

# **BAeA Chief Judge Guidance Notes**

March 2012



These notes are intended as a brief introduction to the duties of the Chief Judge. However - please use the BAeA Operations Manual as your PRIMARY GUIDE!

## **The role of the Chief Judge:**

The BAeA nominates a Chief Judge to manage the judging panel at every aerobatic contest. Chief Judges are selected on the basis of experience and ability, and are expected to oversee all official matters relating to the conduct and performance of the judging team (judges, assistants and scribes) and the judging of sequence flights throughout the event in accordance with standing BAeA Rules – and CIVA Rules where this is appropriate.

The Chief Judge must also work closely with the Contest Director to ensure that, in all matters relating to sequence flight judging, the required standards are met and pilots can be assured that their marks and penalties are recorded in a fair and transparently correct manner.

## **Where to find the Rules**

The BAeA Rules (on the BAeA web – The Association > BAeA Publications page) and the current FAI / CIVA Sporting Code for Powered (Part-1) and Glider Aircraft Regulations (Part-2) provide the descriptive material you will need, to which you should add an up-to-date copy of the Aresti system so that you can resolve questions about the sequence figures themselves – if an Unknown or Unknown Free sequence is to be created at the event then the latter is essential.

## **What you're responsible for**

Whilst the CD carries the overall responsibility for all matters related to the operation of the contest, the CJ is responsible to him for the presence and conduct of the judges, the standard of their output, and the quality and timely return of all judging paperwork to the scorer.

Additionally if a cautionary or disciplinary matter arises relating to the airborne conduct of a pilot, or a pilot submits an official protest that must be settled, then the CJ is required either to assist the CD in resolving the matter, or having spoken to the CD should settle the matter directly with the pilot. Such incidents should also be reported to the BAeA Head of Contest Organisation (HCO) or the Chairman after the event is concluded.

## **Checks before arrival**

- Are enough judges with appropriate experience attending the event? You may have different conditions for Beginners (often on Friday, few judges required) compared to higher level classes on the Saturday and Sunday. Make a list / timetable if necessary. A record of their mobile telephone numbers would be very useful.
- Will any 'special' equipment or unusual hardware be required?

- Is your set of Rules and Aresti reference material up to date? Last years' pages just won't do, and it is all freely available on the internet so there's no excuse.
- Have you got appropriate clothes to meet British snow / hail / sunshine conditions, boots for muddy fields, sun-block and sunglasses etc.? Deck chairs, tables ... ?
- Contact the CD to check whether he/she has any specific instructions for the event.
- Your own assistant throughout the event is a key post – if you can select / nominate someone you know to be capable in this job your life will be much eased.
- It is highly preferable to have someone separately dedicated to handling all of the judging-line radio calls. This frees your attention for other more important things, and considerably improves local traffic awareness and subsequent radio discipline. If not you'll need to handle this between you and your assistant.

### **On arrival**

- Check with the CD to bring yourself up-to-date with all local circumstances. The likely start time of the first sequence is very important; it sets the target for your initial efforts.
- You'll need to know exactly where the competition box is and whether there are any "No-Go" areas around the box that might require policing via radio contact with contestants, where the judges may be positioned and how to get there – will it be across the airfield? Will Hi-Viz jackets be required? Is it muddy there? Are there toilet facilities?
- Find out the current weather situation – you'll need this information to settle the official box wind direction and strength and to finalise where the judges will be situated when you do your bit in pilots briefing.
- Check that all of your judges are en-route or have arrived.
- Try to assess whether there will be enough assistants/scribes, and make sure that 'free' people (pilots partners, hangers-on, interested local club people) are aware that their time and effort would be much appreciated at the judging line during the meeting.
- Get in touch with the scorer, and resolve / agree any particular requirements for the contest paperwork. The way the contest file is constructed to handle FairPlay is an important setting – for BAeA events this should be for a scoring CJ who submits a Form-A and a Flight Summary Sheet for every flight indicating CHZ, penalties awarded etc.. If you want to be non-scoring (you have enough judges?!) this is however easily arranged.

### **Your contribution to Pilots Briefings**

The Contest Director will probably ask you to handle:

- Description of the Performance Zone, ground markings (if any) and prominent features.
- The official Box wind, the main contest axis and direction and the location of the judges.
- Likely morning and afternoon changes to the above to cope with the sun etc.
- The permitted safety manoeuvres in each class.
- The permitted minimum and disqualification heights.
- Cloud base – current and continuing, and weather-break options that will be in force.

- Radio safety frequency handling by the judging line – how you will be controlling box entry and exit procedures, allowed query/response pilot updates regarding current circumstances, Break-Break-Break, Box-Box-Box and Land-Land-Land instructions.
- How you will handle delays caused by judging line conferences etc.
- Will you need a 'box flight' ? Instruct the initial pilot if necessary.
- Instruct your judges where to assemble immediately after the briefing, or they will all wander off and be quite hard to locate and assemble in time for the first flight.

### **After 1<sup>st</sup> briefing**

This is usually a very pressured period – be ready! Now you must begin to “manage” your judging team, so being assertive and a leader at this stage will bring valuable benefits throughout the event. Lose the initiative here, and you’ll find the ground hard to make up.

- Get your judges and assistants together – do NOT let them wander away. This will probably require some shouting and firm instructions! Judges who ‘drift off’ may be telling you how they’ll behave for the rest of the day.
- Make sure that all judges have assistants – some quick words with the CD will help enormously to boost the numbers here. If necessary he/she can ask pilots to help.
- Make sure that your team has enough chairs, umbrellas etc. to do the job.
- If the judging line is further than a few minutes’ walk away or can only be reached by crossing an aerodrome No-Go zone, get some transport organised. The judges will have their own vehicles, and the CD may be able to help here. You may need other permissions to access judging sites on or off the airfield.
- Collect the radios and spare batteries from the scoring office, and any other hardware necessary for your job.
- Ask your assistant to get the judging clipboards together, and to ensure that the CJ’s box of paperwork handling equipment has the necessary things in it – stapler, rubber bands, post-it notes, coloured pens, stop-watch, whistle, spare paper for notes etc..
- Send your team to the judging site well before the start time.

### **Before sequence flying starts**

You now have a one-off opportunity to get everyone together and set the tone for the day. Have an impromptu light-hearted quiz – ask around to see that the Perception Zero and Hard Zero rules are properly understood, what to do when figures are entirely missed from a flight, how to handle major errors, what judges must do when marking the figures to arrive at the right positioning mark after the flight. Ensure that they understand the need to respond immediately to your calls for a post-flight conference.

Get them to space their positions suitably apart – there may not be much room, and many other considerations can render the result far from perfect. The officially required judge separation is 15m, but far less than this will help you to keep in touch between each flight. You might prefer to have less experienced judges nearer to you – in all these matters just tell them what you need to see - YOU ARE THE MANAGER!

## Managing judging team standards

All aerobatic judging involves the recording of opinions drawn from fleeting technically complex events by people with widely differing skill sets, and you will undoubtedly see differences of opinion between your judges. It's a good idea to be assertive during the initial flights; get all the judges together in a circle a few times, compare their marks and ask them why they gave them. These are key opportunities to delve into the judging rules and clarify all sorts of misunderstandings, clarify areas that are poorly understood, and reinforce basic aspects of their responsibilities. Be 'kind' if judges make silly mistakes, they'll learn better if they are given the space and dignity to recover from their errors. These situations occur all the way to international unlimited judging, and the same handling skills always pay the best dividends.

## Flight Safety and Pilot control

As Chief Judge you are responsible for maintaining awareness of the position of each contestant from the moment of take-off until the sequence is complete or aborted and the aeroplane departs from the box area, and either personally or through your Radio Operator must use the allotted Safety Frequency to make appropriate calls to control them. Apart from calling pilots into the box, or perhaps advising them to stay clear if the previous pilot has not yet finished, three potentially dangerous situations will require rapid and clear RT instruction from you:

- A non-contest aeroplane flies towards or into the box:  
Call "**Break! Break! Break!**" then advise the pilot regarding the location and track of the conflicting traffic as soon as possible. This call may also be given if the contestant's flight becomes unacceptably low and in your view a break for re-positioning is necessary.
- The contestant's aeroplane has a problem you can see:  
Call "**Land! Land! Land!**" and when the pilot has recovered the aeroplane to erect flight give brief details if requested regarding the nature and extent of the suspected problem. This call also applies if you feel the flight has become dangerous and should be aborted, but in this case no explanation should be given until the pilot is on the ground.
- The contestant's aeroplane enters a "No Fly" area:  
Call "**Box! Box! Box!**" and when the pilot has recovered the aeroplane to erect flight give suitable advice regarding the no-go location and the re-positioning required.

## Pilot discipline

From time to time a pilot will transgress some area of the BAeA's rules, for instance by low or dangerous flying, disregarding some explicit CD or CJ instruction, poor airmanship etc.. It is important that these events are handled discreetly but in a forthright manner, usually by asking the pilot concerned to attend a private meeting – possibly with the CD in attendance – so that the incident can be discussed in sufficient detail to arrive at an appropriate conclusion.

- ➔ If the pilot is absolved of any wrongdoing or the incident is explained without the need for discipline and the pilot remains active at the event, keeping the discussion private and avoiding unnecessary embarrassment or humiliation will be critically important.
- ➔ It may be simply that some common sense observations should be firmly given, but occasionally a more serious misdemeanour must be aired and resolved. The latter may necessarily lead to disqualification of the pilot from the sequence or even the whole event, in which case giving him/her time to fully answer your allegations is essential.

- Make sure that the CD is kept fully advised, and also that the BAeA HOC or the Chairman get a thorough explanation – preferably written – after the event.

### Don't let your judges change their marks!

The current FairPlay scoring system requires judges to leave marks unchanged, even when there has been a post-flight discussion and clearly some judges have made the 'wrong decision'. The CJ is however allowed to change selected PZ's to HZ under specific circumstances (see CIVA 5.3.4.2). Making sure that your judges leave 'errors' unchanged will help them to remember the occasion, and will serve to reinforce their own understanding of the 'correct' solution.

### Zeros and Averages

When to use the Perception Zero and when to use the Hard Zero is an important area, and when differences between judges arise you'll need to go over the fundamental rules each time to get them understood. In circumstances where a judge is uncertain about any key aspect of a figure then he/she should always be encouraged to give an 'A'. This is the right solution!

### The Positioning and Harmony marks

We now teach simple and practical methods for assessing the positioning mark, and if possible you should run through each judges own system at some stage during the early part of the day. The Harmony mark is simply an opinion based on the harmonious qualities of the flight, required only at glider events. Seek advice from the book!

### Collate and check all Form-A's after every flight, and decide the official CHZ's

We strongly urge you to get your assistant to collect all judges' sheets after every flight. This is not a difficult task, and timely paperwork collection forms the basis for your next essential duty: completing the Flight Summary Sheet on which you must record Confirmed Hard Zero's (CHZ) where necessary.

Get your assistant to staple the sheets together in judge number order with a blank Flight Summary Sheet at the top.

Be clearly aware that you as Chief Judge must complete the Flight Summary Sheet that records the CHZ's that drive the FairPlay system to set a figure to all HZ or not – the old 'majority rules' approach went out years ago! Check through your Judges Form-A's for HZ's, Low's etc. to get a good feel for their views. If there is disagreement about HZ's you must quickly talk to the minority 'dissenters' or get them all together for a quick chat so that an all-Judges solution is agreed. Don't leave this too long – memories and time are short. Mark the relevant figures as CHZ, or leave the column blank where the figure is OK, and add any agreed penalties. Finally – initial the sheet to show that you have signed it off to be sent to the scorer. The scorer uses ONLY this sheet to drive these inputs, not the Form-A's.

When the scorer's runner collects the sets of paperwork they must be stapled together in sets as above. This will ensure

- a) that all the sheets are there (you did check, didn't you!) and
- b) that they are in the right order for swift computer entry.

Flight Summary Sheet		
Flight #:	Pilot:	
Figure:	CHZ:	Penalties:
1	X	Too Low
2		Too High
3		Box Out
4		Interruptions
5		Insertions
6		Mixed Slot
7		Training Violation
8		Wing Rocks
9		Disqualified (fig?)
10		Other
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
Comments		
CJ Initials		

## **Video**

At key events we video-record all flights, where necessary to help judges determine the 'correct' resolution to disagreements about HZ decisions. The video should be available to any judge who asks for it. It is there to resolve matters of fact, not PZ's – these are matters of perception. However a Judge can NOT give an "A" (average) and then ask to see the video!

## **Post-sequence judging analysis sheets**

The ACRO contest scoring system will provide analysis sheets for each judge when the sequence is finished, and another sheet that collates the essential details together for the CJ. Used carefully these sheets can show where a judge may be giving marks that differ significantly from the other judges. They do require personal explanation however, so don't give them out without some personal time to explain what it all means and to answer any queries.

## **Protests**

The BAeA Rules provide the basis for pilots' protests, and fortunately these are extremely rare. The CD will formally handle any protests submitted, and of course where the subject matter involves a query relating to a judging line decision then the CJ's advice will be sought. Strict adherence to the current BAeA Rules is paramount in these events, but where there is any doubt the decision should always be in the pilots' best interest.

## **Free sequence acceptance**

Although we do not usually check Free sequences at national events, it is possible that an error in construction may come to light – or that a poorly drawn sequence (even in Visio or OLAN) can give rise to ambiguity in the judging line paperwork. Always give the pilot the benefit of the doubt where appropriate, but if necessary an offending figure must be marked HZ if it is not flown or un-flyable.

## **Post event reporting**

Not really necessary at national events, but if the event status or some incident demands one then a short report to the BAeA HOC or the Chairman should be made.

## **And finally!**

Always remember that the good conduct of BAeA officials provides the foundation for excellence in all aspects of our events. You're on show, whether you like it or not. You're also there because you earned the position, so enjoy the privilege and make an effort to turn in the best performance that you can.

For your first event as Chief Judge you can always arrange to have an experienced mentor.

*NHB*

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