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Paragliding – Aerobatics

WHAT IS THE PARAGLIDING AEROBATICS COMPETITION?

Competitors in the Paragliding Aerobatic competition require great skill to demonstrate their ability to fly a synchronized and artistically appealing sequence of aerobatic manoeuvres with a paraglider wing. The manoeuvres they perform consist of spins, wingovers, helicopters, SATs (where the pilot and wing rotate around a central point), continuous loops, and more. The best pilots perform these manoeuvres with a minimum of altitude loss, so they can demonstrate more manoeuvres within the available altitude. Particularly spectacular is the section when two paragliders perform together, sometimes touching their wings in breathtaking manoeuvres. These are called the Syncro pairs and provide a team element to this event.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO TO WIN?

Competitors are judged according to the number and difficulty of the manoeuvres they successfully complete. Points are awarded for clean, accurate and smooth flying. Each pilot or pair flies a freestyle routine. The pilot gaining the most points at the end of the rounds is declared the FAI World Air Games Champion.

HOW IS IT SCORED?

A Paragliding Aerobatics contest is judged by a panel of experts, just like gymnastics. The judges look for control of speed, control of heading, altitude management, precision of manoeuvres, smooth transition between manoeuvres and variety of manoeuvres. All programme elements are the competitor's choice. At the end of the routine the competitors land on a 82m square raft with the chance to get additional style points or a very wet arrival.

TELL ME MORE!

Although a relatively new sport, paragliding demonstrates the pureness and simplicity of flight and has become one of the most popular recreational airsports. Paragliding Aerobatics is one of the most recent development in this air sport and requires experienced pilots to control their wings through their full flight envelope. Pilots have to demonstrate their ability to fly synchronized and artistically appealing sequences of aerobatic manoeuvres, either as individual athletes or in teams of 2 with synchronized manoeuvres. In order to improve pilots' safety, this event may only be performed above water.

Paragliding is a very popular and rapidly growing sport which is practised all over the world. The pilot sits in a harness 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 in case their main canopy should malfunction although this is rare. Modern paragliders weigh approximately 15kg and have a speed range from as little as 20kph up to 80kph or more on some of the latest competition designs.

« An attractive, pure but demanding sport »