CIVL 2024 PLENARY – ANNEXE 38E

PROPOSAL POLAND – COMMUNICATION AND SAFETY

Dear all,

on behalf of the paragliding commission of the Aeroclub of Poland I woud like to present a proposition that adresses two issues at once, which combined could improve safety in major competitions.

First one is communication. Again and again it happens that safety frequency is unusable during a task by someone transmitting white noise (most probably a pilot who inadvertently pressed the button when stowing radio in the harness and left it like that, not even knowing he is transmitting). This can lead to serious consequences - for example, there was a case of an accident in the launch area that required a helicopter. This was announced, but due to blocked frequency some pilots did not hear of the emergency and kept overflying the launch area, denying the helicopter possibility to land with assistance. In this way injured pilot's life and health was put in danger, something that is absolutely inadmissible and must be eliminated.

The other thing is neverending story of cloud flying still occurring, especially in the starting gaggle. It is there where it's most dangerous, as there are many pilots in one thermal area trying to get the best (highest) starting position, while later on the task course the gaggle naturally dissipates, plus there is no need anymore to maximalize altitude as the speed is more important.

Hopefully there is a solution mitigating both risks. It was already successfully tested by German organisers and we feel could be implemented in major competitions.
It is often difficult to set an upper altitude limit, since the cloudbase can differ with time and place. Therefore it is not announced in a briefing, but a specific time is set - a 20 minutes before opening the window for example - when it will be announced on safety frequency. Then a couple of designated marshalls get flying in launch area in order to assess the viable altitude and advise the meet director. When the decision is taken on the altitude limit, it gets transmitted and any pilots who happen to be above must get below before the task starts – there is enough time to do that safely.
In this way we have both problems solved: everybody knows the limit, and all pilots who did not hear anything at given time go check their radios, as it means they have been transmitting.

Of course this requires further discussion, but we feel this is a sound proposition and a good starting point.

yours,

Jędrzej Jaxa-Rozen, delegate