

22 August 2011



To: President, CIVA

**Report of CIVA Representative, Riga Elite Aerobatics,
18-21 August 2011**

For presentation to CIVA Plenary Meeting, 2011

Overview

An elite aerobatic contest, promoted by Jurgis Kairys of Lithuania and sanctioned by FAI/CIVA was held in Riga, Latvia from 18th to 21st August 2011. The event was completed safely by 7pm local time on Saturday 20th. A public medal ceremony was held in the centre of Riga on Sunday 21st, taking advantage of the city's annual foundation celebrations.

In addition to reporting the results of the event, this report also comments on regulatory and organisational aspects of the event from a CIVA strategic perspective.

Participation

Nine pilots from eight countries flew in the competition, as follows:

Czech Rep.	Martin Sonka
Finland	Sammi Kontio
France	Nicolas Ivanoff
Great Britain	Tom Cassells
Japan	Yoshihide Muroya
Russia	Svetlana Kapanina
Russia	Mikhail Mamistov
Spain	Castor Fantoba
United States	Jeff Boerboon



Pilots were largely nominated by NACs based on the results of the Final Freestyle competition at the WAC 2009. Additionally, a small number of pilots were invited by the promoter, based on previous performance in similar events. It became apparent that one of the invited pilots was relatively inexperienced in the type of aeroplane he was flying, but the pilot flew with caution and his inclusion did not, in this case, lead to any unsafe situation arising.

Format

Each competition flight was formed of two separate parts: a known programme flown with the aim of finishing as quickly as possible, while retaining certain standards of accuracy, and a freestyle programme of three minutes duration, with penalties for poor time keeping. The freestyle programme was also judged on technical merit and artistic impression, the points awarded being converted to "bonus seconds" which were deducted from the time achieved in the first part of the flight.

The contest was won by the pilot with the lowest overall "time", albeit a rather contrived calculation amalgamating elements of precision, technical ability, time-keeping ability and flying in a spectacular fashion. As the commentary was, inevitably, in the Latvian language, it was impossible for me to know how this was all described to the watching public, nor for me to determine how well the average spectator was able to understand and follow the progress of the event.

From 11 am on 20th August to 11 am on 21st August

14 Courtyard by the Latvian National Opera
"MATCH OF THE RIVER BANKS"
24 HOUR BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
 A 24 hour basketball marathon in the very centre of Riga with two teams competing – residents from the right bank of the Daugava and residents of the left bank of the Daugava

1 12 midday – 4 am The sky above the Daugava waterway between the Salu and Dienvidu bridges
ELITE AEROBATIC FORMULA RIGA/FAI-2011
 12 midday – 12.30 pm Opening Ceremony
 12.30 pm – 2 pm 1st Part of Competition
 5.30 pm – 7 pm 2nd Part of Competition
 7 pm – 7.30 pm Air show. Closing Ceremony
 9 pm – 4 am Open air party - Discothèque. Pilots invite – Battle between the best DJ's in the Baltic States

15 12 midday – 6 pm In Alberta Street
100 YEARS AGO IN ALBERTA STREET
 An entertaining educational event, at which every attendee will be able to watch or even take part in various master

There was no participation from other recognised FAI Sports, although this would have been a good opportunity to showcase additional activities to the assembled audience.

Flight Schedule

Thursday was a training day, over the contest site. Friday was planned for training in the morning and "Qualification" in the afternoon. The contest proper was scheduled to be flown over two rounds on Saturday: early and late afternoon. The results of the qualification round was to be used to determine the flight order for the first competitive round and to create a set of back-up scores in case no competitive flying was possible at all.

In fact, the weather intervened and qualification could not be completed on Friday, but ran on into Saturday morning. The two competition rounds were then completed in better weather after midday Saturday, finishing by 1700 local time. Consequently, most pilots flew three sorties on Saturday. However, three pilots actually flew four times as early morning flights were reduced to non-competing flat displays because of a 1,400ft cloud base. Sunday was kept as a reserve day but was not needed.

This flight schedule gave a very good chance of determining a result, despite potentially adverse weather, but resulted in perhaps more flying than was necessary, each pilot effectively having three bites at the cherry with the best of two to determine the final ranking. From a public viewpoint, it might have proved easier to follow and more exciting at the conclusion had some form of elimination taken place after the first round, the final round then being a show-down between the quickest of the field during the first session.



Results

Pilot	Elapsed Time (Seconds)	Penalties (Add)	Freestyle Bonus (Subtract)	Penalties (Add)	Final "Time" (Seconds)
Sonka	133	0	52	0	81
Boerboon	144	0	54	0	90
Kapanina	131	5	47	3	92
Ivanoff	118	5	46	19	96
Mamistov	134	5	43	2	98
Kontio	136	10	43	1	104
Cassells	143	5	47	9	110
Fantoba	132	10	48	29	123
Muroya	144	35	37	15	157

A summary of the results is given in this table, which ranks the pilots in descending order of achievement.

Organisation

Organisation of this type of event falls into two broad categories: international and local. The 'international' organisation involves the gathering of suitable pilots, the determination of the contest formula, and the promotion of the event to international media (including the internet) and potential commercial sponsors. The local organisation involves the competition infrastructure. In this case, the international organisation and promotion was the responsibility of Jurgis Kairys while local organisation was delegated to a team of Latvian nationals.

For this kind of event to be scalable into a series of events in different countries, a core team larger than a single individual (JK) would be essential. Such a team would have to be multilingual, multi-skilled and permanently funded from an over-arching principal sponsor. Until such a situation prevails, it is unlikely that this particular event will lead to anything other than a succession of annual events in Latvia. I understand that there is outline approval from the city of Riga for a further four years.

The local organisers of this event were clearly inexperienced in some ways, resulting in a number of expected facilities being unavailable. For example, there were no large video screens for the public to watch, or on which to flash up times or scoring data. Additionally, only one of two erected floating pylons was ever floated into the river. So the planned timing gate was reduced to a single pylon and timing of the known sequence had to be taken from wing rocks. There were a number of smaller organisational shortcomings, including the provision of transport and refreshments for officials. These were individually overcome in time, but were symptomatic of inadequate baseline planning prior to the event.

Timing and Scoring

Timing and scoring of the programmes was competently carried out by the Chief Judge, Quintin Hawthorne, two further scorers and a computer operator. Most had previous experience of this kind of event and the results were quickly available at the judging position after each flight. Local commentators were co-located with the judging team and thus able to announce the progress of the competition, but the lack of large visual displays of the critical overall "times" was a major drawback.



The relatively simple real-time scoring input systems and spreadsheet scoreboard worked mostly very well. However, it was notable that any small error in the input process resulted in an unnecessarily time-consuming rectification process which detracted once or twice from the speedy nature of the publication of pilots "times".

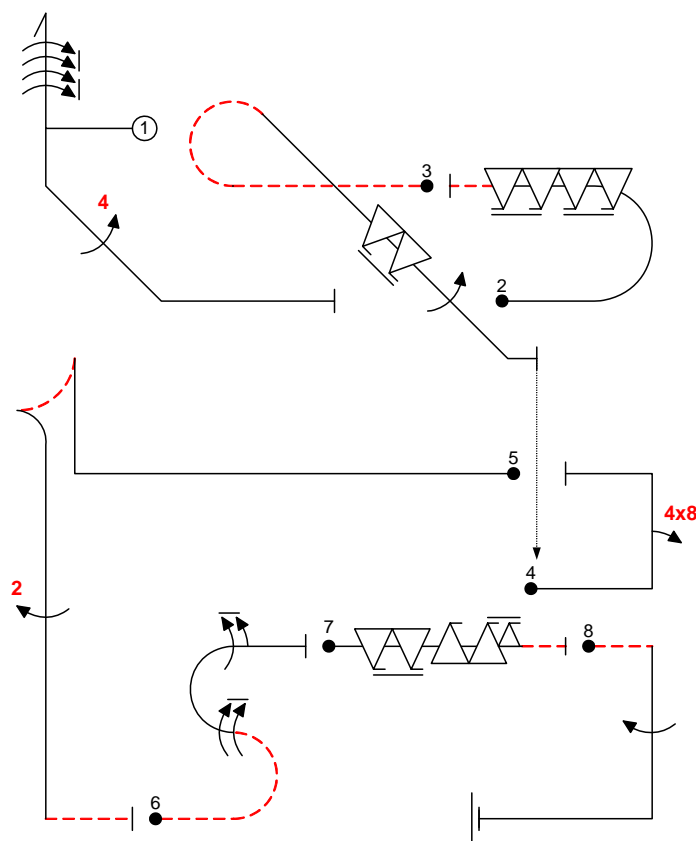
Conclusions

1. This event was successful from the sporting point of view, safely obtaining a sound result. Its failure to draw expected numbers of spectators may have been influenced by poor weather forecasts on Friday and Saturday. The satisfaction of spectators could not be

ascertained in real time due to language difficulties. The organiser should take steps to evaluate local opinion before making detailed arrangements for a similar event in 2012.

2. Care should continue to be exercised over the selection of pilots who will fly aircraft in which they have not established a strong record in previous Category 1 competition.
3. Consideration should be given to some form of elimination rounds in order to reduce the extent of the final flying period on the last day.
4. In association with CIVA, the promoter should investigate the practicalities of adding additional FAI sporting disciplines to add some extension and variation to the spectacle available to audiences.
5. The conversion of graded judgements in the Freestyle to an "equivalent" time bonus is arbitrary and rather difficult for public comprehension. Consideration should be given to more simple, separate ranking systems for the speed programme and the Freestyle programme, with these then being combined on a points basis (12 for first, 10 for second, 8 for third, 7, 6 etc) to determine an overall winner. In this case, the final ranking order would not have changed, and some lower order places would have been subject to a tie.
6. The rapid visual presentation of results to spectators is extremely important. On this occasion, this benefit was lost. In future years, special effort should be applied to the public interface of the results-generation system.
7. Events such as this have much potential appeal to the public. The benefits of scalability across continents will not be achieved, however, until a significant private sector investor can be found and a multilingual core organising team of full-time professional staff employed.

Alan Cassidy
Vice-President
Maidenhead
22 August 2011



Timed Programme - Riga 2011