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## Paragliding – Accuracy

### WHAT IS THE PARAGLIDING ACCURACY COMPETITION?

This event is a test of the paraglider pilot's ability to fly their canopy to a very small target landing pad. The target point is an electronic score pad only 15cm in diameter with 1m, 5m and 10m diameter circles surrounding it. Pilots fly from hills or are towed by a winch. Then, allowing for any wind or air movements that may affect their progress, they fly their paragliders to the target.

### WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO TO WIN?

The pilot is scored for each landing according to their first touch on the target area. The closer they touch to the centre of the target, the lower their points score. Up to 12 rounds can be completed, after which each pilot drops their worst score to arrive at a total. The pilot with the lowest accumulated score wins the competition and becomes the FAI World Air Games Champion.

### HOW IS IT SCORED?

A team of Judges is present at the target: three 'fichet' judges triangulate the exact spot of the first point of contact. Two 'strike' judges confirm which foot landed first (sometimes the back foot may land first, yet the fichet judges may be tracking the foot being placed closest to the target). A wind speed monitor and scorer are also present. If the pilot lands on the electronic pad, the score will be displayed on the digital display, in centimetres ranging from 0 to 15cm but if the pilot's first touch is greater but still inside the 10m circle, the judges mark and measure the distance from the centre spot. There are rules in place to ensure every pilot has a fair opportunity to reach the target. In special cases a re-flight may be awarded. Such cases include obstruction of the target, wind speed over competition limits or other technical problems.

### TELL ME MORE!

Pilots must constantly assess their distance to the target and the glide angle which they can achieve in the prevailing wind conditions; this is tricky since the wind near the ground can be quite different from that at higher levels in both direction and strength. Thermal activity is another factor the pilot has to consider, as any local rising or sinking air will have a significant impact on the final approach to the target. The pilots use their skill, experience and judgement to land into wind while trying to place one foot in the centre of the target pad. The pilots must not fall over, nor must any part of their equipment touch the ground while they are landing.

Paragliding is a very popular and rapidly growing sport which is practised around the world. The pilot sits in a harness which is attached to a canopy wing similar to a parachute. The wing is double layered, creating cells between the layers which fill with air. This gives the wing an aerofoil shape, enabling the paraglider to fly. Pilots usually fly with a reserve parachute should their main canopy fail, though this is rare. Modern paragliders weigh approximately 15kg and have a speed range from as little as 20kph to 60kph or more for the latest competition designs.

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