

British Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association.

Competitions Panel Meeting, Wednesday 15th September 2004.

Minutes of Pilots meeting held on Wednesday 15th September 2004, Castejon de Sos, Spain.

Chairman: Adrian Thomas.

Meeting held to get the views of those pilots present about the format of the British Paragliding Championships.

Adrian asked those present to consider three main themes;

*A review of the Competitions so far,
The format of the Championships, i.e. structure
Where do we go in 2005?*

Review of 2004 so far:

Adrian asked if the reputation of the places chosen for this year's comp. had put many pilot off. We had had a good, safe comp. so far, with only two injuries at take – off in St. André. The task cancelled on Tuesday *may* have been cancelled early, but at least was safe. The task-setting were learning a lot. Were pilots not turning up to comps. Because of the bad reputation of certain locations or did they have a problem with the format of the Championships?

Up to 30 or 40 Championships pilots had not turned up to St. André.

Kitt The locations chosen for this year were a good contrast to UK flying.

John Bate Many UK-based pilots were put off from entering the competitions due to the choice of locations, i.e. St André and Cestejon de Sos.

Steve Purdie The reputation of some of the sites may have had more to do with the type of gliders flown at the time, e.g. Firebird Cult rather than the place itself. He felt it was necessary to go to places such as St. André to get the experience.

Chris Harland In St. André this year we stayed away from the Chavel Blanc & had advice from top local pilots in task setting. Chris thought the format of 1 mountain location and 1 flat lands was good.

Pete Douglas Enjoyed the comps. so far and had learned a lot.

Adrian Said Yes! [Not sure what to!] The southern Alps sites were chosen for their reliable flying conditions.

Steve Ham Castejon de Sos better in July / August, but conditions were obviously much stronger. Traditionally, the first two weeks of September are usually good for flying.

Calvo or Adrian We have been unlucky un the past and have lost money on the comps. We have to be careful when picking new locations. Timing is also important. It may be possible to twin our comp. with another Nations event, e.g. *The Nordics, or the Spanish*. The Spanish use their comp. to choose the Spanish team.

Format of the Championships:

Chris ? Statistically, over the year's, having one week in the UK and one week abroad has produced 1/3 flyable UK tasks, compared to 2/3 flyable tasks abroad.

Rupert Dodds Could we have the UK part of the Championships over more week ends instead of the 4-day Bank Holiday?

Adrian There were a few options to consider;

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Keeping the format of the Championships the same as now,

A league-type comp. for the UK part with additional BPC & Open comps.

One week Foreign & one week UK.

Steve Ham Would like the UK event to be one week as it never attracts foreign pilots for 4 days flying in the UK.

James Goldsborough There are two different aims of the Championships. Bringing pilots on and developing new pilots as well as choosing the British Champion.

Dave Snowdon There are a lot of other competitions available for pilots to fly to gain experience and learn.

Adrian We could nominate a certain foreign competition.

Dave Snowdon Liked the format of 1 week UK and 1 week foreign.

Steve Ham if pilots wanted to fly with lots of other pilots there were many French or Spanish comps. available.

Dave Snowdon The British Paragliding Cup is an excellent way of doing this. Only Adrian, Carlo, Abi & Snowy doing them. He was surprised that many other pilots don't do them.

Rupert Dodds He wasn't surprised as the weather in the UK is not reliable enough to take time off. He preferred ad-hoc when the weather was acceptable.

Simon Ford Not possible to change the date and location of the comp at late notice as people need to book holidays from work, accommodation, etc..

Adrian Thomas Was happy with the current format but wondered why not all the pilots had turned up.

John Bate We need to encourage more pilots to take part in the comps.

Birkitt *Something about* 1 Open event and 30 Nationals pilots.

Adrian Asked could a pilot do all three Open events and not be the British Champion? Yes under the current system. Do we need to change this?

In the Europeans, as pilot has to achieve a certain standard before they can be considered for a team. More sensible if a pilot has to demonstrate a level of experience with perhaps either a 40Km cross country in a competition or make goal in a competition.

Calvo proposed the top 50 pilots from the previous year's Championships have automatic entry, then apply the criteria to others. Then all pilots have a chance to become the British Champion.

Dave Snowdon Not getting

Birkitt Gareth-the-photographer had said in a BPC forum that incentive was needed to get into the Championships. There was a need for the premier competition like the Championships and a lower level comp. series like the BPC.

Abi Agreed that there needed to be a standard which pilots must achieve before entering the Championships.

Ulric We can't take the top ten of the BPC for the Champs. as it is not compatible.

Simon Ford Criteria good comps. panel needs to represent ALL pilots, even first time / novices.

Calvo When he ran the BPC, only 30% of BP Cup pilots who qualified to enter the Championships took up the offer.

Phil 30 pilots did not turn up at St. André. We did not know until the event at St. André. How do we know how many on the reserve list to accept?

Peter P can we not reserve 50 places for British Pilots, then anyone after that?

Rupert Dodds Why do British pilots not turn up at the Comps. Is it the reputations of certain locations?

Alex Coltman could we have a week course (training) for first-time pilots who have not taken part in big comps. before? This would give novice pilots a helping hand.

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Calvo Liked the idea of a series of 3 Opens, the winner of all 3 becoming the British Champion. So long as they were British.

Steve Ham asked if pilot had to be a member of the BHPA or a British passport holder as he could (& has been) be the Spanish Paragliding Champion.

Adrian We go along with the FAI Rules & Regulations. See email from BHPA office that Nikky has? The BHPA can now issue an FAI licence to a British non-BHPA pilot, living abroad.

Abi asked if a pilot taking part in the Championships still needed to be Advanced Pilot rated? This is an insurance requirement for our comps.

Adrian If a British pilot had entered all 3 of the Opens then they should be in the Championships, so long as they fulfilled the entry requirements.

Possible Criteria Advanced pilot + IPPI 5 (Not recognised in Spain)

Having competed at a lower level competition.

A goal flight or a cross-country flight in a competition of over 25Km

Encourage entry into the BPC.

Calvo top X No. of previous year's Championships given a place.

Adrian A vote was then taken.

Vote to keep current Championships entry requirement – none.

Vote to change to new – Overwhelming.

Format of the Championships.

The majority of pilots present were in favour of keeping the format of the Championships the same as this year, i.e. one UK Bank Holiday weekend, (four days) and two, one-week foreign events, Opens. We need to canvas the opinion of all cross-country pilots, to get an accurate vote.

Mark Graham Two one-week events would be easier to do than the present format.

Adrian poll all pilots with a short list of locations when we get back.

Adrian Toase If we change to two, one-week events, one still in the UK we will end up with less flyable tasks overall.

Steve Ham Two weeks abroad only, non-UK ?

Mark Hyman we should encourage more pilots to fly abroad to get experience of different conditions.

Calvo we should write up the proposed change to the Championships to clarify details.

Adrian Toase What about 10 days abroad?

Kelly Different locations to gain experience in different flying conditions.

The main consensus was that we should change the entry requirement to allow someone doing all three comps. to become the British Champion.

Where in 2005?

Piedrahita – Spain. There were no competitions this year held at Piedrahita and the village have realised that they have lost money by not having them. Steve Ham mentioned that the problems at take-off, i.e. the fence and landing field are being sorted out. The Piedrahita villagers are talking to the village of S***** over the back of take-off. A sum of money approx £6,000 will be paid to the village.

Steve has suggested 10€ per pilot per year, but this is still to be decided.

Calvo has been asked by lots of pilots asking to go back to Piedrahita.

Mark Hyman We went to St. André in June, probably the most-windy time of the year.

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Dave Snowdon Has done a competition in Slovenia and asked why we don't hold an event there. The infrastructure is already set up and conditions can be very good.

Adrian We need a local contact to be on-site to sort out all the details, like Nikky and Mark (along with Steve Ham) here. Adrian & Calvo will speak to Dave. Adrian has flown there.

Calvo also agreed we need a local person to be available to set up and sort any problems. We need suggestions to check out for future events.

Cost is also a criteria. Next year, the entry fee may need to increase.

We need a local contact and it needs to be financial viable.

Suggestions for future events:

Laroucco, Montenegro – Portugal. Worlds have been held here.

Ager - Spain

Tolmin – Slovenia

Piedrahita – Spain. Village would like to see us back. Known area, Steve on-site.

St André / Laragne – France

Annecy, Gn Bornand, Morzine – France

Mayrhofen – Austria, 2 hours from Munich. Kelly lives there, bus able to go to take off, (2000m). End of May, early June is best. The local club have already said that we would be welcome & provide assistance. Kelly will investigate cost of Medical cover, etc.

Calvo List of locations, apply check list, talk to local contacts, make sure financially viable, then canvass pilots' opinions.

Any Other Business

John Bate would like it to be known that the retrieves in this competition had been very good & the bus driver was excellent.

Team-Selection. Dave Snowdon asked if the selection of the British Team was a subjective process and what criteria was been used to determine places? Adrian replied that we use the top 3 British Pilots in the top 50 of the WPRS (World Paragliding Ranking System), the British male & female Champion and the rest are made up of disscresionary places. This can sometimes be viewed as a subjective process. The process needs to be seen to be fair. A clear, decise process, where the places are decided by the ranking system and a wild card.

Adrian Agreed that the WPRS had it's faults and did not always show quality. A pilot who finished in the top 26 of four FAI Cat II events could appear in the top 50 of the WPRS. The French team are currently ranked 12th in the world due to the WPRS.

Chris Harland mentioned something along the lines of we need a ranking system that works.

Adrian We need a fully objective system, as the Spanish have.

Dave Snowdon Pilots need to know the requirements to gain entry into the British Squad so that they can fly competitions accordingly.

Steve Purdie Simple system, top 5 of the Nationals from the previous year. But the Championships are not at the right time in the year to do this. Bruce Goldsmith not currently in the top ? of the WPRS.

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John Bate Asked could we pick a team specifically for an event. As people do in business, i.e. profile pilots for a particular event. This is difficult to achieve & what happens if no tasks, average over 10 competitions.

Dave Snowdon Asked if we could use Race 2002 and compare pilots over 15 or so comps? Ulric & Calvo & Adrian will see if this is possible. Perhaps check overall score from 2003 & 2004 Championships.

Mark Graham Know events in future, eg. Euros, Worlds and set our events in the same or similar place to get valuable data.

Adrian Never a right way to pick team places.

Comps Panel Volunteers needed.

Calvo / Chris Harland asked for *off-panel* members, eg. Ranking system co-ordinator.

We need to spread the load better.

*Adrian volunteered to have a go at the Ranking system. Ulric will speak to him to show him what is required.

*This might have been Mark Graham agreed to have a look at the glider data-base & Ulric was going to tell him what was involved.