

2024 FAI F3CN European Championships for Model Helicopters for Seniors and Juniors 10th to 17th August 2024, Aabenraa, Denmark

Jury Report

The 2024 FAI F3CN European Championships for Model Helicopters was organised by Modelflyvning Danmark.

Venue

The competition took place at 'RC Parken' near the city Aabenraa, Denmark. The venue is a privately owned RC park and consists of two race tracks for on-road and off-road cars, a small lake for boats and a large grass runway with an asphalt runway for model aircrafts. Furthermore, there is a large building on the site with sanitary facilities, a kitchen and enough space for events, such as team manager meetings. In addition, a tent was set up, which was used for the registration, the model processing and evaluation.

There was enough space for spectators and also enough parking space for vehicles. A 1m high fence was used to separate the flight area from the audience area. A proper safety fence was not built. Most of the time there was a small tent available at the preparation area for the pilots. This tent was only removed because of strong wind that came up several times.

The organizer provided six training fields that were less than 30 km from the event location.

Unfortunately, not all of the training fields met the requirements for operating model helicopters. However, since training was also possible on the site of the RC Park, there were sufficient training opportunities available for all pilots.

The airfield was built the day before the opening. It was sufficient to host the championship, but it could have been prepared with greater precision.

Participation

In class F3C 33 pilots were registered, but one pilot was because of illness not able to participate. So, 32 pilots participated. There were no juniors registered in F3C. In class F3N 14 pilots participated with one junior and one female pilot. Originally 15 pilots were registered in F3N, but one pilot had to cancel his participation due to a broken thumb. In total, pilots from 12 nations were represented. The organizer would have liked to have a few more pilots, but did not use the possible Phase 2 to increase the number of pilots after the preliminary entry.

Official Practice / Registration / Model Processing

The schedule for the official training was announced in advance on the website. Since each nation adhered to the schedule, the official training could be carried out without any difficulty. The organizer decided to carry out the model processing after the official practice. This avoided waiting times during model processing. So, each pilot of a team did his practice first and after finishing the whole team went to the model processing with registration. Since the FAI licenses were already checked in advance by the jury president, the registration only checked the presence of the pilots. The model processing went without incident. All models met the specifications and were labeled accordingly with stickers. Because of the knowledgeable staff, the registration of the pilots and the officials and the model processing was completed quickly.

One pilot arrived at the contest site with a large delay and was therefore not possible to attend the official practice and the model processing with registration. The model processing was done the following day.

Parallel to the official training meetings were held under the direction of the jury president for the F3C and F3N judges. These were used to clarify the latest details.

Organisation

It was the first time at a category 1 event that both helicopter classes, F3C and F3N, took place on only one flightline. With the approval of the F3 Helicopter Chairman the organizer invited three judges who are able to judge both classes and two judges each for F3C and F3N only. This made it possible to hold the championships with only seven judges instead of ten, which saved a lot of money. Only by reducing costs was the organizer able to hold the championships.

After the introduction of the semifinal schedule in the F3C class in 2020, the evaluation program that had been used up to that point could no longer be used. Robert Holzmann from Austria has therefore developed a new evaluation program that has been used successfully for several years at several national and international championships. At this year's European Championships, the program was used for the first time in a category 1 competition. Even though the evaluation program offers the possibility to enter the scores online via tablet or mobile phone, the classic method with score sheets was used. Every day, the score sheets were available to all judges, sorted according to the starting order. This was very well prepared by the organizer. After a flight the score sheets were picked up by one of the jury members, were checked for readability and correct form and brought to the evaluation tent. The results were published exclusively online, which was widely accepted by all those involved. The QR code required to see the results was published everywhere on the competition site.

The flightline was not oriented directly north so that the sun bother the judges and pilots during flights which started between 8 and 9 am. However, this was not a big problem, as the organizer provided a sundisc and the sky was often cloudy.

There were no comfortable chairs available for the judges. Since most of the judges brought their own chairs, no action was required. Drinks for the officials were sufficiently available on the flightline. A timekeeper was available for each flight. The role of the flightline director was taken over most of the time by one of the jury members.

The organizer conducted three team manager meetings. One before the preliminary rounds, one before the F3C semifinal and F3N final rounds and one before the F3C finals. The last team manager meeting was not held because the flights started late that day due to bad weather and therefore flew until late in the evening. In coordination with the team managers, the starting order for the F3C final flights the following day was determined by the organizer and announced online.

For pilots who started in both classes, no special attention had to be paid to their starting position in the starting order, since the two classes F3C and F3N were always flown one after the other.

During the first team manager meeting the team managers were also informed about new rules in the Sporting Code which were effective since June, 15th 2024. Of course there was also enough time to answer all questions of the team managers.

In order to ensure that classes F3C and F3N are treated equally, it was decided that during the four preliminary rounds the competition would begin twice with class F3C and twice with class F3N. Although this approach was accepted by all participants, but it was not supported by all. In retrospect, it can be said that an identical starting order for the two classes on each day would be preferable. Due to the good organization, most rounds could be carried out without appreciable time delays, but with sufficient breaks for the judges. Only on the day on which the second semifinal F3C and the second final F3N were to be flown did the schedule have to be postponed several times due

to persistent rain. Together with the contest director, the jury worked out several scenarios as to how the competition could continue if the rain did not stop. Fortunately, none of these scenarios were used, as both rounds were flown to the end, albeit late into the evening. Fortunately there were no protests. A pilot threatened to protest. However, the pilot was appeased and no protest was filed.

One point of criticism in the conduct of the competition was the selection of the judges. The organizer placed importance on inviting judges who had a short travel distance. This was intended to minimize travel costs. The organizer's proposal regarding the selection of the judges was accepted by the subcommittee chairman, even though he did not personally know all of the proposed judges. During the competition it became apparent that one of the judges was not up to the task of a category 1 competition. In consultation with all jury members, further judge meetings were held to defuse the situation. Problematic issues were addressed, explained and clarified. After the preliminary rounds, the scoring improved so that no further measures were necessary. Due to this fact, there is a need for future championships to implement appropriate measures to ensure the quality of the judges' performance before a competition.

Weather

The weather was most of the time sunny or cloudy with sometimes strong wind and one day rainy during the competition. On that rainy day there were several breaks due to rain. Occasionally wind gusts occurred that reached short-term speeds up to 12 m/s. However, the high wind speeds never reached the maximum indicated in the rule book, so there were no cancellations of any flights.

Accommodation and Food

All teams made the hotel bookings on their own. The hotel of the officials was located 20 minutes driving by car from the competition area. However, not all officials stayed in the same hotel. Some judges preferred to stay in a holiday apartment or in a tent directly on the competition site. The hotel served a daily breakfast. For dinner of the officials, each judge and jury member received sufficient cash, so that they could eat at their own discretion. The food at the flightline was prepared by a caterer.

It should also be mentioned that the officials who travelled by car only received a small travel allowance, which did not cover the costs. This was due to the fact that the organizer only had the teams' entry fees as a source of income and therefore did not have any more money at his disposal.

Safety

There was no serious safety problem during the European Championships. During the official practice a pilot from Belgium lost one of his helicopters due to transmitter problems. During the preliminary rounds this pilot also lost his second helicopter most probably because of the same problem.

Opening and Closing Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony took place beside the main building. This was intentionally kept quite short, which was very well received by the teams. After some words from the contest director to the teams the European Championships were opened by the chairman of the F3 Helicopter Subcommittee and jury president. After the opening, the organizer invited all the teams to have some cake. The Closing Ceremony together with the prize giving took place near the flightline.

After the last final flight, the results were verified by the jury and declared correct. The subsequent awards ceremony was again initiated by a few greetings of the contest director followed by a short speech of the jury president. The handing over of the FAI diplomas was done by the contest director. The FAI medals were given to the winners by the chairman of the F3 Helicopter Subcommittee. The organizer also provided trophies for all winners, which were presented by a member of the

organizing team. The only female participant and the junior pilot in the F3N class were awarded FAI diplomas. In accordance with the current rules, no medals were awarded to these two participants.

The European Championships were officially closed by the chairman of the F3 Helicopter Subcommittee.

In the evening, the closing banquet took place in the hotel of the officials in Aabenraa. All participants were able to attend. The organizer managed to find sponsors who provided non-cash prizes. These non-cash prizes were raffled off among all participants of the European Championships during the banquet.

Protests

There was no protest submitted during the championships.

Technical Meeting

Since 8 of the 16 members of the F3 Helicopter Subcommittee were present, a technical meeting took place in the evening of the third day of the competition, in which 6 of the 8 members present took part. One member who was not present sent a representative. In 60 minutes various topics were addressed. The cooperation of the members was excellent, so this meeting was a complete success.

Conclusion

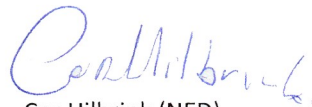
In the opinion of the FAI Jury, the 2024 FAI F3CN European Championships was very successful and carried out in a friendly atmosphere. The organizers are to be commended for an excellent event.



Stefan Wolf (GER)
President



Oscar Chinello (ITA)
Member



Cor Hilbrink (NED)
Member