

2016 British Open Paramotor Championship

Details of event. Venue: Colleymore Farm, Coleshill

Introduction:

The championship is an annual event that is run by the British Paramotor Competitions Committee, which is an official panel of the British Hang Gliding and Paragliding association (BHPA). All pilots carry 3rd party insurance to the value of £5m, and the event itself is also covered under the event insurance of the British Microlight Aircraft Association (BMAA), our other governing body. The committee have more than 10 years' experience of organising these events annually, and have an excellent record of safety and of working with site to ensure the event runs smoothly and successfully, with minimal adverse impact on the local area.

Dates:

- Thursday 23rd to Friday 24th of June: Arrival and setup of hired infrastructure, marquees etc. Also pilots arriving on site and training.
- First competition briefing: 9pm Friday 24th June
- Competition flying days: Saturday 25th-Tuesday 28th June
- Reserve flying day (in case of bad weather): Wednesday 29th June
- Pilots leave: Wednesday 29th/Thursday 30th.
- Removal of infrastructure: Thursday 30th.

Competition activities

The competition consists of flying a series of tasks throughout the week, as many as weather conditions and organisation/scoring capabilities allow. This is normally around 10-12 tasks over the period of the competition. Whilst there will clearly be a lot of activity on the airfield during the event, careful management and good communication between the director and the site management should minimise the impact on existing site activities/business. Circuit patterns and takeoff decks will be carefully planned to minimise impact on local residents.

Aviation tasks consist of 3 main types: Navigation, Precision, and Economy, with a 1/3 balance of each in total points value.

Navigation tasks involve longer distance flying. Pilots typically cross a start gate and conduct a turn point hunt over a period of up to 90 minutes, before crossing a finish point and returning to the airfield. This is an area of approximately 40 by 40 kilometers. Precision tasks are either landing based (spot landings, engine off at a certain height, glide to land on a specific target), or slalom-based, in which pilots fly short timed circuits around a course of inflatable pylons, typically laid out in a 5-dice shape with the square edge 100m long. Economy tasks consist of taking off with a measured quantity of fuel and using thermals to fly for as long as possible.

All competitors are required to show evidence of flying qualifications and of a minimum £1 million 3rd party insurance on registration for the competition.

The Site

The image below details the areas that will be used for the competition.

The field allocated for competition use is outlined in RED

The proposed camping area is outlined in ORANGE

The proposed takeoff and landing decks are outlined in BLUE

The additional field available for precision task use is outlined in BLACK

Access to site is via the Colleymore Farm buildings and the track outlined in YELLOW

This road is paved except for the section outlined in PURPLE, which may require addition of appropriate material to prevent mud if weather is wet.



Noise

The most likely impact on local residents will be noise from the paramotor engines. The field allocated for the event is approximately 500m from the village of Great Coxwell. As mentioned above, careful planning of flight paths will keep pilots away from local villages when flying away on tasks. Any noise from engines will be primarily from takeoffs, and from the precision tasks which represent only about 1/3 of the competition

For the navigation and the economy tasks, pilots take off and fly away, so with good circuit / airspace management there should be minimal local impact. The precision tasks may need to take place on the runways/landing decks and over the airfield; takeoffs are carefully managed by marshals so that only a small number of pilots are in the air at any point either flying or stacking for the task – reducing the noise levels. Takeoffs can be paused to clear the airspace over the field if another aircraft needs to land, or any other situation arises. Occasionally conditions dictate that tasks do need to take place early in the morning. In consideration of local residents, there will be no flying before 7am on any day of the competition, and 8am on the Sunday.

Adherence to local airspace restrictions is of paramount importance, and severe penalties will be imposed on pilots for any infringement. These penalties will also apply during the training days before the competition has started. The organising team will work with site hosts to establish any particular local flight restrictions, i.e. around local villages etc.

Various studies have been conducted on noise levels from Paramotors, such as <http://www.azppg.com/ParamotorThrustLevelTesting.doc>. They tested a range of engines and found them to be in the range of up to 100-120db at the pilots head (right next to the engine) and 85-105db at their feet. It did not study the dropoff at further distances, but use of an online calculator such

as <http://www.sengpielaudio.com/calculator-distance.htm> suggests that a 110db noise measured at 1m from the source will drop to 63db at 200m distance - within the realms of normal conversational volume, and even lower 56db at 500m - the approximate distance to the village.

Numbers attending:

The Championships are 'open' in the sense that they are not limited to UK only pilots, although these will form the large majority. Based on attendance in recent years, around 30 pilots are expected to compete.

It is expected that most attendees will camp on-site during the period of the competition. Some pilots may bring additional non-flying family members or friends as helpers or spectators. Therefore including the organising team for the competition, it is estimated that there will be no more than 100 people camping on site for the duration of the competition days.

Infrastructure

The competition organisers will arrange and import all the necessary infrastructure including toilets, showers, internet, skips, marquees, catering, and power generation, but of course if the airfield have existing infrastructure that can be used that would be very welcome. All brought-in infrastructure, and rubbish etc. will be removed after the event to leave the site exactly as it was originally provided.

Finances

The competition is run on a non-profit making basis. Income is primarily from pilot entry fees, and to a small extent from sponsorship, although in a niche sport such as this, sponsorship tends to be 'in kind' rather than in significant financial contributions. All of the organising team are working free of charge as volunteers. The majority of the capital income will be spent on hiring the requisite infrastructure to enable the event to take place.

Visitors / Spectators

Local residents are of course very welcome to visit, enjoy watching the competition, and discover more about the sport. There will most likely be a social event of some kind such as a barbeque or hog roast on the Saturday evening.

The competition is not advertised more widely as a spectator event, although spectators will not be refused entry. It is anticipated that the majority of any spectators will be accompanying family and friends of competitors. There will be no charge for entry to the site for spectators.

Conclusion

There are a dedicated team working hard to ensure that the 2016 British Open Paramotor Championship is an event that is safe, challenging, well-organised, and efficiently run.

Please feel free to contact me for any more information.

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