

FINAL F3J FESTIVAL FOR RULES MARK ONE

BABENHAUSEN - 15/16 SEPTEMBER 2018

What promises to be a “sweet and sour” weekend of Contest Eurotour flying before the new F3J rules allowing winch towing instead of two-man hand towing come into force - January 2019 - will take place weekend September 15/16 September in Babenhausen just a little way south of Frankfurt.

Why sweet and sour?

After the biggest set of rule changes by CIAM in Lausanne since the stake was banned, many dedicated pilots, with their deep tradition of friendship and fun, say that the winch and new rules spell the end.

Entry numbers tell a similar tale. Contest Eurotour F3J entry numbers are down to less than 200 in total compared with more than 600 in previous years. In many countries F3J meetings are being cancelled. That is the “sour”.

One compensation in this sad tale is that F5J is booming. Entry numbers have passed 500 and growing. Pilots who have resisted using propellers and electric motors to launch are expressing surprise at how exciting it is to learn new skills and strategies.

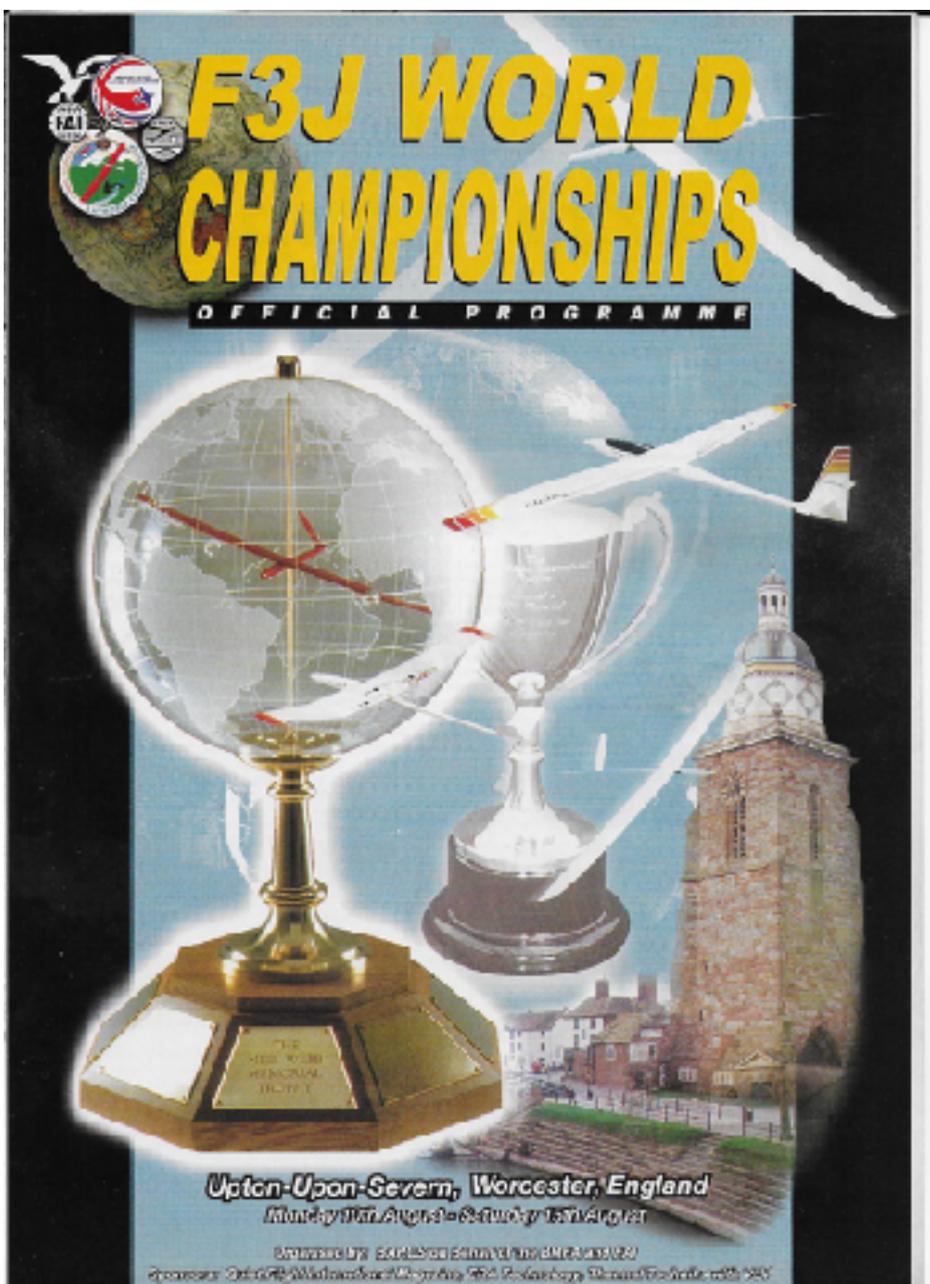
When Philip Kolb heard about the rule changes, he hit upon the idea of encouraging F3J pilots old and new to get together for a final celebration of 21 years of FAI contests and FAI championships under Mark 1 rules, a chance for everyone to enjoy a great reunion, keen competition with plenty of beer and stories old and new. Babenhausen is also the last contest in the 2018 Contest Eurotour series and the new champion will be crowned. That is the “sweet”!

Philip’s call for an F3J farewell party did not go down well at the start: even his good friend Stephan Lammlein described his idea as nonsense. “We must make ourselves strong and press for better rules.” Darius Mahmoudi thought Philip’s idea was counterproductive at uncertain times for F3J.

Philip backtracked a little. “Let’s call it a retro meeting for F3J and attract as many ex-F3J pilots to come - including me.” Babenhausen is a contest for the F3J family to get together again, and as Erel Cankan says, “if all of us in the family wants, we will find a way to put things back on track again!”

At the time of writing 90+ pilots have entered for the two days. Let’s all hope that the weather is kind. The new flying site is planned to allow 120 pilots to compete, so there is still a chance to enter. Flying or spectating come along and help everyone celebrate in style and joy.

Cheering our world champions



What are our reminiscences? Let’s start with F3J world champions,

Starting with 1998 at Upton upon Severn, the winner was Joe Wurts, still flying today in various classes, and still standing on podiums and revered world-wide, always ready to give expert advice. The start of World Championships as opposed to European friendships.

Two years later the championships were on the island of Corfu, troubled a little by smoking forest fires and won by Jan Kohout from the Czech Republic. He plays a lovely guitar repertoire but was tempted out of thermal flying a few years later by mountaineering.

Next stop was Finland in Lappeenranta where a worthy winner was Arend Borst from Canada who almost won in 1998, and appropriate since the next world championships were already booked for Canada.

2004 Red Deer was a chance for teams to experience the Rockies and compete on a sod farm. The week was almost marred by a typhoon which managed to uproot one of two giant marquees held down by three metre scaffold tubes which were just ripped out of the ground as the cover blew nearly 200 metres and almost onto the main highway. Winner this time was David Hobby from Australia flying in his first F3J contest with no track record in this class. In his job he did fly remote-controlled drones across the Atlantic, a true professional.

Back into Europe for the 2006 worlds and flying in Martin, Slovakia one of the worlds most beautiful model flying sites. What happened? David Hobby won again, and not only that, in the fly offs he had a mid-air which increased the dihedral on the port tip by 20 degrees and tore the surfaces. but he still flew some 400 metres to land safely near the landing spot. he was so far ahead by this point that he didn't even need his reflight to become champion again.

One country, Turkey, had been F3J keen from the start and had set new standards in how well contests could be organised and managed. The reward was being chosen for the 2008 world championships and again flew on a pristine sod farm at Adazapari. The winner was Benedikt Feigl, younger brother of Sebastian Feigl who had won a team world medal two years before, and son of Peter Feigl who flew models and full-size gliders. The three man Feigl team was and still is a notable force to be reckoned with.

The next world event was in France in Dole Jura, 2010, and although the flying site was not ideal, the food, wine and activities were great. Daryl Perkins who had been world champion some four times in the F3B class became world champion in F3J, much to his delight and my surprise. I had

always reckoned mistakenly that Daryl did not have the same keenness for J as B. US teams was selected after one trial contest, not a series or league, and Daryl until 2009 had never gained a team place. But his competitive spirit was not deterred. He came and conquered. Since then he has been the driver for F3J in the United States and encouraging to keep it alive and kicking.

The world championships in 2012 moved to a new continent, held in South Africa at Kempton Park, still flown in mid summer and so that the weather was a testing mix of snow, wind and cold in the Southern Hemisphere .

The event was well organised in an exciting country by Michelle and Craig Goodrum and yet another win for Benedikt Feigl. This was the first WCs that I missed, but I was lucky because I cannot take cold. Vladimir Gavrylko recounted that he looked forward to getting back to his hotel to thaw out, only to find that the bath taps were running cold too!

In 2014 the world championships returned to Slovakia and Martin and a new young pilot with the widest of smiles, Jany Littva became world champion. He was to become one of the young pilots with skills that left the established oldies wondering what they could do to match the pilot skills and reactions.

Slovenia has always held a strong reputation in the F3J circuit with its beautiful and unique flying site in Bovec, surrounded by a wide bowl of mountains. Sadly the sports airport there was lost to models when a new road widening scheme chopped off space. But the site at Vipava is almost as good, just as friendly and blessed with good wines. Champion of the world in 2016 was Arijan Hucaljuk from Croatia, another youngster with a shy smile, a man who seems to smell thermal lift that others cannot see, a man who stands with his feet forming a V-sign around the landing spot and 9 times out of 10 puts the nose down on the spot.

And finally in 2018 the world championships moved to Romania, to Brasov where Arijan Hucaljuk won again, just one of a series of trophies in F5J and F3K which Arijan has won over the last few weeks over the summer.

In his comments last week about the Dupnitsa F5J first European Championships, Graham Wicks reports that Arijan's launch height was 14

metres in one slot, he sank to 7 metres and then thermalled to fly out the slot. What a pilot, another win!

Having reached the end of the list of F3J world champions, the feature which intrigues me is that there are three pilots who have won twice, David, Benedikt and Arijan which is remarkable considering the number of excellent highly skilled pilots from so many countries, any of whom could have triumphed, but these three have something extra. What?

Who will be flying in Babenhausen's F3J Festival?

Not surprisingly most of the entries are from Germany, this year's end of the Eurotour, and many of these pilots are not people I recognise to date. I hope they will excuse me if I stick to people I know, some going back to when F3J started.

Dieter Rybold will be flying along with Knut Bundgen, one of the organisers, Robert Braune has a strong track record and I am pleased to see lady pilots Catharina Schmidtkunz and junior Carolin Weihe. Stefan Hollein will be flying the flag along with Ryan. A keen sponsor/pilot/guru is Thomas Rossner of Servorahmen fame who enjoys beer and seems to turn up at all the best competitions all over the world. Helmut Rohner is another pilot who flies everywhere, takes lots of photographs and make puzzles on Facebook, and always tells me off - "Sydney, du weiss ich spreche kein Englisch."

Next on the list of pilots is the inspiration for this Festival, Philip Kolb who sadly is transferring his loyalties to bigger and better classes of glider models. Karl Hinsch has flown with Philip for many a year. Stephan Lammlein will be there although at this point his son Tobi who now lives and flies for Switzerland, a former German junior world champion. I remember his mother Gabi going shopping in Lappeenranta because she could not put up with the stress of watching Tobi in the flyoffs.

Jany Littva and his father Dr Jan Littva are entered, Cederic Duss a more recent star pilot, Jaroslav Vostrel of the Pike family, Martin Rajsner another star, Christian Keulerz, Felix and Willi Parsch, Christian and Manuel Reinecke and the keenly competitive Dominik Prestele. Darius

Mahmoudi will fly as well as report I suspect for Aufwind. We shall also be pleased to see Arijan Hucaljuk, no doubt keen to add to his 2018 prizes. I am also delighted that Erel Cankan and Salahi Tezel will be flying in from North Cyprus to fly the Turkish flag.

Italy could not be left out and Marco and Giuseppe Generali along with the Gallizia family Giuseppe, Carlo and Marco. I am especially pleased to see Vladimir Gavrilko and Oleksandr Chekh from Ukraine, but there will not be time over the weekend to assemble the swimming pool.

That's the list as it stands at the time of writing. There could be and I hope there will be more to come. Apologies again to those pilots I don't recognise.

I do not know how Tomas Bartovsky found out that I was intending to attend Babenhausen, but he did ask me to pass on his best regards to the F3J family and all his friends. I do know that Tomas is a firm believer that F3J will survive and thrive, and will get over the rule changes. "There will always be those keen pilots who wish to become champions!"

Finally I am sure that many of us will have lost friends who have passed away over the last 20 years, friends who shared the same enthusiasms and dedication to F3J. I should like to remember Mustafa Koc, Otto Barvels, Utz Giesa, and Hans Fischer, and if my memory was better, others too.

Uncle Sydney - really gossiping for the last time. 2 September 2018