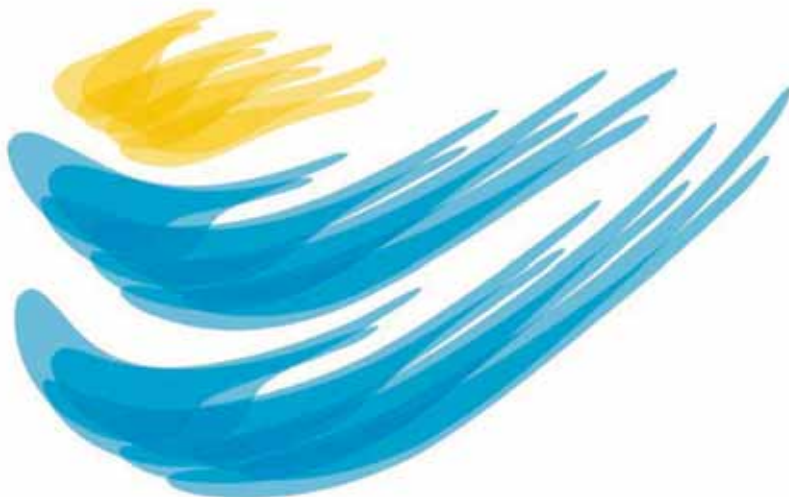


WWGC 2009 Szeged - Hungary

**5th Women's World
Gliding Championships
Szeged (Hungary) 2009**



IMPRESSIONS SZEGED 2009

Szeged... Hungary again 30 years after Dunaujvaros where the very first official European Championships were organized, only about 200 km north - west from Subotica, where the Yugoslav organizer did a fine job in 1985. So, here we are again in Hungary, this time in Szeged. Imagine, Judy Pollerman, Maria Bolla and also Jana Veprekova already meet again here in Szeged.



Szeged airfield

The training days for these 5th gliding world championships for women have literally heated up the whole site... including its occupants. Tasks were given each morning but mostly the 49 competitors used whatever time they intended to be in the air, to exercise crossing start line and finish line, so it was useless to calculate the results.

49 names on the list? Well, several of the expected ladies never turned up. For Russian Tamara Sviridova and Larissa Khamitova (you must remember her impressive acrobatic dancing demonstration with Czech team captain Petr Krejcik in Romorantin?) *money was the root of all evil* or better still the lack of it and the same trouble was the reason for the regretted absence of both Lithuanian pilots Edita Skalskiene and Dalia Vainene.

Rather unexplainable is the absence of the USA representative Elizabeth Geiger from Harris Hill but living in Germany and married to a German pilot she had a baby with, in April. The group of American lady pilots I met a few days earlier in Slovenia at the WSPA meeting had recommended me to please encourage her in Szeged. On the other hand Frauke Elber, editor of **Hangar Soaring** (USA) told me that Elizabeth was required to fly in the pre-worlds, planned shortly after the 5th WWGC 2009 in **Szeged**. Instead of that, she will (have to?) fly with the women. Adding to the mistery, there was a red notation

(*no registration fee*) to her name on the entry list. SO now the non-European participants came from Japan (welcome again, dear Akemi Hirotsume), Australia : Jenny Thompson well surrounded by a group of ever smiling solid fellow countrymen with impressive hats - and, yes, also Turkey (the country is still knocking unsuccessfully on the door to become part of the European Union). Their Mrs Andrea Barna accompanied by her Turkish husband Ali Acan, is Hungarian born - even in Szeged which gives her a welcome occasion for a family reunion.

The Hungarian team was a joy to the eye with several young pilots wanting to follow the road of their predecessors Maria Bolla and Judy Pollerman, both still competing. For Maria Bolla this 2009 Szeged meant her 18th participation with best result silver in 1983 in Belgium. Young competitors, young yes, but not without experience: Orsolya Diofasi participated in the recent Junior World Championships in Rayskala where she finished 32th on 46... and where she met French Nathalie Hurlin who finished 10th on 46.



Training days : the sky was not very promising

Young blood also in the Italian team. In as far as 1973 the only Italian competitor was famous Adele Orsi, then after a long time in 1997 we could again welcome a (also one and only) Italian representative Margherita (by everybody called Margot) Acquaderni in Prievidza where Gisela Weinreich - here in Szeged steward - became European champion for the fifth time. Here in Szeged Margot brought two pretty young women along: Elena Fergnani and Paola Lanzieri, well managed by Nicola Fergnani just back from the world junior championships in Rajskala, where he finished 25th on 46. There his pretty venetian blond sister Elena acted as team captain (until her father would take over). Here in Szeged Elena herself pilots the same glider LS 1F in club class. Same team, different characters, different aspects: Elena - with 20 springs she is the youngest competitor on the field - together with her black haired "*à la Carmen*" colleague Paola Lanzieri.

The Czech republic came with a large team, as usual, a strong team, also as usual with real title candidates Alena Netusilova - world champion 15 m class 2003 in Jihlava and silver medal in 1997 - and Jana Veprekova - world champion standard class in 2005 in Klix, silver in 1999.

Since the beginning of these FAI approved contests and championships the German team has constantly grown in quantity AND quality and with the help they get in the homeland successes are of course expected from the ten registered ladies. It would not be fair to already point out one special candidate but Katrin Senne is certainly keen and capable to keep the title she conquered in Romorantin 2 years ago. So: 10 German pilots were registered but unfortunately only 9 will be able to compete. Indeed they "lost one pilot" due to a painful injury during training week: Doerte Starsinski, so proud and happy with her first appearance in the strong German team, was severely burned - 3rd degree - when she stumbled from her caravan and got a large kettle of boiling water on her breast and other parts of her body. Urgent transfer to Germany for skin transplantation killed her dream before it started, but being a doctor herself, she realized she could not possibly stay to start the championship. Too late also to still "mobilize" a replacement. So, 9 pilots, even so, really not a little team!!!



One name is missing in the British team: Sarah Harland - Steinberg - Kelman, 3 times standard champion - in 1999 , in 2001 and in 2007. How can any team afford not to bring her along ...unless another pregnancy? NO , this time Sarah has promised her family of 3 kids to spend holidays with them. SO Gillian

Spreckley will have to double efforts carrying British chances in Szeged, where she could very well add a standard class title to both the 15 m class (in 2001) and club class (in 2007) she already booked.

Quite impressive, the academic level of the 6 elegant French team members: airline pilot Marilyne Abadie Berard, Magali De Cachard and Anne Ducarouge both engineers and young Nathalie Hurlin studying to become one, Celine Montorio in the military control service and psychologist Jutta Sturm



Opening Cerimony

No Swiss competitors this time, although Yvonne Schwarz (silver in 2005) almost made it. After selling her glider to pay for her training she is now flying Airbus 320 for SWISS. Thus some funds coming in, she bought a new glider *"thinking about flying women competitions again...but it is too soon for Szeged 2009"*

World championships without Valentyna Toporova of Ukraine - *not possible* - she won gold twice, in 1991 and 1999 and Szeged 2009 means number 12 for her, a beautiful subscription indeed !

Poland absent would also be unimaginable, so experienced airline pilot Joanna Biedermann took a very young Polish girl Marta Najfeld under her wings. Young, she is 30 - but certainly not a beginner. In July 2007 she indeed piloted her Polish SZD - 55 glider to improve her own 100 km triangle world record (of 2006) in subclass D - 15 achieving a speed of 163,14 km/h.

To my very big surprise Joanna Biedermann told me that women championships will no longer be organized in Poland. Hard to believe, hard to conceive...

It was probably the general financial situation all over the world which prevented Russia to add more “pilot material” to Vera Shishlakova (her 7th participation) and Nina Shalneva, quite a long way from Novosibirsk.

Slovakia is again present, Zuzana Hrnčirkova hoping to do well and bring home a few Slovak records.

Here is Denmark represented again, this time by Helle Lundgren and not by world champion 2005 Mette Pedersen, now expecting a second baby. And talking about babies: the twins Sarah and David (1 and 1/2 years old) of Alena Netusilova are graciously being taken care of by Maria Kyzivatova, “Kyzi”, well known Czech champion pilot (European gold in 1989 Orel, silver in 87 and 4 x bronze).

Said Kyzi *“the least I can do for all the help I got from Alena in my days”*.

The French team of 6 - and more particularly Marilyne Abadie Berard - is also brightened up by a solid 10 months old baby boy standing firmly on its (future gliding?) legs. A new BABY class in sight? Maybe add the cute blond son of Orsolya Diofasi.... *“Wrong, Gill, this is not my son but my 20 year younger brother”*. Not counting little Eva Senne, now 5 and her brothers 10 and 11, without forgetting both active children of Cornelia Schaich and I saw more youngsters running and cycling around. Future generation secured?

THE SCENE IS SET - LET THE ACTORS PERFORM !!!

training over - now things are getting serious.



DAY 1

Is this Texas ? Or Namibia ?



Hesitation useless: large polygon racing tasks a MUST ! club class 310,9 km, standard class 405,3 km and 15 m class 415,5 km. One single look at the inviting cumulus sky could predict: we shall see most of the girls back in less than 4 hours !

With regularly 2 m/sec rising to 4m especially on the third last part of the distance, indeed here they came elegantly crossing the finish line and reaching Szeged, showering the dusty field with what ballast was left . But to reach this excellent result speeds of 127 km/h were needed in 15 m class by Susanne Schoedel, Katrin Senne and Alena Netusilova, both German pilots rewarded the well deserved maximum of 1000 points.

The speed in standard class was only slightly less than in the 15m class: a fantastic cumulative start for both French pilots Anne Ducarouge -1000 points - and Magali De Cachard, hardly less: 958 points. As for the club class Hana Vokrinkova could write this first victory in her flight book 2009, her 310,9 km in hardly one minute more than 3 hours and 102,8 km/h . This way Hana reminded her rivals of her golden title in 2005 in Klix, which she would so much like to repeat here. Unknown - but not for very long - Ayala Liran of the United Kingdom made an excellent start, becoming second.

One speed missing on the score board: really an outlanding ? No no, Turkish Andrea just decided to take a shortcut to land safely on Szeged.

A dark message on the results board was a serious blow for Jutta Sturm (Colmar) who had finally been authorized to defend the blue - white - red colours in the strong French team. She shortly crossed the Hungarian border, the rule is hard, but the logger does not lie: her “theoretical landing point” on this border gave her 76 km... and poor 69 points - from here on she can - and maybe has to - take every risk.



A T-shirt of the British team shows how the days of the pilots will be for two weeks.....

DAY 2

Happy faces all over, organizers AND competitors. Tiny cirrus covered the field, surrounded however by a few cumuli. The meteo man - by the way also the Hungarian team captain Andras Gyongyosi - announced dryer conditions, so later blue thermals would develop with possible consequences : gaggles... and maybe a few outlandings.



Director and Stewards at work on the grid

Not surprising, the smile on the face of director Peter Göncze who announced big ones again: 520,9 km for “the big girls”, 509,4 km for standard class, 439,5 km for club class - at the very late moment task AAT had been changed into racing task for everybody.

Like on the first day towing was efficient and speedy - all 49 pilots in the air in some 46 minutes in spite of firm cross wind... One tow pilot got a well deserved warning, because of his unexpected manoeuvre “jokingly” diving straight on to steward Gisela Weinreich and a few other women who all had no other solution but to fall flat on the ground!

As the day progressed conditions became more demanding, somewhat less favourable than yesterday, which was evidently decreasing the average speed! Ayala Liran of Great Britain could proudly put 1000 club class points in her pocket, with 81,4 km/h, sharing the 1000 points honour with Hungarian Orsolya Diofasi - also her first participation!

In standard class the German team finishing 1 (Cornelia Schaich) - 2 and 3 only left the rest to the representatives of the other 8 nations.

And look, almost the same German scenario in the 15 m class with 1
(Anja Kohlrausch) - 3 - 4 - 6



Gliders towards the first turning point, just after the start

Global conclusion: 12 outlandings, all in full safety, but what a blow to Alena Netusilova (gold in 2003), carefully calculating the risk... and deciding to make an outlanding... 1,5 km BEFORE the airfield. This “punished” her with only 510 points on a 1000 points day. No doubt this reminded her of a similar situation in the European championships 1999 in Leszno, where she landed on a high cornfield **3 km** before the airfield, suffering serious injury of her spinal column. I can imagine she did not want to take this risk again and played it safely, even if it meant a giant loss of points. Sad, sad...

DAY 3

Roses to start the day, offered to the birthday ladies Maria Bolla, Helle Lundgren and Andrea Barna, with of course the kiss of the director. Roses put away... and off they went to prepare the grid, first launch foreseen at 12 noon.

In club class with a racing task of 275,5 km both Czech girls Dana Novakova and Hana Vokrinkova preferred to be patient and let half of the rivals go before they decided to do so: apparently the right decision, for they shared top result, with Novakova getting 1000 points.

In standard class “out of the way” was the silent cry of the 3 ladies strong German block Haberkern, Kussbach and Schaich , performing their 301,8 km task with 105,8 km speed average, well ahead of the CZ duo Jana Veprekova and Eva Cerna, also still more than 100 km average speed.



Standard class grid

In the 15 m class 2 French girls Jutta Sturm (eager to catch up on her unfortunate “airspace violation” of the first day) and Maryline Abadie Berard were the first to go

and also, to their own joy, the first to come in before the group of 3 German ladies, split up by Margot Acquaderni..



The Australian team

DAY 4

After three racing tasks nobody was surprised by the announcement of task 4: AAT for every class, with 3 hours to fill with speed. After all, annex A of the Sporting Code, Part 6 prescribes: at least 2 different types of tasks, but none of them should be used for more than 67 % of the championships days.

Once more the day promised to be hot. As dynamic steward Gisela Weinreich put it : here the thermometer already shows 31°, a telephone call from Germany indicated the reverse : 13°C...

Long before the briefing started at 10 o'clock one could see real dust devils rising up from the dry sand of the field.



Briefing time

First launch foreseen at 12.00... but even while bringing the gliders to the right spot on the grid, the sky was overanxious to display its welcome address: already 3/8 of tempting cumulus. During the day pilots reported these were swelling to 5/8 and even a bit more. Although AAT is supposed to tend more to individual initiative and the chosen points, team work is not an idle word. This seems to be proven by the practically simultaneous crossing of the start line as well as the finish line by the 3 Czech pilots in the 15 m class, its final triple result only interrupted by French Marilyne Abadie who had chosen to leave almost one half hour before. But what a victory for good old Lenka Kuthova : 136,2 km/hour and hardly less for the following pilots: the other Czech matador Alena Netusilova and compatriot Jana Treslova. To nobody's surprise, the 3 Germans Katrin Senne, Susanne Schoedel and Anette Klossok, practiced the same scenario: off together, home together. Tactics hard to beat in the standard class, where 3 British ladies Kay Draper, Hannah Hay and Gillian Spreckley left almost in one breath, to land practically together in Szeged, young Hungarian Timea Markus "spoiling" the British sequence. All this however could not stop experienced Jana Veprekova to win the day in her LS 8 reaching 120,9 km/h . She had started together with her team mate Eva Cerna, "lost" underway.

To complete the happiness of CZ team captain also victory in the club class was offered to him by Dana Novakov 103,4 km/h on her standard Cirrus *bis repetita like the day before* in spite of the resistance of - again - Ayala Liron and her friend Elizabeth Sparrow. Pick up your calculator, Petr Krejcirik: 3 X 1000 points makes 3000 for the Czech team. What a harvest for ONE day!

The feast was not over. This day turned out to bring absolute joy to Zuzana Hrcirikova (I can write her name but don't ask me to take too serious risks to pronounce it !). She broke not less than 4 Slovak women records

In 15 m class : *Free distance return flight 341,62 km (limit 300 km)*

Free distance 3 turnpoints 525,04 km (old 317,2 km)

Free distance polygone 481,3 km (old 310,5 km)

In Open Class : *Free distance 3 turnpoints 525,04 km (old 517,9 km)*

For Zuzana this Day 4 meant the second 500 km in her life, whereas her average speed of 118 km/h in the racing task of 405,3 km (she finished 3rd on Day 1) was the best speed she ever achieved in her life. Nice going, Zuzana!



Getting ready for a second launch

DAY 5

For the first time in these championships a sniffer was sent in the air. His flight must have convinced the met/man who announced the air was still dry and thermals would be somewhat lower than yesterday.

Eyebrows raising everywhere: AAT...hello girls, make the best of your choices within 5 - yes FIVE - hours. I heard somebody whisper *are these championships for gliding or for endurance...?* Well, without good physical condition pilots will hardly successfully survive in such demanding gliding operations as we are experiencing here in Szeged 2009.

Briefing over. No, not yet, here came a quite impressive male squadron dressed in impeccably white bathrobes: an original way of the CZ crew to congratulate their girls for their triple victory of day 4, now official.



Meanwhile some practical joker, inspired (?) by the 5 hours AAT task, had been sticking a message on the cockpit of various gliders: *"pampers inside"...*

The first launch of 12.15 h was postponed till 12.45 h and an interested group of visiting schoolchildren had not enough eyes to witness all take offs of the elegant big birds...



First launch postponed ...waiting in the shadow of a tow plane

Even before briefing half the field had already been covered by slight grey-blue stratus which steadily turned into timid cumulus, slowly growing to 3/8. When

the last glider was launched cloud base had risen to 2000 m and pilots signalled even 2300 m.

Around 16.30 h a bit of shy wind made the temperature slightly plunge below 30°, a relative coolness nobody regretted.

At 17.00 h my head got a few (welcome) drops and the airfield got a harmless shower, a luxury missed since a long time. Slight rain in Szeged, yes, but not so slight on the last turn point where the rain came down in quite “fat” drops (heard from one pilot). The unlucky pilots paid the price: suffering a negative 3m/sec, some were flying lower than 500 m and had to rely on their instruments - and of course on their eyes - to land safely home. Nevertheless, I saw quite some showers on the thirsty field, several pilots had clearly kept as much ballast as possible until the very landing.

In standard class German Gaby Haberkern enjoyed her second victory (she won day 3) - with impressive speed of 121,9 km/h, sharing the happy 1000 pts fate with French Anne Ducarouge. Of course Cornelia Schaich (here 5th - she won day 2) was never far away and kept her overall lead, followed by her two team mates Sue Kussbach and Gaby Haberkern. Gillian Spreckley and Jana Veprekova continued their catch on operation, however the points difference was almost negligible.

Not so in club class where Hana Vokrinkova repeated her victory of day 1 but that gave hardly 20 points more than Ayala Liran / same second place as on day 1 / who stayed solidly high up in overall ranking, since day2 ! Her friend Elizabeth Sparrow had followed on her heels, staying in podium position since the 2nd day. Who is this exceptional pilot never seen before? Born Israeli – Shalom, Ayala - her parents settled down in Great Britain where she flies in Lasham which several members of the British team have now chosen as their home base.

(what a souvenir for me, quite some years ago I had registered for a week of cloud flying training. Imagine, not one single cloud or rain drop - how dare England be so “un-British?” So instead I took an unforgettable aerobatic course).



Photo Gallery man !

Apparently Katrin Senne chose the right moments at the right places - 122,8 km/h in 5 hours! with Susanne Schoedel on her heels (on the German frequency I heard the voice of Katrin Senne “Susanne, shall I wait for you ?”). Both were only a little faster than - yes, again - Marilyne Abadie who certainly confirms her podium intentions.

No outlandings today, 30 July. Should tasks have been still larger? Bigger still than 5 hours AAT? Who says so?

DAY 6

Is the optimism of the Hungarian organizers sinking? How else can you explain a racing task of “only?” 255,5 km for the 15 m class ? Yesterday on day 5 everybody flew for hours and hours, some almost 6 hours, spirit and condition helping.



The Danish Helle Lundgren and the Italian Paola Lanzieri and Elena Fergnani waiting for take off

Surprise? Czechs up again? Not really a big surprise, for this large team had already proven its talents, inspired by Alena Netusilova courageously trying to catch up on the top, after her sad outlanding at 1,5 km from the field on day 2. Jana Treslova did not let Alena out of sight... but who could have beaten “speedy Gonzales” Alena and her **138,1 km the very fastest lady until today** (*and till the end of the championships*). Less than 2 hours flight, landing around 4 p.m. No sign of fatigue.

Passing by the Czech camping area I suddenly saw a tall slim figure, solid dark helmet on its head, protecting devices around the waist, solid black knee-pads and black boots. An extra terrestrial? No, it was Alena Netusilova on the way to her (almost) daily roller skating training. On top of being a caring mother she certainly was the busiest pilot on the Szeged field, for she also spent quite some time in front of her lap-top, running her business in Prague. Energy for sale...

Back to the task of day 6 : today Anja Kohlrausch started almost 5 minutes later than her fellow - countrywomen, which was apparently a good inspiration, she managed 130,5 km/h but even this speed was not good enough to stop both Czech matadors Alena Netusilova and “3 points less” Jana Treslova to win the day. And once more, the regular flying pattern of Maryline Abadie kept her solidly rooted in bronze spot 3 Maryline Abadie in her final glide.

The importance of very accurate setting of the instruments was demonstrated in the unfortunate case of 57Ventus 2 glider of Margot Acquaderni. Preliminary checking of flight documents took into account only 246 km, producing poor 266 points. WHAT? Her complaint was carefully checked and changed into 50 penalty points for staying very slightly out of the cylinder with dots on both sides. However small the difference, both loggers do not lie, out is out. A protest to change the verdict would only make her lose 150 Euro.

“Only 241,9 km”? in standard class - Gillian Spreckley teaming up with her friend Kay Draper, would certainly have liked a bigger task. Indeed, her victory today with 118,7 km/h did not bring her the dreamed of 1000 points (“only” 615 points) and combined efforts of both French LS 8 competitors Magali De Cachard and Anne Ducarouge stopped Kay Draper to join Gillian as number 2. The difference of points between victory and 14th placing was only 112 points, not enough to change overall ranking.



Jutta Sturm crosses the final line

In club class it was “Rule Britannia” with result 1 - 2 - 3 for the united forces of the United Kingdom Sparrow-Liran - Johnson. And what to think of the following group of European Union youngsters - Polish Marta Najfeld, French Nathalie Hurlin, Hungarian Orsolya Diofasi and Italian Elena Fergnani? They held back the 3 Czech Standard Cirrus gliders. A careful look at the overall placing told the story: young Nathalie Hurlin coming ever closer to podium spot, only 88 points away...

Who says club class, thinks of Kathrin Woetzel and Christine Grote. Their present modest results are difficult to explain. These 2 charming German friends were always present among the best club class pilots in previous championships: 2003 in Jihlava Christine got gold, Kathrin silver, 2005 in Klix Kathrin was 6th, Christine 7th, 2007 in Romorantin Kathrin was 2nd, Christine 3rd. After this 6th day in Szeged it was 8 and 9 for both. Come on girls, you can do better! As some famous politician once said: “*Il n’est pas trop tard mais il est grand temps*”. It is not too late but it is high time...