

**FÉDÉRATION AÉRONAUTIQUE INTERNATIONALE**

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Cc: CIA Jury Board Chairman: Jean-Claude Weber

Event Director: Tomas Hora

Organizing NAC: USA

October 26, 2023

**REPORT OF THE JURY PRESIDENT TO THE FAI**

**EVENT DETAILS**

TITLE: 66th Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett

DATE: October 6 – 14, 2023 LOCATION: Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

ORGANIZING NAC: USA

NUMBER OF FLIGHTS: 1 NUMBER OF TASKS: 1 NUMBER OF COMPETITORS: 17

DISQUALIFICATIONS: NO

**EVENT PERSONNEL**

EVENT DIRECTOR: **Tomas Hora (GER)**

DEPUTY EVENT DIRECTOR: John Petrehn (USA)

CHIEF SCORER: Jim Byrd (USA)

SAFETY OFFICER: Wally Book (USA)

STEWARDS: Marc Andre (SUI)

**FAI JURY**

All members of the Jury have reviewed and approved this report by e-mail.

Jury President: **Garry A. Lockyer (CAN)**

Jury Member: John C. Davis, IV (USA)

Jury Member: Luc Van Geyte (BEL)

**COMPLAINTS AND PROTESTS**

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS: 0 TOTAL NUMBER OF PROTESTS ADMITTED: 0

NUMBER WITHDRAWN: 0 NUMBER UPHELD: 0 NUMBER FAILED: 0

AMOUNT OF PROTEST FEES RETAINED: 0

A copy of the Event result is included with this report.

A performance Bond release report has been sent to the CIA President.

DATE & PLACE: November 1, 2023 Saga, Japan

Garry A. Lockyer (by e-mail)

Jury President

**Recommendations:**

1. **Reporting of Landing**: Rule 7.3 Reporting “The landing position shall be communicated to the Command Center or Event Director. . .” For events with a command centre (staffed 24 X 7), perhaps “or Event Director” should be removed such that all routine communications and notifications are done via the Command Center, eliminating/reducing the load on the ED and any delay in informing the Command Center of a team’s situation.
2. **Collision and Damage**: The rules do not specifically mention collision with anything on the ground or in the air nor do the rules mention damage to an aircraft (other than in 9 Liability and Safety), therefore it is not obvious how collision and/or damage might be penalized. The rules do refer to Sporting Code Section One ANNEX 5 - PENALTIES AND DISQUALIFICATIONS which does provide general guidance. Perhaps the rules for the Gordon Bennett should specifically deal with penalties for collision and/or damage.

**General Comments:**

Overall, the 66th Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett was extremely well organized and conducted. The National Aeronautic Association (NAA), the Balloon Federation of America (BFA), especially the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta (AIBF) and Event Director Tomas Hora (and Team) are congratulated and thanked for hosting a world class event.

All information before and during the event was posted to the organizer’s (AIBF) website on pages dedicated to the 66th edition of the Gordon Bennett. Gordon Bennett TV and AIBF’s Balloon Fiesta Live covered the event extensively, with real-time tracking and numerous interviews and updates before, during and at the conclusion of the event.

The Command Center was located in the Anderson Abruzzo Albuquerque International Balloon Museum allowing museum visitors to observe the status of the competition and how the Command Center assisted competitors throughout their flights. The Command Center staff spoke (when time permitted) with hundreds of visitors about this Gordon Bennett and balloon competition in general. In my opinion, it was a brilliant decision to locate the Command Center in the Balloon Museum!

On Monday, October 9 near sunset, one balloon struck powerlines south of Dallas, Texas. Both pilots sustained injuries requiring hospitalization and their balloon was destroyed. The organizers gathered as much information as possible immediately after they became aware of the incident and issued a statement shortly thereafter. The organizers dealt with the situation expeditiously and very professionally!

Any deficiencies were minor and generally due to the organizers being awarded the event on short notice (due to another NAC determining it was unable to host the event as planned):

* the locations of the competitors’ hotel and briefing hotel (nearby hotels already booked for Balloon Fiesta)
* length and number of hydrogen hoses and valves (new hydrogen supplier)
* provision of dedicated space and network access for the Jury (limited available space, Jury shared space in the Command Center without impairing the jury’s activities)

**SUMMARY OF AMOUNTS TO BE RETAINED FROM PERFORMANCE BOND**

The Jury has determined that the organizers complied with the FAI Organizers Agreement and that the Performance Bond should be returned in full.