

# FIR & Climate Change

Climate change has been a global issue for over 30 years, however it is only in the past 5 years that a real awareness has developed as to the magnitude of what needs to be done to protect our society and the short time frame in which we have to achieve it.

In Racketlon parlance, we are heading to the tennis court and we need to win 21-11 or better to win the match, there is hope, but we need to start well and start quickly. While there will be a major role for national governments and big industry, there is an important role for all people to play.

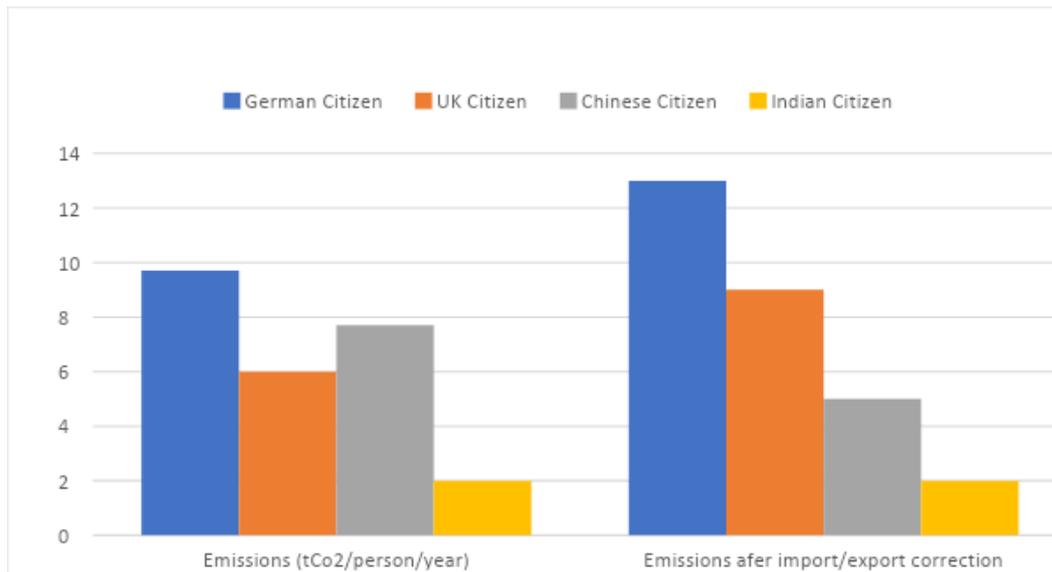
The FIR recognises that there is a role for it to play in reducing the environmental impact of the FIR World Tour, whilst maintaining and increasing player enjoyment. To do that, we are going to need your help.

Awareness of the breadth and strength of human impact on our environment is increasing all the time, from air pollution to biodiversity loss, plastic pollution to climate change. By tackling climate change we as a society are able to have positive impacts on many of these other environmental issues.

## *Climate Change: The Science (abridged)*

There is now overwhelming evidence that we need to limit global mean temperature change to 1.5°C above the levels recorded in 1850, and we have already added ~1°C to global temperatures since then. If we continue emitting greenhouse gases (such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) at our current rates, we will break the 1.5°C barrier by 2052 at the latest. To exceed even the 1.5°C barrier could result in major changes to our society with negative impacts on farming, water resources and health highly likely to occur in many countries from the Arctic to the Equator, but disproportionately on the poorer communities around the world.

However, we can avoid breaching this 1.5°C limit by reducing our emissions of greenhouse gases. To do so, we must reduce our emissions by 45% (compared to levels in 2010) by 2030 and be globally carbon neutral by 2050. To be globally carbon neutral will require major international co-operation between governments and industry, however it is firmly within the power of individuals to make a big dent in the more immediate (and equally important target) of a 45% reduction by 2030. Some might think that bigger countries are to blame, but developed countries have a much higher impact per person than developing ones (see fig. 1) and the latter set our civilizations as an example to follow.



**Figure 1. Carbon emissions (tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>) per person per year for a German, British, Chinese and Indian citizen. A correction for the emissions required to produce goods consumed in their country is included in the second set.**

For over a decade British Cycling has dominated based around the theory of “Marginal Gains”. This theory works on the basis that every small improvement in performance is positive and when you add enough of them together, you get a significant improvement. This theory applies to every part of our life and that includes Racketlon and the FIR World Tour.

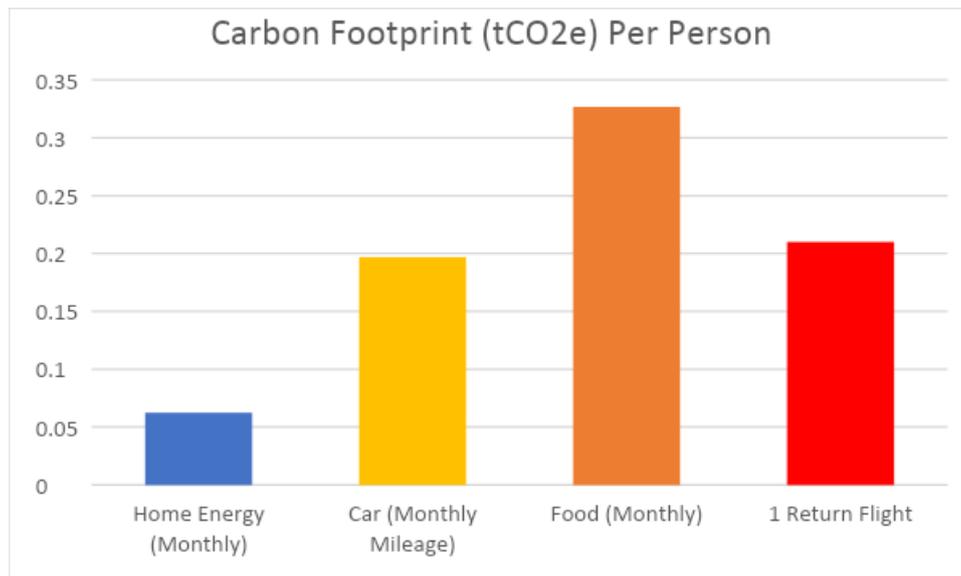
### *Greening the FIR World Tour*

The FIR is very much aware that World Tour generates a significant number of additional flights for players every year and that for some tournaments there is no sensible alternative than to fly for the majority of non-local players. However, there are a number of World Tour events where players could reduce their carbon impact through car-sharing or by replacing a flight with the train (more on this in the next section!). The FIR will therefore be beginning to implement a few changes to make it easier for players to help us in our efforts to green the World Tour.

1. We will encourage Tournament Directors to make it easier for players to find a possible car-sharing partner (UK players can all attest to the brilliance of car sharing with Dianne Baker who makes the most wonderful picnics).
2. We will encourage Tournament Directors to include a shuttle service from the nearest railway station.
3. The FIR Media team will produce a guide to travelling by rail for the many World Tour tournaments across Europe as well as highlighting the positive environmental impacts of the train journey and estimate of costs (compared to flying).
4. A free singles entry will be offered to the player who travels the furthest by train to reach an SWT or World Champs tournament (minimum distance: 600 km)
5. The FIR has named [myclimate.org](http://myclimate.org) as its preferred Carbon Offsetting organisation and encourages players to use this for tournaments when it is impossible to avoid flying. [myclimate.org](http://myclimate.org) funds projects with a positive impact (such as biogas, efficient cooking stoves in poor countries, energy efficiency in rich ones, land use & forestry, waste management...).

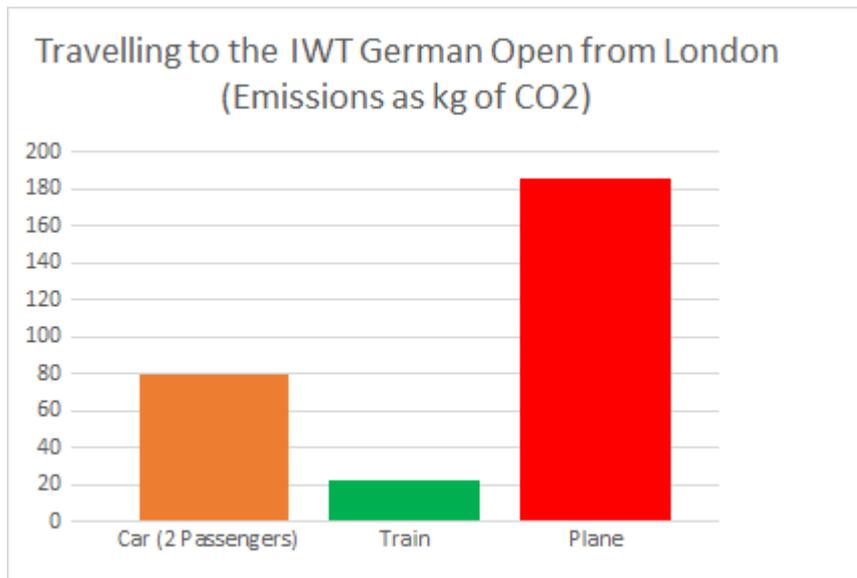
## *We Need Your Help*

While the FIR will encourage these actions, we cannot do it without your help and we in no way want to put anyone off travelling to play on the World Tour. Without doubt a highlight of playing the World Tour is the opportunity to play players from a diverse range of countries and we are proud to have such a broad tour as we currently do (and want to increase this). However, even small changes can make a big difference, the concept of Marginal Gains. Even if you took the train to one tournament instead of flying or shared a car for two or three events then you will be making a difference. When a number of us start making these changes then we will, as a community, be making an impact we can be proud of and champion.



**Figure 2.** A representative 1 person carbon footprint for monthly home energy use, car mileage, and food consumption, compared to 1 return flight London to Frankfurt. Graph calculated on [www.carbonfootprint.com](http://www.carbonfootprint.com).

To give you a flavour of the possible impacts, the website <http://www.ecopassenger.org> allows you to compare journey times and environmental impacts of travelling by car, train or airplane. When you factor in waiting time at the airport, your flight is only 4-6 hours quicker than these alternatives for travelling from London to Frankfurt (for the German Open). There are also other considerations such as cost, but given trains and cars do not charge for or limit the size of baggage and allow more convenient overnight travel options within Europe (saving on hotel costs), it can sometimes be more cost effective to avoid the flight too, especially if you use carsharing options such as [Blablacar](http://www.blablacar.com).



**Figure 3. Carbon emissions (kgs of CO<sub>2</sub>) for a return journey London to Nußloch comparing plane, car and train travel.**

If flying is the only option, look for direct flights! As planes burn kerosene mainly upon take-off and landing, stop-overs increase the impact of flying.

### *Get Involved*

This article represents the start of our plans to “green” the World Tour and we are as ever very much aware of the breadth of experience within our community. If you have an idea or suggestion for how we can achieve our aims we would love to hear from you. Climate change is a global issue, but unlike our analogous tennis situation, it is one we can only resolve when we all work together (unlike the tennis, you are on your own there!)

James Pope & Cédric Junillon

### **Would You Like to Know More?**

The science discussed above is a brief summary of the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and their 2018 report, “Global Warming of 1.5C”. The report is publicly available online in PDF format from this website: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/> The Summary for Policy Makers represents an easy to reach briefing on the science, while the various chapters go into more technical detail.

James is always willing to answer your questions on climate science, so feel free to grab him at an event!

### **About the Authors**

Dr James Pope is a climate scientist in the UK Climate Projections team at the UK Met Office. James has a background in geology before moving into climate science in 2009, where he has worked ever

since gaining a Masters from the University of Edinburgh and a PhD from the University of Leeds. Prior to the Met Office, he worked at the British Antarctic Survey, and has a decade of diverse climate research experience. James came to Racketlon in 2007, but it is fair to say he is far better at, and more knowledgeable of climate science than Racketlon!

Cédric Junillon graduated in Microrobotics which doesn't have much to do with what later on became his major scientific areas of interest: energetical and environmental issues. He started Racketlon in 2009 and though now officially retired still has a passion for the game and the community!