

AEROBATIC PARAGLIDING

Season 2012 summary



During 2012 a total of 7 FAI Cat 2 competitions took place in 5 countries, with 65 participating pilots from 17 different nations.

5 were only solo competitions, 1 was only synchro, and 1 was solo & synchro.

2 solo and 2 synchro competitions counted for the Aerobatic Paragliding World Cup ranking (APWC).

Event	Location	Date	APWC	Solo pilots	Synchro teams	Nations
Vertigo Voss	Voss, Bergen (NOR)	25-26.06.12	No	21	N/A	5
Acrojam	Obertraun (AUT)	04-08.07.12	No	20	N/A	10
Norwegian Championship	Bygland (NOR)	26-29.07.12	No	6	N/A	1
Nordic Open	Are (SWE)	02-05.08.12	No	18	N/A	5
Acrobatixx	Zell am See (AUT)	02-05.08.12	Solo	39	N/A	12
AcroLake	Brienz (SUI)	16-19.08.12	Synchro	N/A	10	6
AcroWing Tour	Annecy (FRA)	30.09-02.09.12	Solo & Synchro	39	11	7

APWC – AEROBATIC PARAGLIDING WORLD CUP

2012 was the season of big changes in competition format and scoring system: the Evolution competition format - a completely new system featuring live scoring with the results displayed on a big screen and simultaneously published in the internet - was introduced with great success. This was possible thanks to dedicated software Acropyx, developed during the last 2 years.

We had 3 events counting for APWC: one solo only, one synchro only and one final event with both solo and synchro.

The 1st APWC event of the season was Acrobatixx in Zell am See / Austria. As usual, the event had a remarkable success of audience due to its concomitance with the Lake Fest, a very popular estival event in Zell am See, with air show and live music. Despite the changeable weather and frequent rain showers, 3 full solo runs could be completed. Unfortunately, a very last thunderstorm forced us to cancel the super final run with the 12 best pilots planned on saturday evening, just after the big air show. It is a shame, because around 5'000+ spectators were on the lake shore waiting for it.

The 2nd APWC event was AcroLake, held in Brienz / Switzerland. According to a successful formula adopted since 2010, the Swiss Championships synchro competitions are sanctioned FAI Cat 2 and are also valid for APWC. It was the first event held on this marvellous site, which is very suitable for aerobatic paragliding competitions. The weather was perfect, 4 solo and 4 synchro runs were completed. The organizers already announced that they will do it again in 2013.

The final event of the 2012 APWC season was the AcroWing Tour in Doussard-Annecy / France, the only one event of the year to be both, solo and synchro competition, also valid for the French Championship. The first 2 days had terrible and absolutely unflyable weather with heavy rain and strong winds. On Saturday the competition could finally start in the late afternoon: all 44 pilots could complete their first task before dark. And Sunday was the final rush: we initially completed a solo 2nd task in order to validate the solo competition. Since the expected thunderstorms didn't develop, we then found the way to fly a 1st synchro run with dry landing, followed by a spectacular final run for the delight of the many spectators who had joined the landing area.



2012 APWC FINAL STANDINGS

SOLO

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

LADIES

- 1st: Alexandra Grillmayer (HUN)
- 2nd: Leila Simonet (FRA)
- 3rd: Nicole Schmidt (AUT)

SYNCHRO

- 1st: Stay Irie (Marvin Ogger / GER - Lino Oehl / GER)
- 2nd: SAT Cousins (Horacio Llorens / SPA - Felix Rodriguez / SPA)
- 3rd: FluGeil (Yves Hohl / SUI - Robin Cavanak / SUI)
- 4th: Super Puff Girls (Alexandra Grillmayer / HUN - Nicole Schmidt / AUT)
- 5th: Maxi Boys (Tim Alongi / FRA - Emmanuel Manon / FRA)

NATIONS CUP

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



JUDGES SEMINARS

3 judges seminars were held during the season. As a result, 1 trainee has been promoted as qualified judge, and another one has been checked out for judging solo competitions, he just need some more training for synchro. For details please refer to the dedicated report.



THE FUTURE

1. ISSUES

Paragliding aerobatics is experiencing a very hard time, due to the following reasons:

- Absence of a real subcommittee: I have personally been doing the whole work during the whole season. The subcommittee members' list hasn't been updated for a long time, some of the members haven't been seen on a competition event site for many years, and some of them are even completely unknown to me. The lack of a fund for the reimbursement of expenses of the people involved is certainly a decisive factor.
- 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 2 seasons, but we still need more, especially from outside Europe.
- 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.

2. SUGGESTIONS:

- **ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROPOSITIVE SUBCOMMITTEE**

Priority should be given to the establishment of a group of 7-8 reliable and motivated people, each with well-defined functions, that will shake up things for the near future.

The people that I'm inviting to be part of this group are the ones that I consider are the more qualified and motivated, in representation of all sectors: CIVL representatives, judges, pioneers of the discipline, current top pilots, emerging young ones, and finally organizers. Some of them have already confirmed their willingness to work together to restore momentum to the discipline.

The availability of a small budget for the partial reimbursement of expenses of the members (in particular the expenses for obtaining a subscription that would allow to make skype conferences with all board members connected at the same time) could be an incentive for more people willing to engage in the committee.

Below is a list of people that I consider appropriate for this function:

- Iris Vogt
- François Bon
- Pernilla and/or Pal Hammar-Rognoy
- Gilles Berruex
- Luigi Vigorito
- Alexander Meschuh
- Pal Takats
- Raul Rodriguez
- Horacio Llorens
- Marvin Ogger
- Theo de Blic
- François Ragolski



- **FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT 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 2012 season 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 implementation of the direct elimination concept in the software. Additionally, we are evaluating the possibility of real time broadcasting (live streaming) of the APWC competitions in a window inserted in the Acropyx display board. Preliminary negotiations are under way with a company specialized in distribution of HF images.

- **ESTABLISHMENT OF A MARKETING CONCEPT FOR THE SEARCH FOR ONE OR MORE MAIN SPONSORS FOR A WORLD TOUR**

It is hoped that the introduction of the new Evolution competition format, combined with the new Acropyx scoring software will give a new impulse to the whole movement. Competitions conducted with these new rules are much more exciting and engaging for all: pilots, spectators, judges...and – last but not least - medias! And they are especially much more interesting for sponsors. This factor should definitely be used to bring some new supporters to the discipline.

Our vision:

The first stage is to achieve the implementation of this new and exciting competition concept. Then, with the support of a marketing specialists of FAI (or an external one), we want to bring paragliding aerobatics to have the resonance in the medias that it deserves, to finally present it to potential sponsors, with a concrete project of World Cup Series.

2 years road map:

- Summer 2012: testing of the Evolution competition concept during the APWC season (completed!).
- Winter 2012/2013: brain storming to find all other astutenesses that can make the discipline attractive to the media (in progress!). Development of a global concept of marketing for the discipline, with the final goal of convincing one or more main sponsors to support a entire *APWC World Tour*
- Summer 2013: full APWC season with the Evolution competition concept, modified according to the issues found during the 2012 season. Implementation of the direct elimination system (battle) during competitions. Research campaign to sponsors for the *APWC World Tour*
- Winter 2013/2014: Final tuning
- *Summer 2014: 1st COCACOLA-CANON-REDBULL-MCDONALDS APWC Series :-)*



- **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 maneuvers 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.

- **ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE ORGANIZERS OF COMPETITIONS**

The number of organizers is constantly decreasing. If nothing is done to stop this hemorrhage, soon there will not be enough events anymore to validate the APWC season. During the last 2 seasons, not more than 3 APWC events were organized, and the trend for 2013 is not looking any better. The suggestions to avoid reaching this point are:

- Cost sharing for the judges.
The costs of a panel of judges (including expenses and accommodation but excluding board) range from 3'150.- € for a 3-day event to 4'050.- € for a 4 day-event. These costs are drastically affecting the overall budget of a competition. Given the great difficulty in finding enough judges, a reduction in compensation to the judges involved is for the moment difficult to apply. A direct aid by the CIVL to cover the costs of the judges would certainly be an incentive for the organizers.
- Centralization of pilot registration for the competitions.
A process of registration for competitions (and possibly also the collection of inscription fees) centralized on the CIVL web pages would facilitate the task of the organizers and at the same time simplify the management of results.

- **IMPROVEMENT IN COMMUNICATION**

Communication between the Aerobatic subcommittee, judges, pilots and organizers is a major concern. An amelioration of the situation is of vital importance. In the future it is also necessary for the aerobatic subcommittee members, to have the possibility to create an e-mail distribution list based on the CIVL DB of pilots.



CONCLUSIONS AND REQUESTS

To achieve the objectives set out above, the aerobatic subcommittee requests the following support:

- 1'000.- € to cover part of the expenses of the members of the aerobatic subcommittee
- Support from a marketing specialist of the FAI/CIVL or from an external source, to search for one or more main sponsors of the aerobatic paragliding World Series.
- 2'000.- € for judges training seminars
- 1'500.- € for the production of a judging tutorial video
- 2'500.- € for the further development of the Acropyx scoring software
- Participation of 2'000.- € for each APWC event (up to maximum 5 events/season) for the coverage of part of the costs of the judges
- Improvement in communication

On behalf of the Aerobatic subcommittee
Claudio Cattaneo

