

British Paragliding Competitions Panel Meeting

Pedro Bernardo – Spain
4th June 2008

Members Present :

Chris (Calvo) Burns CB
Richard Bungay RB
Paul Russell PR
Kitt Rudd KR
Brad Nicholas BN
Adrian Thomas AT
Steve Nash SN
Nigel Prior NP
John Stevenson JS
Matt Church MC
Kirsty Cameron KC
Mark Hayman MH
Alan Horsfield AH
Charlie Merrett CM
Tom Payne TP

Comps Panel Structure

RB asked the members present if there was anyone thinking of standing down from the panel.
CM stated that due to other commitments and not being able to keep in regular email contact due to work he would like to stand down as he couldn't guarantee his full commitment to the panel.
MC stated that he wasn't sure about being available to the panel but was happy to continue assisting JS with the running of the XC League.
Tom Payne had been invited to the meeting as he was willing to join the panel.
All other members stated that they were happy to continue on the panel.

The election of officers then took place with the following results :

- Chairman - RB returned unopposed (r/u)
- Vice Chairman - TP voted on unopposed
- Treasurer - KC (r/u)
- Meet Director - CB (r/u)
- Secretary - agreed that this role will be combined with the role of Vice Chairman
- Safety Officer – MH with Rik McHarg as safety marshal (r/u)
- Website – PR (r/u)
- Technical – Ulrich Jessop, Chris Trow and Rik McHarg
- Comp Lines – SN (r/u)
- Squad Development – BR (r/u)
- Sponsorship – It was assumed that Russell Ogden would continue with the role with NP dealing directly with Neil Speed at Lighthouse
- Head Marshall – AH (r/u)
- CIVL Representative – CB (r/u)
- PWC Representative – It was agreed that this fell under CIVL but that MH would assist as well.
- Team Manager – CB (r/u)
- BP Cup Representative – Current BPCup Organiser (presently Gareth Aston)
- XC League – JS (r/u) and a sub-committee as and when needed.
- Team Treasurer – AT (r/u)

The structure of the comps panel was discussed with the idea to have a smaller core committee and several sub-committees as necessary.

A discussion on whether Rulings/Objections would be better served by a smaller sub-committee. The points raised were that a sub-committee would be smaller and therefore it should be easier to come to a decision.
MH played Devil's advocate and suggested that the proposal would rule out all other members of the committee and wasn't sure that a smaller group would necessarily come to a better decision.
KR suggested that it would be more focussed and would stop debates going around in circles for too long and would reduce the time pressure.
It was agreed that those interested in joining the sub-committees must get involved at an early stage if they felt they wanted to contribute to the discussion/decision making process.
RB commented that a larger group of people would spread the workload.
AT was in favour of sub-committees as long as the members were not fixed and that they would be open to anyone on the panel that had an interest.

A discussion on general panel business continued with suggestions of using a web based forum so that threads were easier to read and follow. Some members said they preferred to have emails delivered directly to their inbox. PR said that would be possible and would look into it.

Using some sort of task based software was discussed but generally agreed that it hadn't worked well when tried previously but PR may look into it again.

All members with the possible exception of MH were in favour of creating a smaller core committee and creating sub-committees to deal with individual issues.

There was a discussion about squad development and the Bleriot team and that it needed better defining and suggestions/ideas were needed for squad training. KR had some ideas and was happy to suggest some proposals.

Sponsorship was discussed but as Russell Ogden was not present it wasn't clear whether he was happy to continue but was voted back in anyway. NP was happy to continue dealing with Neil Speed at Lighthouse as he had a good relationship with him but was unable to commit to the role of Sponsorship full time due to work commitments.

It was noted that there had been a significant drop in marshal numbers this year but that the marshalling system was working well despite this.

CB mentioned that BN's role included assisting the Technical Officer checking the specs of gliders in the competitions.

The panel then had a discussion on the make up of the smaller core committee.

BN suggested that we decide on how many first and not who would be on it.

AT suggested that we leave the decision to later as the meeting was time constrained and there were other more important issues to discuss.

RB mentioned that the panel ought to have a constitution and that having one written up should be looked into.

Glider Classification

RB then started a discussion on Glider Classes which was brought about when the Gradient XC2 was certified EN C and LTF 2-3. This created a problem with placing the glider into the appropriate class of glider for the Championships and was indicative of the problem created by having two certifying bodies and trying to match them to either Sports Serial or Open classes. It was stated that people flying Sports class weren't happy that the Gradient XC2 was being placed in the Sports Class.

AT suggested that the XC2 had been designed for a specific market but ended up being certified to a different one and that our procedure of classifying gliders according to LTF/EN was at odds to the manufacturers who designed their gliders to a different specification.

AT proposed that we should use the manufacturers description of who the glider was aimed at to place it in the appropriate class.

TP suggested we produce a list of all the gliders and their appropriate classification for the Championships.

KR suggested we leave the issue alone for a while and not make any snap decision.

CB suggested that manufacturers design gliders to customer demand and that we would be punishing pilots by placing certain wings in a higher class.

AT asked why we were trying to second guess the manufacturers ?

BN suggested that the LTF/EN certification is an unbiased opinion and therefore suggested we should use it.

SN stated that he believed the Paraglider's Manufacturers Association was looking towards AT's proposal.

MH asked whether we classifying gliders to a safety or performance criteria ?

RB suggested that there be no "knee-jerk" reaction and that this issue should be left until next year but be debated well before the next season started.

Several proposals were put forward, AT suggested the following :

- a) Maintain the status quo
 - b) Fall in line with the OLC
 - c) Use the Manufacturer's description to classify the glider
- Or BN suggested we have prizes for EN D, LTF 2-3, EN C, LTF 2.

It was summarised the issue was that we were trying to combine two very different certification processes into one classification system.

A timescale to make a decision was given as the end of the St Andre round and that the decision would be placed on the website.

Venue Selection

A discussion on possible venues and dates for next season started. It was stated that the aim was to provide one venue that was tried and tested and try to provide one new venue for pilots.

Recent comps had been quite expensive with the retrieve being the biggest expense and CB stated that next year we should only consider destinations that we know make money.

These were Piedrahita, St Andre and Mayrhofen.

The idea of going to Italy was suggested as well with Pieve and Bassano considered the best options.

KC suggested that having somewhere interesting for pilots to fly should also be a consideration.

TP suggested that St Vincent on the Dormillouse ridge would be a good option with a cable car to launch and a large take off that could accommodate approx 60 pilots but concern was voiced over the limited task setting options if only the main ridge was used.

CM suggested that after speaking to Kelly Farina there was the possibility that the Mayrhofen council may be able to provide a complimentary pass for using the local train service for retrieves and possibly sponsoring his organisation fee.
Laragne was discounted as we tend to move around a lot if the weather isn't suitable which increases the transport cost.
Steve Ham would approach to investigate using Piedrahita as a venue next year and Kelly Farina should be asked to investigate using Mayrhofen and also look into Pieve and Bassano.
For the UK round it was stated that Long Mynd shouldn't be considered next year as the local club weren't that keen to host us due to problems with local land owners in the past.
It was suggested that the Dales local club would be very keen to host a round.
Tinto in the Borders was also suggested but concerns over the weather were noted and a requirement would be to hold the round early in the season.
The Builth Wells area in Wales was also suggested.
AT agreed to investigate possible venues in the UK.
It was suggested that JS should consult previous XC League data to try and determine which times of the year would be more likely provide 4 consecutive flyable days.

CB would produce a checklist of the venue requirements as soon as possible to aid selection.

A discussion on Team Selection and qualifying rounds for PWC entry started.
RB stated that the British Championships and one nominated British Open (after foreign pilots had been removed) was given to the PWC for PWC competition entry.
It was noted that timely notice should be given to pilots as to which round would be the PWC qualifying round.
MH suggested we use St Andre this year as the qualifying round.
KR stated that the qualifying round should be named before the start of the season to allow pilots to choose which round they entered.
CB would confirm with Xavier that this year our nominated rounds are the Championships and St Andre.
PR to put this on the website.
AT to write an explanation of the above.

CB confirmed that since the CIVL meeting in January there had been a change to way CAT 2 comps were weighted for WPRS points and that the pilot quality factor was now based upon the top 67 pilots in the comp rather than the average of all the pilots.
This made our British Opens very attractive comps to enter as they regularly attract top WPRS rated pilots resulting in high quality comps.
Team place selection was now based solely on WPRS ranking which should encourage our top pilots to continue to enter our Opens.

AOB

BN stated that he was very unhappy over a recent incident where an email from him to the comps panel had been copied onto a club forum without consent.
CM apologised stating that he wasn't aware that the information was confidential as it came from the UK importer and related to a general enquiry about a glider.
CB reminded all comps panel members to treat all comps panel emails as confidential unless otherwise stated by the Chairman.

CB stated that he was concerned over the number of Marshals and that he wasn't able to guarantee sufficient cover for pilots if an incident occurred that required the use of the Marshals and Meet Director to deal with it.
AT was concerned over the cost of our opens, stating that he believed they were the most expensive comps including PWCs.
CB stated that safety had to be a priority which required manpower and that he had lost 5 experienced marshals in the last year.
KR suggested that our comps were relatively safer due to more cautious task setting recently.
CM suggested that the Meet Director should only run a competition that he was happy had the required number of marshals to be able to run safely.
CB stated that he would like to see a return to the previous level of costing for marshals and the panel agreed that the minimum core number required was 5 marshals and that we needed to approach clubs etc to recruit more.

The meeting closed at 18:25 (only 25 mins late ☺)