

REPORT ON 2022 FAI FREE FLIGHT WORLD CUP

by Ian Kaynes F1 World Cup Coordinator January 2023

The 2022 Free Flight World Cup was completed in December, marking the first complete year World Cup since 2019 after the partial-year World Cup in 2021.

The top three flyers in F1A each had at least four wins and the winner decided on bonus points. Per Findahl, winner of the last two World Cups was in the lead initially but was overtaken by Bertrand Pouzet of France when he won the large Szabo Miklos competition in Romania followed by two wins at the French competitions in August. Jama Danier of Canada, who won in 2014, was third.

The winner of F1A-Junior is also from France, Capucin Ragot who had placed third in 2019. He was followed by Axel Segerstrom (Sweden) and Tomasz Jeziony (Poland).

Stefan Stefanchuk (Ukraine) won the F1B World Cup. He had 2373 points from four wins which put him just 8 points ahead of runner-up Adam Krawiec (Poland) with four wins and who had also placed second in 2019. Third place was taken by Michael Seifert (Germany) with two wins and two second places.

The top five flyers in F1B Junior all had four wins and so places were determined on bonus points. With the small number of flyers in F1B Junior there are few bonus points and so the score difference between second and fifth places was just 7 points. However, the winner Ittai Kohavi (USA) won by a margin of 32 points. In February he had won the MaxMen F1B outright and so his senior score with 28 bonus points was also applied to his junior World Cup score. While he had four wins by October, all these were in USA and so only three could be counted. He went to the Israel competitions in December and won the junior category of the Negev Open to give him his clear win of the World Cup.

Artem Babenko (Ukraine) won F1C by a large margin. Artem had four wins, second place Guy Menanno (USA) had only three wins and third place Claus-Peter Wachtler had two wins, a second place and sixth place. This is Artem's fourth World Cup win with the first one having been in 2005.

Since F1P Junior was uncoupled from the mixed flying which had been allowed in F1C the participation has dropped dramatically. For this reason the F1 Subcommittee has submitted a proposal to the 2023 Plenary meeting to discontinue this World Cup class. This year Bozhidar Dochev of Bulgaria beat the Hungarian Orsolya Sarusi-Kiss.

The winner of F1Q in 2021 was Varadi Mihaly (Hungary) and he has retained the trophy this year. Second place was also the same as 2021 Franco Gradi (Italy) and third place was taken by another Italian Andrea Banci.

F1Q Junior World Cup started in 2021 and this year was won by Franciszek Jedrysiak of Poland who had placed third in 2021. He was followed by Csaba Buzas Andras (Hungary) and Kamil Pogonowski (Poland).

Alexander Winker of Germany won F1E and was followed by Mihnea Proanel, a junior from Romania, and Marta Vysoka of Czech Republic. From that it is obvious that Mihnea Proanel won F1E Junior and he was followed by Elisa Vanzo (Italy) and Theo Laura (France).

ORGANISATION

The top three places in each event have been displayed on the FAI web site and updated frequently throughout the year at the address:

<https://www.fai.org/world-cups/f1-free-flight>

The detailed results have been uploaded to the coordinator's web site and there are links to this from the FAI web page for both the results of each class or the overall summary.

During the year one competition was cancelled, five hosted in Russia were removed (two organised by Russia, two by Belarus and one by Kazakhstan), and three held in Ukraine were postponed.

Almost all organisers have returned results promptly, but there were delays extending to a month for some. However, despite repeated reminders there was no response about two competitions in Argentina. Six weeks after the scheduled date these events were removed from the World Cup.

STATISTICS

There have been 61 competitions in F1A F1B F1C F1P F1Q and 22 in F1E with a total 3636 entries in these competitions.

Number of competitors per country, those scoring points in 1 or more events

The “All” column in the second table is the number of people over all classes, including allowance for some people having flown in more than one class.

F1A	F1A Junior	F1B	F1B Junior	F1C	F1O Junior	F1Q	F1Q Junior	F1E	F1E Junior	All
GER 24	FRA 8	FRA 18	FRA 6	GER 6	BUL 1	GER 9	POL 4	ROU 26	ROU 10	GER 62
FRA 20	GER 5	ISR 17	ISR 5	FRA 5	HUN 1	HUN 7	MGL 3	FRA 17	POL 6	FRA 59
POL 18	POL 5	USA 17	GER 3	USA 5		USA 6	HUN 1	GER 15	FRA 4	POL 53
HUN 17	HUN 4	GER 12	BUL 2	ISR 4		ISR 5	ISR 1	POL 11	CZE 3	USA 46
FIN 15	SLO 4	UKR 8	POL 2	POL 4		ITA 5		CZE 10	BUL 2	ISR 41
ISR 14	BUL 3	GBR 6	BIH 1	GBR 3		POL 5		USA 9	GER 2	ROU 35
USA 11	SVK 3	MGL 5	EST 1	HUN 3		MGL 4		ITA 8	ITA 2	HUN 29
CZE 10	BIH 2	POL 5	ITA 1	ITA 3		DEN 3		BUL 5	SVK 1	CZE 25
SLO 10	CZE 2	TUR 5	MGL 1	SRB 3		FRA 3		SVK 4	UKR 1	FIN 22
MKD 8	ISR 2	SRB 5	MKD 1	AUS 2		FIN 2		SUI 2		ITA 22
SVK 8	MGL 2	CRO 4	ROU 1	BUL 2		GBR 2		GBR 1		MGL 21
SWE 8	MKD 2	CZE 4	USA 1	CRO 2		BUL 1		SWE 1		BUL 19
BUL 7	NED 1	EST 4	SRB 1	EST 2		CRO 1		UKR 1		UKR 17
MGL 7	SWE 1	FIN 4		FIN 2		NED 1				SLO 16
NED 7	USA 1	BUL 3		LTU 2		POR 1				GBR 15
CRO 6		CAN 3		MGL 2		UKR 1				CRO 13
BIH 5		NED 3		SLO 2						SVK 12
DEN 5		NOR 3		UKR 2						SRB 12
LTU 5		SLO 3		CAN 1						MKD 11
ROU 5		BIH 2		KAZ 1						NED 11
TUR 5		DEN 2		MKD 1						EST 10
EST 4		ITA 2		SUI 1						TUR 10
GBR 4		KAZ 2		UZB 1						BIH 9
ITA 4		ROU 2								SWE 9
SUI 4		SUI 2								DEN 8
UKR 4		MKD 1								CAN 6
SRB 4		SVK 1								LTU 6
AUT 3		SWE 1								SUI 5
UZB 3		UZB 1								UZB 5
CAN 2										AUS 3
ESP 2										AUT 3
ARG 1										KAZ 3
AUS 1										NOR 3
LAT 1										ESP 2
										ARG 1
										LAT 1
										POR 1

	F1A	F1A-J	F1B	F1B-J	F1C	F1P-J	F1Q	F1Q-J	F1E	F1E-J
Number of competitions	58	41	59	42	48	4	48	14	20	15
Total number of entries	1349	241	760	107	196	4	325	34	509	111
Number of competitors scoring points:										
in 1 event	107	16	61	11	26	1	16	2	47	18
in 2 events	53	9	32	6	21	0	15	4	27	7
in 3 events	26	6	16	2	7	1	8	1	14	3
in 4 events	28	3	11	2	3	0	6	1	9	2
in 5 events	7	3	5	1	1	0	5	1	6	0
in 6 events	12	3	7	3	1	0	0	0	3	0
in 7 events	3	4	6	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
in 8 events	5	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
in 9 events	3	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
in 10 events	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
in 11 events	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
in 12 events	3	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
in 13 events	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of competitors scoring World Cup points	252	45	145	26	59	2	56	9	110	31

These statistics show a reduction in participants compared to 2019, the last full year before the pandemic with the ratio of total entries in 2019 to the total in 2022 shown by the following percentages:

F1A	F1B	F1C	F1Q	F1E	F1ABCQ total
71%	63%	49%	163%	71%	71%

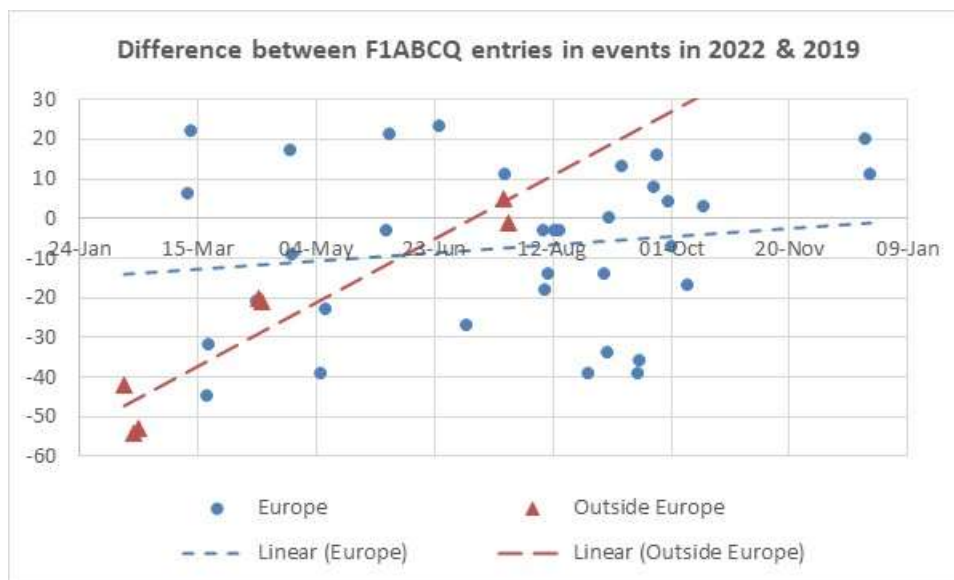
The figure for F1Q is dominated by increased participation and more events for this class which is growing in popularity. Conversely the figure for F1C could include an element of long term decline of participation. The F1E and the total of F1ABCQ both show 71%, that is a reduction by 29%.

There are two major factors involved in the reduction. Some covid travel imitations remained in place in the first part of the year. From March Russia and Belarus were banned from FAI activities which removed both the competitors and competitions from those countries. There have usually been more Russian competitors scoring points in F1A, F1B and F1C than any other countries.

The effect of removing Russian competitors and competitions can be assessed by removing them from the 2019 events. This shows a reduction of total entries in F1ABCQ of about 13%. The number of F1ABCQ competitions was 61 in 2019 and the same number in 2022. Thus the elimination of the competitions had not reduced the total number of events, but the two major F1ABC competitions held in Russia have typically had 150 total entries, whereas for example two events added to the 2022 were for F1Q only and, although well supported for F1Q, total numbers were considerably lower than the Russian F1ABC competitions.

Thus it would appear that the Russian effect accounts for almost half of the 29% reduction. To attempt to understand the remaining difference, the total of entries in F1A F1B F1C and F1Q were studied for comparable events held at similar dates and the same location in 2019 and 2022. There were 41 comparable events, about two thirds of the total number in the year. Two events in USA in October were excluded because the 2019 competitions were held at the time of the World Championships in USA and thus benefited from large entries with only 25% of the numbers flying in 2022. This increased activity in World Championships is usual and in this case these two events contribute about 5% of the observed 29% reduction from 2019 to 2022.

Plotting the difference between entries in 2022 and 2019 for the comparable events gave the following distribution:



The events in Europe show a gradual increase through the year suggesting that travel restrictions in the early part of the year could have had some effect, but as the reduction continues through the year it could also include a loss of competitors to the sport after the pandemic period of inactivity. Of course variabilities such as the weather have a significant effect on participation. The events outside Europe in February to April were in USA and Australia and undoubtedly affected by covid travel restrictions. The ones in the middle of the year were in Mongolia and dominated by domestic participation. On this comparable set of competitions the reduction is 19% overall, with the breakdown being 13% for events in Europe and 42% for events outside Europe.

To summarise, there was a 29% reduction of competitors in 2022 compared to 2019. Various reasons have been examined and since it is not possible to cross-compare all events the individual factors add up to 37% rather than 29% but the relative effect of each factor is probably representative:

13% due to the elimination of Russia and Belarus from the World Cup

19% due to a combination of travel restrictions and reduced activity following the pandemic

5% due to larger competitions associated with events in conjunction with the 2019 World Championships not entirely balanced by an event at the 2022 European Championship.