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Glider Aerobatics

WHAT IS GLIDER AEROBATICS?

The Glider Aerobatics competition is a test of the pilot's ability to perform a preplanned programme of spectacular aerobatic manoeuvres whilst managing the glider's energy. These silent and graceful figures are blended together in a sequence that aims to impress the judges with the pilot's accurate and precise aircraft handling skills. His ability to manage the glider's speed, energy and position within the 1km airspace cube that we call the "box" is of paramount importance to obtaining a winning score. The pilots competing in the Glider Aerobatics event at the World Air Games have been chosen from amongst the world's top Glider Aerobatic pilots and include current world and continental champions.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO TO WIN?

Unlike powered aerobatics, the pilot has only the energy provided by the initial height of the glider as it is released from its tow at 1,200m altitude, and they must conserve and carefully deploy this energy if they are to score highly. If they waste energy through poor handling or excessive 'G' in the manoeuvres they may not be able to complete the programme. The winner is the pilot who demonstrates the most precise flying skills in his figures and of course completes the sequence within the performance zone.

HOW IS IT SCORED?

The panel of FAI judges award points for the precision of the manoeuvres, the positioning of the glider and the flow throughout the sequence. The pilot gaining the most points from all three aspects of the performances cumulated over several days will be declared the World Air Games Glider Champion.

TELL ME MORE!

This is a relatively young event; the earliest dedicated Glider Aerobatics contests were held in the early 1980's. At that time there was very little choice of suitable gliders specifically designed for competition aerobatics. The development of dedicated designs and highly stressed, very manoeuvrable gliders such as the Swift and MDM Fox has encouraged a considerable interest in this sport in recent years.

Most glider aerobatic pilots start by becoming regular glider pilots, learning at one of the many clubs around the world. Once they have reached a reasonable level of skill they can begin aerobatic training; this is offered by many of the larger gliding clubs. Some countries require aerobatic proficiency qualifications which can typically take solo glider pilots 10-20 training flights to achieve at a cost of around 500-1000 Euros.

"silent and spectacular display of precision competition flying"