

AEROBATIC PARAGLIDING

Season 2013 summary



During 2013 a total of 5 FAI Cat 2 competitions took place (7 in 2012) in 4 countries, with the participation of pilots from 17 different nations.

2 events only had a solo competitions, 1 only synchro, and 2 had both solo & synchro.

2 solo and 3 synchro competitions counted for the Aerobatic Paragliding World Cup 2013 (APWC).

Event	Location	Date	APWC	Solo pilots	Synchro teams	Nations
Vertigo Voss	Voss, Bergen (NOR)	25-27.06.13	No	18	N/A	6
AcroMax	Trasaghis (ITA)	11-14.07.13	Solo + Synchro	31	10	13
Norwegian Championship	Selbu (NOR)	26-28.07.13	No	12	N/A	2
AcroLake	Brienz (SUI)	08-11.08.13	Synchro	N/A	10	6
AcroJam	Obertraun (AUT)	14-18.08.13	Solo + Synchro	31	11	10

APWC – AEROBATIC PARAGLIDING WORLD CUP

After the introduction in 2012 of the new “Evolution” competition format and scoring system (a completely new system featuring live scoring with the results displayed on a big screen and simultaneously published in the internet) 2013 was the season of adjustments.

A new calculation system for the APWC overall ranking (more suitable due to the small number of competition) was adopted and the scoring system was adapted accordingly. Now Acropyx automatically calculates the APWC season overall ranking, while earlier this had to be done by hand.

We had 3 events counting for APWC: two with both solo and synchro categories, and one with synchro only. 39 pilots and 16 teams from 15 nations took part to the 2013 Aerobatic Paragliding World Cup.

The 1st APWC event of the season was Acromax in Trasaghis (Udine-Italy). It was the first time an aerobatic competition took place on this site. The event had a remarkable success of audience, and was additionally offering to the visitors the possibility to try a wide range of sports activities. On Friday and Saturday night show and live music. Despite some rain showers, 3 full solo and synchro runs could be completed.

The 2nd event was AcroLake in Brienz / Switzerland. According to a successful formula adopted since 2010, the Swiss Championships' synchro competition is sanctioned FAI Cat 2 and is also valid for APWC. It was the second consecutive year that the event was held on this marvellous site, very suitable for aerobatic paragliding competitions. Actually the event main area has been moved since last year, and the location (the lakeshore in downtown Brienz) is now even better! The weather conditions were prohibitive on Thursday and Friday, where all kind of flying activity had to be cancelled. But they were perfect during the week end, with plenty of sunshine and very light or no wind at all. 3 solo (only valid for the Swiss Championship) and 2 synchro runs (APWC) were completed.

The final event of the 2013 APWC season was AcroJam in Obertraun / Austria. 3 runs were flown for both the solo and the synchro competition. AcroJam is a very suitable location for aerobatic competitions, the effectiveness of the organizing staff has been widely demonstrated in the past years.



EVOLUTION COMPETITION FORMAT AND ACROPYX SCORING SOFTWARE

During its first 2 years of existence, the new "Evolution" competition format continuously needed to be adapted and improved. Due to the lack of other occasions, this tuning was done during the APWC competition season. This was necessary in order to be prepared for a possible jump in quality of aerobatic paragliding competitions in the near future. The majority of the changes were suggested and requested by pilots. All modifications have been discussed and implemented after agreement between the judges and the pilots' committee.

These changes occurred smoothly and without trouble. Only during the very last stage of the season we experienced a small scoring problem. Due to a misunderstanding, at the briefing it was mistakenly communicated that the repetition of the 4 non directional manoeuvres (Tail slide, Full stall, Dynamic full stall and Pitch pendulum) would now be allowed without restriction, and that these manoeuvres could be performed several times without limitation nor penalization.

Unfortunately this was not correct: the introduction of this new rule had been discussed and agreed, but was planned for 2014.

The possibility that something might go wrong when applying modifications to the judging and scoring system and to Acropyx software in the middle of the season was always taken into account. The mistake was finally discovered 5 days after the end of the competition: the scoring software was updated accordingly and a new ranking calculated.

Normally such tiny penalties hardly affect the results. As a matter of fact, the Acrojam synchro competition and the 2013 APWC synchro overall ranking didn't undergo any change. Also the classification of the Acrojam solo competition had only 2 insignificant changes in the lower part. But due to the incredible proximity in the 2013 APWC solo overall ranking of the two leading pilots, the final classification was influenced by these very small differences: the pilots where so close to each other that after the new calculation their position was inverted.

Having deeply analyzed the facts, the judges involved, together with the Aerobatic subcommittee chair man, decided by unanimity to revise the scoring of the competition Acrojam according to the criteria actually communicated to the pilots during the briefing. The final, overall 2013 APWC ranking was updated accordingly. As a consequence, since at the end of the entire season the difference between the 2 pilots was insignificant and negligible (0.179 points!) the title of winner of the 2013 SOLO APWC was assigned ex aequo to both pilots Horacio Llorens (spain) & Marvin Ogger (Germany).

The title of winner of the 2013 SYNCHRO APWC went to the French Alongi Team (Tim Alongi & François Ragolski).



2013 APWC FINAL STANDINGS

SOLO

- 1st: Horacio Llorens (ESP) & Marvin Ogger (GER) ex aequo
- 3rd: François Ragolski (FRA)
- 4th: Eliot Nochez (FRA)
- 5th: Tim Alongi (FRA)

LADIES

- 1st: Alexandra Grillmayer (HUN)
- 2nd: Beverly Jäger (GER)
- 3rd: Leila Simonet (FRA)

SYNCHRO

- 1st: Alongi Team (Tim Alongi / FRA – François Ragolski / FRA)
- 2nd: SAT Team (Horacio Llorens / SPA - Felix Rodriguez / SPA)
- 3rd: SOL Acro Team (Rafael Goberna / BRA – Hernàn Pitocco / ARG)
- 4th: Les Piousfous (Lionel Hercod / SUI – Karim Bruchez / SUI)
- 5th: Stay Irie (Marvin Ogger / GER - Lino Oehl / GER)

NATIONS CUP

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



JUDGES SEMINARS

Two judges seminars were held during the season. As a result, 1 trainee has been promoted as qualified judge.

SAFETY

Throughout the 2013 season 221 solo and 81 synchro runs were flown, for a total of 383 flights. Not even a single accident occurred.

Hundreds of runs are flown every year, no fatal accident happened since the APWC was created in 2003. This is a success we are proud of. The aerobatic paragliding discipline has demonstrated over the years that it has reached a very high level of safety. Nevertheless, in the last couple of years some young pilots (who never took part to any FAI competition) died while performing manoeuvres during training or acro shows. The situation should be monitored, in order to prevent the discipline from having a bad redundancy in the medias.



THE FUTURE

1. ISSUES

Paragliding aerobatics is still experiencing a hard time, mainly for the following reasons:

- Lack of an active working group.

A subcommittee was finally formed during 2013, after many years of inactivity, but it is still difficult to organize meetings. During the competitions the schedule is already very busy and there are other priorities.

Here is the list of members of the newly formed Aerobatic subcommittee:

- Claudio Cattaneo (chair)
- Dennis Pagen (chair)
- Raymond Caux
- François Bon
- Pal Hammar-Rognoy
- Gilles Berruex
- Alexander Meschuh
- Horacio Llorens
- Marvin Ogger
- Theo de Blic
- François Ragolski

- 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 3 seasons, but we still need more, especially from outside Europe.

- Shortage of event organisers

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. In 2013 only 5 FAI Cat 2 competitions were organized (7 in 2012).

During the 2013 CIVL plenary, a meeting took place with Giancarlo Sergi, CEO of FAME, the marketing arm of FAI. As a result, a Memorandum of understanding was signed on April 4th. FAME is supposed to “work with the individual sporting aviation groups in the FAI to help them develop, market and produce unique events aimed at promoting aviation sports to the public”. Agust Gudmundsson, President of CIVL, said: *“CIVL is excited about this project with FAME which is intended to promote Paragliding Aerobatics and make the activity a more publicly visible sport. The success of the cooperation will break new grounds in development of Paragliding Aerobatics and it will open up new possibilities in competition and Paragliding Aerobatics shows for pilots, organizers as well as being very interesting for public viewers and sponsors.”*

Unfortunately, after we provided FAME with a detailed budget calculation for a 5 stages World Tour, and we froze all kind of search for sponsors on our side, nothing happened anymore. When in September Mr. Sergi was asked about the latest developments, he explained that “as agreed with CIVL the project is on hold because first of all sponsors/funding have to be found”.

As a consequence, the road map established after the 2013 Plenary meeting has been delayed by one year.

2. SUGGESTIONS:

- **INTRODUCTION OF NEW MANOEUVRES**

The discipline is continuously evolving, new manoeuvres are discovered every year. During the winter 2013/2014 a working group of the aerobatic subcommittee will decide which ones deserve to be included to the manoeuvres board and set the judging and scoring criteria for each one of them.

- **FURTHER DEVELOPMENT 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 and 2013 seasons 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 SPONSORS FOR A WORLD TOUR**

Updated road map:

- Winter 2013/2014: brain storming to find all other astutenesses that can make the discipline attractive to the media. Development, with or without FAME, of a global concept of marketing for the discipline, with the final goal of convincing sponsors to support an *APWC World Tour*
- Summer 2014: further testing and improvement of the "Evolution" competition concept. Running of a full APWC season with the Evolution competition concept, modified according to the issues found during the 2012 and 2013 seasons. Implementation of the direct elimination system (battle) during competitions.
- Winter 2014/2015: Final tuning
- *Summer 2015: 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 manoeuvres 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.



CONCLUSIONS AND REQUESTS

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

- 1'500.- € for judges training seminars
- 2'000.- € for the production of a judging tutorial video
- 1'500.- € for the further development of the Acropyx scoring software

On behalf of the Aerobatic subcommittee
Claudio Cattaneo