



PROPELLING GLOBAL HOVERSPORT

WORLD
HOVERCRAFT
FEDERATION

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Minutes of the 2012 World Hovercraft Federation Board meeting on Monday September 17th at Saalburg, Germany 9:30 am

Present:

Chris Barlow, Great Britain
Jaroslav Balaz, Slovakia
Kent Gano, USA, WHF VP, Americas
Margret Heinze, Germany
Bob Rennick, Canada
Jakub Furmanski, Poland
Klaus Bonighausen, Germany
Conrad Beale, Great Britain

James Lewendon, Great Britain Techn. dir.
Owen Ellis, Australia dir. Endurance Racing
Henk Martens, Netherlands
Tony Drake, Great Britain, WHF President
Christel Martens, Netherlands, WHF secretary
Michele Scanavino, Italy
Frank Creamers, Belgium

12.01 Welcome by the President

- Tony Drake opened the meeting, 10 minutes later than scheduled because only a few countries were present.

12.02 Apologies for absence

- Apologies for absence were received from David Ryan - Ireland, Francois Malan - South Africa, Andrew Stelzhammer - Austria, Jos Vanderhoven - Belgium gave their vote to *Frank Creamers*. Denis Ragot - France gave their vote to *Michele Scanavino*, Magnus Ivanoff - Sweden gave their vote to *Michele Scanavino*

12.03 President's WHF board report (including financial report)

I would like to start my report by offering both my and the WHF's sincere condolences and sympathies to the family and friends of Michael Feulner who, as you all know, sadly died in a racing accident last Friday. He will be sadly missed by his family and all that knew him.

On a lighter note I would like to record my thanks to the Hoverclub of Germany and in particular BGS Sport Event (Klaus Bönighausen, Thomas Grabowski and Roy Stache) for organising our recent World Hovercraft Championships. The welcome we received was fantastic. The organisation was superb which made for racing of the highest standard and produced very worthy World Champions. In summary the whole event was a perfect balance between social activities and racing.

It is always dangerous to talk about individuals but would also like to say a special “thank you” to Susanne Bösche. Susanne has been the key contact for many of us before the Championships. Her patience, professionalism, and help has been invaluable and appreciated by everyone.

It should not be forgotten that the Hovercraft Club of Great Britain organised our World Championship Endurance Race earlier this year. I am very grateful to them for this, particularly as the weather in England at the time was atrocious with high winds and torrential rain. In fact the weather was so bad the planned World Hovercraft Federation speed trials had to be cancelled.

Interestingly, this was the first time we have held our World Championships at two different locations, at two different times AND in two different countries. While I would not particularly advocate this it certainly shows what some lateral thinking can do.

At WHF events it now seems quite normal to have marshals and officials from many countries working closely together and supporting the host country. This just goes to show what strength and depth we have in the World Federation. It is also comforting to know that this expertise is available to new emerging member Countries who will hopefully be hosting future World Championships. I would like to record my thanks to all who help in this way.

I would like to record my personal thanks to our Vice Presidents who have given me support during my recent term of office. But in particular my thanks go to Christel Martens, our Secretary and Treasurer, without whose help my role as President would be almost impossible.

It will not have escaped your notice that we have rationalised our administrative publications and re-written our technical documents. On behalf of the WHF I must sincerely thank Jamie Lewendon, our Technical Director, for this. For his outstanding achievement in drawing together the hovercraft technical requirements from Clubs and Organisations from around the world, harmonising them and gaining agreement from all. It was a monumental task and one which was long overdue and will stand us in good stead for the future.

With any world wide federation it is essential to have a good website both for communications and contact between ourselves and attracting and developing new member countries. Cathy Godicheau, from France is our Web Master and on behalf of everyone in the WHF I would like to say a huge thank you to Cathy for maintaining such an efficient and professional web site for us. It is a superb, impressive and modern website and one Cathy should be very proud of.

Financially our Federation is in a fairly healthy position due entirely to the generosity of our Board members who over the past few years have not made any claims for business expenses. In my view it is important to retain this healthy position for those who will follow who may not be in such a fortunate position. After the last Board meeting we had a balance of 120 GB pounds and 943.41 Euro. Since then we have spent £30 on software for producing our new publications. We have also received 475 Euro from the drivers entry fee levy at the 2012 World Championships. The Treasurer and I have decided that this will not as normal go into our funds but will be given to the family of Michael Feulner. To some

of us it may seem a strange thing to do but this is the custom in this part of Germany. This leave us with 90 GB pounds and 943.41€uro.

This year for the first time F3 was excluded from the Championships. In my view this was a retrograde step and in the future if at all possible F3 should be included in the programme. We must be as inclusive as possible for the good of and strength of the World Hovercraft Federation. As an organisation we are far too small to start excluding drivers and hovercraft.

While I fully accept that the largest number and concentration of sporting hovercraft is in Europe I firmly believe that from time to time it is essential for the creditability of our World Championship that we should hold an event outside of Europe. I am looking for and asking for countries outside of Europe to come forward to host future World Championships and can promise them all the help and support they need.

Another thing that concerns me is the frequency of our World Hovercraft Championships. I know that this is an agenda item for our meeting so suffice it to say I fully support and endorse the proposal from Holland. We should be pragmatic now and when the world's economic situation improves we could always return to a two yearly cycle.

I would like to reflect for a few moments on the European Hovercraft Federation. In many ways they are facing the same challenges in terms of venues and support as we do. I sense that they are in decline with only two events this year, one in France and the other in Great Britain. It may be they are also suffering from the frequency of our World Championships. However, I am sure with some lateral thinking they can re-build their Federation events for the future and the World Hovercraft Federation will offer all the help we can.

On another sad note I have to report the death Jon Flidh from Norway. Anyone that new Jon will remember him as an active member of the WHF for many years representing both Norway and Portugal. Jon passed away last December. He was found in his beloved workshop no doubt after working on one of his many engines.

My report would not be complete without a mention of the accident that lead to the death of Michael Feulner. It is a great relief to know that the German police and investigators have yesterday reported that they found no fault with the organisation, safety procedures or our marshalling response and have recorded it as a tragic racing accident and very importantly no criminal prosecutions will follow. All our racing documents, log books, insurance and scrutineering were in good order. Our marshalling response was exemplary - the response time of our marshals to the accident scene has been established from video evidence to be just 4.2 seconds. All this just demonstrates that it is essential we rigorously follow our published regulations and procedures along with any that are mandatory in the host's country. I ask all our member countries to review their own regulations to ensure they are equal to ours. Although not relevant to the accident I would ask that we all review the way in which we assess the competency of our drivers before issuing hovercraft driving licences as I believe that this may be an area in which some countries are vulnerable.

On a happier and very positive note we were very, very fortunate to have so many Juniors at our recent Championships. We must do everything possible to support and encourage them and as many others as we can. They are our future. With many Clubs around the

world contracting by losing their older members this is the very best way of ensuring a strong and continuing future. I know that the Hovercraft Club of Great Britain is embarking on very ambitious junior and youth programmes and am sure they will be pleased to share their ideas with you.

At our last Board Meeting we were asked to communicate with as many individual World Championship participants as possible. I am pleased to report that this is now happening. Our Secretary now, with some difficulties it has to be said, regularly circulates our Bulletins and other documents to all those we have on our data base. I hope it has encouraged discussion within our member Countries clubs and organisations and through their representatives have a direct input to the WHF.

Also, last time we asked our member Countries to prepare a report on their past years activities and submit them to the Board Meeting. This time I am asking you to prepare the same report but we will publish them in our next Bulletin. I think it is very useful if not vital that we should be aware of what we are all doing ~ there will frequently be something that perhaps we can all learn.

In conclusion, I am proud to have been your President during my past term of office and represent the World Hovercraft Federation. I am proud to be actively involved with our sport ~ I hope you are too.

Thank you.

12.04 Election of Officers.

- The following were agreed as office holders until the next Board meeting:

President – Tony Drake
Vice President Europe – Magnus Ivanoff
Vice President Americas – Kent Gano
Technical Director – James Lewendon
Secretary/Treasurer – Christel Martens
Director Endurance Racing - Owen Ellis

Vice President Africa & Vice President Asia – vacant

12.05 Any appeals to the Board arising from WHC 2012

- One protest was received. This was from Magnus Ivanoff against the penalty he received in the penultimate F2 race. He sited Competition Rule 7.3.G. complaining that it had wrongly been applied. After discussion the Board members by a vote of 5 in favour, 3 against and 4 abstentions, upheld Magnus's appeal and therefore the penalty removed. There was no criticism of the original protest committees' decision as the Board were convinced that the initial protest was not clearly defined and the protest committee were not directed to the appropriate rule.
- As a result of this decision the positions of the F2 Championship will need to be re-calculated.

- The Technical director has been asked to look at the rule, 7.3.G and make a proposal to rewrite the rule.

12.06 Host for future World Championships

- At this time there are no proposals.

12.07 Frequency of future World Championships

- Members present gave their view and the frequency for future World Championships will stay at every 2 years. If no Country offers to host the next World Championship it will automatically move 1 year forward.

12.08 Any Other Emergency Business

- Andrew Stelzhammer asked if Austria could be a WHF member, the meeting agreed and we welcome Austria as a new member.
- The WHF Technical Director ask for it to be recorded that he was pleased to see both the French and English teams had totally complied with the revised WHF regulations and procedures (log books and compliance check list etc.) But was disappointed to see that other had not, in particular the event scrutineers did not use the new WHF safety check list.
- All other business that is mentioned below will be discussed and resolved by e-mail.
 - Sweden proposed to change the point system when heats are needed. At the moment the difference in points between 1st and 3th place are to big.
 - France proposed a prize to honour hull/craft manufacturers.
 - France maintains their view that when only 6 craft are registered in a formula there should not be a World title.
 - France proposed that for safety reasons each continent should send the WHF a letter which shows their drivers have a least run two international races in the year of a World Championship. An alternative suggestion was made by Germany that a WHF hovercraft racing licence is needed and that only authorised countries should be able to issue these after investigating the driving history of applicants to see if they meet WHF requirements.
 - France proposed that aggressive drivers (driving like bulls) should be penalised.
 - Germany proposed that the rules concerning crash helmets, life jackets and back protections should be strengthened.
 - Protest procedures to be reviewed.
 - Competition Regulations rule 7.3.G. to be reviewed and rewritten.

- How should the race course be defined?
- The WHF Director of Endurance Racing will be submitting future development plans.

The President thanked everyone for attending and participating in the meeting, and the meeting closed at 11.30 am.

