

Safety, Expedited and Presidents Proposals, and Discussion Topic 2024

The following proposals to the CIVA 2024 Plenary Conference together with one open discussion topic cover areas that I view as being of strategic importance to creating a secure and progressive future for the aerobatic commission.

Plenary is invited to debate each item, and agreed outcomes should be used where appropriate to adjust CIVA regulations and its forthcoming programmes.

Proposal #1 – Early release of Flight Video Recordings

It is becoming increasingly clear that release of flight videos during or after each flight or at most after each programme can provide a major benefit to competitors and is positively supportive of media considerations. We can see through our social media platforms that such videos can provide a significant attraction to the sport from the publicity viewpoint. The need for reliable high quality videos of all flights is obvious and becoming ever more valuable than in the past.

The proposal:

We should therefore revise the wording of Section-6 Parts 1 para 4.5.5.1 final sentence (part-2 similarly) regarding release of official video recordings from –

“After the completion of the championships, the recording may be released by the Organiser for use in training.”

To either (i) -

“During each competitor’s flight the video recording may be streamed for public viewing”

or (ii) –

“After each competitor’s flight and all subsequent considerations by the judging panel are complete, the flight video recording may be released for publication.”

or (iii) –

“After the conclusion of the official protest period for each programme in a championship, all flight video recordings may be released for publication.”

This will allow CIVA to organise upload of all such video recordings to a suitable online platform so that everyone will be able to view them. A review of appropriate online video platforms shows for example that Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com/>) offers a good service for this purpose at the relatively low cost of circa 200 CHF per annum, thereby providing the basis for a permanent and growing resource of highly beneficial media and training material that would be freely available to all. This costing is included in the 2025 CIVA budget, and steps will be taken to implement its use.

Proposal #2 – CIVA should take over responsibility for the video operation

For historic reasons the video operator and camera equipment that we rely on to resolve matters of fact at championships when required has always been an organiser cost and responsibility. The organiser must provide an experienced operator who will be on-site throughout the event with a suitable camera, tripod and a quantity of SD cards to record every flight from take-off to final wing-wag and, when necessary, is required to display selected video(s) through an organiser-supplied monitor or projector for the judging panel to review and determine whether the competitor flew without a major error – or should receive a Confirmed HZ from the whole panel.

Sometimes we have found the video operator has insufficient experience for this demanding task in an aerobatic environment, and/or that the quality of the video equipment provided is not good enough, and also that the video recordings are successively over-written during the event or simply lost afterwards.

To make acceptable recordings the operator must –

- Ensure the aeroplane is in good focus throughout (i.e. infinity focus, not always maintained)
- Keep the zoom relatively tight so that intimate aircraft attitude and motion details are clear, but wide enough that the aeroplane is kept within the picture at all times
- Make sure that the aeroplane is adequately centred and stable within the picture frame, otherwise it can be difficult for judges to clearly resolve matters of fact

The proposal:

Bearing in mind that we send at least 7 judges + 7 assistants + 1 CJ + up to 2 assistants = 17 people to every event, with travel funded by CIVA and the accommodation fully covered by the organiser, I propose that we should -

- Reduce the number of judges by one (therefore to 6 individual judges and their assistants)
- Make the Chief Judge a scoring judge to maintain the marks at 7 for each figure, and then
- Add 1 experienced video operator + 1 assistant to our team, their TA being paid by CIVA but as CIVA officials their accommodation and food provided by the organiser

Strictly speaking the change of CJ duties to scoring Chief Judge is not essential, but in the opinion of many CJ's this would be an easy and fair adjustment with an **unchanged budget** for both CIVA and the organiser. Importantly control of the video operation is entirely transferred to CIVA, and in this way -

1. The judging standard is unchanged (7 marks per figure for FPS to work with)
2. The CJ's job is slightly broader but with the usual two assistants is completely acceptable
3. The scoring system is unaffected, HZ decisions are confirmed or denied from panel agreements
4. The cost to CIVA is unchanged, and most importantly -
5. CIVA takes control of the video operation and the organiser loses this troublesome task

We can easily fund a suitable video camera and tripod from the W GPA reserve plus an appropriate travelling case, and add it to the 2025 Vimeo server space + uploading task that is already in the budget for 2025. A StarLink satellite broadband system may also be required to facilitate uploads from remote locations. It should not be too difficult to find and nominate video operators who have the necessary familiarity with aerobatic operations from within our community; an offer to carry out one such duty has already been received from experienced US Nationals videographer Forrest Fox. A shopping list of suitable video equipment has been attempted but requires further work.

Proposal #3 – Replace the Hard Zero in flick-roll, spin and tail-slide judgements with a downgrade

Consider: Judges must use the HZ to zero any figure that in their opinion has failed to meet a critically important requirement. Unless the HZ is unanimous a re-assessment of the suspected failure must be made post-flight using the video recording, and can include for example –

- a) A 'wrong' figure (i.e. not as drawn) has been flown
- b) The figure entry or exit direction(s) are incorrect
- c) One or more necessary roll hesitations have been omitted
- d) Paired roll directions are incorrect (i.e. are not 'same' or 'opposite')
- e) In a rolling turn the roll direction is incorrect
- f) A tail slide falls in the wrong direction
- g) Required positive or negative flight paths or flick type are incorrect

Following elimination of the PZ the judge is required to impose an HZ when he/she observes –

- h) That a flick-roll displays insufficient pitch or yaw and the autorotation may be false
- i) That a spin begins without a clearly identifiable stall -> wing-drop -> autorotation
- j) That a tail slide appears not to slide backwards sufficiently

where in each case it is not possible for the panel to prove or deny that the 'HZ threshold' has been reached or exceeded from the video recording. The competitor may therefore receive a Hard Zero for the entire figure based on an unprovable opinion concerning just one part of it. In all other CIVA judging criteria downgrades for identified faults in each part of a figure are assembled cumulatively up to a maximum of 10.0, at which point it naturally has zero value. In a high-K figure with many judged elements a poorly flown flick-roll or spin or a doubtful tail-slide must currently destroy the mark for the entire figure, whereas in other situations every element is separately addressed and the final downgrade represents a well-structured overall opinion.

The proposal:

Instead of applying the HZ when any of items h) to j) above are detected I propose that a numeric downgrade of at least 2.0 and at most 4.0 points should be awarded. The amount of downgrade applied should be adjusted to match the severity of the incorrectness observed.

This change will provide the following clear benefits –

- Judges will be able to grade every aspect of figures that include a poorly executed flick-roll, spin or tail-slide in a valid and progressive manner
- Competitors will receive a score for the remainder of the figure instead of a mandatory zero
- Judges will be free of pressure to consider the probable marks of other panel members, and will award grades based solely upon the sum of individual errors successively identified

Proposal #4 – Create a new World Champion Trophy for Unlimited category events

The Aresti Cup that is traditionally awarded to the World Champion at the conclusion of each Unlimited category power World Championships for performance in the classic programmes has not been obtainable by WAC organisers for some years, and has been presumed held by the Aresti family to enable necessary repairs to be carried out.

During recent enquiries by CIVA Aresti Committee chairman Jim Bourke however we have been informed that after being held for some years by the Real Aero Club de España in its offices, the cup has now been passed to Colonel Aresti's son Jose Luis Aresti Mugica. Jim is currently in communications with the son to establish how best to move forward, with helpful guidance from the Spanish delegate.

We should note here that the Aresti Cup is a large and heavy item, and there may not currently be a suitable travelling case available for it. It is certainly a magnificent and worthy trophy, though in terms of its probable fragility, size and weight could be deemed unsuitable for travel to each WAC and unlikely to ever represent a practical "take home" item for successive World Champions. The replacement must therefore be transportable to the recipient's home base, like other CIVA trophies are.



The proposal:

A move is therefore being considered to design and create a new trophy that will henceforward be used for this purpose, on the assumption that the original cup donated to FAI in 1964 by Colonel Jose Luis Aresti and first presented to Tomas Castaño of Spain will remain effectively unavailable. This should be undertaken by encouraging the submission of design proposals for a new / replacement trophy, possibly with CIVA funding, leading to selection of an approved solution that would then be constructed by a designated manufacturer.

Proposal #5: Luxembourg, Safety: To remove double negative loop figures from programmes 2, 3 and 4

Luxembourg submitted a safety proposal to the SWG in July 2024 with the wish for it to be presented at CIVA Plenary 2024 in Athens.

Safety proposal for the next CIVA meeting 2024 from Luxembourg CIVA Delegate Cyrial Talon:

In Sporting Code 6 Part 1 A.12. A13. Family 7.8. in Unlimited, remove all the figures which contain two negative loop elements.

Rationale:

At the last UK national championships, figures of this type were present in the Known and in the Unknown programmes. Such figures require to be flown with quite high negative g-load (around -5g) for long periods of time. This could lead, after a long career in Unlimited, to potential ear, eyes and brain damage.

The SWG had many exchanges on this topic and discussed it extensively at the last Zoom meeting on the 9th of October 2024. The repeated practicing over many years of such figures could indeed cause the “wobblies”, inner ear, eyes and brain damage.

The conclusion was that the SWG supports the Luxembourg proposal in the interest of the pilot’s long-term health and safety and it is submitting a more precise version in this President’s proposal.

The proposal:

For programmes 2, 3 and 4 in all categories, in Sporting Code 6 Part 1 A.12. A13., the following figures are not allowed:

- A.12. 7.8.3.2
- A.12. 7.8.3.3
- A.12. 7.8.4.2
- A.12. 7.8.4.3
- A.12. 7.8.6.1
- A.12. 7.8.6.4
- A.13. 7.8.8.2
- A.13. 7.8.8.3

(see pages 6+7 here for reference)

Topic for open discussion: “Other Teams”

The competition structure of FAI and its commissions is based on a fundamental principle that competitors who are citizens or residents of a country can be authorised to compete by their national airport control (NAC) and granted an FAI Sporting License from the same source. Consequently individuals and teams are representatives of their nation. A competitor may also apply directly to FAI to receive a Sporting Licence if their NAC is unable to do this, provided the NAC is not under suspension or if the competitor’s country has no NAC. In these cases the competitor represents the FAI rather than their

country, and is normally obliged to operate under a neutral flag; at CIVA events such a competitor will compete “Hors Concours”.

The underlying principle expressed in the following suggestion is that we should consider the following order of precedence in all aviation sporting matters:

1. The primary focus of FAI is **Air Sport**
2. To create an environment suitable for sporting competitions we need local distributed management centres, to be established by FAI members or NACs
3. FAI itself must provide a coordinated structure of regulations for the above to operate within, including a top-level licensing system and sport-specific commissions to manage each area

It is therefore the Air Sport that must receive our keenest attention, in our case aerobatics, and the 2nd and 3rd items above are there to provide the necessary foundations for the air sport to thrive.

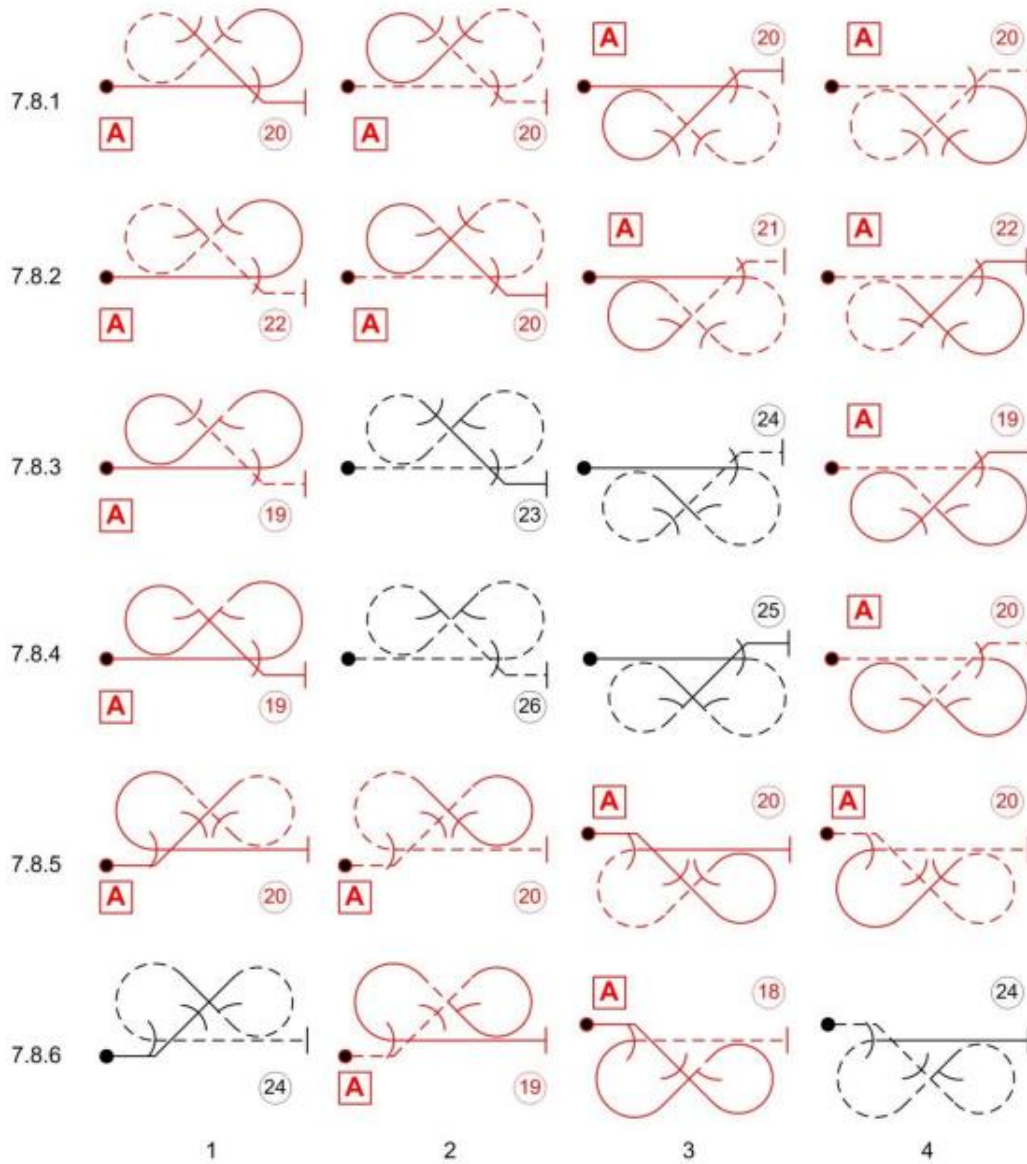
Following suggestions from various sources I am investigating whether the FAI Sporting Code could be extended to make it possible for competitors to form themselves into other groups in order to represent an alternative entity. This would make a creative name for the group possible, or it could be titled to represent a commercial benefactor wishing to support the group for their own purposes. This would raise the prospect of for example of a “Team Coca-Cola” or a “Team RayBan” in the same manner that Sky have supported cycling and Emirates play a role in the Americas Cup yachting world. This move would open the way for commissions to levy appropriately raised sanction fees for such competitors and teams, elevated entry fees for organisers to benefit from, and more importantly provide a clear marketing route for the team operators to significantly promote the media aspects of the relationship that would greatly enhance the profile of aerobatics to the obvious benefit of CIVA.

I would stress that this potential restructuring of the FAI Sporting Code is currently at the discussion stage, with a request by FAI to provide a potentially suitable form of words for review by the Executive Board en-route to wider consideration by FAI members and delegates. The notion that teams might be created as parallel entities to those based upon national foundations may seem daring, but crucially it opens the door to far better financial support coupled to clear opportunities for modern media representation and commercial exploitation of the sport itself.

Nick Buckenham
CIVA President
October 2024



A.12. Family 7.8.1 To 7.8.6

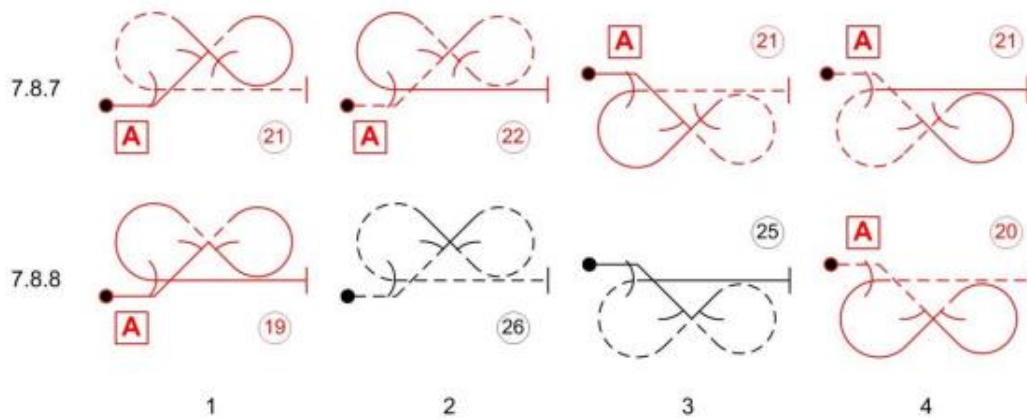


A.12.1.1. All Categories: No flick rolls permitted on the horizontal entry lines of figures in columns 1 and 2, of 7.8.1 to 7.8.4.

A.12.1.2. All Categories: No flick rolls permitted on the horizontal exit lines of figures in columns 1 and 2, of 7.8.5 and 7.8.6.



A.13. Family 7.8.7 To 7.8.8



A.13.1.1. All Categories. No flick rolls permitted on the horizontal exit lines of figures in columns 1 and 2, of 7.8.7 and 7.8.8.