



IGC PRESIDENT REPORT TO THE FAI GENERAL CONFERENCE 2010

We are very pleased to record our congratulations to Barron Hilton for the award of the FAI Gold Medal in recognition of his services to the aviation sports and particularly to gliding over many years. Barron has provided the opportunity for many glider pilots worldwide to explore the capabilities of soaring flight and aircraft performance at his ranch in the USA.

The past year has seen the completion of our major World Gliding Championships (WGC) events and the completion of the 2008-2009 series of the Sailplane Grand Prix (SGP). On the world scene the level of gliding activity and membership continues to drift downwards, reflecting the pressure that the sport is facing. Accidents at Championships have been an unfortunate and highly undesirable feature of this year creating even more pressure on the willing volunteers who give so freely of their time and energy to help manage and develop our sport. Changes have been made to our competition calendar and opportunities for expansion of the sport are being pursued.

Financially the IGC is in a sound position and we are balancing our expenditure on Officials' expenses against income from sanction fees and pilot fees. The reserve fund that we have built up within the FAI consolidated funds now provides us with the opportunity to consider major projects, such as the Safety Strategy we adopted this year, and the continuing development of the Grand Prix. We also draw on our reserves to cover expenses for Officials at the Junior World Gliding Championships. This is a deliberate policy to ensure that entry fees for this Championship are kept low to encourage participation.

We appreciate that the staff in the FAI Office in Lausanne have been under significant pressure this year and I wish to record the IGC's appreciation and thanks for their support and enthusiasm during this period of transition.

DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

An increasing demand for additional classes to be added to the World Championships calendar has resulted in a review of the calendar and the planned replacement of the World Class by the 20M two-seater class and the planned addition of a stand-alone Championship for gliders with wingspans of 13.5M and below. Both these changes will take effect from 2014 if approved by the IGC Plenum.

The 20M two-seater class has been very strong in the European Championships since 2008 and there has been an increasing growth in the "light-end" of the glider market with aircraft that have shortened wingspans and usually weight less than 300kg fully loaded. These decisions will create opportunities for increased participation at the international level. This, we believe, will then increase interest and demand for competitions in the class at national levels.

Providing competent on-line tracking for our competitions has been a challenge that has absorbed a lot of effort in the past ten years. We are very pleased to now have an informal relationship with the UK Company YellowBrick, which provides an effective and cost-

efficient solution for tracking. YellowBrick have successfully provided on-line tracking with live commentary now for two seasons and we look forward to expanding our relationship with them to improve the coverage of our championships for our pilots and the public worldwide.

The success of the OLC product is remarkable. This has prompted the IGC to look at launching an FAI-IGC Decentralised Gliding Competition focussing specifically on FAI triangles. We intend to develop this on-line competition during the next 12 months.

Negotiations are currently underway to create a world circuit based on the Sailplane Grand Prix race combined with a marketing strategy and a sponsorship concept associating the clean and pure nature of our sport with a strong environmental message.

CURRENT THREATS – ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

Last year I reported that we had serious accidents at our sanctioned competitions and I regret that this trend has continued in 2010. We have had two pilot fatalities, one at the SGP Final in Chile and one at the WGC in Slovakia. Both accidents appeared to involve loss of control resulting in the gliders spinning into the ground with tragic consequences. The resulting situations were managed extremely well by the organisers with the involvement of local authorities and the assistance and guidance provided by the “FAI Causality Guidelines”.

In addition we suffered two serious accidents, one at the WGC in Slovakia with a mid-air between two gliders during the completion. Both pilots were able to land their gliders safely and were uninjured. One pilot was subsequently disqualified for 3 days from the championship.

The second accident occurred at the WGC in Hungary where a glider on approach to landing collided with a truck passing along the road adjacent to the end of the runway. The glider pilot was uninjured despite the glider being destroyed in the subsequent uncontrollable landing, but regrettably the truck driver suffered severe facial injuries when the wing tip struck him. I understand that surgeons have been able to restore sight in one of his eyes. This accident is being investigated by the Hungarian Police.

Add to this the fact that multiple protests were made in Slovakia about “*dangerous flying*” all of which were dismissed by the Jury, and you can understand why we, as a Bureau, are not happy with the behaviours being apparently displayed by some of our pilots. Safety messages were delivered loud and clear at both these World Championships but they seem to have fallen on deaf ears for a few pilots. A long, hard look will now be taken at the way we manage our World Championships and the latitude that we allow pilots for flying misdemeanours.

We are very aware that, at the National level in many countries, they do not have the numbers of gliders necessary to create viable competitions in a single class (such as Standard or 15M). There seems, therefore, to be a need for the IGC to provide guidance as to how individual countries can manage their national competitions to allow their pilots to develop and gain the skills and experience essential for competition at the international level.

The other threats that the sport faces – airspace, airworthiness, medicals, transponders, ADSB, increasing costs etc, form part of the interesting and frustrating battle that is on-going primarily at the national level. In Europe the gliding community is extremely well served by the members of the European Gliding Union who battle endlessly, or so it seems, to convince the Regulators at EASA to provide reasonable and appropriate regulations.

In addition, our Country Development Working Group has provided significant insight, through a survey, into what our members see as being the critical issues that impact their ability to enjoy their sport. “Barriers to flight” were identified as being specific to eastern European countries more so than anywhere else with gliding seen as an “expensive” sport in these countries. The full report is available at igc-survey.fai.org/files/onlineSurvey.pdf

THE PAST YEAR IN REVIEW

Accomplishments

- Increasing participation at our WGC
- Continued positive momentum for the SGP series
- 15% growth in the Ranking List from 4,888 pilots, at the end of 2009, to 5,644 pilots and it’s utilization in the WGC’s for seeding and entry
- Creation of the 13.5M Class
- Incorporation of the 20M two-seater Class into WGC’s
- Establishment of Continental Records

IGC Annual Meeting 2010

The IGC held its 2010 annual meeting in Lausanne in March. 34 NACs were represented and some 65 people attended our annual IGC dinner on the Friday evening. Max and Angela Bishop attended the dinner as our guests and were farewelled in fitting style.

Awards

The Plenum was pleased to confer the following awards:

- The **Lilienthal Medal**, for eminent service to the sport of gliding over a significant period of time by a currently active glider pilot, to **Mr Ross Macintyre**, New Zealand
- The **Pelagia Majewski Medal**, for eminent services to gliding over a long period of time by a female glider pilot, to **Ms Beryl Hartley**, Australia
- The **Pirat Gehriger Diploma**, for eminent services to international gliding, to **Mr Igidio Galli**, Italy

Decisions

Significant decisions taken by the Plenum included:

- The immediate application of a revised pilot selection procedure for WGCs to cater for oversubscriptions in entries
- The adoption of an “IGC Safety Strategy”
- The adoption of Continental Records
- The periodic allocation of Women’s and Juniors World Championships to countries outside of Europe
- The establishment of a 13.5M world championship class
- The inclusion of the 20M two-seater class in World Championships
- The approval of GPS Position Recorders (non-IGC certified) for Gold and Silver Badge flights

Championships

Pilot Rankings

The top three pilots on the IGC Ranking List (as at time of writing this report) are:



1st
Michael Sommer
(Germany)



2nd
Sebastian Kawa
(Poland)



3rd
Zbigniew Nieradka
(Poland)

FAI Gliding Championships – 2010

The IGC congratulates the winners of the 2010 Championships, and the IGC-OLC World League. Following on from the financial problems of 2009, the past year saw event hosts struggling to raise funding and sponsorship and we are grateful to all organisers for their perseverance in making these events possible.

31st FAI World Gliding Championships – Standard, Club and World Classes

The 31st FAI WGC for the Standard, Club and World Classes was held in July in Prievidza, Slovakia. 106 competitors representing 27 NACs participated. 12 competition days were achieved for each class.

The World Champions are:



Standard Class
Sebastian Kawa (POL)



Club Class
Arndt Hovestadt (GER)



World Class
Laurent Couture (FRA)

31st FAI World Gliding Championships – Open, 18M and 15M Classes

The 31st FAI WGC for the Open, 18M and 15M classes was held in August in Szeged, Hungary. 142 competitors representing 32 NACs participated. The weather was inclement and only seven competition days were achieved for the 18M and 15M classes and eight days for the Open Class.

The World Champions are:



Open Class
Michael Sommer (GER)



18M Class
Zbigniew Nieradka (POL)



15M Class
Stefano Ghiorzo (ITA)

FAI World Sailplane GP Series 2008-2009

The 3rd FAI World SGP Final was held in Santiago, Chile, in January 2010. The 15 qualified pilots who were able to attend the Final came from Austria, Australia, Chile, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Italy and Poland. Eight competition days were achieved and **Sebastian Kawa** (POL) successfully defended his title as the FAI World SGP Champion.

FAI World Sailplane GP Series 2010-2011

The 2010-2011 series for the FAI World SGP commenced with a very wet start at the first qualifying event in Zar, Poland. The weather conditions did not allow a viable competition and, as a result, this qualifying event has been re-scheduled to 2011. The second qualifying event of this series has recently been successfully completed in St Moritz, Switzerland. The remaining eight qualifying events are being held in: Nitra, Slovakia; Boonah, Australia; Santiago, Chile; Ghimbav-Brasov, Romania; Saint Auban, France; La Cerdanya, Spain; Nummela, Finland; and, Calcinte Del Pesce, Italy. We are pleased to have initial SGP races being hosted in Spain and Romania continuing the expansion of this style of glider racing.

The 4th FAI World SGP Final will be hosted at the Wasserkuppe, Germany In July 2011. The SGP Final will form part of the DAeC 100th anniversary of the sport of gliding at this historic site.

The IGC-OLC World League 2010

The 4th season of the IGC-OLC World League has seen the continued growth in this contest with recorded entries from 1069 Clubs and gliding organisations (up from 1065 in 2009). The top three placed clubs for 2010 were:

- 1st Albuquerque Soaring, USA (repeating their 1st placing from 2009)
- 2nd SFZ Königsdorf (DE/BY),GER
- 3rd Tucson Soaring Club, USA

There was a small reduction in total activity for the OLC for 2010 with 12,948 individual competitors (2009 - 13,287), flying 95,019 flights (2009 - 103,801) and achieving a total distance of 27 million Km (2009 - 28 million Km). While total numbers were down slightly across the board, the average kilometers flown by each pilot remained at just on 2,100 Km which shows a high degree of consistency in the activity in the OLC.

Future Championships

The sanctioned Championships for 2011 are:

- The 6th FAI Women's WGC in Arboga, Sweden
- The 7th FAI Junior WGC in Musbach, Germany
- The 4th FAI World SGP Final in Wasserkuppe, Germany
- The 16th European Gliding Championships in Pociunai, Lithuania for the Open, 18M and 15M Classes and in Nitra, Slovakia for the Standard, Club, 20M two-seater and World Classes.



President
International Gliding Commission