



# WORLD HOVERCRAFT FEDERATION

*PROPELLING GLOBAL HOVERSPORT*

Bulletin Number 32

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I write the introduction to this Bulletin with very mixed emotions. We had a wonderful reception and fantastic racing at the BGS World Championships in Saalburg, Germany but this was marred by the tragic F 2 accident in which Michael Feulner lost his life. Michael's death has affected us all greatly and our thoughts and sympathies are with Michael's wife, family and friends at this very sad time.

We all accept that any motor sport can be dangerous and we will be examining everything surrounding Michael's tragic accident to see if there is anything we can learn to further minimise the risk of death or serious injury in our sport.

Kind regards,

Tony M. Drake JP. President of the World Hovercraft Federation.

P.S. As usual this Bulletin will be circulated to as many people as possible but please pass it on to anyone who you think may be interested.

## **BGS Sport Event ~ World Hovercraft Championship 2012.**

The WHF would like to record its 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 everyone 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.

Our reigning World Champions are now:

- F1 Michael Metzner (Germany)
- F2 Joint Champions: Magnus Ivanoff (Sweden) & Denis Ragot (France)
- FS Chris Barlow (Great Britain)
- F35 Jake Cooper (Great Britain)
- F50 Fabien Santoulange (France)
- FJ Lucas Hall (Sweden)

And our congratulations go to them all.

(Full results can be found on the WHF website at [www.worldhovercraftfederation.org](http://www.worldhovercraftfederation.org) )

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 Federation. It is also comforting to know that this expertise is available to new and emerging member Countries who will hopefully be hosting future World Championships. Again the WHF would like to record their thanks to all who help in this way.

Sadly, any report on the 2012 BGS World Championships would not be complete without a mention of the accident that led to the death of Michael Feulner. The incident arose when three craft were close together on the racing line on the first land to water transition. Both engines of the lead craft cut out on the land immediately before the water. The second craft driven by Michael Feulner went over the first craft at considerable speed forcing it into the water. Michael and his craft were then struck with force by the third craft which was closely following. A red flag was immediately shown and two marshals were at the scene of the accident within 4.2 seconds of it happening and pulled Michael from the wreckage. Paramedics were on the scene very shortly after but were unable to revive Michael.

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## **(BGS Sport Event ~ World Hovercraft Championship 2012 continued).**

The police immediately sealed off the craft and scene and began collecting information, evidence and statements. Their investigations were thorough and incisive ranging from documentation, safety procedures, and drivers safety equipment etc. The final conclusion was that tragically Michael Feulner died as the result of a hovercraft racing accident and that no fault was found with the drivers, organisation, marshal support or safety procedures, and more importantly no criminal prosecutions would follow.

In conclusion this was a very, very tragic racing accident with a fatal result and no blame can or should be apportioned to anyone.

## **WHF Award for Excellence.**

From time to time the WHF presents its prestigious "Award for Excellence". This time it was presented by our President to Michael Rausch, by coincidence, from Germany at the World Championships in Saalburg. The citation on the award says it all:

His total dedication to sporting hovercraft in his own country, Europe and world wide. An outstanding man who has given so much to support and develop our sport.

He was a driver from 1989 ~ 2000. From 2001 to date he has been President and Race Director for HvD, and Chairman of the Munchen Hovercraft Club; EHF Sports Commissar; Race Director at forty National or EHF race meetings; Assistant or Race Director to five World Hovercraft Championships; Chairman of the EHF Scrutineering Committee. He has constructed race support equipment, developed timing software and been very active in noise measurement and control.

We hope you agree a very worthy recipient.

## **Future WHF World Hovercraft Championships.**

Regrettably, so far we have not received any bids to host the World Championships in 2014. If your country is proposing to make a bid please inform the WHF Secretary within the next six months. If needed there are guidance notes available to download from our website at [www.worldhovercraftfederation.org](http://www.worldhovercraftfederation.org). Alternatively, advice is always available from the President, Secretary, Technical Director or the WHF Vice Presidents.

## WHF 2012 Delegate meeting.

Full minutes of the WHF Delegates meeting can be found on our website at [www.worldhovercraftfederation.org](http://www.worldhovercraftfederation.org)

There are several outstanding matters, listed below, that were agreed to be resolved by e-mail. These will be discussed and resolved between member Country Delegates, after consulting with others, over the coming weeks. If you have any views on these issues please discuss them immediately with your Country Delegate.

- Sweden proposed to change the point system when heats are needed. At the moment the difference in points between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place are too 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.

## And Finally ~

We are very pleased to welcome Austria to the World Hovercraft Federation. Their details can be found on the following page. We can also inform you that Paul Hibbard is accepted as the new Vice President Asia.

## For your information our Member Country Delegates are:

Australia (2)	Peter Streader	<a href="mailto:peter.streader@thomson.net">peter.streader@thomson.net</a>
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USA (2)	Kent Gano	<a href="mailto:kentgano@bellsouth.net">kentgano@bellsouth.net</a>

(\*) number of votes each country has.

Please inform our Secretary, Christel Martens, if your country has made any changes.

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