

DAY 7

No, no, day 7 becomes the first day OFF, after six demanding tasks nobody protested to have some time at hand. Some rest also but this day pilots and crews made quite a rush to the many shops in town, matter of renewing or completing the provisions in the frig box.

Gisela Weinreich and husband Wolfgang welcomed the chance of a motor flight, the lift was quite bumpy... and the cloud base reached 2300 meters... no no, their Cessna did not experience this, the eyes of the passengers did !

But this day was by far not a lost day. The Hungarian organizers spared no efforts to make everybody appreciate the quite lively Hungarian evening in the briefing hangar with the always appreciated folklore shows: acrobatic males dancing and the ladies swaying their brightly coloured dresses. Their performance brought about an inviting imitation sequence and up they were, pilots and other team members with devilish speed.



No more morning jogging needed to morrow.....Brian Spreckley will not contradict me....

DAY 7, again

this time the real one

Roses, kisses and “happy birthday” singing, sorry, that was true for Akemi Hirotsune but surprised Wolfgang Weinreich could omit the kissing part. The gesture of director Peter and the organizers was completed by the complete German team, expressing its appreciation for the long years of his perfect managing the FAI , with a beautiful wooden box containing every instrument any amateur of good wine could wish for.

The tasks of the day could have been the ones of yesterday: speed polygon of 382,1 km for the 15 m class, 355,5 km for the standard (ai ai, part of this imposed track is really very near the border, so: CAREFUL - loggers do not lie !) and 303,3 km for the club class.

This pre-frontal situation, no humidity on the ground, high cloud base. VERY high temperature again - it only stopped at 34°C. Go girls, go !



In standard class some kind of jump was expected from Gillian Spreckley who lacked only 31 points to rise to podium position.

1 p.m: a shy white cumulus, the pilots want more of those. The day turned out to offer regular 2/8 of them. Agnes Abrok was the first to get away, the three British musketeers followed 2 minutes later. Their joy was to be spoiled by Jana Veprekova Only 3 pilots landed before 5 p.m., among them victorious Jana with 113,4 km/h before Kay Draper and Gillian Spreckley who had now succeeded in getting in podium position, 16 little points more than Czech Jana.

What kind of complot was planned in club class for its 303,3 km task? : United Kingdom, both French EA and ED, both Italians, 2 Germans, they were ALL OFF before 13.30 h.

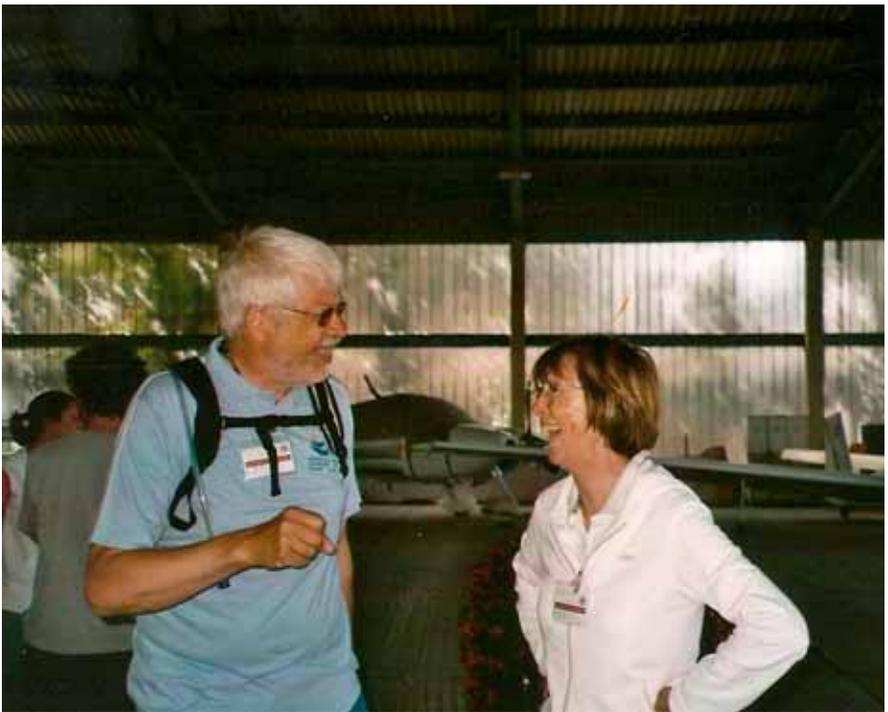
A quarter of an hour later 2 CZ Cirrus passed the start line and for their whole flight they needed 5 minutes... less than the earlier starters.

So Vokrinkova and Novakova collected practically 1000 points, but again, who would be surprised, Ayala Liran did not let anybody else precede her. Her 140 overall points advance became rather comfortable. Both German friends Christine Grote and Kathrin Woetzel lacked speed, again.

Their German team mates in the 15 m class were fast enough in their 382,1 km racing task: Katrin Senne 114 km/h, separated from Susanne Schoedel by happily surprising Jenny Thompson from Australia, a very early starter: 30 minutes before the whole group. She proved her capability to find the best lift in its capricious centre.

WHAT? An unexpected appearance: a very much old timer Hungarian trailer hooked behind a car (somewhat slightly younger, to be honest)...this is NO way to encourage the brave fighting spirit of the pilots in the sky, the base of which had even risen to 2500 m. Don't tell us this old contraption is getting Turkish Andrea Barna competition glider FS - *the only outlander today* - out of a meadow or another field.

No No, this is just a show off for fun.



Happy Ake Pettersson and Gisela Weinreich

DAY 8

A somewhat longer team captains meeting today: they objected to some of the flights of yesterday originating opposite courses. OK: will be avoided in the future. Then the Danish team requested reimbursement for the damage to the trolley of the SE glider LS 8, caused by the holes in the ground.



Very sorry. As Director Peter Gönczi had already explained before, the organizing team had well prepared the field, filling the holes created by some gophers, kind of small squirrels, a species threatened with extinction. Everyday some 40 of these troublemakers were

caught and brought to scientific laboratories but these inventive little devils created their own ever changing “catacombs”.

Never say never - a James Bond moto applying to the meteo of the day : blue all day! AAT foreseen for the three classes: some team captains expressed doubts, director Peter proved the organizers’ flexibility by putting the matter to a vote. 4 team captains are against, 6 approved, democracy is saved, tasks are maintained. Last happy announcement: tonight is international night... there will be 100 liters (or more...) of Czech beer etc etc.

A slight risk of thunderstorm behind the dissipating front is announced. No doubt this can become a tricky day. By 11.30 h the capricious cirrus has left the field. When the sniffer goes up he very quickly taste the kind of conditions colleagues on the ground are to expect. The director changes tasks for standard and club classes: AAT, yes, but 2 instead of 3 hours - for once the task setter does not quite agree.

Today 15 m class is in front of the grid, their launch starts at 12.30 h but after the last glider is in the air towing is interrupted. The gliders all choose the north of the field with some 1000 m height. The elegant ballet of the thermal circling gliders looks like little spots of stars... but of course this is day and not night....

The wind seems less strong than yesterday, lift trigger temperature of 31° is soon reached, rising to 34° (again !) between 2 and 4 pm. Launching restarts

and the start line is declared open at 13.15 for club, at 14.15 for standard class. The temperature only knows one direction: UP and the crews on the ground try desperately to catch the smallest whisper of relieving wind.

Within 4 minutes 16 of the 18 club class girls have started on their mission, all eager to make the best of their 2 AAT hours.

Vera Shishlakova in her LS 1d and young French Nathalie Hurlin in her St Cirus CS 1 both finish in less than 2 hours and Hungarian Orsolya Diafosi exceeds this time by less than a minute. Who says club class, says handicap factors juggling with daily speeds and therefore with daily rankings. Scoring calculations point out miss Diafosi as winner of the day. However, it soon appears Nathalie achieved best speed - 108,4 km/ h, she becomes 4th but the difference of points is almost negligible, only 34 points separate numbers 1 and 6.



Uli has finished his "before take off" job

Quite better speed was reached in standard class by the latest starter Danish Helle Lundgren and her LS 8, during her 2 AAT hours: 122,6 km/ if you please ! even faster than the best 15 m competitor Marilyne Abadie Berard 112,7 km/ - well yes, Marilyne had a somewhat longer AAT 3 hours task, leaving everybody behind - the complete German trio included. Sunny day for Helle, black day for Gillian Spreckley. She left a few minutes before 3 p.m, practically together with Kay Draper and both French pilots Magali De Cachard and Ann Ducarouge. Something must have gone wrong on the way. Indeed, unlike Kay Draper, finishing 4th with a speed of 115,8 km/h, Gillian had to settle for 107,4 km/h. She was granted only 472 points (compared to 628 for Danish Helle Lundgren.) and dropped to overall 5th. eager to catch up again on day 9. To top it all- or was it because she realized her poor performance? - poor Gillian got a warning for "incorrect landing lane".

DAY 9, not really

Early entering the briefing hangar I admired an unexpected “household show”: a nice lady consciously ironing the white clothes for the various team tables. Impeccable!

And I surprised the task setter in discussion with the director, he thought there had been no reason to change the task of yesterday, shortening the AAT tasks for standard and club classes: 2 hours instead of the originally foreseen 3 hours.

Thermals were appearing in the north-east of the country, clouds were covering the field in the morning, the air was humid and unstable. Foreseen trigger temperature was 29 / 30 °, not expected to be reached. Director Gönczi promised “freshness”: at least 4° less than yesterday. Ha ha, thank you. For the next 2 days the situation seems rather uncertain, nevertheless the grid is to be prepared. Nobody ignores the information on shower risks: less than 30 %, so the risk of thunders and precipitations does exist.

The witchcraft of the old and new Babajagas to be initiated this Wednesday evening really was not influential (yet) and as logic commanded: flying day 9 was neutralized at 13.00 hours.



Not very promising sky...

Shortly afterwards French Celine Montorio strained her ankle. Were the squirrel holes in the ground the guilty ones? No, she just stumbled on an uneven piece of the ground. Ice needed. Not to be found on the field. Clever French crew: a quick drive to their nearby guest house (very comfortable and recommendable, they told me) - and one - two - three the ankle was taken care of... No flying, but the day was not lost....

The neutralization of the contest day allowed pilots participating for the first time in these official international / European / World championships to listen to the “already initiated **BABAJAGAS**” of their team, recommending THE disguise for the festive evening of their acceptance in the international sorority of the “flying witches”. Is it necessary to remind everybody of this ceremony, originated by the Polish women pilots, a tradition respected and continued. The underlying idea of the oath to be sworn, is the solemn promise to never cheat but act with fair play in all circumstances. First the oath - repeating it in the language of the “godmother” (you can imagine these tongue twisters!) - then a tour of honor dancing on the broomstick around the blazing fire, sometimes on “a two-seater broomstick” godmothers courageous enough ! Finally then the novices seal the oath with a lip print in the witch chronicle... and a small strong drink helps encouraging them to always respect their oath.



First you promise.....



Then you dance

The only shadow on this evening: **NO** microphone (I really had insisted, in vain...), which prevented the questions being traditionally asked by the attendants and to be honestly answered by the novices, unless they did not want to answer.

For the rest of the evening I tried to assist chief witch Judy Pollermann (the same chief witch as 30 years ago in Dunaujvaros!!) by acting as some kind of “loudspeaker”....

Szeged 2009 quite a number of “acceptances in the sisterhood of the Babajagas” Indeed, there was a (happy) lot of novices to “undergo” the ceremony”: not less than 18 and thus 18 godmothers. Some godmothers really pushed their novices to a maximum of effort...



Godmother Margot Acquaderni with novice Andrea Kadar

You can imagine the lasting public laughter when Italian Margot Acquaderni tried again and again to bring her young new Hungarian protégée Andrea Kadar to pronounce **riaterrare sempre** with repeated rolling rrrrs... or Sue Kussbach (who did not know yet that she was to become the winner of Szeged 2009 in standard class), pushing her Turkish godchild Andrea to enormous efforts to repeat the German oath.



Judit Pollerman, the chief Babajaga 2009

BABAJAGA 2009, SZEGED - Hungary



18 Novices	Godmothers
Eszeter Zákány HUN	Anne Decourage FR
Elena Fergnani ITA	Jana Veprekova CZ
Jenny Thompson AUS	Maryline Abadie Bérard FR
Timea Mårkus HUN	Katrin Senne GER
Marta Najfeld POL	Akemi Hirostune JAP
Gaby Haberkern GER	Joanna Bindermann POL
Ayala Liran UK	Maria Bolla HUN
Andrea Barna TUR	Sue Kussbach GER
Orsolya Diofàasi HUN	Valentina Toporova UKR
Zuzanna Hrcirikova SLO	Agnes Abrok HUN
Andrea Kadar HUN	Margot Acquaderni ITA
Jutta Sturm FR	Lenka Kuthanova CZ
Paola Lanzieri ITA	Nina Shalneva RUS
Nathalie Hurlin FR	Hana Vokrinkova CZ
Helle Lundgren DK	Vera Shishlakova RUS
Hanna Hay UK	Judit Pollerman HUN

DAY 9, the real one ?

Some sleepy eyes at briefing... did the Babajaga evening have prolongations? Old and new witches should have used their "influence" to make the previsions of the day somewhat more favorable than what the meteo services presented: very uncertain previsions, active zone will pass east of our region. Grid to be prepared anyway.

Meanwhile the Swedish visitors of Arboga - next organizers 2011 - gave a presentation of their site and possibilities. Arboga, population 14.000 is situated 150 km west of Arboga. Speaker was Mats Lundqvist, the handsome director of these future world championships. A somewhat disagreeable surprise was the high registration fee 750 € - which is 150 more than Szeged. Of course, living costs in Sweden are quite higher than in Hungary...

This morning the usual group photo was planned. Milan-Kmetovics - man with 1000 qualities - (photographer, scorer, adviser, etc...) had an original idea: to take the group photo from above, from the roof of the hangar and the pilots were requested to take place next to and beside the Hungarian "old-timer" glider installed in front of the hangar. No special hurry.

Acrobat Milan climbed on an autobus and reached his objective: the roof of the hangar.

"Ready, ladies? Please wave at me". Some loud voice (who?) : wait, we want Gill with us on the photo. *I am not a competitor.* We want you with us, you belong to us. My protest was waved away, SO...



Meanwhile on the grid, launching was “postponed” and “postponed again”. Wait and wait,... like the pigeon fanciers waiting for the signal to release their pigeons...

One can imagine the mood of the pilots on the field, quite different according to their position in overall rankings. *I pray we shall fly, so maybe I can improve my ranking*” or still *“well, I am on top, why should uncertain weather change my ranking?”*



Hard times for crews

Enough waiting: 13.30 h. patience came to an end : NO task today.

Everywhere cars with trailers were rushing in the splashing rain to the tie-down site of their flying jewels, pushed by the darkening clouds, rain coming much sooner than really expected. Bravo for the brave teams in what too soon had become a cloud burst. TOO soon indeed.

I heard one possible explanation: in the scoring office the internet had broken down and meteo man and task setter were anxiously trying to get it functioning again, till one of them happened to look through the window to discover the apparent overdevelopment. Immediate logic decision: NEUTRALIZATION of the day!!!



Katrin Senne and Margot Acquaderni with winged t shirts looking at the sky

Waiting public in the restaurant quickly changed place, when the slightest touching of the tented roof caused temporary abundant inundations. Maybe the rising temperature after the deluge would take care of drying everything. So, day 9 - again - was not a real (flying) one...

DAY 9, yes again

Briefing started with excuses for the somewhat late cancellation of the task yesterday. Sorry...Yesterday there was too much overdevelopment, we were “on the wrong side” of the flyable weather. The meteo man was offered a present: a beautiful umbrella - I can't judge if he really appreciated the gesture.

Today some dryer air is approaching from the north-east, the cloud base will be rather low. Temperatures of 34°C will again not be exceptions. However, if we are to be realistic, there is again - this time a 40% risk of overdevelopment which means possible showers. Cloud base is expected to be much lower than during the glorious first days of the championships but nevertheless slowly rising up to 1000 m to start with.



Briefing : stop watch !

Must we believe what the task setter predicted?: today the championship is really starting. Now is the time “when they separate the men from the boys” - or rather *the women from the girls...*

OK ladies, here are your tasks: 3 hours AAT task for all three classes.

First launch foreseen at 11.30 and postponed.

The sniffer took off at 11.20, signaled cloud base rising to 1000 m but the quantity of cumulus slowly increasing. Launch postponed, but not for very long, at 11.45 the tow planes started running, the first class to be launched was (as usual) the club class. On the grid Turkish SF refused her first launch. 35 minutes later she took off but had to come landing again. Decision of team captain/ husband Ali Aca “no more waste of money, you stay on the ground”. And that was the end of her first world championship!

Alena Netusilova also returned to land after her first launch. However, this time she did not need friendly help from Klaus Keim (father of Katrin Senne) always ready to help, as he recently did, saving Australian Jenny Thompsen with the funny little purple-colored-strand-on-her-forehead from any more rubber waterballast trouble. Fortunately Alena's small instrumental problem was immediately solved and she was quickly re-launched.

INTERMEZZO:

If crew members and visitors wanted to have their usual lunch at the open air restaurant, they were in for a surprise. Today suddenly it was impossible to see and take whatever (indeed tasty) food was inside the containers. The catering management “Protocol Party Service” had decided: no more food “*à volont *” as before. Today suddenly it was impossible to see WHICH menus were presented, because the containers had been reversed, now the food offered was to be “rationed in appropriate quantity” by the serving personnel. Apparently the appetite of customers until now had been judged “exaggerated”...

I think of a possible real (?) reason for this sudden change. The caterer had wanted to organize the farewell party in the newly built annex of his restaurant in town. However, the organizers fairly decided to respect the tradition: farewell party as always in the briefing hangar!

Hence the moody reaction... although the participation fee of 18 € per person for food and one aperitif (drinks not included) for that evening seemed ample payment for his catering mission. Several teams were upset with these unexpected expenses for pilots and various crew members, team captains started counting “can we afford this?”

Meanwhile the number of visitors on the airfield was increasing: arrival of some participants in the pre-world Flatland Cup (who will come next year?) to start on Monday August 10th.

“Flatland”? On the list of 141 turn points I discovered the highest one; nr 085 Kekestet 1015 m high, N 47°52.467 - E 020°00.500.

OK, it is not mount Everest!

But “flat”land?

Back to the grid



Judith Pollerman waiting for take off

The temperature had risen again to 34° C... Wait or not wait? As I heard on the frequency at about 13.15 h cloud base reached 1000 m. that is anyway what the first club class starters announced. Among them British Ayala Liran, leading overall ranking since the second day, Elizabeth Sparrow always in her “flying footsteps”. Those were their positions at the very beginning of this last championships day, apparently not in too great danger to be caught up by CS pilot Dana Novakova ranked 3rd. A little chance maybe for Nathalie Hurlin to climb on the 3rd step of the podium???

Tactics? Gambling? Pick the **right** time to get away? - of course only at the end of the task everybody would know what the **right time** was. Both CZ ladies Novakova and Vokrinkova passed the start line some 8 minutes later than the British colleagues...so did French Celine Montorio (no more trouble with her strained ankle...). Should Celine keep an eye on progress and position of started pilots ...and report to team captain Eric Napoleon who could then transmit any useful information to his young Nathalie? Why not consider such possibility? Nathalie Hurlin waited 21 more (long) minutes, then she started, followed 4 minutes later by Kathrin Woetzel and Christine Grote. Both German friends were determined to have a better championship finish than the beginning of it. They **did**, finishing 3rd and 4th in their last appearance in Szeged but... too late for other dreams...



Kathrin Woetzel ready to take off

They were not the only ones complaining: *the earth seems so very near with this low cloud base*. Of course, former days in Szeged all pilots had been coddled by generously high cloud bases, sometimes rising to 2500 meter! Nothing similar today... and some scattered thunderstorms on the way did not facilitate the pilot's task.

Soon radio messages told the story: Ayala Liran and Elizabeth Sparrow did not find the right rhythm and their modest average speed of 63,2 km/h failed to keep them on the road to victory-much less speed than fastest Hana Vokrinkova 82,0 km/h who was preceded in points - handicap factor considered - by Russian Vera Shishlakova. Quite impressive, blond Vera, *finishing* her last day in Szeged with a victory, whereas two years ago in Romorantin she had *started* first and also second day with a victory!

Clever Nathalie Hurlin on her Std Cirrus CS achieved the impossible: this very morning she was still at a distance of 12 points from the bronze medal, 84 points from silver and 241 points from gold. Her speed of **81,9 km/h** compared to 63,2 of Ayala Liran and Elizabeth Sparrow, offered her **335 points** more

than unlucky Ayala, royally enough for happy Nathalie Hurlin to get hold of the world champion title 2009. Disappointed Ayala Liran even lacked 14 precious points to stand on the podium.

How can one describe the immense joy in the French team? Nathalie Hurlin (650 gliding hours in her logbook) became the youngest world champion ever! *Impossible n'est pas français* !! And please do not ask me to describe the dramatic deception in the British ranks...



Part of the French team

old Hungarian Orsolya Diofasi (300 flight hours) and 20 year old Elena Fergnani (only 200 gliding flight hours!) finishing quite decently in the middle of the field of these 5th world championships.

Look out for them in Arboga 2011 !

MORE SURPRISES ?

How much change in normal previsions can you expect? The unexpected "shock" in club class... then an also unforeseen result in standard class. Until this last day 9 Cornelia Schaich (world champion 2003 in Jihlava) did not seem in danger to lose her leading position, conquered as from the second day of these Szeged championships. True, Sue Kussbach was never far behind or far before and IF so, sometimes by as little as 1 or 2 points. In 8 competition days Cornelia Schaich had accumulated some 48 points more than Sue Kussbach and that was the situation on the morning of this very last competition day..

Dangerous rivals? Gaby Haberkern, British Gillian Spreckley and CZ Jana Veprekova always present.

Gillian Spreckley had won day 6 but her poor harvest of 615 points had not really pushed back the German duo Schaich-Kussbach. It nevertheless allowed Gillian to climb into podium position, confirmed after day 7 but to her regret no more after day 8, when surprising Danish Helle got 156 points more and Gillian dropped to 5th overall ranking.

Incredible
TOPSY-TURVY
in this club class !

It should not escape your attention: the club class has several young candidates rising to more than decent heights with positive outlooks for next championships: 24 year old Celine Montorio (960 hours experience), 23 year

Gillian's very early departure on this ultimate day turned out to be a good decision even considering that Jana Veprekova leaving more than an **hour** later, finally won this last championships day. Unlike on former days German Sue Kussbach and Cornelia Schaich did not start at the same moment. Everybody her own chance? And calculating the points separating them? But how do you foresee how many points every km/h "faster speed" will reward you?

Kussbach - Schaich went on their way some 20 minutes apart and the later start of Sue Kussbach made her a very happy lady. Her 90.4 km/h granted her 107 points more than colleague Cornelia Schaich, Till the very end the most experienced (3700 flight hours) Jana Veprekova remained a solid candidate for the title, she missed a new world title by "little" 13 points, but she got the silver, leaving bronze for Cornelia Schaich. The expected name of the 2009 world champion was not Cornelia Schaich but Sue Kussbach. By the way, Sue has taken over the role of the regretted Angelika Machinek as speaker of the German women gliding pilots.

Unlucky Gillian Spreckley had to be (dis)pleased with a spot next to the podium with 6 points more than Gaby Haberkern...



Sue Kussbach together with other pilots looking at the sky before take off

INDEED ONE MORE SURPRISE in 15 M CLASS !!!

A very regular pattern characterized all flights of both German pilots Katrin Senne and Susanne Schödel who started the championship, sharing 1000 points on the very first day.

From then on when any one of both announced her start time, the second message we heard came only seconds later. Katrin Senne always ended just before Susanne but in the course of the championships she accumulated only small positive amounts of points : $3 + 8 + 2 + 8 + 4 + 7 + 2$, so the very last morning her advantage on Susanne was 34 points.

It seemed sufficient enough to keep her world title. On the ground we all heard various radio messages, complaints also because of the lack of height, a bit disconcerting on this last day. However, the sky is the "same for all" except for Turkish Andrea Barna who stayed on the ground.

Australian Jenny Thompson must have remembered her exploit on day 7 when she started first and ended second of the day. Bis repetita ? SO: off she went at 13'10, absolute first starter!

Two minutes later 3 German pilots went on their way together : Senne, Schödel and Klossok - not Anja Kohlrausch, reputed to be not very keen on team flying.

It took about 30 minutes before any other pilot left the field. Following starters stayed together in their own national team : CZ, France, Hungary. Start times were very scattered, spreading from 13'10 to 14'01 which is when the Czech compatriots Netusilova, Lenka Kuthanova and Jana Treslova were the last to leave Szeged.

The successive landings could not give any idea of the final ranking, so it would be "patient" waiting for the scoring calculations.



The first to start, the first to come landing at 16'13 - look, here are the first raindrops ! - was Jenny Thompson, quickly followed by the German trio. The latest homecomers were Lenka Kuthanova and Jana Treslova and ... no, no, no, not Alena Netusilova who left them behind on the way.

Indeed, on the grid Alena had remarked her left wing was losing water. Back to the hangar, repair made, water again tanked - tow - out weight officially controlled. Meanwhile the gate was declared open, the Czech team started together after 2 p.m. and calm as usual Alena flew to her this last day 1000 points victory. What other word but magnificent could be used to-day again for "speedy" Alena? Her 102,2 km/h was 5 km/h better than number 2 of to-day. It is easy to imagine what went on in the mind of Alena... what a pity, that unfortunate day 2, when she landed (safely) 1,5 km before the airfield and got only 510 points on a generous 1000 points day. This last day Alena got the well deserved 1000 points, but lacked 275 to become world champion again.

So: it was not Netusilova. More surprising still: it was not Katrin Senne. What? A lot of interested people gathered in front of the screen, announcing results. Provisional? Suspense. Then the incredible verdict: the built up "Senne" advance of 34 points on Schödel did not fill the final gap of 38 points between both on this very last day. Katrin missed 4 points to keep her title.