



## **2013 CIVL PLENARY – ANNEX 19G PARAGLIDING XC – INCIDENT REPORT**

*December 2012, Brian Harris*

### **Brief analysis of incident report forms received in the CIVL database**

The incident forms have mostly been collected since Piedrahita (August 2011 onwards), although a small number are earlier. Attempts to collect old data have been almost totally unsuccessful.

The collection of data is very patchy, with forms often not received from some of the high profile competitions. In particular, high level organisers such as the PWCA, have not supplied incident forms despite reports of multiple deployments in many of their events during 2012. This included the 10 incidents at the 2011 Super Final where eventually I put together some scrappy forms with some limited information from the SF organiser (corrected by Joerg).

I have tried to categorise the data on the reported incidents.

### **Total of 91 incident forms for PG XC in the database.**

#### **A. Reserve Deployments:**

##### **i) Successful reserve deployments (52)**

2 of these the injuries were marked as serious, and involved fractures to vertebrae.

9 of these are marked as minor injuries, these seem to be mainly cuts and bruises, and in one case mild concussion.

The remaining 41 deployments resulted in no reported injuries.

##### **ii) Accidental (1)**

There is one incident where it is marked as accidental deployment, but it is not entirely clear from the narrative if this was truly an accidental deployment.

#### **B. Incidents where there was no deployment**

There are 35 incidents marked as no rescue deployed and 3 marked as failed. These are made up of the following.

##### **i) Not required.**

29 of these incidents appear not to have required a reserve deployment and almost all involve take offs and landings. Exceptions are: pilot choosing to hold glider in deep stall rather than reach for reserve (2); and 4 instances of pilots being too close to the terrain when the incident occurred to think about throwing.

2 of these incidents were Fatal.

5 of these are marked as serious.  
6 are marked as minor.  
16 report no injury.

## **ii) No attempted deployment (2)**

A slightly more difficult category to define.

The commentary on 2 incidents implied there was no attempt to deploy a reserve. These include one report which includes a very short video of a pilot rotating to the ground with a cravat with no attempt to throw or actively control the glider. In the second there is insufficient information, except that the pilot landed and was injured high on the mountain, with no mention of an attempt to deploy.

## **iii) Insufficient information (2)**

2 reports stated no deployment, but provided insufficient information to allow any judgement on whether there was an attempt to deploy. One could have been a successful deployment as no injury was sustained, the other could have been too low as injuries were sustained.

## **iv) Malfunctions (where a reserve was deployed but malfunctioned)**

None reported.

## **v) Failed Deployments (where deployment was attempted but unsuccessful or ineffective)**

Incident at Piedrahita, where the witness reported one hand appearing trapped and pilot in high G spiral. No reserve deployed with Fatal outcome.

Incident at Sopot – Pre-worlds: pilot had incident at approx 120m and attempted to control glider, glider auto rotated, pilot deployed reserve but was too low for reserve to fully open. Reserve was found open but bridle had not pulled free of the harness velcro. Pilot still had hands through brakes which may have hindered deployment.

Incident in Switzerland, wing cravatted and auto-rotated, pilot flying with hand through the brake handles, which caused a large resistance as he reached for his reserve with hand still looped. He says this led to confusion and delay and resulted in not actually deploying his reserve at all. He landed in trees with no injury.

There are two incidents in the database marked as failed, but the narrative shows one as a landing accident. The narrative of the second can be interpreted as the pilot failed to deploy, rather than a failed deployment. Neither gives any indication that a reserve throw was attempted.

## **C. Additional remarks:**

### **i) Incidents where no forms have been submitted.**

This category could include the incidents at the Europeans at St Andre where there were known to be 10 incidents, comprising: 6 successful reserve deployments, 2 crashes where reserves were not deployed, and 2 accidents on landing (no reserve necessary).

Regarding the 2 non-reserve deployments (Nanda Walliser and Marina Olexina), I can't comment on as I have not seen any written reports.

### **ii) Fatalities**

In the last 18 month period, there have been to my knowledge, 12 fatalities: 10 in paragliding XC and 2 in hang gliding FAI-sanctioned competitions. For 3 of the paragliding fatalities no incident report forms were received. From the reports received on the fatalities, information ranges from auto-rotation/spiral to the ground, water landing, falling from harness (leg straps not closed) and hitting a tree on landing and then falling 20m.