

## F2C World Champs 2008 – where does F2C go from here?

### 1 Introduction

As many of you know, one of Doc Jackson's last acts in his long-standing occupancy of the Chair of the CIAM F2 Control Line Subcommittee was to appoint Bengt-Olof Samuelson (SWE) as leader of a small "F2C Working Group". Subsequently the CIAM F2 Subcommittee Chair has been taken over by Bengt-Olof, and over the least year or so that Working Group have made recommendations regarding revision of the F2C part of the current FAI Sporting Code (the "rulebook" in every-day speech). All of those recommendations were accepted by both the full F2 Subcommittee meeting and the full CIAM Plenary meeting held in Lausanne in March 2008. As a result, we will have a "new F2C rulebook" in 2009.

Now *don't* go getting all excited - *please!*

Apart from a small increase in line diameter, plus expansion of the wording to allow those who wish to use multi-strand lines to do so if they so wish, in reality there is very little change between today's F2C and 2009's F2C. That is, so far ....

But as a member of the above F2C Working Group (F2CWG for short), it is clear that the feeling among many of our members is that as we get into more of the detail, more changes will be necessary. That feeling seems also to be shared among many of the active members of the whole CIAM F2 Subcommittee, and certainly in my own private talks with many active F2C participants around many circles over quite a few years now, there is a growing feeling that "F2C must change or die"!

That last maybe something of an exaggeration, but I think that the majority of active F2C participants now do agree that we need to have, *at the very least*, a careful look at the current situation in F2C.

### 2 Aims of this paper

Having been honoured and privileged to be one of the three Judges appointed for this latest F2C World Champs this paper is intended to prompt *informed* and *non-emotional* discussion as an aid to ensuring the continuance – even, dare I say it, the expansion - of current F2C.

What this paper is *not*:

- An invitation for *anyone* to start correspondence or discussion (in *any* form whatsoever) about specific individuals and/or specific events that took place at this contest;
- An invitation for *anyone* who thinks he may recognise someone in my paragraph 5 table below to start correspondence or discussion (in *any* form whatsoever) about any "placing/s" in that table;
- After previous experiences I am certainly *not* going to join/re-join/publish this at any of the on-line discussion groups.

What it *is*:

- An F2C "Judge's eye" view of the July/August 2008 F2C World Champs;
- A personal view. *Definitely not* necessarily the view of the other 2 x F2C Judges or any other official at this contest (none of whom knew that I was going to prepare this paper, and none of whom have been consulted in any way during its preparation);
- An invitation to anyone with some F2C knowledge and/or interest in this class to make comments on this paper – specifically comments on the Conclusions listed at paragraph 7 below.

### 3 Contest details

For those needing it, full results are available on both the F2 World Champs organiser's own website (<http://www.f2cdbl.org/>), Goeran Olsson's website (<http://www.go-cl.se/cl.html>), and many others too no doubt. But here is an in-depth look at this statistics for this contest:

Racing was flown over 3 Qualifying Heats, then 2 x Semi-finals, followed by a total of 3 Finals (1 x Junior Final, 1 x Senior Final and 1 x Senior Final Re-flight). Including Re-flights, this gave a total of 52 x 100 lap races plus 3 x 200 lap races, these spread over a period of 5 days. Each day lasted for approx 6 to 7 hours, including Official Training sessions at the start of each day, plus a Lunch break.

As well as the racing itself, every official training flight was observed by the Circle Marshall and/or by at least 1 F2C Judge.

There were a total of 4 crashes during racing, one of which led to total destruction of a model. And there were 3 Official Protests (it could have been 4), 1 of which was upheld by the on-site FAI Jury.

### 4 Entrants

Total 42 teams from 20 nations, 39 being Seniors, 3 Juniors (HUN; SIN; UKR).

This breaks down into:

1 x nation with 4 x teams = Ukraine (UKR), 3 x Seniors plus 1 of the above Junior teams;

6 x nations with 3 x Senior teams = Australia (AUS); France (FRA); Great Britain (GBR); Italy (ITA); Russia (RUS); USA (USA);

1 x nation with 2 x Senior + 1 x Junior team = Singapore (SIN);

4 x nations with 2 x Senior teams = Spain (ESP); Germany (GER); Portugal (POR); Sweden (SWE);

1 x nation with 1 x Senior + 1 x Junior team = Hungary (HUN);

6 x nations with 1 x Senior team = Brazil (BRA); Latvia (LAT); Lithuania (LTU); Netherlands (NED); South Africa (RSA); Switzerland (SUI).

2 well-known regular F2C contestants announced their permanganate retirement from high-level competition during this contest. Together with others known to me personally, I estimate that for various reasons there have been at least 8 permanent retirements of regular F2C contestants over the last couple of years or so. If the entry of 39 Senior pilots at this World Champs is "typical", then 8 retirements in 2 years is roughly speaking a loss of 10% per year.

How many newcomers (especially Juniors) are we seeing in the F2C circles each year? Do we gain anything even close to 10% newcomers per year? If not why not?

## 5 Individual Teams' "Categorisation"

But now we start with the really controversial stuff!

I have attempted to place the pilot of each individual Senior team into a single category based on 2 separate factors (Juniors are not categorised) - the *approximate* age; the level of F2C skill/fitness/experience.

According to how I have chosen to set up the categories, and according to which category I have decided to place each pilot, we now see the following, which is based on the total Senior entry at this last World Champs:

Category:	Explanation:	Number of entrants:
1	Age 18 to 30. Sufficient skills/fitness/experience	3
2	Age 18 to 30. Below standard skills/fitness/experience	2
3	Age "in his 30's". Sufficient skills/fitness/experience	8
4	Age "in his 30's". Below standard skills/fitness/experience	1
5	Age "in his 40's". Sufficient skills/fitness/experience	8
6	Age "in his 40's". Below standard capability/skills/fitness/experience	7
7	Age "in his '50's". Sufficient capability/skills/fitness/experience	5
8	Age "in his '50's". Below standard skills/fitness/experience	4
9	Over 60. Sufficient skills/fitness/experience	0
10	Over 60. Below standard skills/fitness/experience	1

Separately, I've also looked at (roughly) how long each of the teams have been flying F2C, simply categorising them as "A = less than 5 years experience"; "B= up to 10 years experience"; over "C = over 10 years experience". The results are:

Category:	Explanation:	Number of entrants
A	Less than 5 years in F2C	8 (inc. the 3 x Juniors) = 19% of the total entry
B	Up to 10 years in F2C	9 = 21% of the total entry
C	More than 10 years in F2C	25 = 59% of the total entry

But there are (of course) problems with this all these categorisations, for example:

Unless one has very many categories (maybe the 10 above are already a few too many?), there is always the problem of the "borderline case" - i.e. "Is Mr. X, who's just on the edge of having sufficient skills/fitness/experience, just *above* or just *below* that line?"

And again I *must* stress the points made in the opening of this paper - the above are purely my own categories and purely my own judgements. Clearly a lot could change in the above table simply by moving the age ranges and/or experience limits around a bit, never mind getting into the judgement/opinion area of "Has Mr. X really got enough skill, fitness, and experience to be able to fly competitive F2C?" "Or not?"

I know some of the pilots flying in this World Champs pretty well personally, so have a good idea of their ages (and by the way, their capabilities, temperament, fitness, experience, equipment, etc, etc). But other pilots are much less well known to me, so my estimates of their ages could easily be 5 or more years out one way or the other.

And certainly my (hopefully objective but nevertheless purely personal) assessment of their individual F2C capabilities are in some cases based on having judged them at many contests, but in a few cases my categorisations are based only on my having seen them fly F2C at these last World Champs. But even in the cases of those pilots who were strangers to me at this World Champs, please note that *all* the categorising of pilots I use here are based primarily on my official notes of each individual Warning and Disqualification (with the reasons) which I made in the Judges' Tower at the time each offence was committed.

But let's be quite clear here. Whatever the "justifications" put forward, the above categorisations are simply the "best guesses" of just one observer. They are certainly "arguable" in many cases. *And* I am certainly *not* going to put names against any of the above either!

But knowledgeable readers may like to take the World Champs entry list and using my categories as above, categorise the entrants themselves. I'm pretty confident that such lists wouldn't look radically different to my own.

## 6 Warnings and Disqualifications

Throughout the 3 x Qualifying Heats a total of 139 x Warnings and 18 x Disqualifications ("DQ's") were issued. This represents about 34% of the total Warnings that were arithmetically possible with this number of races and participants.

It should be noted that in percentage terms, the total of 33 x Warnings and 2 x DQ's issued during the 9 Semi-final races flown (includes 1 Re-flight) represents an increase to an average of 38%. Surprising (to me anyway), this is much the same/a little higher percentage compared to the Qualifying Heats.

A total of 6 of all the 20 x DQ's issued were based on the accumulation of 3 Warnings, including 1 of the total 2 x DQ's issued in the Semi-finals. That is 30% of all DQ's. The remaining 13 (70%) were for a single serious transgression of the rules.

But it should also be noted here that 7 of those 13 remaining DQ's, including 1 of the 2 x Semi-final DQ's, were all issued because a mechanic entered the circle beyond 50 cm to retrieve a model. This is a really silly way to "earn" a DQ for your team's official record, as in 99% of cases it is so much safer (and just as easy) for the pilot to use the lines to pull his model clear of the racing area. But the result of the mechanic entering the circle beyond 50 cm is a definite DQ, whereas if the pilot pulls the model clear that team's record simply reads "Did Not Finish – DNF - XX laps".

Finally, looking at the various Finals, the Juniors had a total of 2 x Warnings (1 each for the 2 teams finishing) plus 1 x DQ for the remaining team (again for the mechanic entering the circle beyond 50 cm).

The original Seniors Final had 1 team with a DNF at 34 laps, 1 team with a DNF at 35 laps, and 1 team with ZERO Warnings. As a result of an Official Protest which was upheld by the FAI Jury, 2 of the original teams qualifying for the original Final flew again.

In that Final Re-flight 1 team received 2 x Warnings and 1 team (the eventual winners) received ZERO Warnings - the same ZERO Warnings that this same team received in the original Final!

Now back into the controversial stuff again:

Looking at my notes on all the Warnings and DQ's issued during the 3 x Qualifying Heats and the 2 x Semi-finals, I see the following rough breakdowns:

Offence type:	Explanation:	Number committed:
"Safety"	such as "Model Landing Outside Circle/Pilot Foot Outside Circle" (before model in the Mechanic's hand), etc	7 (4% of the 168 total)
* "Mechanic's offences"	such as not standing upright at Count 3; touching the model before Count 0; lifting the model off the ground; etc; but <i>excluding</i> the above-discussed "Mechanic inside 50 cm" offences	8 (5% of the 168 total)
"Technical"	such as "Whipping"; "High Flying"; "Failure to take the proper pilot position while model on ground"; etc	44 26% of the 168 total)
	see next page	

"Interference/Blocking"	such as "Blocking" itself; "Behind Centre"; "Taking Centre"; "Pivoting", Failing to Overtake within 3 laps"; and "Pilot Interference" itself – i.e. holding on to another contestant/s for more than a lap or so	109 (65+% of the 168 total)
ALSO PLEASE NOTE:	of the above 109 offences, 63 of them – i.e. over half - were committed by pilots whom I have categorised in paragraph 5 above as being in one or more respects below the standards of skill/fitness/experience required for successfully competing in today's F2C	

\* And as already noted, a ridiculously high number of DQ's (7) were issued "just" for mechanics going inside the 50 cm circle.

## 7 Conclusions to be drawn

We all know at least a couple of the famous sayings about statistics, for example:- "There are lies, damned lies, and statistics". And:- "A man standing with one foot in the oven and the other in the deep freeze is statistically quite comfortable"!

So even more than the above caveats about the ages and skill/fitness/experience categorisations I have used, we all need to be *very* careful here. I'm not a statistician and have had absolutely NIL training in that discipline.

*But* despite these cautions it does seem to me that it would be quite reasonable and logical to draw the following conclusions from the above – in other words, all the above numbers most probably *do not* provide absolute proof of anything. *But* these numbers do seem to *indicate* that:

- There is a shortage of newcomers in F2C (especially Juniors);
- Many nations find it difficult to field 3 separate Senior teams who possess the necessary skill/fitness/experience required to be able to compete with some chance of success;
- The above 2 problems do not seem to be caused by a lack of suitable equipment availability (models, engines), but by various combinations of age and lack of fitness and lack of experience;
- Around 30% of all Warnings and DQ's issued would probably not have been issued at all if the offenders concerned had not been "overloaded" by reason of their lack of skill, fitness, experience or some combination of these compared with the level of skill/fitness/experience required to fly F2C *safely*!

For me there's a need to do something about these problems. Or can we – *really* – afford to just go on ignoring these problems. These are problems that more and more of us are now just muttering amongst ourselves about - or even worse, in a few cases, just voting with our feet and leaving F2C?

## 8 So where do we go now?

I would like to see inputs to the CIAM F2 Subcommittee and/or to F2CWG members from people with F2C knowledge and experience (*not* necessarily as contestants themselves) on the following questions:

- **Model airspeed needs to be reduced – Yes/No?**  
(*Please note:* At this stage there is no intention of discussing how airspeed should be reduced – at this stage we simply need to establish a consensus – or not)
- **As an alternative to reducing model airspeed, all races to be 2-ups – Yes/No?**
- **We do not need to do anything at all – F2C is fine just as it is - Yes/No?**
- Alternatively, and following on from Bruno Delor's recent paper, **we need to reduce F2C noise. Doing just this will solve the airspeed problem – Yes/No?**  
(*Again please note:* At this stage there is *no* intention to discuss how noise should be reduced – at this stage we simply need to establish a consensus principle – or not).

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