

FAI World Helicopter Championship 2005

Report on conduct of FAI CIG Jury President

On Thursday 18th August, the day of the “Long Navigation with Timed Arrival and Load Drop Off”, I was judging at the finish line area.

My responsibilities were:-

- 1) to confirm that the Crews were correctly seated with their harnesses fastened – see Event Rules & Regulations 1.14.5
- 2) to confirm that no unsafe manoeuvres were carried out between the finish line and the parking area – see Event Rules & Regulations 1.16.4

The end of the task consisted of dropping the Skittle through the Dog House roof followed by landing in the designated area to the south west of the Dog House.

After dropping his skittle Competitor 17, a German registered Schweizer, began to move in the wrong direction to the north east. Some 30 metres to the north east of the Dog House was an official seated on a chair with his hands on his lap. As the helicopter approached this official, he raised his hands, but not his elbows, from his lap and gesticulated to the pilot that he should move in the opposite direction. The pilot turned and did so.

I approached this official and said that I needed to take his photograph and returned to my previous position to consult with fellow judges. Although no one else saw the signal, no one doubted me and it was agreed that the official should be asked to leave the field and the matter be reported to the Chief Judge.

As I walked over to the official he was already walking as to leave the field. I approached him and said that I had seen him signalling to the previous competitor. His reply was that he had been asleep and had seen nothing. I put it to him again that he had been signalling to the competitor and that this was not permitted. His next reply was to acknowledge that he had been signalling but that as the competition was over for the competitor at that point it was of no consequence. I disagreed and said “I have to ask you to leave the field”.

He replied “ You must be f***ing crazy, do you know who I am?”. My response was that it did not matter who he was, he was wrong about the rules and wrong to signal to competitors. Again “You must be f***ing crazy, I wrote the f***king rules”.

Notwithstanding the verbal onslaught I insisted that he was wrong. He then gave yet another justification for his action - flight safety. I said that I could see no flight safety issue involved. He said that the competitor had been moving across the taxiway towards the arrivals line. This was not correct. At no point did the fuselage of the Competitor approach let alone cross the centreline of the taxiway.

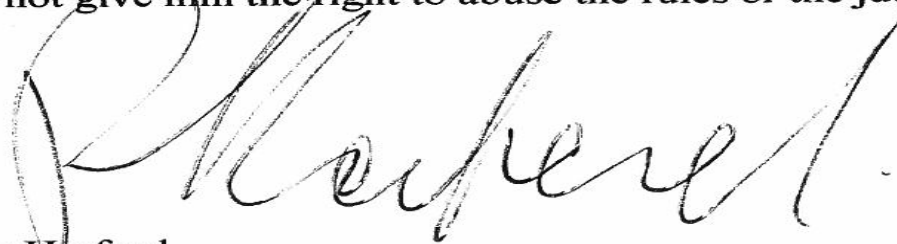
I chose not to continue this abusive conversation further and returned to my judging area whilst he left the field.

Consulting again with fellow judges it seemed that the best course of action was to record this incident on the Scoring Sheet and report the matter to the Chief Judge when convenient. Several other judges verified that there had been no compromise of flight safety either actual or potential.

Shortly afterwards whilst passing through the Judges Briefing Room I happened upon Wolfgang Perplies, the Chief Judge. I discussed the incident with him and showed him the photograph which I had taken. He identified the official as Fredi Herbert, the President of the Jury, and said that he would take the matter up with him.

Returning to the field I observed Wolfgang speaking to Fredi Herbert for some 30 minutes.

At the lunch break Fredi Herbert sought me out and said that I had in fact been correct in my interpretation of the rules. He then went on to say that his signalling had been a matter of flight safety as the competitor was straying over the taxiway and into the arrivals area. This was completely incorrect and I refuted it. At this point he said that if I took the matter further he would make sure that I never judged at an international event again. I told him that his position did not give him the right to abuse the rules or the judges.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Harford', written in a cursive style.

Roy Harford

UK International Judge

Former Chairman of Helicopter Club of Great Britain, former winner of British Helicopter Championship, current Board Director of HCGB