

AEROBATIC PARAGLIDING

Season 2014 summary



FAI CAT 2 COMPETITIONS

During 2014 a total of 4 FAI Cat 2 competitions took place (5 in 2013, 7 in 2012...) in 3 countries, with the participation of 49 pilots from 17 different nations.

2 events only had a solo competitions, and 2 had both solo & synchro.

3 solo and 2 synchro competitions counted for the Aerobatic Paragliding World Cup 2014 (APWT).

Event	Location	Date	APWT	Solo pilots	Synchro teams	Nations
ParaAcrobatics	Pogradec (ALB)	13-15.06.14	Solo	29	N/A	11
AcroAria	Omegna (ITA)	03-06.07.14	Solo + Synchro	33	9	12
Norwegian Championship	Bygland (NOR)	24-27.07.14	No	15	N/A	2
AcroMax	Trasaghis (ITA)	14-17.08.14	Solo + Synchro	31	7	11

APWT – AEROBATIC PARAGLIDING WORLD TOUR

After the introduction in 2012 of the new “Evolution” competition format and scoring system (a completely new system featuring live scoring with the results displayed on a big screen and simultaneously published in the internet) 2013 and 2014 were the seasons of adjustments. The discipline is in rapid and continuous evolution. At the end of 2013 some pilots started to fly twisted manoeuvres. The aerobatic subcommittee was ready to react to this revolution and adapted accordingly the competition rules and the scoring system. The scoring software has been updated and is now able to calculate the bonus points obtained by flying twisted manoeuvres.

3 events counted for APWT: two with both solo and synchro categories, and one with solo only. **48 pilots** (39 in 2013) and **12 teams** (16) from **16 nations** (15) took part to the 2014 Aerobatic Paragliding World Tour. **6 of them were ladies.**

2 other events, that had been announced and programmed **were cancelled for financial reasons.** Luckily one of them could be replaced by an event organised at the last minute in Italy.

The Aerobatic Paragliding World Tour wasn't really affected by the terrible weather of the European 2014 “summer”. All planned events took place normally, with a more than satisfying number of runs and only some adaptation of the program according to the meteorological conditions.

The 1st APWT event of the season was **ParaAcrobatix in Pogradec (Albania)**. It was the first time an aerobatic competition took place on this country. The event had a remarkable success of participating pilots and audience. The winch towing system proved to be rather unreliable: 2 boats were available on the first day, but one of them was unserviceable after some hours, and couldn't be fixed before the end of the event. As a result the competition flow was very slow, with one pilot every 25-30 minutes. An accident occurred during day 2, when one of the helper's leg was hit by the propeller of the boat and he had to be taken to the hospital for the medication of his medium gravity injury. Despite this and some thunderstorms, 3 full solo and synchro runs could be completed.

The 2nd event was **AcroAria in Omega (Italy)**. It was nice to have again a competition in this “historical” location for aerobatic paragliding after a 5 years. This “pause of reflection” was necessary for the local organising committee, after the last editions had left their account into the negative...But the passion for the discipline is stronger: the aerobatic subcommittee deeply appreciates the effort of this dedicated team to restart the adventure. The site is very suitable for aerobatic competitions, pilots love to participate to this event, the effectiveness and friendliness of the staff has been widely demonstrated in the past years, and as usual on week end days many spectators came to assist. 3 runs were flown for both the solo and the synchro competition.

The 3rd and final event of the 2014 APWT season was **AcroMax in San Simeone / Udine (Italy)**. It was the second consecutive year that the event was held on this site. Originally the event was not scheduled: only after Austria announced the cancellation of it's planned event, the Italian organisers kindly proposed to replace it in their site, thus saving the credibility of the APWT. The weather conditions were prohibitive on Thursday and Friday, where all kind of flying activity had to be cancelled. But they were perfect during the week end, with blue sky, plenty of sunshine and very light or no wind at all. 2 solo and 2 synchro runs were completed.



2014 APWT FINAL STANDINGS

The title of **winner of the 2014 SOLO APWT** was assigned to **François Ragolski (FRA)**.

The title of **winner of the 2014 SYNCHRO APWT** went to the **Face to Face Team - François Ragolski (FRA) and Raul Rodriguez (SPA)**

The title of **winner of the 2014 APWT NATION CUP** was assigned to **FRANCE**.

SOLO OVERALL

- 1st: François Ragolski (FRA)
- 2nd: Eliot Nochez (FRA)
- 3rd: Théo de Blic (FRA)
- 4th: Sebastian Kahn (AUT)
- 5th: Horacio Llorens (ESP)

LADIES

- 1st: Alexandra Grillmayer (HUN)
- 2nd: Leila Simonet (FRA)
- 3rd: Daniela Martin (AUT)
- 4th: Nicole Schmidt (GER)
- 5th: Sabrina Thiélen (FRA)

SYNCHRO

- 1st: Face to Face (François Ragolski / FRA – Raul Rodriguez / SPA)
- 2nd: SOL Acro Team (Rafael Goberna / BRA – Hernàn Pitocco / ARG)
- 3rd: Twisted Boys (Théo de Blic / FRA - Horacio Llorens / SPA)
- 4th: VRL Team (Eliot Nochez / FRA – Tim Alongi / FRA)
- 5th: CAT Acroteam (David Geiser / SUI – Jérémy Péclard / SUI)

NATIONS CUP

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





EVOLUTION COMPETITION FORMAT AND ACROPYX SCORING SOFTWARE

After 3 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.

JUDGES SEMINARS

Judges seminars were held during all 3 APWT competitions of the season. As a result, 1 trainee has been promoted as qualified judge and another one only needs one more competition to be checked out for solo judging.

SAFETY

Throughout the 2014 season 248 solo and 41 synchro runs were flown, for a total of 330 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) died 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, the number of organizers willing to take an important financial risk decreases each year. In 2014 only 4 FAI Cat 2 competitions were organized (5 in 2013, 7 in 2012). Two Cat 2 APWT events already scheduled were cancelled. One of them, which was programmed as a practice event for the 2015 Worlds in France, was canceled just weeks before the date, resulting in discomfort for all those participants, pilots and officials, who had already planned their vacations and travel. In the future we shall think about better assessing the applications – not only Cat 1 but also Cat 2 events - in order to prevent this happens again. Additionally, an event that had been announced as FAI Cat 2 in Noway, wasn't sanctioned as FAI Cat 1 because... the Norwegian federation and/or the organiser messed up and forgot to announce it to the FAI before the 30 days limit. When the problem was noticed, 2 weeks before the competition, it was to late because the FAI rules are clear and strict.

- **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. We have been forming some new judges during the last seasons, but we still need more, especially from outside Europe.

SUGGESTIONS AND REQUESTS

- **ESTABLISHMENT OF A MARKETING CONCEPT FOR THE SEARCH FOR SPONSORS FOR A WORLD TOUR**

The chronic lack of competition organizers - the situation is steadily worsening - can be countered only one way, that is by finding one main and some secondary sponsors of the Aerobatic Paragliding World Tour, to relieve the financial effort of the potential organisers. After the failure of the project FAME, a new impetus will have to be given in this direction. **The aerobatic subcommittee request the assistance of a marketing professional for the establishment of a campaign for the search of sponsors for the APWT.**

- **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 two years ago, but unfortunately it wasn't possible to find somebody who would take the lead of the project and produce the clip. We'll try again in 2015...

- **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.

- **PRIZE GIVING FOR THE FAI APWT**

The aerobatic subcommittee moves that trophies are attributed to the top 3 classified of each category of the APWT general ranking (men, ladies and synchro teams). Since only one World Championship was organized in 2006, APWT is to be considered the highest expression of aerobatic paragliding competition held on a regular basis. Until now, after the last competition of the season an informal prize giving ceremony is organized, but without prizes to be given: everyone will agree that this doesn't look very professional...

- **INTRODUCTION OF NEW MANOEUVRES**

The discipline is continuously evolving, new manoeuvres are discovered every year. During the winter 2014/2015 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**

- The 2nd Aerobatic Paragliding World Championship, attributed to France in 2015, was canceled at a very early stage of the organisation process. A new bid from another French organising committee might be presented before the 2015 plenary meeting, for 2016 or 2017. Since the needs of cross country competitions are very different from the needs of aerobatic competitions, and in order to reduce the expenses for the organisers of Cat. 1 events, **the aerobatic subcommittee requests a simplification of jury and stewards requirements for aerobatic Cat 1 competitions.**
- A complete restructuring of the sporting code is being prepared: details will be presented during the plenary meeting.
- Concerning competition rules, the following chapters will be subject to changes: 2.6 – 2.11 – 2.14 – 3.7 – 4.8 – 5.3 – 6.2 – 6.8 – 6.14 – Annex 1 – Annex 2

- **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
- 1'500.- € for the further development of the Acropyx scoring software
- 500.- € for the trophies of the annual APWT general ranking



On behalf of the Aerobatic subcommittee
Claudio Cattaneo - Chairman