

# 25<sup>th</sup> FAI World Hot Air Balloon Championship Szeged, Hungary Jury Report / Performance Bond Refund

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## ORGANISERS

Szegedi Kozlenkedesi Kft & Cameron Balloons, Hungary

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## DETAILS

### Key Dates

CIA 2022 Plenary:	March 18/19 2022
Sanction granted:	CIA 2022 Plenary
Sanction Fee (6000 CHF) Paid:	14 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
Organiser Agreement (OA) signed:	13 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
Performance Bond (18,000 CHF) Paid:	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
AX rules submitted	27 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
NAC Invitation deadline	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2024 (No time)
1 <sup>st</sup> Round Invitation Process start:	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
2 <sup>nd</sup> Round deadline	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
3 <sup>rd</sup> Round Invitation	25 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
3 <sup>rd</sup> Round deadline	31 <sup>st</sup> May 2024
General Briefing:	8 <sup>th</sup> September 2024

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### Documents

CIA Sporting Code	April 2024
CIA 2024 Plenary meeting minutes	March 2024
Protocol for FAI and CIA Sanctioned Events	March 2005
Protocol for Award-Giving and Closing Ceremonies at FAI Championships	Sept 2017

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## **FAI / CIA Event Performance Bond – Refund Conditions**

### **v. Obligation to Competitors**

The Italian NAC entry was rejected by the organisers as it had arrived with no information on it other than the stamp and a signature: it was received on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. The Italian NAC followed this up on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2024 with a completed NAC acceptance form and a further letter on 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2024. The Jury sought to clarify the situation with the ED and Organiser on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 but did not invite the CIA Bureau to become involved. The Italians NAC made a formal complaint to the Organiser and the CIA President (08/03/2024). Following this, 2 Italian entrants were put on the Standby list.

The Event Director was insistent that it was agreed at the CIA Plenary meeting in 2024 that there the Standby list would be used after round 3. However, there is nothing in the minutes of the CIA meeting to confirm this and Section 1 of the Sporting Code was not changed. See below:

#### *5.6.3.3 Round 3*

*Following a request by the organiser to the CIA, a further round of invitations may be sent out as in Round 2.*

*Invitations will follow on from where Round 2 ended.*

*Invitations will only be sent out up to the maximum total number of competitors the organiser is prepared to accommodate.*

*Invitations will not be accepted later than 60 days for World Championships and 45 days for Continental Championships before the start of the event.*

*If all invitations using the ranking method in round 2 have been allocated, and the maximum number of competitors has not been achieved, then additional invitations should be offered to any NAC that was not entitled to additional invitations in round 2, due to not having entered the previous competition. Invitations should be allocated in order of entry received in Round 1.*

#### *5.6.5.2 Standby List*

*If an NAC fails to respond by the proper deadline or if an entrant fails to fulfil his obligations, the NAC or the entrant in question may lose their respective right to enter, but may be kept on a standby list should vacancies appear.*

*Competitors on the standby list will be offered places should they become available after Rounds 1 & 2.*

*Closing dates for entries for pilots on the Standby list will be absolutely no later than the 60 / 45-day limit before the event.*

**vi. Established Deadlines**

- a) Invitation process – no delay
  - b) Submission of rules- submitted within time limits
  - c) Website – OK
  - d) Sending of results – OK
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**Media / FAI & CIA Logos**

The FAI/CIA logo was not displayed on the Official rules for the event. The FAI/CIA logo was not shown on the event page on Watchmefly.

There were no posters within or around the city advertising the event and the locals did not appear to be aware that the event was taking place. The competitors did not feel particularly welcome in the area.

There was no event programme.

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**Protocol**

The CIA president was present at the opening ceremony and the FAI President was at the closing ceremony.

The competitors and officials' oaths were read at the opening ceremony.

The national anthem of the winning country and the FAI anthem were played at the Awards Ceremony. Only the flag of the winning country was shown at the awards ceremony.

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**No Shows / Pilots in attendance**

The General Briefing was not closed until the first task briefing to allow for a competitor whose car had broken down to arrive. At this point the total number of competitors was 118.

One competitor had withdrawn and one competitor was declared "No-Show".

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## **POST EVENT COMMENTS**

### **Sporting Licences**

There were many competitors who did not hold a valid FAI Sporting Licence in the few days leading up to the General Briefing. These all received a reminder.

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### **Facilities**

Facilities were adequate throughout the week with a good briefing hangar. Meals tickets could be bought in advance for breakfast and lunch and a bar was situated just next to the hangar. Check-in to each briefing was carried out electronically and mostly worked well. The internet worked well during the event. There appeared to be parking spaces allocated to pilots, but this did split up some national teams and exiting certain areas was slow.

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### **Propane**

Refuelling was poorly controlled. On one evening there was complete chaos following the un-scheduled arrival of a Dornier which taxied passed the cylinders being re-fuelled and then re-fuelled near them. This delayed re-fuelling for the competitors for at least 1 hour. The competitors were offered free propane for 2 practice flights but were later told that this would only apply to specific dates.

*1. Gas filling:*

***We provide you free gas for all competition flights and a total of 2 training flights. You have to pay for additional gas refills.***

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### **Travel Allowance**

All officials have received reimbursement for travel and hotel costs. It is not known if reimbursements fully covered all expenses and/or expectations. It is not clear what was agreed to in advance of the event. Payments were made several days after arrival: the Jury received their payment in Euro, the Officials in Hungarian currency.

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### **Communication to Competitors**

There was a general lack of communication from the organiser with the competitors prior to the event and no help with finding additional equipment, helium or van hire.

There was no schedule announced on either the website or on the official noticeboard on Watchmefly.

General Briefing notes were not published prior to the start of the meeting and were only published on the Official Notice board on Watchmefly after requests from the Jury. This also applied to unresolved questions during the General Briefing, changes in rules (AX Section II and Shortened Time Limits on the last day of flying).

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## **Communication to Officials**

This was also very slow and very little.

## **Flying area and maps**

While the map appeared to be quite sufficiently large, when other areas were taken into consideration (large military PZ, City, and Serbian border (which was very close and very sensitive) the area was much reduced in size.

## **Tasks setting**

Task selection was generally good but was somewhat compromised by the weather. There could have been more planning for target changes. Very few target fields had been checked prior to the event by the organiser. One target was far too close to the intersection of 2 major roads (during rush hour). The planned CRAT was changed due to problem of 118 balloons trying to take off and make an approach at the same time and was then cancelled due to poor visibility. It was suggested that markers were being collected too early at the targets, however, it was probably only the out of bounds markers that were picked up early. Dangerous flying conditions were noted by the Jury during 2 flights where competitors had to make fast ascents and descents to achieve the goals: this was attributed to changing weather conditions.

## **Scoring**

There were concerns raised that the BLS lost the connection to other devices and did not always register correctly the take off and/or landing.

There were reports that the Balloon Live app did not always register marker drops or was very slow to react to inputs into the phone.

Competitors commented on the difference between the result in the app and the official result.

Competitors felt aggrieved to be penalised by 100 points for not correctly completing the Flight Report Form (FRF) after being given a warning. Especially when there is no requirement on the FRF to provide take-off and landing positions and times and when they had been told that their form had been accepted. This penalty was lowered to 25 points but the AX rules state that the penalty will be up to 100 points.

## **Number of Competitors**

The question was raised as to whether 120 is too many.

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## REPORT OF THE JURY PRESIDENT TO THE FAI

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### EVENT DETAILS

TITLE: 25<sup>th</sup> WORLD HOT AIR BALLOON CHAMPIONSHIP  
DATE: 8-13 September 2024  
LOCATION: Szeged, Hungary  
ORGANIZING NAC: Repulo es Legisport Szovetseg (Hungary)  
NUMBER OF FLIGHTS: 5                      NUMBER OF TASKS: 18  
NUMBER OF COMPETITORS: 118  
DISQUALIFICATIONS: None

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### EVENT            PERSONNEL

EVENT DIRECTOR: Paolo Oggioni (ITA)  
DEPUTY EVENT DIRECTOR: Zoltan Palhegi (HUN)  
SAFETY OFFICER: Goran GRGIC (SLO)  
CHIEF SCORER: Martin GRAF (AUT)

### **FAI JURY**

Jury President: Lindsay Muir  
Jury Member                      David Gleed  
Jury Member                      Bengt Stener

### **COMPLAINTS AND PROTESTS**

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS: 0  
TOTAL NUMBER OF PROTESTS ADMITTED: 0  
NUMBER WITHDRAWN: NA  
NUMBER UPHeld: NA  
NUMBER FAILED: NA  
AMOUNT OF PROTEST FEES RETAINED: NA

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Date: 14th September 2024

Place: Szeged, Hungary

## **Event Debriefing 13 September 2024**

### **25th FAI World Hot Air Balloon Championship**

#### **Szeged Hungary**

1. General Comments on the event.

Propane for free 2 practice flights generated a charge that was applied. Lack of communication with competitors. Lack of general briefing notes that were published prior to the General Briefing extending the GB. Little help for competitors. Just very poor communication. Positives, briefing hanger, sound quality, the City and the flying area (size of fields for take-off and landing).

2. Task selection was generally good. Planning for new target due to weather change. Explanation from ED to why?. Generally good. CRAT problem with 120 balloons. Marker collection too early at the targets, should be only the out of bounds marker. Tasks not connected. Refuelling was viewed as not as safe as it should be. More reminders about safety.

3. Scoring messages were missing or non-existent. FRF was a problem with data required, specifically the take-off, landing co-ordinates and times.

4. Area is restricted by the border , the City and a large military PZ. Larger flying area should be considered when approving locations for competition.

5. BLS dropping the signal to other devices. Slow reaction to inputs. Difference between the app and result was noted. Conversion between lat/long to UTM. Discussion of weaknesses of calculations. Issue with app in phone.

6. Traffic problems with egress and access. Also splitting national team for parking spots was not ideal.

7. Better communication with the public and specifically with the landowners that this event was happening. There appeared to be no publicity about the event locally. Pilots did not feel welcomed.
  
8. Kudos to weather briefing from team. Maybe provide weather updates to all competitors after the briefing ends.

Overall as a general comment from Competitors, Officials and crew: There was very little information coming from the organizers.

Max number of competitors was discussed, question was “is 120 too many?” Not a clear consensus.