

## F5J European Championships 2024.

A report of the F5J EC from my perspective.

The journey to get to the flying site was not uneventful. Upon arrival in Romania, our first job was to pick up the 2 seven seater cars that we had booked & paid for. This was not to be the case, because when we went to collect the cars, we were told that they were no longer available because they had been booked for 10 am & it was now 1pm.

We did end up getting a full refund, but that was no help at the time. So, straight back to the airport & into the Hertz rental desk. The only vehicle which they had available to suit our needs was a 9 seat transit, which we gladly accepted, it was dearer, but we no longer had a choice. In fact the van suited us admirably. Lesson learned---- beware of super cheap car rental firms.

There followed a fairly easy drive along mostly good quality roads to our self catering digs in Deva, ready to get settled in & find our bearings the following day.

We had timed things so that we could have a full day's practice at the airfield before the start of the pre comp. This allowed us to assemble our models & sample the conditions.

The day was warm, indeed hot, but with a modicum of a breeze. Cengiz in particular flew all day with every model in his armoury, the rest of us flew sufficiently to check out the models and the conditions.

It appeared that sometimes one could launch low and not fail to get into lift, while other times sink was prevalent. The trick would be to recognise the air before launching.

We formed an alliance with Peter Zweers of the Netherlands & Erel Cankan of North Cyprus, both of whom had come as sole representatives of their respective countries. This was to be mutually beneficial to us all, affording help where otherwise we may have struggled.

The social side of things gave Rick, Josh & Cengiz the giggles, although I of course remained stoic ( in my position of team manager).

Next day was the first round of the Euro Tour Pre Comp, a 2 day event which serves as a shake down for the organisation, as well as competition practice for us.

The CD for this event (& also the EC) was Sotir Lazarkov, an FAI official of note, who can be relied upon to give firm, no nonsense decisions on all matters affecting the competition. He made it clear that dangerous flying would not be tolerated.

The Euro Tour comp proved to be a good learning curve for us all. Conditions in the afternoon changed from gentle widespread lift to more sporadic lift and sink conditions, followed by evening lift suiting models flying at FAI minimum weight limit.

We all learned from the day, which made the pre comp well worth entering. The major exception being Rick, who had 2 mid airs, but he was able to affect good repairs before the start of the main event.

Saturday heralded 2 more rounds, followed by the flyoff. Our Friend Peter made the flyoff, I came 20<sup>th</sup> (with 97.7 %) which shows how tight things were.

The flyoff demonstrated that even the best can come unstuck with Arijan Hucaljuk scoring 3 zeros, after having demonstrated a 3 metre launch & getaway in the earlier rounds. Also the current world champion Adrien Gallet doing badly.

The following day (Sunday) consisted of model processing, registration & the opening ceremony, followed by a Team manager's meeting.

Monday morning dawned, the start of the EC proper. At this point I realised that live scores were being made available through 'gliderscore online', so I didn't feel obliged to give a blow by blow account of the rounds, more of an overview of each day.

So Monday, 3 rounds flown. Cengiz had our best score (964, 974, 976). Josh next (984, 235, 952) followed by Rick (0, 938, 974). Peter also started with a zero, Erel scored solidly.

A pattern seemed to be forming of either 900 plus scores or quite low.

Tuesday, day2. Cengiz had a terrible day with 2 zeros & 2 low scores. Josh had 4 high scores, Rick had 1 zero , 2 high scores & one mediocre.

Wednesday. Cengiz & I were down at the field early. We were trying different trim settings & flying techniques to be more in keeping with the conditions we faced. It must have worked, because he did not have another bad flight for the rest of the comp.

We had been due to start flying again at 12 noon, but a storm of biblical proportions took over & we were involved in putting models away & anchoring event shelters down. When this cleared we were able to carry on flying, although only 3 rounds could be flown

instead of 4. Cengiz Had 3 good ones, Josh 2 good & one reasonable, Rick 2 good & one not so.

Thursday. 4 rounds flown. Increasing winds meaning full ballast needed later in the day, with tricky fast moving lift followed by powerful sink. Josh had 2 good ones, Rick had 1, Cengiz had 2.

Josh & I made a big mistake while chatting for Rick, meaning we put him into the wrong piece of sky, which meant a low score for Rick in at least one of his flights caused by us, but such is the pressure.

Friday, from my notes Friday morning.

Coming to the end of the rounds. Round 15 flies today & then onto the flyoffs.

Highs and lows with not a lot in between. Josh is our highest placed man in 36<sup>th</sup>, Cengiz & Rick further down the table, although this is more a reflection of circumstances than their flying skills.

Some days have produced flights from our pilots which have been spectacular. Some days have not had the results we would wish for, but others have suffered equally.

A learning curve indeed for us all, but where else but a championship competition could you fly every day amongst the best pilots in the world?

To add. Josh scored 1000 in his last flight. What a way to finish!

Friday afternoon we watched the flyoffs. Very entertaining, culminating in Primoz Rizner winning. Good to see us old guys can still cut it!

In conclusion, a very enjoyable championship, renewing old acquaintances and making new ones. I don't think we let the UK down in our efforts.

The Banquet had food, drink & a swimming pool (30 degrees air temp). A dangerously eclectic mix! Suffice it to say that even more friendships were formed at the banquet.

Early on in the preparations, it appeared that the organisers were experiencing communication problems, & apparently the organisation suffered changes prior to the comp. However, we could not have been received and treated better. We were made very welcome and would have no reservations in attending there again, so thank you to the organisers.

Also thankyou to everyone who helped make it possible for us to go, being the BMFA, the fundraisers and those who donated, also to Brian McDonald & Mark Taylor of MT models for team t shirts.

Thank you from us all for the opportunity.

Bob Dickenson.

