



PROPELLING GLOBAL HOVERSPORT

WORLD
HOVERCRAFT
FEDERATION

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Minutes of the World Hovercraft Federation meeting, 9:00 am Monday, August 25th 2008 at Flottsbro, Sweden

Present:

Michele Scanavino, Italy	Kent Gano, USA, WHF VP, Americas
Chris Barlow, Great Britain	Laurent Guetté, France
David Ryan, Ireland	Jean Pierre Godicheau, France
Jaroslav Balaz, Slovakia	Jean Francois Berry, France, WHF Techn. Dir.
Margret Heinze, Germany	Denis Ragot, France
Magnus Ivanoff, Sweden, WHF VP, Europe	Henk Martens, Netherlands
Michael Rausch, Germany	Tony Drake, Great Britain, WHF President
Bob Rennick, Canada	Christel Martens, Netherlands, WHF secretary
Owen Ellis, Australia, WHF VP, Asia	Michel Thiry, Belgium, EHF President
Jakub Furmanski, Poland	Bill Baker, Great Britain
John Gifford, Great Britain	Rachel Gifford, Great Britain
Matthew Gifford, Great Britain	Duncan Hyde, Great Britain
Deborah Bynes, Australia	Ralph DuBose, USA
Sam Waugh, Australia	Kelly DuBose, USA
Michal Zosepe, Poland	

08.01 Welcome by the President

Tony Drake opened the meeting and welcomed and thanked everyone for giving their time to attend this meeting. Particularly Owen Ellis, our Vice President for Asia, Kent Gano our Vice President for America and Bob Rennick our former Technical Director from Canada.

08.02 Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence where received.

08.03 President's WHF board report

"I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all members and friends of the Swedish Hoverclub for organising an outstanding World Championship. And a huge thank you to such a small club for stepping into the breach and giving us a

World Championship when a previous potential host withdrew. We are all extremely grateful and the Swedish Hoverclub should all be rightly very proud of themselves.

No president's report would be complete without an update on our finances. As of yesterday we had € 501,38 and \$ 293 cash in our funds, not a huge amount but sufficient for our needs and indeed a sum that will increase when the WHF levy on drivers is added from the past few days.

It was a great pleasure to present the 2007 award to Bob Windt, and the 2008 award to Keith Oakley yesterday. If you have nominations for future years please do let us know.

Although Future Championships is an agenda item and at the last WHF delegate meeting a debate was held and it was decided that we should hold a World Championship every two years it may be that with the rising cost of world wide travel and fuel cost we may need to reconsider this. It cannot escape our notice that it was almost only European craft and drivers who took part in the 2008 World Championships. Maybe holding our Championships every three years just may encourage better world wide participation.

Regrettably there was no endurance racing this time but pressures of venue, time and programme simply made this impossible. However, the WHF will insist that, if at all possible, this should be reinstated at future Championships.

There are several major challenges that our events face for the future, for example:

Noise ~ We are perceived as a noisy and therefore environmentally unfriendly ~ in some countries more than others. It is up to us to rectify this by reducing our own permitted maximum noise limits. Some excellent work has been done by Keith Oakley in developing a system to identify sources of noise on hovercraft which has allowed many craft in GB and Europe to reduce their noise levels without reducing their performance. (Indeed the system has been in use during the past few days). We now have the tools so we should be brave and do something about it.

Craft Insurance ~ several clubs and individuals from round the world asking for advice on where to buy public liability insurance for their craft as their existing providers are withdrawing from this market. If you have good hovercraft insurance provider who is able to offer this to others around the world please do let us know. The Hovercraft Club of Great Britain is current reviewing their insurance requirements and it may be this could be offered world wide ~ more of that latter in the meeting.

Future Championship hosts ~ It is concerning greatly that we are not getting offers to host our Championships from outside Europe. I fully appreciate that Europe has the greatest experience and concentration of racing hovercraft and drivers and therefore events in Europe will be by far the best supported, for us to be seen as a truly World Federation we should from time to time hold Championships outside of Europe. It may be also that the complexity of our events puts some off and we will attempt to do something about this during our meeting and over the coming months.

As you know the Board members of the WHF comprises a President, Vice Presidents, Technical Director, and Secretary all of whom you will be voting for in a moment. I would just like to pause and say a personal thank you to Christel Martens our Secretary and Jean-Francois Berry our Technical Director for their support, advice and time they have given to me and the WHF over the past two years. Something we should all be grateful for. However, the one thing that is disappointing is the fact that we all leave our Board meetings full of enthusiasm and ideas to debate and move the WHF forward but for what ever reason we soon forget and little or nothing happens. To try and overcome this we instituted an excellent forum for debate on our web site ~ sadly this, despite Jean-Francois's best efforts, has received little use. I realise the external pressures we all live under but I urge us all to play our full part otherwise the WHF will stagnate and die ~ something which your Board will try to prevent even if it means they have to take decisions in isolation.

Despite my previous remarks I am really cautiously optimistic. We have so much to offer. We are a fully fledged spectacular amphibious motor racing sport ~ no one can doubt that after the past few days. All backed with professional systems and by experienced and very professional officials from round the world. All we need to do is maintain our enthusiasm, improve our own internal communication and exchange of ideas and go and sell this fantastic sport of ours to the world.

The future is bright ~ the future sport is hovercraft!

That is the end of my report"

08.04 Election of Officers

In order to save time nominations were taken in advance. As there is only one person nominated for a particular post they will be adopted unopposed.

The following were adopted as office holders until 2010

President - Tony Drake

Secretary - Christel Martens

Technical Director – Jean François Berry

Vice President Americas - Kent Gano

Vice President Africa – not appointed

Vice President Asia – Owen Ellis

Vice President Europe – Magnus Ivanoff

As the secretary was not able to contact Siegi Scherrer from Mauritius the position of Vice President Africa stays vacant. The meeting also agreed for the future that the position of Vice Presidents can only be taken by a person that are well know to the WHF and who normally attends its race and or Board meetings.

08.05 Formula Junior Teams

Following successful trials at previous World Championships the meeting agreed that we should now formally allow school, college and youth groups to race as Teams at future World Championships. This decision concerns only formulae Junior and will be added to our Competition Rules.

The rules are as follows

- Junior Teams must be genuine schools, college or youth groups.
- Junior Teams may have a maximum of 4 drivers.
- Junior Drivers cannot be in more than one team or if they choose to be in a Team cannot race as an individual.
- Teams must register the names of all Drivers when initially registering to part in the World Championship.
- Teams must inform the organizers prior to any race or practice who the Driver will be. *(This is to ensure that the organizers know at any time, for health and safety reasons etc., who is actually participating).*
- As time trials will determine the first grid position the Team Driver with lowest time will start the first race.
- Each junior driver is entitled to a time trial of 9 laps BUT it is up to each team to decide how to achieve this during the appropriate time trial period.

08.06 Funding for overseas containers

After a discussion, the meeting agreed that the host country can decide if they want to add a little to the entry fee to fund for overseas containers or maybe collect no entry fee etc., from drivers who have to sent their craft by air freight or container.

08.07 Simplification of Formulas at future World Championships

Denis Ragot (France) explained the French proposal and a discussion followed. Countries should have their own discussion and come forward with their point of view as soon as possible. A decision must be taken before Christmas and on the 1st of January 2009 it will be definitive.

08.08 The future of the WHF Forum

The meeting agreed that the WHF web based forum is a valuable way of communicating and it is up to everyone to use it and encourage others to do so.

08.09 WHF World hover week 2009

It was because in July 2009 it is 50 years ago that the first hovercraft crossed the English Channel that Owen Ellis (Australia) made his proposal. This could be a good opportunity to promote our sport. So far no official event has been scheduled. The HCGB will be asked to consider this.

08.10 Members report

The only reply so far came from The Netherlands. Members where asked to sent their reports to the WHF secretary as soon as possible.

08.11 Hosts for future World Championships

The HCGB are actively looking into the possibility of hosting the 2010 WHC, so far they have not identified a suitable location but hopefully in a few months they will come forward with a proposal.

If no other bids are forthcoming, Germany is willing to host the 2010 championship. They will use Goldenstedt, a site that has previously hosted several European race meetings. The WHF wishes to give Germany at least 12 month notice. Poland gave a small presentation and was asked to come to the next EHF meeting in October. Poland was reminded that in order to organise a World Championship they first have to hold a successful European race meeting on the proposed site.

08.12 Any Other Business

The meeting agreed that as we didn't meet their representative Slovenia can be a provisional member, as such they can take part in discussions but do not have any voting rights. The WHF secretary will inform their contact person about this.

The meeting agreed that World Championship frequency will stay as every 2 years, unless there is not a Country to host the event.

Owen Ellis (Australia) thanked Magnus for the opportunity to participate at this World Championship.

Magnus Ivanoff (Sweden) thanked everyone for their help and who made it possible to run this event

Jean Francois Berry (France) asked if we need to define in the rules that a skirt should be inflated but the craft when in operation. The meeting didn't find this necessary.

Jean Francois Berry (France) asked that for a formula to receive World Championship recognition it should not only have a minimum number of drivers but is also have at least three nationalities competing. The meeting did not find this necessary.

Michele Scanavino (Italy) asked how to deal with licensed drivers that we don't know? It was decided by the meeting that the race director and 2 officials will observe all drivers during practice and time trails to make sure they are competent to race. If they are not they will not be allowed to take any further part in the Championships'. This means that all drivers must participate in practice or time trails. This will be added to our Competition Rules.

Sweden asked if we could add to the rules that a craft with the same driver can only go in one formula. This does not prevent the same craft with a different driver taking part in a different formula which is suitable for the craft. This has been discussed at previous meeting but never voted on. The meeting agreed that this should be a new rule. This rule may be relaxed on application to the WHF by a host country if for example the numbers of participating drivers are low. This will be added to our Competition Rules.

The penalty for missing a buoy is stated in the racing rules but not when such an action is for safety reasons. It is not always possible for the race director or marshals to have an overview of the whole course. Therefore, if a craft misses a buoy or the reason why it was missed may not be know. For future championship it is necessary that at least 2 officials support the race director with this. (This could be done by the same 2 officials that support him during observation of the practice and time trails). This will be added to our Competition Rules.

For safety reasons it was recommended that crash helmets must be brightly coloured and fluorescent. This is because that if a driver is in the water and wears a dark helmet it is not always possible to see if the driver is afloat or in a safe position. The meeting agreed that while these are the preferred option, as an alternative temporary, brightly coloured florescent tape or plastic applied to crash helmets would be acceptable. This will be added to our Competition Rules.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am.

