort Hotel located adjacent to a beautiful lake. When we arrived at the hotel we ran into a number of contestants and other contest officials including event director Markku Virtanen. He was most anxious to show me the flying site directly in front of the hotel. On the way to the site he told me that most of the contest officials and some contestants would also be staying at this hotel. However, most of the competitors stayed in cabins at the ~Bomba House~ resort, about 2 km from the flying site. The remaining competitors stayed in cabins or in the campground adjacent to the flying site. Later in the day, Markku invited me to have a cup of coffee and told me that breakfast, lunch and dinner would be furnished by the Hyvarila



Resort Hotel in exchange for meal tickets.

My first impression of the site was that it appeared to be too narrow. However, I did like the idea that all of the support buildings were very conveniently located. After a guided tour of the site I suggested that the mobile homes directly opposite the start box be moved out an additional 30 meters to reduce the possibility of overflights. Even with this change the site was the smallest we have used to date. The flying field consisted of mostly lush grass with essentially unlimited overfly zones at each end. The flight line had to be laid out running northwest to southeast which permitted its use only from 10:00 hours to minimise the sun getting into the pilot's and/or judge's eyes. This did not present a problem because the proximity to the arctic circle provided daylight from about 05:00 to 20:00 hours. I have never been this far north and found it very interesting to see the sun rise in the northeast and set in the northwest. The sun almost appeared to circle overhead.

The basic helipad had been laid out a few days earlier to allow contestants to practice from 1 to 3 August as advertised in Bulletin III. The headquarters building was



Group photo at the end of the competition



Winning FAI Teams left to right: Sweden 2nd, Germany 1st and Denmark 3rd place being congratulated by CIAM President Sandy Pimenoff

only about 30 meters from the helipad and provided space for the contest information desk and computer scoring system. I was very interested in the computer scoring system that Matti had told me about. Matti introduced me to Esa Wainio who had responsibility for the computer scoring system. Esa showed me the Microsoft Windows based computer program that he wrote and I was impressed. The program did require a few modifications but they were made on the spot. (I must point out that this competition marked the first use of the internet for disseminating contest



Individual Winners after receiving FAI Medals left to right, Daniele Graber - Switzerland 2nd, Jörg Rössner - Germany 1st and Johann Hönle also of Germany 3rd. CIAM President Sandy Pimenoff is on the right

information. Anyone with access to the internet was able to keep informed before, during and after the competition. Esa Wainio and JP Nurro were responsible for the improved communications.)

Space for the competitors' models, transmitter impound and conference room was allocated in the larger technical building. The final preparations of the flying site were completed by late Saturday 3 August. Contestant registration and

model processing took place on Sunday, 4 August in the technical building. The organisers checked each model for FAI sticker, proper markings and compliance with general FAI regulations. Each transmitter was checked for carrier frequency and bandwidth. This activity was followed by a team manager's meeting at 16:00

hours. The competition was officially opened by CIAM President Sandy Pimenoff and a representative for the mayor of the city of Nurmes at 17:30 hours and the day ended with a traditional Finnish sauna party commencing at 19:30 hours.

Monday, was the official practice day, and each of the 16 teams was given thirty minutes to test fly at the contest site. To our surprise none of the 39 competitors complained about the size of the flying field. Most of us were also surprised to see the reigning European Champion with pod-and-boom helicopters. Daniele Graber had always flown his very attractive ZENITH model with a streamlined fuselage. We learned later that Daniele had lost his two top models in crashes during the previous months.

A demonstration flight for the judges took place at 09:30 hours prior to the start of the first round on Tuesday. The first round commenced at 10:00 hours and ended at approximately 17:30 hours. The standard of flying increased since the 1994 European Championship in Poland. When the results of the first round were posted, the top five finisher's were: (1) Rossner/Germany, (2) Graber/Switzerland, (3) Honle/Germany, (4) Kastiel/Israel and (5) Sperling/Germany. An interesting result because Honle was the German national champion.

The second round started at 10:00 hours

on Wednesday and also ended at 17:30 hours. For the second round only the order of the top five finisher's changed: (1) Rossner, (2) Graber, (3) Sperling, (4) Honle and (5) Kastiel. The German team appeared unbeatable but there was a battle brewing between the Danish and the Swedish teams for second place. The third elimination round was flown on Thursday with the same time schedule. For the third round the top five finisher's were: (1) Graber, (2) Honle, (3) Rossner, (4) Kessler/Switzerland and (5) Kastiel. The weather for the elimination rounds was sunny, warm and dry with variable winds. The final top ten at the end of the three elimination rounds (after dropping the low round) are shown in the following table. These pilots earned the privilege of going to the two fly-off rounds.

The results at the end of the third

Place	Competitor	Country	Points
1	Rössner, Joerg	Germany	2000.00
2	Graber, Daniele	Switzerland	1988.45
3	Hönle, Johann	Germany	1882.55
4	Sperling, Jan	Germany	1823.71
5	Kastiel, Efraim	Israel	1804.41
6	Nyegård, Stefano	Denmark	1769.78
7	Lucchi, Stefano	Italy	1761.97
8	Kessler, Patrick	Switzerland	1761.87
9	Bexander, Lars	Sweden	1754.34
10	Nielsen, Kaj Henning	Denmark	1747.95

elimination round determined the final team standings. The Swiss team has traditionally placed higher but the other teams have improved even more. It must also be remembered that Daniele Graber was defending his title and was therefore not a member of the Swiss team. The top five teams are displayed in the following table. The FAI Gold Medal was awarded to the German team, the FAI Silver Medal went to the Swedish team and the FAI Bronze Medal went to the Danish team.

Place	Country	Points
1	Germany	5706.26
2	Sweden	5136.15
3	Denmark	5129.82
4	Italy	5050.04
5	Switzerland	4918.42

Friday was scheduled as a reserve day and was used by most for a day of relaxation or sightseeing. Prior to the competition I, as chairman, requested that we convene a CIAM F3C subcommittee meeting to firm up the 1997 F3C program. We had a very successful meeting on Friday with 9



subcommittee members and many other interested individuals present. I also planned to conduct a judges' course for the 1997 F3C rules and this was also advertised prior to the competition. The course took place in the large auditorium and was quite successful with a respectable number of participants.

The first fly-off round was flown the morning of Saturday and the top five finisher's for that round were: (1) Graber, (2) Rossner, (3) Kastiel, (4) Honle and (5) Kessler. This result gave Rossner and Graber each 2000 points and now the pressure for the second fly-off started to build. The second fly-off round followed after lunch. Graber was the third pilot to fly and flew an excellent flight for which he received 211 points, the highest score for this fly-off round thus far. Rossner was the last pilot to fly and the only pilot who could overtake Graber. All eyes were focused on that flight. Under extreme pressure, Rossner was able to put in the highest scoring flight with 214.5 points (1000 points after normalisation) and thus became the new European F3C Champion. I was standing near the start box when Rossner came back from that flight and Graber walked up to him and shook his hand. Rossner said, "You certainly did not make it easy for me" to which Graber answered, "I wanted you to earn the title". True sportsmen, both of them. Thus, the FAI gold medal was awarded to Joerg Rossner of Germany, the FAI silver medal went to Daniele Graber of Switzerland and the FAI bronze medal went to Johann Honle of Germany. The following table lists the final top ten individual finisher's.

The weather during the entire competition was so pleasant that our Finnish friends were quoted as saying that

Place	Competitor	Country	Points
1	Rössner, Joerg	Germany	3000.00
2	Graber, Daniele	Switzerland	2988.45
3	Hönle, Johann	Germany	2820.35
4	Sperling, Jan	Germany	2765.43
5	Kastiel, Efraim	Israel	2744.60
6	Kessler, Patrick	Switzerland	2697.28
7	Lucchi, Stefano	Italy	2661.49
8	Nyegård, Micheal	Denmark	2654.95
9	Nielsen, Kaj Henning	Denmark	2642.69
10	Bexander, Lars	Sweden	2615.59

we were experiencing their complete summer. The flying standard observed during the contest was extremely high with the individual winner not determined until the very last flight. A protest regarding a judges' decision was submitted to the contest director during the second elimination round. However, after careful study, the protest was rejected by the FAI Jury.

Prior to the award ceremony a Finnish Folk Dancing group performed in front of the national flags on the grass courtyard next to the Hyvarila Hotel. During the award ceremony the FAI Medals for the team and individual winners were awarded by CIAM president Sandy Pimenoff in bright sunshine. Although the closing ceremony was scheduled to take place on Sunday, it was moved to Saturday to permit our southern European friends to participate. Most had travelled by auto and had planned to leave after the closing banquet.

The closing Banquet began at 19:00 hours on Saturday 10 August in the BOMBA HOUSE restaurant. The individual and team winners were awarded very nice trophies sponsored by the organisers. Approximately 150 persons attended the banquet. The buffet style dinner serving traditional Finnish food was

enjoyed by most. Some participants from southern Europe were overheard to say that they had enough potatoes to last them a lifetime. Perhaps they now have sympathy for a northern European travelling in south-

ern Europe. I probably enjoyed it more than most because the food is very similar to that served in northern Germany where I was born.

The 6th F3C European Championship was very successful due to the hard work of the many contest officials coupled with almost ideal weather. The competition was



Individual Winners left to right, Daniele Graber 2nd, Jörg Rössner 1st and Johann Hönle 3rd. with their trophies at the closing banquet

well organised and run in a fair and friendly atmosphere. The organisers went to great lengths to assure that every participant was happy. As president of the FAI Jury I would like to thank my fellow jurists Dr. Georg Breiner (Austrian CIAM Delegate) and Mr. Sandy Pimenoff (CIAM President) for their help. I also want to thank the hardest working group, the FAI Judges: Tobias Schuk (Germany), Frits van Laar (Netherlands), Dag Eckhoff (Norway), Riszard Witkowski (Poland) and Carl Inge Lindberg (Sweden) for a job well done. And finally, I thank the aero modelling division of the Finnish Aeronautic Association, the staff of the Hyvarila resort hotel and the many contest officials for a most memorable competition.



Contest site with FAI Judges on the left and helipad on the right