

AEROBATIC PARAGLIDING

Season 2015 summary



FAI CAT 2 COMPETITIONS

During 2015 a total of 7 FAI Cat 2 and 1 FAI Cat 1 competitions took place (4/0 in 2014, 5/0 in 2013, 7/0 in 2012) in 5 different countries, with the participation of 49 pilots from 17 nations. 3 events only had a solo competitions, 1 only synchro and 3 had both solo & synchro. 2 solo and 3 synchro competitions counted for the Aerobatic Paragliding World Cup 2015 (APWT). The French Championships in Doussard (FRA) counted as test event for the World Championships to be held in the same location in 2016.

The highlight of the season will be the World Air Games to be held in Dubai in December.

Event	Location	Date	APWT	Solo pilots	Synchro teams	Nations
Vertigo	Voss (NOR)	22-24.06.15	No	24	N/A	7
Frittelement	Selbu (NOR)	03-05.08.15	No	15	N/A	3
AcroMax	Trasaghis (ITA)	06-09.08.15	Solo + Synchro	36	11	13
Downteam challenge	Åre (SWE)	07-09.08.15	No	15	N/A	3
AcroAria	Omegna (ITA)	13-16.08.15	Solo + Synchro	38	8	14
Swiss champs	Villeneuve (SUI)	20-23.08.15	Synchro	N/A	6	3
French champs	Doussard (FRA)	26-30.08.15	No	23	5	5
World Air Games	Dubai (UAE)	01-13.12.15	No	20	9	12

APWT – AEROBATIC PARAGLIDING WORLD TOUR

After the introduction in 2015 was the 4th season after the introduction of the new “Evolution” competition format and scoring system. The discipline is in rapid and continuous evolution. At the end of 2013 some pilots started to fly twisted manoeuvres, which are now mastered by the majority of the top pilots. Some new manoeuvres for both solo and synchro were introduced.

3 events counted for APWT: two with both solo and synchro categories, and one with synchro only. **42 pilots** (48 in 2014, 39 in 2013) and **13 teams** (12 in 2014, 12 in 2013) from **14 nations** (16 in 2014, 15 in 2013) took part to the 2014 Aerobatic Paragliding World Tour. **5 of them were ladies.**

All planned events took place normally. Only the two competition held in August in Italy were partially affected by some meteorological issues and the program had to be adapted accordingly.

2015 APWT FINAL STANDINGS

The title of **winner of the 2015 SOLO APWT** was assigned to **Éliot Nochez (FRA)**.

The title of **winner of the 2015 SYNCHRO APWT** went to the team **Twisted Boys – Théo de Blic (FRA) and Horacio Llorens (SPA)**

The title of **winner of the 2015 APWT NATION CUP** was assigned to **FRANCE**.

SOLO OVERALL

- 1st: Éliot Nochez (FRA)
- 2nd: François Ragolski (FRA)
- 3rd: Horacio Llorens (ESP)
- 4th: Rafael Goberna (BRA)
- 5th: Tim Alongi (FRA)

LADIES

- 1st: Nicole Schmidt (GER)
- 2nd: Lea Hansenberger (SUI)
- 3rd: Leila Simonet (FRA)
- 4th: Daniela Martin (AUT)
- 5th: Maria Vikhlyaeva (RUS)



SYNCHRO

- 1st: Twisted Boys (Théo de Blic / FRA - Horacio Llorens / SPA)
- 2nd: CAT Acroteam (David Geiser / SUI – Jérémy Péclard / SUI)
- 3rd: VRL Team (Eliot Nochez / FRA – Tim Alongi / FRA)
- 4th: La Belle Team (François Ragolski / FRA – Martin Schriecke / FRA)
- 5th: Very Last Chance (Lionel Hercod / SUI – Pierre Vanstabel / FRA)

NATIONS CUP

- 1st: France
- 2nd: Spain
- 3rd: Austria
- 4th: Switzerland
- 5th: Germany





WORLD AIR GAMES DUBAI

The WAG Dubai were the highlight of the 2015 season.

During the preparation of this event several problems arose: some with the local organisers, some with the FAI. As a result, the work of the aerobatic paragliding event director turned out to be a nightmare during the last couple of months before the event, and during the event itself.

One example: after one year of intense and detailed preparation, on the practice day when we arrived at the helipad according schedule at 08:00, we had to face the fact that...no helicopter had been ordered! When it arrived, one hour later, it was from a different company than the one we had briefed during the test in October, and we had to newly instruct the pilots about the d-bag dropping procedures.

On the first competition day we had to realize that no area had been organized for the judges, no cameraman was available, no internet connection was provided and that there was no drying area for the wings...

The most frustrating thing was the lack of support from the FAI high officers when requested to sort out problems and incomprehensions with the local organisers, despite the fact that those problems were the result of poor and deficient instructions given to them by the FAI.

One of the worse examples was the dispute concerning the room allocation for officials. I had provided a list according to the instructions received from the FAI, and according to the "Memorandum of agreement" signed by FAI and EAF, chapter h: "Double room – single occupancy". Dubai refused this list, stating that the agreement was for double occupancy, accusing me of "unobjective assertions" and "untrue allegations". I requested several times the FAI to speak in the debate: uselessly! When we needed them, the people we were voluntarily working for were on the run. A real shame!

The cherry on the pie was the cut of 3 officials of the aerobatic paragliding staff just days before the beginning of the WAG: the speaker, the TV commentator and the TV production assistant. The two latter had been expressly requested by the organiser. All of them had been invited months before and had been preparing themselves very intensively and professionally for their mission. When Dubai announced that they were not on the final list, only following my insistence the FAI tried - very timidly and uselessly - to make them change their mind, and then shamefully accepted the decision: an evident lack of respect for all those people who made themselves available to work for free, for the glory of FAI. As a result, the aerobatic paragliding competitions were completely snubbed by the event and TV commentators. During the first 2 days of competition I provided the official speakers the starting lists: but since they remained totally unused I gave up. When our athletes were performing their run, nobody was commenting anything, only some images were sometimes to be seen on the giant screen, usually with some background music or a parachute canopy piloting pilot's interview. Sometimes, somebody was ridiculously attempting to say something in the microphone, usually confusing paragliders with parachutes...All this clearly tells us that the organising committee and heads of the FAI had very little interest in portraying the various sports in the best way possible.

Nevertheless, after all the aerobatic competition was a success: the comments from the public following the competitions via internet (SAT TV, live streaming, clips on the social networks) were enthusiastic, the pilots had some fantastic flights in this unusual and superb site, their Gopros got filled with extraordinary clips, and thanks to the fact that a former aerobatic paragliding competitor was in the FAI media team some very nice clips were produced.

The WAG were meant to be a marketing operation for the air sports. From my personal point of view this opportunity could have been better exploited. Much better!



EVOLUTION COMPETITION FORMAT AND ACROPYX SCORING SOFTWARE

After 4 years of existence, the new competition format is evolving and is continuously being adapted and improved. Due to the lack of other occasions, this tuning is done during the APWT competition season. These changes occurred smoothly and without trouble.

The scoring software has been completely revised and the new version is by far more user friendly. Every run of a competition can be programmed independently from all other: as a result the planning of a competition is much more flexible and every run specifications can be adapted to the actual needs.

JUDGES SEMINARS

Judges seminars were held during 2 APWT competitions. As a result, 1 trainee has been promoted as qualified judge.

SAFETY

Throughout the 2015 season 492 solo and 103 synchro runs were flown, for a total of 698 flights.

Not even a single light accident occurred.

Hundreds of runs are flown every year, no fatal accident happened since the APWT was created in 2003. This is a success we are proud of. The aerobatic paragliding discipline has demonstrated over the years that it has reached a very high level of safety. Nevertheless, in the last years some young pilots (who never took part to any FAI competition) had fatal accidents while performing manoeuvres during training or aerobatic shows. The situation should be monitored.

GENERAL DIFFICULTIES

Paragliding aerobatics is still experiencing a hard time, mainly for the following reasons:

- **SHORTAGE OF EVENT ORGANISERS**

Organizing an aerobatic paragliding competition is very demanding and expensive: also due to the current economic situation, during the last years the number of organizers willing to take an important financial risk decreased. Nevertheless, compared to the preceding years we had a slight increase in the number of competitions. 7 FAI Cat 2 competitions (+ the World Air Games) were organized (4 in 2014, 5 in 2013, 7 in 2012).

- **SHORTAGE OF JUDGES**

Judging an aerobatic competition is a very hard job, and it's always very difficult to find the minimum number of judges required for a competition. Additionally some longstanding senior and qualified judges announced their retirement. We have been forming some new judges during the last seasons, but we still need more, especially from outside Europe.

SUGGESTIONS AND REQUESTS

- **STANDARDIZATION OF THE FORMATION PROCESS OF NEW JUDGES**

The best way to achieve this goal has been identified in the **production of a tutorial video** that would explain in detail the criteria for judgment and illustrate the manoeuvres one by one. Such a tool would simplify greatly the training process, making possible the holding of seminars outside of the competition while improving consistency of judgment and reducing costs. A budget had already been approved three (3!!!) years ago, but unfortunately it wasn't possible to find somebody who would take the lead of the project and produce the clip. During the WAG Dubai we agreed with Raul Rodriguez that he would work on this project.

- **FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACROPYX SCORING SOFTWARE**

The new competition format adopted in 2012 has already proved its effectiveness: it is now imperative to continue in this direction, improving it and updating it constantly.

Keeping the costs within acceptable limits has been, and will be possible thanks to the collaboration with two committed Cuban programmers who during the last 3 seasons have already provided an enormous effort, demonstrating great availability over the entire season, on a highly competitive price compared to western standards.

The next steps will consist in the integration of additional information to the display: heart beat, G-force...). Additionally, we are evaluating the possibility of real time broadcasting (live streaming) of the APWT competitions.

- **INTRODUCTION OF NEW MANOEUVRES**

The discipline is continuously evolving, new manoeuvres are discovered every year. During the winter 2015/2016 a working group of the aerobatic subcommittee will decide which ones deserve to be included to the manoeuvres board and set the judging and scoring criteria for each one of them.

- **PROPOSAL FOR MODIFICATION OF THE AEROBATIC ANNEX**

A complete restructuring of the sporting code is being completed and will be presented during the plenary meeting.

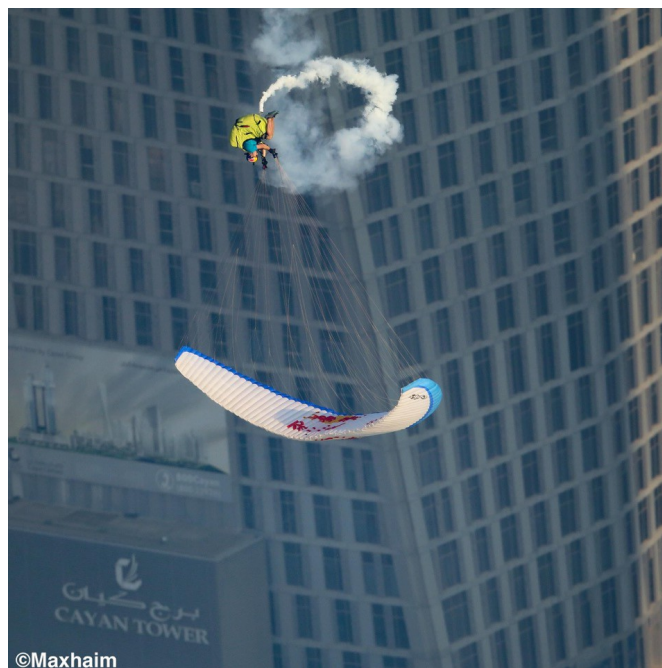




- **BUDGET**

To achieve the objectives set out above, the aerobatic subcommittee requests the following financial support:

- 1'500.- € for judges training seminars
- 1'500.- € for the production of a judging tutorial video (already voted during the last 3 plenary meeting but never used)
- 1'500.- € for the further development of the Acropyx scoring software



On behalf of the Aerobatic subcommittee
Claudio Cattaneo - Chairman