

08 June 2010

Dear Delegates to the IFAA World Council
Dear Officers,

Over the last week of May I spent time in Stuhlfelden, Austria, and attended the European Bowhunter Championships to assess the competency of the IFAA as a whole to see if such large competitions should and could be hosted by our members.

The background for such decision to assess the situation can be summarized as follows:
Even though the hosting club has organized smaller events previously, the organizers had little knowledge of how such an IFAA event is normally hosted and organized and their performance will influence future decisions by the IFAA in their decision who will host an IFAA sanctioned event. The large number of registrations (over 1100 archers) required a large number of ranges and in turn required a large number of field workers. The ranges were not in walking distance from each other and special transport had to be organized to take the archers to the ranges. The Officers felt that such a large number of archers on a range would result in large delays and a possibility of long hours shooting.

Over the years I have heard many contradicting statements on how tournaments were run, how successful they were and how the Officers dealt with problems. Unfortunately not always very positive. I therefore needed to know for myself.

I have over the days noted what I experienced and noted what has gone well and what has gone wrong so that the World Council may be informed at the meeting and the necessary steps can be taken to prevent future problems, improve on certain issues and highlight that what may be used in future tournaments.

My comments must not be seen as criticism at all. All parties worked very hard and did the best under very difficult circumstances and I wish to thank Stuhlfelden club, especially Heinz and my fellow Officers, Steve and Martin, for their unselfish commitment to the success of the Tournament.

Points for discussion during the World Council Meeting:

1. Large number of archers

As stated, the large number of archers that registered for the event were of great concern to the Exec. 1100+ archers is a large number to deal with and the organizers needed to be prepared for such an event.

There have been various discussions with the Host, the Organizers and the Officers over the months preceding the event, resulting in several visits by our Secretary, Martin Koini, for discussions with Heinz and the training of the bow inspectors.

In this process Martin produced the "Bow inspection booklet", a booklet with the rules of setting out a field archery range as well as a fixed Registration Format.

2. Registration fees

The Exec expressed their concern about the high fees several months previously and asked that they be reduced. Even though they were reduced, the revised registration fees were still considered too high by many of the archers I spoke to.

In discussions with the organizers we were informed that each archer would get in return some 70 Euro in "specials" back again.

These included the food at the opening ceremony and a Monday and Wednesday party with a band after the shoot as well as various discounts by local business.

This shows the lack of experience of the organizers.

Today's archers take archery a bit more serious and do not party till late, especially if they are spread over hotels in the neighborhood that often host their own specials.

Needless to say that these special evening events were not well attended even though the costs of these events appear to be included in the registration fees.

Other specials like extra trains and busses between the various villages to transport archers to and from the venue also did not work. Archers bring back-up equipment and cannot travel that way. They come by car, regardless of what is offered.

This service was stopped halfway the event due to lack of interest.

3. Facilities, tent, catering, etc.

I can only praise the organizers for the facilities that were available, the catering, ablution, etc.

The tent was very large and could hold all 1100 archers with family members and/or supporters as well as various groups of local visitors easily.

The tent was totally boarded, as well as the outside terrace.

There was a mobile ablution block with facilities for 12-16 people which was kept clean all day and was linked to the local waste system.

Catering was well organized with catering inside as well as outside the tent.

Other entertainment for non shooters and local kids was also available.

4. Registration and Bow inspection:

As stated: a lot of effort was made by Martin to assure that bow inspectors knew what they were doing and that was clearly noticeable. Martin further attended the bow inspection until Sunday afternoon and unfortunately had to leave due to work commitment.

I take this opportunity to thank him for all the effort he has put in to assure a smooth running of the event.

The Friday was a bit of a "free-for-all" with insufficient guidelines by the organizers, but that got sorted out the same evening with the installation of dedicated queue lanes for each style and additional notice boards for each range.

Inspection stickers remained a problem, even though they were hard to remove. I suspect that some archers did remove the stickers and put them on other bows.

Many archers still do not quite understand that they need to bring all their equipment for inspection, which includes all their arrows as well as a second or back-up bow and on a few occasions we had to inspect bows after they were used in the case of a bow breakage.

Speed check started off on all bows and not only the compound bows. That was changed on the first day. (I would love to see a 300f/s long bow)

The pro forma bow inspection sheet seems to work and few European archers seem to mind to fill this form in. I have some doubt that such administrative extra at the bow inspection would be appreciated in Australia or the USA.

5. Inspection of ranges:

Lay-out, catering & facilities, transport, errors, Martin's hand book

Ranges were easy to access and inspect in general and only few errors were found.

Locating the shooting positions/targets was not up to scratch and on all ranges the Ranges Officers were required to place guide markers on the intended walk ways and some additional barrier tape in some situations to prevent archers shooting the wrong targets.

All ranges had catering facilities, be it a single stand. It has become almost expected that ranges have 2 stands on a range, however I find a single stand sufficient as the responsibility lies with the archers to bring sufficient supplies with. Also the range lay-outs that were handed out at registration to each archer clearly showed a single stand and could have prepared for that.

All ranges had a single ablution facility. That was simply insufficient even though they were cleaned each evening. The distance from the toilet became too great and caused some distress to the female archers.

Walks from target to targets were generally fair to good, even though some sections would have been difficult to manage if we had extensive rain.

On the Range I checked I must note that most of the type 1 and type 2 targets had no direct path away from the target and archers had to walk up to score and walk back to the shooting position to be able to continue on the walk track. That did cause additional delays.

Transport to the ranges was quite chaotic on the first day, but that was soon sorted out and no further major problems occurred there after.

Nevertheless even with the late start on Monday almost all archers were back in the tent by 18.00.

It was quite clear that Martin's handbook on setting out ranges did assist the organizers and reduced the number of errors.

In fact I have no knowledge of major errors, even though we had some protests.

6. Range officers

The function of the Range Officers still does not seem clear to the organizers and the archers.

Their function must be better spelt out and explained to the archers and noted on the notice boards !

No Range Officer may interfere with or advice the archers unless it is an emergency. No Range Officer should be asked by archers what to do or to assist in scoring. The archer must know the rules.

Range Officers are there to assure safety on the range, quality of the targets and assist in the event of an emergency or bow breakage.

The Range Officers I worked with were great and always willing to assist.

7. Opening ceremony

The parade and opening ceremony were well organized even though speeches should be kept to a minimal length, which may be difficult when several dignitaries wish to speak

Despite the request that the dignitaries keep their speeches short, that was not always the case. This resulted in a noisy audience. We cannot "blame" the organizers for that.

8. Duration of daily shoot

With the large numbers of archers and the ranges far apart there was genuine concern by the Exec that the daily rounds would extent well into the night.

This generally was not the case and the first archers usually returned by 16.00

The exception normally were the Barebow and the Recurve archers, who would be back by 18.00

It must be noted however that this was not as a result of a late start, or number of archer or the ranges, but mostly as a result of the archers themselves who often shot very slow and we did receive reports that the draw rule was often not adhered to.

I also found that some of the delays are as a result of our own rules:

We did agree with the organizers that all shooting positions with type 3 and type 4 targets would have a double peg and double targets. So shooting on these targets went fast. Groups started waiting at the type 1 and type 2 targets where only one target and a single peg was allowed, thus allowing only a single archer to shoot.

This greatly limits the speed, especially when we have up to 8 archers per target.

9. Daily entertainment

It appears that daily entertainment was arranged between the organizers and the caterers.

The opening ceremony, the Monday evening and the Wednesday and Friday evening were arranged by the Organizers and the other nights by the caterers.

In real terms this appears to mean that the archers paid for the events that were hosted by the organizers as part of their registration fees.

These special events were badly advertised and were therefore not well attended. They for sure have resulted in a financial loss to all parties.

Visions of what had happened at the 1998 WFAC in New Zealand came up in my mind, where nominated caterers lost a great deal of money and demanded compensation for lost revenue.

10. Bow checking on the ranges

Bow checking was done on the ranges on at least two occasions and more specifically the compound bows and the longbows were tested.

11. Daily scoring & Protests, notifications, double scoring

Score cards were pre-printed with the various possible scores. The archers only had to tick off the correct score and write this in the summary column. Unfortunately one of the score cards was incorrect and had to be reprinted. Not a real problem as this score card was only required on the third day of the event. They were printed on time.

Daily scoring was done in an office totally separate from the venue to avoid “bothering” archers.

Five individual computers were used, each scoring specific style(s).

Score cards were collected at the ranges and taken to the score recorders. Groups that “forgot” to hand in on the range were given the possibility to hand in at one of the shops at the tent.

The scores therefore came out quite quickly and normally within an hour after the last scores came in.

Double scoring was used, but several archers did not check their scores when signing the card and a few errors did happen. The scorers are not there to check scores and find errors. They used the lowest score and these were not changed. It is time that archers start taking the score cards serious.

Notifications were not up to standard and the Organisers as well as the IFAA Officers that attend such events must make sure that clear and proper notification boards are available from the start. The Organisers did bring in a further 5 boards for scoring and notices, but notices were not distributed over all boards.

There were no protest forms available. This is a function of the IFAA as they deal with the protests. So no blame to the organizers.

We must make sure that such forms are available from day one !

12. Team events

Team events were totally unsatisfactory and the IFAA needs to have a good look at this for future events !

The EBHC allows for a Team of Nations (TON) event, which is currently the prime event in all IFAA sanctioned events.

On the second day I received a handful of pieces of paper, varying from scribbled note blocks to well typed out lists. In general a disgrace !

I had to assist with the scoring of the team events, in fact, I did all the scoring of the team events and spent more time behind a computer than on the ranges.

To get a meaningful TON going I allowed for upgrading in the styles to get at least five archers out of seven in each team. By “upgrading” I mean that in the case of absence of a BL archer, a BH archer was used. This should be seen as an exception in the spirit of the game because the IFAA rules do not allow for that. An archer must shoot in the style he/she is entered. Upgrading is possible but then this archer must also compete in the upgraded class. In the example, the BH archer should have been shooting with the BL class !

Style Teams were also registered on odd pieces of paper, with one or two exceptions.

There were about 40 style teams entered originally and the Organisers, who are responsible for this event, had not clue what to do with that and how to handle this event.

As a result no medals were available and the last possible evening (before the award ceremony) some awards were made up from local produce.

In hind site we should have discussed the matter with the organizers long before the event and warned them that medals should be available for these events. This however may be considered unfair to the organizers as they have only 4 days to make up any deficit in medals.

When it became clear that no allowance was made for the style team events, we should have cancelled this event.

Because the scores were kept on various computers, each daily score had to be looked up and copied to the lists of the team events, which was a nightmare and took a lot of time, especially because of the upgrading.

13. Award ceremony, medals, after party

The award ceremony also showed the organizers’ lack of experience and he needed Steve’s and my input and assistance. But in general things went well and organized without much delays.

Crowd control must be regulated better however. The participants got too close to the award area and as a result many people could not see what was happening in front.

The lights so close to Steve’s face were too hot and most had to be switched off.

The after party was a success and lasted until deep in the next morning.

Total impression

We all realize that an event of this size is not easy to be organized by a team of volunteers. Expectations of such an event are raised by our archers to a higher scale each year, making it impossible to please all.

This event was no exception and there were complaints that needed to be dealt with by Heinz and Steve, but generally these complaints were minor and often nothing more than whinges.

Steve normally dealt with them directly through simple discussion.

The Organisers fulfilled the obligations they set out to do.

The event was well organized, be it for a few hiccups on the first day event. Was there a problem, it was normally dealt with immediately.

The sponsors, especially the local community and local business were satisfied and interacted very well with the archers. The event was a good booster for the local community

The archers I spoke with were generally satisfied and happy with the way things were organized and with the ranges.

There were adequate facilities at the center point and adequate catering, etc.

Mistakes that were made can mainly be attributed to lack of experience, but definitely not lack of motivation and enthusiasm. Any problem was fixed the same day without any protest.

All in all I believe that the event was well organized and errors must rather be seen as incidents rather than the norm.

I thank Heinz and the organizing team for what they have achieved and for a good event. It is now up to the IFAA to attend to the very few incidents to avoid repetition.

Points to attend to:

1. Guidelines for controlled bow inspection

The work done by Martin and his input in the bow inspection had a good positive effect on the whole procedure.

However we must attend to a few issues, such as:

- a. "Mass Control". Adequate barriers and indicators should be used to guide the archers to the correct inspection table.
- b. Proper notices that inform the archer to bring all bows and arrows he/she intend to use. These notices must be visible before the archer queues up in the line.
- c. Large prints of style definitions, such as the pictures/drawings on the IFAA web site, should be posted at the entrance of the queue line and at the inspection table for easy referencing.
- d. Inspection stickers must not be freely available or lie around. Also they should not be able to be removed without damaging them.

2. Notifications

Notification boards must be large, such as 2x1 meters. Print format should be at least 14p and printing should be done on A3 format, especially if it concerns daily scores.

At least two boards should be up with duplicated information !

I do not wish to see our archers pushing and shoving near the score sheets like a group of puppy dogs around a small bowl of food.

We may even have to think about electronic notice boards for such large events !

3. Registration fees

Registration fees must just be what they are intended for:

To cover the cost of hosting an event without including all the other extras.

This should be i.e. The cost for setting out the ranges, hire of land, insurance, costs of targets, butts and faces, score cards, opening ceremony (excl. catering) , marquee, podium, medals, etc.

It should not include "specials" such as "free meals" and discounts, neither should it include catering and parties.

Those who wish to be entertained must pay separately for that and such risk lies with the organizers.

Future bids will have to include a break down of the registration fee !

4. Stricter rules for ranges and range facilities

We need to look at enforcing some stricter rules for the ranges. This could be done as part of the agreement without loading our BOR even further.

- a. A minimum of ablution facilities and kiosks must be defined.
- b. We may need to bring in additional defined smoking areas to avoid illegal smoking, and have these points equipped with proper sand trays for extinguishing the cigarettes.
- c. Waste bags at all shooting positions, or at least at the first four shooting positions after the kiosk

- d. The ranges should be considered safe in all weather conditions and pathways must be such that in wet conditions they are not slippery. Ropes along the tracks to hold on to will be a requirement in steep areas.
- e. Back stops should be enforced, even on short areas where arrows have a chance of flying into a neighbor's property. The loss of 2-3 arrows already covers the costs of a simple backstop !

5. Communication between Officers and individual archers, meeting with delegates or appointed representatives.

It is not that I sit on a high throne, unreachable by the archers.

However it is time that archers learn how to approach an Officer of the IFAA. We are not at an event to listen to individual concerns and complaints. We have other work to do.

I have seen this especially with the English and German archers who for very small things approach Steve, often quite rudely breaking into conversations that he had with other people.

You may expect this from children, not adults.

I personally would not have accepted this from anyone, and possibly therefore were not bothered that often. But on many an occasion when I was talking to Steve, an archer simply butted in and our discussion stopped.

There is a process of communication !!

An archer approaches his team leader or Delegate with the problem. The Team leader or Delegate deals with it and if needed approaches the event organizer or the relevant IFAA Officer.

6. Selling of IFAA memorabilia

The IFAA Officers are not hawkers to try and sell IFAA memorabilia.

Nevertheless there is such a demand for specific items such as pins and patches/badges that these need to be made available to our archers.

I believe that such an arrangement must be made with the event organizers to sell IFAA memorabilia at a handling fee for them and that they are invoiced formally by the IFAA for the delivered memorabilia.

Also this should be included in the agreement.

7. Enforcing of tournament & IFAA rules

The enforcing of tournament and IFAA rules remains a problem. We have rules that we do not comply with or enforce and we must really consider what we should do: either make sure they are enforced without exception or do away with them.

Examples:

- a. Speed checks should be done daily and not occasionally
- b. Longbow archers are known to modify their equipment (also called cheating) and their bows must be inspected regularly, if not daily.
- c. It must be noted that neither of the above is the function of the Officers and that a system must be worked out to have control, or get rid of the rules.
- d. Archers that shoot with an unapproved bow for whatever reason should be penalized and not be allowed to come in afterwards for approval of equipment.
- e. The draw rules (max. 4x) must be enforced.
- f. The team rules must be adhered to and much better organized !!
- g. No more than a maximum number of archers per range and target and apply the IFAA rules
- h. Etc.

8. Double targets

Because of the large number of participants we negotiated with the organizers that the type 4 and type 3 targets were always double, each with their own shooting peg.

This would avoid a large number of arrows in the “kill zone” and thus minimize damage to the arrows. Also less time was used by shooting side by side.

This worked well was it not that there was only a single marker on the type 1 and type 2 target, allowing only a single archer to shoot at a long distance which in addition is also a walk-up.

Furthermore it is stated in our rules that only one archers may shoot the in unmarked animal round. This rule does not apply for the Standard and Hunter Round, which are similar in character. Why not ??

We must therefore either insist on the double marker system for each type of target and get rid of the single marker layout, or have a single marker layout and allow two archers to shoot from the imaginary line.

This rule caused back ups up to 6 groups and had it not been for the nice weather, we would definitely have had protests.

As a result of this waiting I noticed various groups in the queue shooting all three arrows on the short distance as a “practice target”, rather than waiting under a tree.

In stead of saving on the small targets and trying to prevent shooting through, this practice caused unwarranted wear and tear on such targets and some targets were eventually shot through.

So by changing to a double peg system we not only will save at least 2 hours in shooting time, it saves on the small targets and will allow for larger numbers of archers per but, but not more than 8.

9. Award/Closing Ceremony

The award/closing ceremony is always handled by the organizers and should be left as such. However we must assure that all those attending the event can see what is happening at the podium!

The ceremonial stand must be on a stage/podium and well above the spectators. There should also be a “no-go” zone immediately in front of the stage/podium.

Lighting must be such that the Officer who announces the winners does not get roasted on stage!

10. Missing IFAA Flags

Missing flags that belong to the IFAA remain a problem and this event was no exception.

The responsibility of returning those flags to the IFAA lies with the Host. It is not the function of one of the IFAA Officers to try and find all of them after the shoot.

We should give a host a number of weeks to return the flags, where after the host will be invoiced for the missing flags.

Nevertheless I do hope that Steve was able to get them all back.

11. Scoring

The IFAA must look at a scoring system that is user friendly to all event organizers. We already discussed this the first time in 1998 in New Zealand.

The scoring used by the organizers of the EBHC2010 worked well for individual scoring and was quick. It was however unusable to the IFAA for their own purpose of team events, resulting in double work every day and late issue of the results.

We require a scoring system based on a database that automatically identifies the members of the various teams and prints out the teams and results on a single command.

12. Inexperienced archers

Inexperience archers remain a problem and as they normally shoot lower scores than experienced archers, they do not learn the basic rules of our games.

An IFAA sanctioned event is not a place to learn the game. It frustrates other archers and the number of mistakes, especially with walk up targets and scoring, cause confusion and sometimes protests.

Maybe we should look at the inexperienced archers as a means to reduce our attendance, but only if everything else fails, by making it compulsory that an archer shoots at least one national event under IFAA rules.

This brings me to the last question:

Should an inexperienced host/organizer be allowed to bid for an IFAA sanctioned event ?

My opinion is a simple NO !

The EBHC2010 team did a good job in general.

They had a lot of support of the local community and Heinz is very well known by all in the region.

He had support from the local town council and regional Council and had access to their resources.

The local archery club has a lot of members and there are several clubs nearby.

This is not often the case and many previous hosts have to battle to get a successful event going with little resources to start of with and limited assistance from the local community and member archers. Most of us have been there before.

Like with the WBHC2007 in Switzerland, I am quite convinced that the situation in Stuhlfelden greatly assisted to the success of this event, but I can mention various other countries where experience has showed us that such assistance will not be the case and the success of such an event, even with 400 or less archers, would be doubtful.

I therefore recommend that in the case of bids by inexperienced members, especially in Europe where 1000+ archers may attend an event, must include:

1. Assurance that the organizing club will host at least one similar event at national level with the IFAA V-P or nominated representative attending that event. This at the expense of the Organizers

And/or

2. That the event organizer is allowed to “shadow” as a member of an organizing team of the previous event to learn the various aspects of such an event.

And/or

3. The IFAA V-P or his nominated representative will visit the venue at least 6 months prior to the event to view the situation and discuss all matters with the organizers. This at the expense of the Organizers

And

4. The agreement is more detailed in various aspects we expect will not be attended to due to this lack of experience, i.e. Team events, mass control, etc.

Regards,

Loet Smit

IFAA President