

2019 FAI F1E World Championships for Slope Soaring Gliders

Air modellers from all over the world have come to Turiec again to measure their strength during 2019 FAI F1E World Championships for Slope Soaring Gliders for Juniors and Seniors. Slovakia was also one of 13 countries which triumphed thanks to the local RC Model Club Martin.

F1E model aircrafts are specific for their unconventional control. "They are slope gliders that are controlled by magnetic steering," said Jakub Drmla, FAI delegate and representative of RC Model klub Martin. Further, he explains that competition models are not driven by engines or controlled remotely. "The direction of flight is set on the magnetic steering. It is set similarly to a compass according to cardinal points. Thanks to the magnet, the model keeps the set direction of flight."

The main goal of the competition is to keep the model in the air for a maximum given time. However, the magnetic control set up is not enough for success. "Pre-start model preparation is crucial. The pilot has to choose the right model considering the current weather conditions," Drmla explained, adding that each competitor has five models that vary in size and weight. "The competitor chooses a model with a large wingspan and an arched profile for low wind and warm air. Thanks to these parameters, the model flies as slowly as possible. On the other hand, in strong winds, the competitor chooses a model with a smaller wingspan and a straight profile." A successful flight requires a lot of practice and many flying hours. However, happiness also plays a role.

Up to 58 modelers of different ages came to Martin to compete in the F1E World Championship. This year, all countries in which modelers in this category are officially engaged, were represented in Martin. There were competitors from Germany, Romania, France, USA and even Japan. Competitions lasted for several days in two age categories and in five main rounds. Both individuals and national teams were competing.

In the category of seniors Poles took first place. Stanislaw Kubit achieved the best results. Second place went to German Florian Winker and third was Alexander Winker, also from Germany. Poland won the team classification, followed by Ukraine and finally Romania.

In the junior category, Pole Dawid Karpowicz was the best. Slovaks Ema Kožuchová and Laura Kožuchová won the second and third place. Slovakia was doing even better in the team competition as it managed to win the first place. France and Germany came second and third.

Successful Slovak modellers are members of RC Model Club Martin, which has been operating since 1974. Aeromodelling clubs in Slovakia are covered by Slovak Aerospace Modelling Association in which the club from Martin is one of the more numerous. It brings together air modellers of various "model size" categories, as well as age groups. From an approximately 45-member base, many members are successful and well-known representatives not only at home but also abroad. Recently, there has been quite a lot of interest in club membership among young people, as evidenced by approximately a quarter of junior members.

RC Model klub Martin is also an important organiser of the aeromodelling championships in Slovakia. The club had to first convince the international organization FAI in Switzerland of its organizational skills. "For the first time, we managed to organise the championship of this category in 2013. Subsequently, it was easier, as the results and positive feedback from foreign competitors spoke for us. But then again, the beginnings were really challenging. In order to convince of our competence, we had to organize various smaller competitions attended by pilots from different countries," explains Jakub Drmla. As far as the F1E category is concerned, they have so far managed to organize two World Championships and two European Championships in Martin. Not to mention other categories of aircraft models. However, it was not easy to organise an international competition. The club also owes its organization success of this year's championship to the town of Martin and local agricultural cooperatives.

Compared to other countries, Slovakia, and especially Martin's surroundings, has excellent flying conditions. "Our hills are neither very high nor very low. The terrain is accessible and there are also suitable climate conditions," Drmla noted.

Although RC Model Club Martin is not planning to organise other championships in this category over the next two years, it is already preparing the F3K hand-launch remote controlled glider championship and will certainly not be missing in many domestic and international competitions. The club wants to invest its time especially in the work with youth, from which it wants to raise a new generation of modellers. "If anyone is interested and willing to become a modeller, the door is open. We will teach him how to start, help him choose a category that would interest him, and we will be very happy to support him in the competition," Drmla summed up.

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