

Junior survey report.

Following the 2017 CIAM Plenary meeting I contacted the NACs and CIAM Delegates of all of the juniors who have flown in F2 Championships and World Cups since 1994 with a questionnaire which I asked them to forward to each of the named competitors. While I did not expect to get 100% replies I am disappointed that France, Poland, Russia, and Ukraine, which have a strong interest in F2, failed to send any replies at all. In fact only 38% of NACs and 4.5% of competitors replied.

In all there were 509 competitors from 37 countries who had flown in World or Continental Championships and or World Cup Competitions. Of the 37 countries contacted only 14 replied. Four NACs replied but none of their competitors returned questionnaires, two NACs replied and said that they did not have any juniors even though I had named the competitors who had flown for these countries. 23 flyers from eight countries completed and returned the questionnaire.

Of the 23 replies most were introduced to model flying by a grand father, father or uncle, three were introduced by a friend and one saw F2 and thought it looked interesting! This is reflected in the junior participation from some other countries where I know that the majority of juniors were introduced to the sport by family members who are current or former F2 competitors. None of the juniors found model flying from a website or from model magazines. Subsequent to my initial report I received an email from Jean Paul Perret with information about the current activities of some of the ex juniors from France, 4 of them are still actively involved in international classes, 7 are competing in National competitions and have taken on the responsibility of running competitions. The others have lost interest and have moved on to other interests.

The result of this survey strongly suggests that the pool of possible new junior competitors in many countries has probably been exhausted. The risk adverse culture of 21st century, coupled with social and legislative changes, make it very difficult recruit F2 competitors from a wider group of young people. Some reasons for this are; other activities are easier to do, a "safety" culture in schools and youth groups prohibits the use of knives and other sharp tools, (starting an engine by hand would be unthinkable). Because of the noise problems, model flying is no longer visible to general public.

Twelve of the competitors who replied are still flying. Of the 11 who are no longer flying six have work or family commitments, four are at college or university and one just lost interest.

The question to be answered is; has the inclusion of a junior into F2 teams been a success? Of the 509 competitors who first entered as juniors, 10 have become champions. Two of these champions, (both in F2D), were still juniors when they became the champion. Another eight have reached the podium in 2nd or 3rd place.

Juniors who have become World or European champions

10 competitors

Luca Grossi F2A
Remi Berringer F2B
Richard Kornmeier F2B
Hugh Simons F2C
Pascal Surrage/ George Suruge F2C
Pavol Ereklisev F2D
Ilia Redituk F2D
Ignatio Rioja F2D
Alexey Zhelizko F2D

Analysis of the 2017 F2 World Cup results shows that of the 345 juniors who competed in Championships between 1994 and 2016, only 74 (21%) flew in the 2017 World Cup! Where have they all gone? In my opinion, before any changes are made to F2 team membership, the reasons for losing so many young competitors has to be addressed. The problem is not recruitment it is retention.

Notwithstanding the above, the following number of juniors flew in the 2017 World Cups, F2A 10, F2B 12, F2C, 5 teams, F2D 40. I suggest that a better way to encourage and reward more juniors would be to introduce a junior classification into the F2 World Cup with the 1-2-3 winners receiving a medal and diploma.

Despite the low number of replies I think it fair to say that the inclusion a junior into F2 teams has been a success. Some of those who have started as juniors have gone on to become World or Continental Champions in all four classes. In fact the current World and European champions in F2D are still both juniors.

I think that it is fair to say that the time spent flying in international F2 competitions will have been beneficial to all of the juniors.

Peter Halman

F2 subcommittee chairman.

2nd December 2017