

An aerial photograph of a massive skydiving formation. Hundreds of skydivers are in freefall, their colorful parachutes creating a dense, multi-colored pattern that resembles a checkerboard or a mosaic. The colors include bright orange, blue, yellow, pink, purple, and green. The skydivers are arranged in a grid-like pattern, with each person positioned directly below the one above them. The background shows a vast, flat landscape with some structures and roads, viewed from a high altitude. The sky is clear and blue.

# **SKYDIVE** 2025

# THE REVIEW

**BRITISH SKYDIVING**

# WELCOME TO THE REVIEW

Dear fellow skydiver,

Every year in skydiving feels full. This one felt dense.

Dense with jumps, certainly. Dense with firsts, near-misses, quiet breakthroughs, hard conversations, and the kind of incremental progress that rarely announces itself but always leaves a mark. If there's a theme running through this Review of the Year, it's not spectacle. It's momentum.

This issue isn't designed as a highlight reel. Instead, it's more like a pause on the packing mat. A moment to look back at what actually moved the sport forward in 2025, not just what made the loudest noise. Some of that movement happened at altitude, but much of it happened on the ground: in committees, in briefings, in careful refinements to our shared safety culture, and in the everyday decisions made by jumpers, instructors, coaches, organisers and dropzone staff across the country and the world.

You'll find reflections from British Skydiving leadership that set the tone for the year just passed, as well as the one gathering speed down the runway. You'll also find stories that remind us why this sport remains delightfully semi-feral: Euro tours that stretched ambition and logistics in equal measure; disciplines that continue to cross-pollinate; and personal progressions that are anything but linear. Skydiving still refuses to fit neatly into boxes... and we're better off for it.

We've made space here for skills progression and safety thinking – not as abstractions, but as a lived practice. For celebration, yes, but also for context. For data, where it helps. For joy, where it's earned. And for the occasional raised eyebrow, because a healthy sport should always be able to question itself.

If this issue does one thing, I hope it reminds you that the health of skydiving here in Britain isn't measured only in records and medals, but in how deliberately we approach risk, how openly we share knowledge, and how willing we are to keep improving the boring bits. The everyday bits. The bits that make tomorrow's jumps possible.



Thank you for reading, for contributing, and for continuing to build a sport that is as thoughtful as it is thrilling.

Here's to the year we've just flown through, and to the one already unfolding above us.

Ad astra,  
*Annette Lyn O'Neil*  
Editor-in-Chief

**On the cover:** The 104-Way Canopy Formation Record 2025, organised by Chris Gay and Brian Pangburn at Skydive Florida in Lake Wales, FL. It brought together jumpers from 20 countries, including the UK, and broke the previous 100-way record set back in 2007. The event used eight aircraft, with the highest flying at 19,500ft AGL.

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# CHAIR'S END OF YEAR REVIEW

*Craig Poxon, Interim Chair of British Skydiving*



**THIS YEAR HAS** been an extremely turbulent one for British Skydiving, perhaps the most difficult since the Covid-19 pandemic. As Jeff has said in his review, we tragically lost Adam Harrison, Belinda Taylor and Jade Damarell. I know we all offer our deepest sympathies to their families and friends.

I was surprised to be asked to return to the chair early in the year after Mary had to step away. It was supposed to be a temporary arrangement but, due to reasons beyond the board's control, it has taken most of the year to resolve. I appreciate there has been no further communication on this matter beyond the initial message, but unfortunately it has not been appropriate to share any further details. The matter has now been resolved, and the board has accepted the recommendations from an independent review that was undertaken as a result and will look to adopt them this year.

Usually, the chair's review details the successes of the year, and while there have been many, they pale in significance when considering another elephant in the room: the rumour that a purely tandem Parachute Training Organisation wishes to operate outside of British Skydiving and obtain their parachuting permission directly from the CAA. The PTO has sadly indicated that they do not intend to reaffiliate come the new membership year in

April. It appears that the PTO feels that their students are over-insured and contribute to aspects of our service, through the membership element of the fee that they pay to join our association, that they wouldn't necessarily wish to support, such as our discretionary spending – on competitions, for instance. It is a sentiment that resonates somewhat with other PTOs but, while they wish to remain a part of the association due to the value and benefits it provides, they do also desire change. Due to the way our association is structured and funded, our strength comes from everyone contributing to everything and spreading the load evenly, and changes to this finely balanced model within our relatively small not-for-profit organisation could have significant repercussions for those who remain. Clearly, any loss of income would need to be offset either by increasing fees or reducing services, neither of which are conducive to growing our sport. We are in discussions with our underwriters, via our broker, to negotiate the best deal possible and to consider changes to our policy, but recent history does not leave us in a particularly strong position. As a membership association, it is increasingly challenging to balance the commercial nature of our sport especially given the rising financial pressures that are exerted on our stakeholders (and all of us!), without whom we would be unable to skydive. It would be a shame if such a split were to occur. When it has happened in other countries, it has had a detrimental effect on the sport. Our association is at a crossroads and is facing some difficult challenges.

Apologies that, outwardly, we have been quiet on this matter while discretely trying to find a resolution, but I hope you can understand why, given the sensitivity. I am still hopeful that the PTO will appreciate the value of remaining a part of the association and the benefits it brings for the whole of our sport.

Back in 2017, when the association adopted Sport England's Code for Sports Governance, terms for directors were staggered to prevent a wholesale change in the number of directors to promote continuity and ensure stability. Despite these best laid plans at the start of the year, due to the ebb and flow of interest, we found ourselves with five casual vacancies to fill. We did fill them and the new directors were thrown in at the deep end and have performed admirably, tackling the issues we have faced. This year, partly due to the casual vacancy terms only lasting for a year, and to the end of three-year terms of office, we have found ourselves with seven seats to fill. It has been great to see interest in the governance and future of our sport return with the recent election. I will watch with keen interest to see how the great business acumen and huge passion for the sport from some of our most prominent PTOs is applied while navigating the tricky conflicts of interest that some of our new directors will face.

I will be watching from a little bit further away, as sadly this has been my final year on the board. The adoption of the code also included limits of three terms of office of three years each, which I have now reached. These limits are to ensure new skills and ideas are brought to the leadership, the risk of entrenched power is reduced, and the board better reflects the diversity of the sport. I had already been on the board for 11 years before the limits came in, so it really is time for me to retire. My time on the board has been contrasting; it has been both incredibly difficult but equally very rewarding. I will miss it immensely, but also be slightly relieved that it's someone else's responsibility. I hope I can still contribute, where appropriate, likely by offering a historic perspective, "Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it!" Thank you to everyone I have worked with during my time. I wish the new board, the staff, members and stakeholders a safe and successful year.

# BRITISH SKYDIVING

## BUSINESS REVIEW 2025

Robert Gibson, CEO of British Skydiving



### INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Dear members, dropzone operators, instructors, coaches, competitors, volunteers, staff and the wider skydiving community,

I'm delighted to share this annual review of our sport and organisation for 2025. It has been a year of dynamic energy, outstanding achievements, meaningful progress and, at times, sombre reflection. Through it all, our community's resilience, camaraderie and shared passion for flight have been unmistakable. I hope this review conveys how much we have accomplished together and how energised we are for the year ahead.

### MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION GROWTH

This year saw continued engagement and growth across our membership base. DZs reported strong enrolments in both student training and advanced tandem activity throughout the spring and summer quarters. Despite weather variability affecting some weekends, I've routinely heard how AFF and sport jump volumes are setting promising trends for the coming seasons, a positive sign that participation remains lively and enthusiastic.

### SAFETY, OPERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Safety remains our core priority and central to everything we do. In June we were deeply saddened by two tragic incidents. Our thoughts continue to be with the families and friends of those involved.

Across the year, the Safety and Training Committee, supported by HQ,

advanced initiatives to strengthen reporting mechanisms, training standards and incident review processes, all designed to support DZs and instructors in maintaining the safest possible environment for skydiving.

Operationally, the broad adoption of SkyVault's automated invoicing and API integration marked a significant milestone. This innovation has improved efficiency for both DZs and British Skydiving.

### CHALLENGES FACED AND HOW WE OVERCAME THEM

Every year brings challenges, and 2025 was no exception. The sudden closure of a major operator presented financial and operational questions for the association. Through proactive engagement, constructive dialogue and careful scenario planning, we navigated these pressures while maintaining operational continuity. This has been a valuable learning experience, strengthening British Skydiving's capacity to respond and remain resilient in the face of unforeseen changes across the DZO network.

Critically, these discussions reinforced the importance of strong governance, clear communication and collective leadership, themes we have taken forward into our current strategic planning cycle.

### FINANCIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW

While membership growth and SkyVault improvements have strengthened our foundation, operating the association in today's environment demands careful stewardship of resources. Rising costs in insurance and administration, combined with fluctuating income streams, continue to be pressures we manage with prudence and foresight.

We have continued investing in core capabilities, from safety support to technology, and remain focused on long-term financial resilience rather than short-term fixes. High-level planning is underway to ensure that British Skydiving remains sustainable and fit for purpose for this generation and the next.

### THANKS TO THE COMMUNITY, VOLUNTEERS, STAFF AND PARTNERS

None of the progress we celebrate would be possible without the extraordinary commitment of our community. To the volunteers who judge at events with professionalism and fairness, thank you. To the coaches and instructors who guide so many through their skydiving journey, your contribution is invaluable.

Our staff at HQ continue to work tirelessly behind the scenes to support membership services, governance, safety, competitions and operations. Your dedication is appreciated more deeply than words can express.

To our partners, insurers, regulators, drop zones and industry supporters, thank you for your collaboration and support throughout the year.

### VISION AND OUTLOOK FOR 2026

Looking ahead, 2026 promises to be full of opportunity. We have the return of Skydive the Expo, bringing the community together for knowledge sharing, innovation and celebration.

National and international competitions will continue to be a cornerstone of our calendar. With teams set to represent the UK on the world stage, we look forward with great anticipation to seeing British competitors excel further.

We will continue to invest in technology, safety, engagement and governance. Our membership strategy will focus on drawing more individuals into the sport and giving existing members the support and recognition they deserve.

### CLOSING MESSAGE

2025 was a year of challenge, growth and achievement. As CEO, I could not be prouder of how our community has navigated the skies together, with professionalism, spirit and unity. Thank you to every member, volunteer, competitor and DZ operator for contributing to the energy and vibrancy of British Skydiving.

As we look to 2026, I am confident that our shared passion for skydiving will continue to drive progress, connection and excellence. Let's keep building a sport that's safe, exciting and welcoming to all who choose to fly with us.

# BRITISH SKYDIVING 2025 FINANCE COMMITTEE END OF YEAR REVIEW

Prepared by Roumie Radountcheva



**AS WE CLOSE** the 2025 financial year, it's a real pleasure to share a positive and forward-looking review of British Skydiving's financial footing. While the year has included a few notable challenges, what stands out most is the resilience, adaptability and continued commitment of our organisation to supporting safe skydiving across the UK.

## **A YEAR OF INVESTMENT AND MODERNISATION**

One of the defining features of 2025 has been long term investment, most notably our significant progress in digital transformation. The introduction of SkyVault is now firmly underway, reflected in the creation of a major new intangible asset. This marks a meaningful step toward improving member experience, streamlining operations, and modernising the way British Skydiving functions day to day.

Similarly, tangible assets saw a reshaping rather than expansion, an indication that we're transitioning from legacy equipment to more sustainable, future focused systems. This careful modernisation underscores our priority to build long term capability without unnecessary capital risk.

## **OPERATIONAL PRESSURES AND A PREDICTABLE DEFICIT**

As many membership organisations experienced in 2025, inflationary pressure and growing operational

costs played a major role in shaping our financial outcome. Administrative and staffing expenses increased notably this year, including wages, staff related costs and additional administrative demands that reflect ongoing regulatory obligations.

While this resulted in an operational deficit, this outcome is neither unexpected nor destabilising. Year on year income from member activities remained reassuringly stable, and our insurance flow through continues to work exactly as intended. The deficit primarily reflects expanded activity, investment, and a rising cost environment, not a structural weakness.

## **INSURANCE, MEMBERSHIP AND STABILITY IN CORE OPERATIONS**

Membership linked revenues held steady once again, demonstrating the continued strength and loyalty of the British Skydiving community.

The insurance mechanism, which passes income and costs through the accounts, once again fulfilled its role seamlessly. This consistency reinforces the fundamental health of our operating model.

## **INVESTMENTS AND AUDIT OBSERVATIONS**

Our investment portfolio continues to form an essential part of British Skydiving's financial resilience. While the auditors confirmed that year end asset values were well supported, they were unable to obtain sufficiently detailed evidence for movements within the portfolio during the year. This resulted in a qualified audit opinion, restricted specifically to investment transaction documentation rather than the organisation's general financial integrity.

Importantly, the auditors confirmed there is no concern regarding going concern status, the accuracy of year end valuations, or the organisation's ability to continue meeting its obligations. This means British Skydiving remains financially stable,

with a clear pathway to tighten processes around investment tracking.

The revaluation of investments brought a welcome positive uplift, helping to buffer the year's operating deficit and softening the overall impact of rising costs.

## **STRONG RESERVES AND A SECURE FINANCIAL BASE**

Despite the year's deficit, British Skydiving closes 2025 with substantial reserves and a strong balance sheet that comfortably supports our obligations. Even with increased administrative expenditure and strategic investment, the organisation remains securely within a healthy financial position.

Our reserve's philosophy continues to serve us well, balancing the need for safeguarding with the ambition to reinvest in the sport. We remain well placed to support members, drop zones, and growth initiatives.

## **LOOKING AHEAD WITH CONFIDENCE**

The story of 2025 is not one of loss, but of strategic strengthening. We have modernised, invested, adapted, and continued to deliver services in a challenging financial climate.

## **OUR FOCUS FOR 2026 WILL BE ON:**

- Completing our digital transformation and realising its benefits.
- Continuing to support safe, high quality operations.
- Tightening investment documentation and governance processes.
- Keeping membership value at the heart of financial decision making.
- Maintaining stability while enabling growth across the sport.

Thanks to the commitment of our members, volunteers, staff, and drop zones, British Skydiving remains robust, forward thinking, and ready for the exciting years ahead. With the groundwork laid in 2025, we're perfectly positioned to keep elevating the sport, safely, sustainably, and together.

# SAFETY & TRAINING REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2025

Jeff Montgomery, Head of Safety, Training and Competitions



**2025 WAS A** year of both progress and significant reflection for the Safety and Training Committee (STC). We strengthened our organisational structure, enhanced our analytical approach to safety data, and continued to deliver instructor training across the UK.

We record, with deep regret, two fatal incidents this year. One was a solo jumper, the second a tandem double fatality – the first recorded in over three decades. The lessons arising from these events are likely to shape many of our actions and priorities going forward.

British Skydiving acknowledges the profound effect these incidents have on families, PTO staff, our instructional community, and our membership. As investigations conclude, any safety recommendations will be shared to help prevent recurrence and better support our PTOs, our instructors and members.

At the start of 2025 we said goodbye to Kevin Dynan, one of our safety and training officers, who left to seek other opportunities within our industry. We soon began a recruitment process and successfully appointed Hans Donner. Hans brings a diverse and experienced range of skills which will help us maintain our improved and administrative support structure for collation and dissemination of safety reports, offering continued and sustained support for PTOs and members. British Skydiving will also be investing in data analysis to help gain the best insight from our data. This will ensure we move towards a more evidence-based, decision-making process.

Our committee and the Riggers' Subcommittee have undertaken a full

review, and we are looking to implement the new structured committees starting in February 2026. Historically, all chief instructors have automatically been appointed as a voting member of STC and been responsible for all decisions surrounding safety in the sport. Our Chief Instructors have supported our Association for more than 60 years as an ongoing contribution towards the development of safety in skydiving.

To grow and evolve as an association, we look to future changes by adopting a new STC composition, which allows for a wider range of subject matter experts, such as instructor examiners, pilots, display team leaders, riggers, and a number of chief instructors.

The committee will be supported by our medical adviser and members of technical staff, who now become committee members with voting rights.

Our chief instructors will continue to support the association by becoming members of a Specialist Interest Group (SIG), which will enable them to continue supporting the STC through a consultation and discussion network, to ensure their feedback and insights are considered on matters of safety. Our instructor examiners will also form a SIG, providing another network of consultation, which will feed back into the STC when considering changes to training and qualifications of instructors.

The Riggers Subcommittee will continue to report back to the STC on rigging matters, equipment, packing and training of riggers, but will also undergo a change to its composition by reducing the number of members on the subcommittee, and having advanced riggers and rigger examiners only as the voting members. Parachute riggers will also form a new SIG to ensure the Riggers' Subcommittee continues to be supported by its own specialised group.

On behalf of our association, I want to thank all those individuals who, over the years, have supported both our Safety and Training Committee and the Riggers' Subcommittee.

Throughout 2025 we have continued our mutual collaboration with international partners including USPA (United States Parachute Association), APF (Australian Parachute Federation)

and the Belgian Parachute Federation, by sharing data on incident statistics, training, and developing material to enhance our safety standards.

Throughout 2025, British Skydiving delivered 10 one-week long instructor and rigging courses, covering eight different instructor ratings at eight separate affiliated PTOs. A total of 90 candidates were trained, coached or assessed for their respective ratings, with a total of 80 being awarded British Skydiving Instructor ratings.

We also awarded six Basic Rigger, five Parachute Rigger and one Rigger Examiner ratings.

Competitions saw big changes for 2025 with Helen Lucas stepping down from the competitions co-ordinator role, then Stacey Halford and Meghan Sheedy filling the gap.

Both ladies shifted roles within the organisation, moving from administrative secretary and membership services. While familiar with the workings of the association, it was a fast-paced learning curve, jumping feet first into the world of competitions.

Domestically, a total of 13 events took place, from UKSLs, GPs and Nationals around the UK, to Czechia (CP Nationals). In true British fashion, the weather didn't always play ball, there were ups and downs (pun intended!), but jumping endured, rounds were completed, and another year of home-grown competitions came to a close. It is always wonderful to see people coming together to participate in the sport they love, celebrating each other and striving for the best. Well done to all participants!

Internationally, there were six competitions across the globe, from China to the US. As always, Team GB sent a delegation of superb athletes to represent the nation in competing for the coveted top spots. Our delegations this year ranged from 31 people to one person, all of whom showed tremendous perseverance and inspiring ability. It isn't always easy being on the world stage, so a huge well done to all our Team GB athletes! Bring on 2026!

Overall, our competitors have broken eight individual records and eight team records in accuracy, speed, wingsuit and formation skydiving. A big congratulations goes out to those competitors and members who established new records in 2025 within their chosen disciplines.

A huge thank you goes out to all the DZO's who have supported British Skydiving in hosting our regional and national competitions, as well as our instructor and rigging courses.

# MDC END OF YEAR REVIEW 2025

Karl Kojro, Member Development Committee Chair



**2025 MARKED AN** important year of consolidation and maturity for the Member Development Committee (MDC). Operating within the context of the British Skydiving Strategic Plan 2023–2027, the committee focused on strengthening governance, sharpening its remit and ensuring that member facing activity was aligned to long term sustainability and value.

Across the year, the MDC maintained a clear line of sight between operational activity and strategic intent, providing challenge where needed, supporting delivery where appropriate, and escalating matters to the board when they moved beyond committee scope.

## STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT OVERVIEW

MDC activity throughout 2025 was consistently framed against the five strategic goals of British Skydiving:

1. Process: governance, clarity of remit, and effective committee operation.
2. Finance: responsible stewardship of limited resources.
3. Membership and legacy: member engagement, development, and retention.
4. Team: effective collaboration between volunteers, committees, and HQ.
5. Brand: oversight of communications, content, and member perception.

## 1. PROCESS - GOVERNANCE AND COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS

The MDC placed strong emphasis on governance discipline throughout 2025.

Standing agenda items were used consistently to ensure continuity, transparency, and alignment with the Strategic Plan.

Key governance outcomes included:

- Clear confirmation of voting membership and leadership roles early in the year.
- Improved tracking and closure of actions across meetings.
- Mature handling of matters that no longer sat appropriately within the MDC's remit.

A notable example of this was the decision to remove the Inclusivity, Diversity and Equality Committee from MDC oversight once it became a standalone committee reporting directly to the board. This ensured clarity of accountability and avoided duplication, reflecting good governance practice.

MDC also continued work on defining short, medium and long term goals, recognising the importance of structured planning while balancing competing priorities and capacity.

## 2. FINANCE - BUDGET STEWARDSHIP AND VALUE

The MDC approached all financial decisions in 2025 with a strong focus on value, sustainability, and proportionality.

Key contributions included:

- Careful scrutiny of the MDC budget, with spend remaining significantly below allocation for much of the year.
- Considered decision making on Development Events funding, ensuring limited resources were directed toward activities with clear member benefit.
- Appropriate challenge and escalation of wider cost pressures, particularly in relation to communications and publication contracts.

The Committee consistently recognised the financial constraints facing British Skydiving and ensured recommendations were evidence based and aligned with strategic priorities rather than short term gain.

## 3. MEMBERSHIP AND LEGACY - MEMBER VALUE AND ENGAGEMENT

The MDC's core focus remained the member experience.

### DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

Development Events continued to be a key mechanism for supporting progression, engagement, and community building. During 2025:

- Multiple Development Event applications were reviewed and approved.
- Funding decisions were balanced against budget availability.
- The committee identified the need for clearer post event reporting, feedback, and impact measurement.

The MDC also recognised the importance of improved visibility and communication around Development Events and supported work to clarify criteria, timelines, and promotional activity.

### RETENTION AND PROGRESSION

Throughout the year, the MDC engaged in ongoing discussion around member retention and progression, including:

- Consideration of surveys and historical data.
- Focus on understanding why members disengage.
- Recognition that data led insight is essential to long term growth.

These discussions directly supported the strategic aim of growing and retaining participation across all demographics.

## 4. TEAM - COLLABORATION AND CAPABILITY

MDC worked constructively with HQ staff, volunteers, and board directors to support delivery while maintaining appropriate challenge.

### KEY THEMES INCLUDED:

- Strong collaboration with HQ on AGM / Expo delivery.
- Recognition of volunteer contribution through Development Events and committee participation.

- Clear signalling where the MDC required improved clarity, structure, or reporting from other functions

The committee demonstrated a balanced approach: supportive of staff and volunteers, while maintaining governance standards and strategic oversight.

**5. BRAND – COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBER PERCEPTION**

The MDC’s most significant areas of focus in 2025 was communications and member facing content.

Key areas of work included:

- Ongoing scrutiny of the magazine, app, and wider communications strategy.
- Challenge around engagement levels, clarity of reporting, and return on investment.
- Consideration of future options for digital, print and hybrid approaches.

As the year progressed, it became clear that elements of this work required board level strategic direction. The MDC

appropriately escalated and released ownership where necessary, ensuring that decisions about long term brand and publication strategy were taken at the correct level.

**AGM/EXPO – LISTENING TO MEMBERS**

MDC provided oversight and support to the AGM/Expo process throughout 2025, while also recognising its potential as a listening and insight gathering opportunity.

The committee supported:

- Cost conscious delivery in a challenging financial environment.
- Adjustments informed by previous member feedback.
- Exploration of ways to better capture member sentiment and data through the event.

**REFLECTION AND LOOKING AHEAD**

2025 was a year in which the MDC demonstrated increasing maturity, clarity, and strategic alignment. The committee:

- Focused on doing the right work,

- not simply more work.
- Strengthened governance boundaries.
- Prioritised member value and sustainability.
- Built stronger alignment with the board and Strategic Plan.

**LOOKING AHEAD, MDC ENTERS 2026 WELL POSITIONED TO:**

- Continue refining Development Events impact and reporting.
- Support data led approaches to retention and progression.
- Contribute constructively to strategic discussions on brand, communications, and member engagement.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The committee would like to thank:

- British Skydiving staff for their continued commitment and professionalism.
- Volunteers and members who contribute time, insight, and energy to the sport.
- Fellow directors and committee members for open, constructive collaboration.

# EPC END OF YEAR REVIEW 2025

*Craig Poxon, Elite Performance Committee Interim Chair*



Hello, it’s me again. I’m not sure if there is a rule about being the (interim) chair of the association while also being the (interim) chair of a committee, but if there isn’t, there should be. Apologies if there has been any degradation in service as a result.

Despite having represented the UK internationally as both a competitor and team manager/Head of Delegation and despite being the Alternate Delegate to the Fédération

Aéronautique Internationale’s International Skydiving Commission (which conducts international competition), and being on the board for 20 years, I had previously managed to dodge being on the EPC...until 2025.

2025 turned out to be a mixed one for competitions. There have been some amazing achievements:

- Anna Lea – Bronze Medal – Female – 5th FAI European Speed Skydiving Championship.
- Paige Smith – Bronze Medal – Junior Female - 5th FAI European Speed Skydiving Championship.
- Turbo Ice Cloud – Bronze Medal – Acrobatic Flying – 3rd FAI European Wingsuit Flying Championship (Casey Flay narrowly missing out on a bronze medal in the Speed Category of the Performance discipline at the same meet).
- Omni Freefly – Bronze Medal – 13th FAI European Artistic Events Championship (and also a strong 4th position in the World Cup).
- Martin Reynolds narrowly missed out on Bronze in the Distance

category at the 6th European Canopy Piloting Championships.

At a national level, while we have seen attendance boom in disciplines such as speed (thanks to Anna’s indomitable enthusiasm and drive) and wingsuit, we have seen a decline in the once-prominent formation skydiving. From a peak of 70 teams in 2015, we had 24 at this year’s Nationals. There are likely many factors that have impacted this. While dedicated coaches drive a lot of the participation, it is perhaps not on the same level as the “factory” teams in the past. Rising costs are likely to be another factor. The demise of coaching roadshows? Perhaps formation skydiving is falling out of fashion? A lack of international competitors to inspire? Anyone who has been on a team, knows the commitment required. Perhaps people would rather spend their time on non-competitive disciplines such as angle/movement/canopy flocking?

I don’t know. What I do know, and as I have mentioned in my other review, is that British Skydiving treads a fine line trying to balance the needs of its members and our PTO stakeholders, without whom we could not skydive. The EPC budget is probably the association’s biggest discretionary spend. While one of the main aims of British Skydiving is the promotion of competitions and the pursuit of excellence which inspires the next generation of skydivers. We and our

commercial partners face increasing economic pressures. In the face of such pressures, we find ourselves having to very carefully account for how we spend our money. It is said that only 10% of our members compete so the size of the expenditure makes it an obvious area of scrutiny for all. Funding of our competitors has swung between the pursuit of medals and giving many the opportunity (and inspiration) to compete on the international stage. As exchequer funding declined, and now with the cost of living squeeze impacting everything, we have over the years gone from funding training, to just paying entry fees. Even that is now being questioned. I do think it would be a shame not to support our competitors internationally, since it is one of the main remits of a sporting national governing body, but I understand we find ourselves in difficult times. There is no simple answer. Unfortunately, since

I am retiring from the board this year, I will no longer be directly involved in trying to find a solution. But if you do care about competitions, I encourage you to get involved and help.

Nothing stays the same except change. Meghan and Stacey, the events and competitions managers, have done a tremendous job in their new roles. They have experienced some of the more challenging aspects of an important and demanding committee and think there may be opportunities to improve the way it is managed by bringing some of its functions in-house. Of course, the specialist knowledge of our technical excellence advisors and directors are still very much required but there is a belief that things can be done differently for the better. The office has been tasked to come up with a more detailed proposal, so watch this space.

Other plans for next year include making the bidding process for competitions easier and more efficient,

as well as being able to extend international invites to our competitors much more quickly, enabling everyone to plan more in advance.

The judges, along with their usual tireless support of competitions, have created the Amanda Kenny Award for Outstanding Contribution to Competition Skydiving. Just like the lady it honours, it recognises the dedication above and beyond the call of duty of those without whom competitions would not happen. Like some of our other prestigious awards, it will not necessarily be awarded every year. I won't spoil it, but the inaugural award is very worthy and epitomises the very ethos of this distinction.

That only leaves me to thank everyone who has helped through this challenging year, staff, volunteers, competitors and stakeholders alike. Good luck for the future and perhaps I might even get some time to compete myself now!

# EVENTS AND COURSES

A look ahead to some key dates in 2026

<b>BRITISH SKYDIVING NATIONALS 2026</b>		
<b>Wingsuit (WS) Hibaldstow</b> 23-24 July	<b>Canopy Formation (CF) / Vertical Formation Skydiving (VFS) 2-Way &amp; 4-Way</b> Langar 19-21 September	<b>Meet 3 - Formation Skydiving (FS-4Way)</b> Hibaldstow 4-5 July
<b>Canopy Piloting (CP)</b> Klatovy, Czechia 5-9 August	<b>UKSL 2026 Meet 1 - Formation Skydiving (FS-4 Way)</b> APA 2-4 May	<b>Grand Prix 2026 Accuracy (ACC) - Meet 1</b> APA 2-4 May
<b>Accuracy (ACC)</b> Skydive GB 14-16 August	<b>Meet 2 - Formation Skydiving (FS-4 Way)</b> Langar 6-7 June	<b>Canopy Formation (CF) - Meet 1</b> Skydive Northwest 23-24 May
<b>Formation Skydiving (FS) 4-Way</b> Hibaldstow 29-31 August		<b>Canopy Formation (CF) - Meet 2</b> Langar 30-31 May
<b>Speed, Artistic Events (AE), Formation Skydiving (FS) 8-Way</b> APA 12-14 September		<b>Accuracy (ACC) - Meet 2</b> Skydive GB 20-21 June

<b>BRITISH SKYDIVING COURSES 2026</b>		
<b>Army Parachute Association (APA)</b> 09-13 February (CSBI/AFFBI/TBI/Advanced/Examiner, Category System Instructor)	<b>Skydive Strathallan</b> 11-15 May (CSBI/AFFBI/TBI/Advanced/Examiner)	<b>Skydive Tilstock</b> 10-14 August (CSBI/AFFBI/TBI/Advanced/Examiner)
<b>Skydive Hibaldstow</b> 16-20 March (Tandem/AFF/Pre-Adv/Observers)	<b>Skydive Strathallan</b> 18-22 May (Category System Instructor)	<b>Skydive Tilstock</b> 17-21 August (CSI/Tandem/AFF/Pre-Adv/Observers)
<b>Skydive Langar</b> 13-17 April (Tandem/AFF/Pre-Adv/Observers)	<b>Skydive Southwest</b> 08-12 June (Tandem/AFF/Pre-Adv/Observers)	<b>Army Parachute Association (APA)</b> 14-18 September (Tandem/AFF/Pre-Adv/Observers)
	<b>Sibson Skydivers</b> 06-10 July (Tandem/AFF/Pre-Adv/Observers)	<b>Skydive Langar</b> 02-06 November (CSBI/AFFBI/TBI/Advanced/Examiner)
		<b>Skydive Langar</b> 09-13 November (Category System Instructor)

# STATISTICS

# 2025

2025 Membership		Numbers	Issued Licences in 2025	
Life Member		17	A Licence	512
Life_NA (Non Active)		23	B Licence	275
Full Members		3,978	C Licence	190
Full New Members		662	D Licence	44

Total number of students trained in 2025	
Category System	1,986
Accelerated Free Fall	863
Tandem	47,631
<b>Total:</b>	<b>50,480</b>

Descents made in 2025	
Category System SL Descents	5,906
Category System Free Fall Descents	2,167
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,073</b>

AFF L1-8 Descents	4,818
AFF Consol Descents	3,098
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,916</b>

Licensed Descents (no Displays)	157,887
Tandem Jumps	48,470
Display Jumps	607
<b>Total Descents</b>	<b>222,953</b>

British Skydiving Rating One Member may hold more than one rating	Qualified in 2025 (Jan-Dec)	TOTAL RATINGS 2025 (End of Dec)	Qualified In 2024 (Jan-Dec)	TOTAL RATINGS 2024 (End of Dec)
Category System Basic Instructor (CSBI)	14	13	9	5
Tandem Basic Instructor (TBI)	13	9	16	3
Accelerated Free Fall Basic Instructor (AFFBI)	5	8	8	9
Category System Instructor (CSI)	8	223	13	242
Category System Instructor (Ground)	3	7	0	7
Tandem Instructor (TI)	19	317	31	338
Tandem Instructor (Ground)	2	24	2	24
Accelerated Free Fall Instructor (AFFI)	11	207	9	213
Accelerated Free Fall Instructor (Ground)	1	6	1	7
Advanced Instructor (AI)	5	83	3	84
Instructor Examiner (IE)	2	50	2	48
Basic Rigger (BR)	8	9	4	12
Parachute Rigger (PR)	8	49	1	45
Advanced Rigger (AR)	1	20	0	21
Rigger Examiner (RE)	1	11	0	10
Advanced Packer (Initial)	13	172	12	177
Advanced Packer (Upgrades)	3	N/A	5	N/A
Formation Skydiving Coach	34	466	46	479
Basic Freefly Coach	16	97	8	89
Freefly Coach	7	181	4	79
Basic Tracking Coach	8	80	13	82
Tracking Coach	2	88	3	84
Canopy Formation Coach	4	51	2	57
Canopy Handling Coach	18	337	19	345
Canopy Piloting Coach	4	51	2	48
Wingsuit Coach	4	44	5	42
Foundation Coach (FS)	1	12	5	14
Judge	3 New Judges (8 New Ratings)	23	8	42
Pilots	22	103	15	117

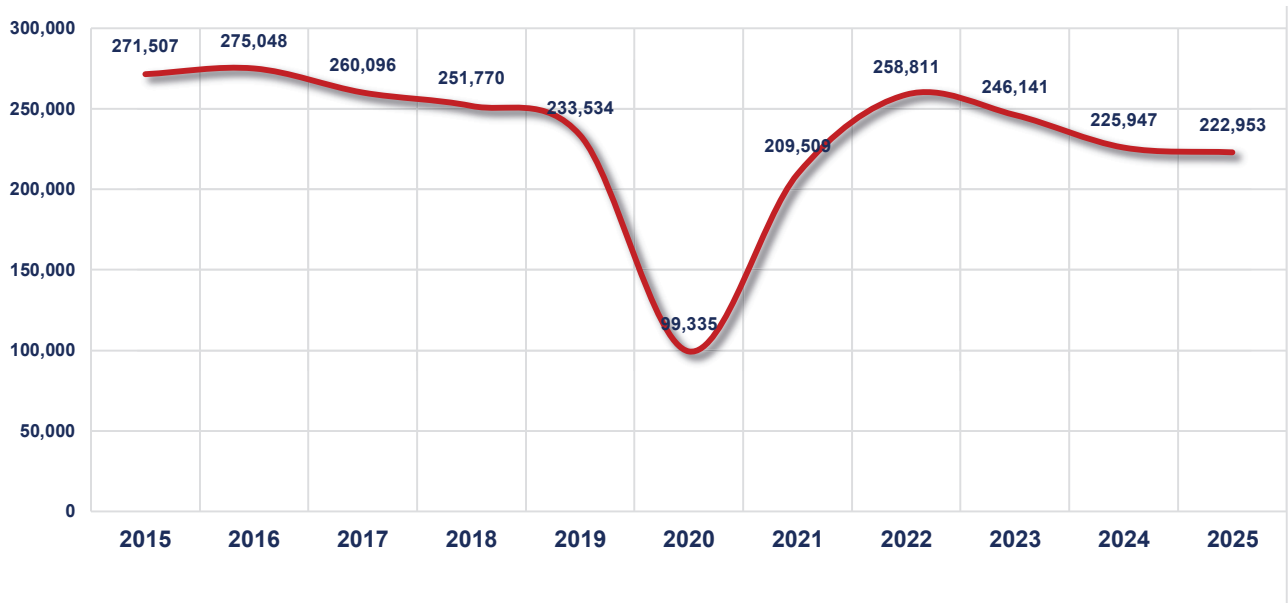
Total amount of Injuries recorded for all types of descents in 2025		
SEVERITY	CLASSIFICATION	TOTAL
1	Soft tissue injury, local 1stAid, fainting	47
2	One broken bone or multiple fractures of single bone or joint or dislocation	30
3	Multiple broken bones, femoral or pelvic fracture, spinal fracture without cord damage, knocked out	16
4	Traumatic Brain or Spinal Cord Injury / Life changing injury	2
5	Fatal	3*
	<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>

\*Double Tandem Fatality on one descent.

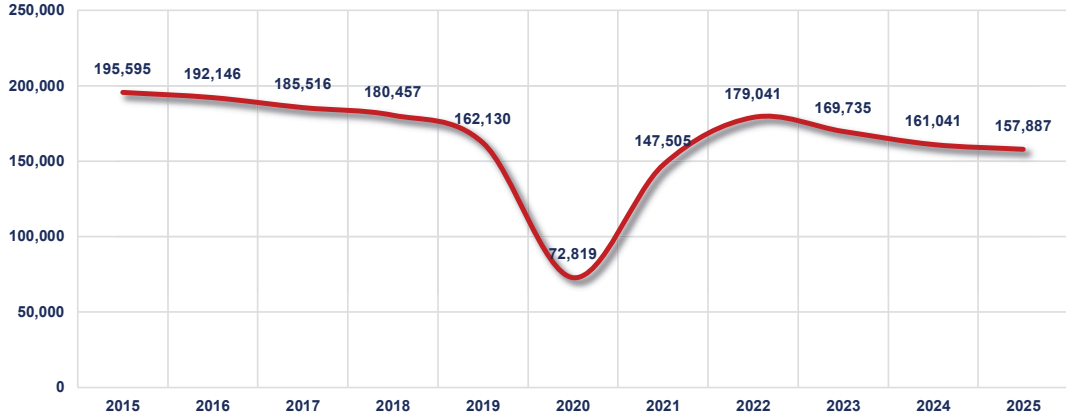
Reserve Deployments in 2025*	
Category System Students	10
Accelerated Free Fall students	10
Tandem	48
Licenced Skydivers	87
Total	155

\*Relates only to the use of the reserve and not all types of incidents.

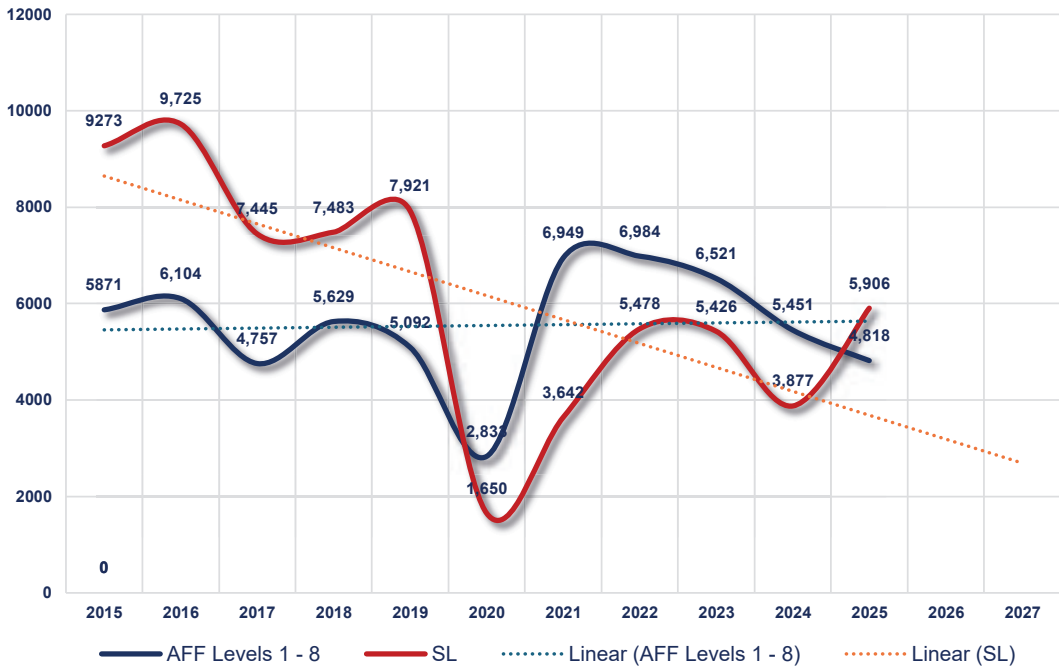
**Total Descents 2015-2025**



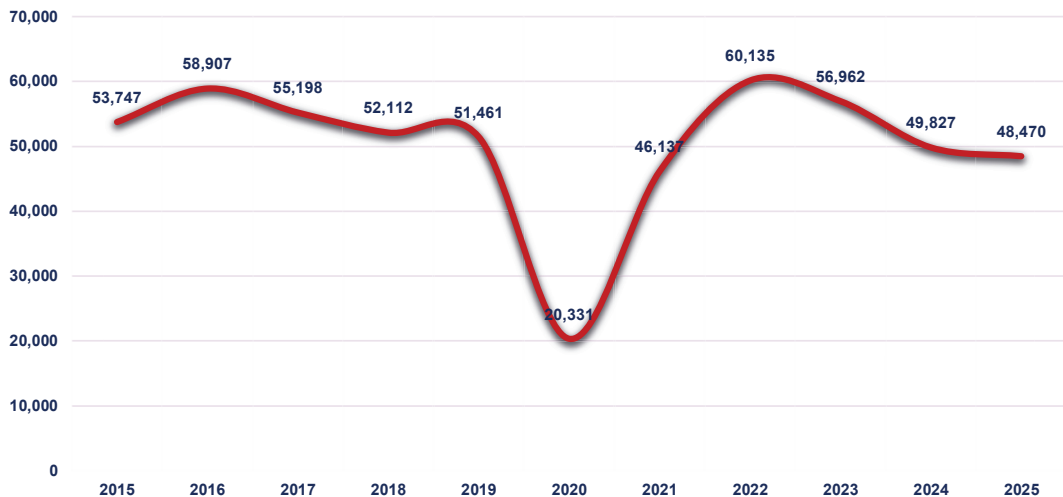
### Licenced Skydiver Descents 2015-2025



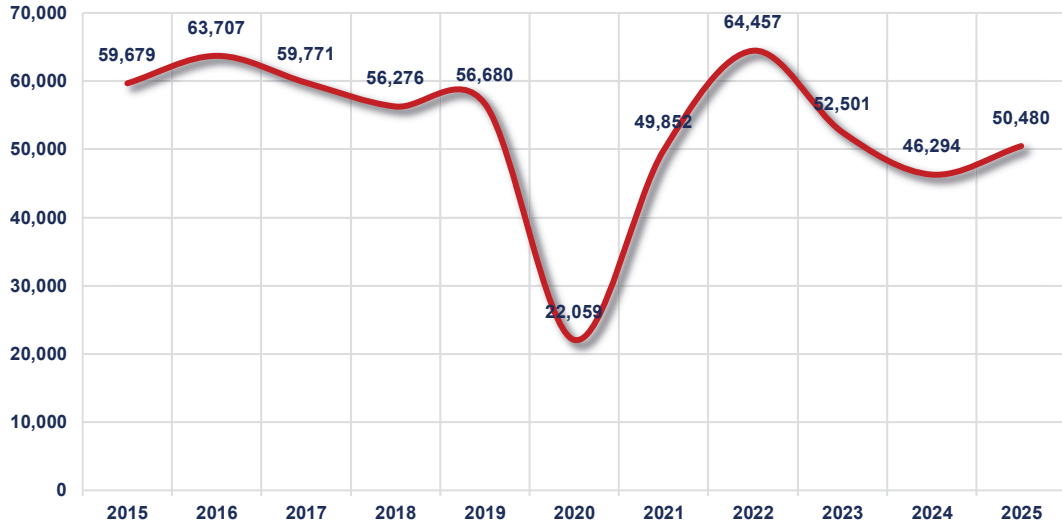
### Category System (SL) and AFF Descents 2015-2025



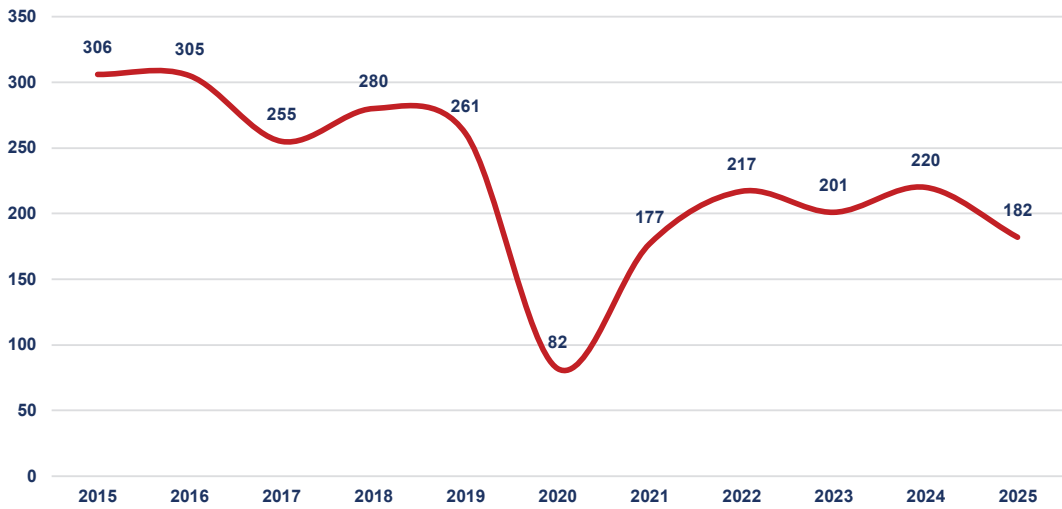
### Tandem Descents 2015-2025



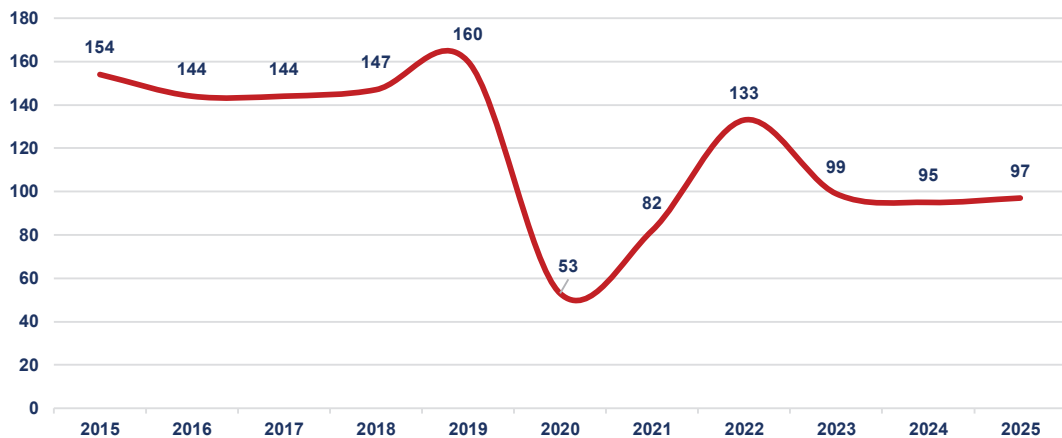
**Total Students Trained 2015-2025**



**Total Malfunctions 2015-2025**



**Total Injuries 2015-2025**





# NO TIME TO **GET ON T**

British University Skydiving is saving you a seat

*All images courtesy British University Skydiving*



# D EXPLAIN: THE BUS

See, the thing is: it's about the jumping, but it's not *really* about the jumping. Not *entirely*, at least. "When [the BUS tour] went to Denmark," muses British University Skydiving member Sebastian Taylor. "The first three days were completely weathered out. But I think I've had more fun in those three

days than I've had in much of the rest of my skydiving career." It's fair to say that British University Skydiving (BUS), with its cheery, Skittle-toned logo, its chockablock calendar of events and its impressive viral outreach, has an outsized impact for a scrappy student association. For 40 years, this ever-changing motley crew of volunteer students and alumni

has successfully beaten the drum of creating an inclusive community to accommodate and promote the sport of skydiving – and this particular bus is showing no signs of slowing down. "As much as this whole thing is called skydiving," Sebastian goes on. "It feels to me that very little actually is about the jumping – or at least far less than you'd assume. The qualities that



make people stay in the sport all come down to relationships; to the people. Capitalising on that fact has created a core group in BUS that is doing a lot to keep skydiving, as a sport, alive.”

The organisation takes that charter seriously. Any monies that come in are immediately reinvested back into the membership in the form of regular skydiving-based events, trips, and parties across the UK, with the goal of helping members to progress their skills, make new connections, explore new skies (and get a little crazy, as any self-respecting uni student must do).

There’s a rich history here, too – from humble beginnings in the mid-1970s to the org’s current status as a well-established, nationally recognised organisation – demonstrating how the association has been instrumental in shaping the careers and lives of many, many skydivers, from the current crop of wide-eyed freshers to crowds of folks who threw their caps long, long ago.

### EARLY DAYS

BUS wasn’t always *quite* so snappy-of-title. The org officially began under the banner of the British Collegiate Skydiving Association (BCPA) in 1977, rustled up in response to the increasing number of comp-hungry, community-minded skydivers matriculating through university (research confirms earlier, unofficial mentions as far back as 1975).

The first recorded BCPA meet-up brought together 114 participants from a whopping 15 different universities. The routines were decidedly basic – judged predominantly on the stability of static-line exits, alongside landing accuracy. A couple of individual style events made it into the mix, too.

While the jumping, admittedly, wasn’t spectacular, the event caught on like wildfire: probably, because of the high vibe on the ground. It wasn’t long before these successes led to the BCPA joining forces with the broader British Parachute Association, legitimising the BCPA’s existence within the sport.

Initially, just a handful of BCPA clubs operated, concentrated at the largest UK universities. As the BCPA integrated into the BPA and spread, that number grew to more than 50. BCPA groups hailed from regions from Plymouth and the South Coast all the way up to the Scottish Highlands. These clubs organised regular meets, competitions, boogies and just plain parties, reinforcing the community’s strength and reach – and establishing

*“They also got the chance to engage in some top-shelf tomfoolery”*

a powerfully inclusive culture where even the newest of newcomers were (and still are) encouraged to participate, learn, and gradually build their abilities among like-minded peers from every corner of Ol’ Blighty.

### QUITE A COMPETITIVE STREAK

As the association matured, its competitive events grew in scale and scope. Before long, the BCPA’s scrappy collegiate activities had been successfully integrated into the considerably more formal proceedings of national skydiving competitions.

By the time the Intercollegiate Championships bubbled into existence, the number of involved jumpers started to hockey-stick upwards. BCPA competitive events “graduated” from the perhaps cringey territory of basic static-line competence and evolved into full-fledged RW (now FS) competitions: first, 4-way; before long, all the way up to 16-way. In recent years, these competitions have expanded to embrace free flying, freestyle, and dynamic tunnel flying.

### BIRTH OF THE BUS TOUR

Although attempts were made to organise international meets – in particular, sending teams off to compete in the US – funding (and the logistical challenges of the often-overburdened schedule of a typical university student) hampered the effort. With that said: while overseas BCPA *competing* never really made it off the runway, the BCPA *community* sure did.

In the 1990s, “tours” (both foreign and domestic) became a hallmark of the association. Keen cohorts of BCPA jumpers began to regularly descend upon various air sports meccas in the US and Europe. Members got the chance to jump in different environments and learn new skills. They also got the chance to engage in some top-shelf tomfoolery, complete with DJs, unhinged, absolutely-not-skydiving-related bar contests, and the collaborative generation of an extraordinary amount of lore (and *après*-event swearing-to-secrecy, of course).

### GETTING SERIOUS, NOW

Sure, the tours are the beating heart of BUS. However, semi-feral overseas partying certainly isn’t the *only* purpose BUS serves the UK skydiving community.

Many BCPA (later, BUS) alumni have gone on to become instructors, national champions and influential figures in the sport. The association has, for nearly half a century, provided a practical environment facilitating beginners to progress from uncertain beginnings towards the mastery of advanced disciplines in a supportive atmosphere with just enough competition to keep it interesting.

Plenty of BUS members have progressed into leadership roles both inside *and* outside of the association, building not only a repertoire of technical skills but also lifelong friendships (and professional networks, to boot).

### LOOKING AHEAD

As you see, then, British University Skydiving isn’t *just* about skydiving. It’s about community, growth, and the enduring spirit of adventure – and its members are engaged in an ongoing effort to keep its traditions alive while embracing new trends in skydiving, and all while struggling against the same forces that pose a direct challenge to the sport at large. According to Sebastian Taylor, it’s all surmountable – and indeed, these will all be fun and interesting projects for the incoming cohort to work on, together.

“It’s so fluid, and there’s a lot more to build, and a lot of room for growth and improvement,” Taylor explains. “BUS needs passionate people who see how things could be revolutionised or reformed, and then take it on as a personal challenge – we need ideas for how to take this forward in the most powerful way. If I have any legacy in BUS, it would be hopefully to inspire and empower people to take initiative and execute their ideas.”

“BUS,” he smiles, “isn’t anything more than the people in it.”

# **BECOMING A BADASS IN 2025... AND BEYOND!**



*By Laura Hampton*

**F**or many of us, the New Year offers a chance to reflect on our achievements and consider where we want to go next.

And it's no surprise that, in a sport as fast-paced and adrenaline-fuelled as skydiving, many of our goals relate to PROGRESSION. What can I achieve next? What cool skills can I learn? What stickers can

I add to my book?

The aim of this article is to help shape your skydiving progression in 2025 and should act as a useful resource whether you're just starting out or you're a seasoned pro.

## **WHERE ARE YOU NOW... AND WHAT IS YOUR NEXT STEP?**

If we think short term for a moment, it can be useful to consider where

you are now in your skydiving career as this can inform where is appropriate to go next.

Still on student status? While having big goals is no problem, understanding that some of the skills you chase might require you to have been in the sport for a couple of years. It might help you set your expectations in terms of what you can realistically achieve in 2025.

Equally, if you're already in a place

where your licence book is brimming over with stickers, perhaps this year represents an opportunity to dive deeper into one of your many skills and become a master.

You can start setting your 2025 goals by looking at where you are now. Here are a few tips to help with that...

### STUDENT SKYDIVERS

Your first aim should, and in fact must, be achieving your A licence. This is the licence you'll need to do anything else in skydiving – so focusing your attention there will mean you can ensure you get to the next steps.

Remember, skydiving isn't something you can dip in and out of. To stay safe and improve your skills, you'll want to stay current, meaning your plan for 2025 should include plenty of days at the DZ.

### A-C LICENCE SKYDIVERS

The first sticker you'll want to achieve is your FS1 – Formation Skydiving 1. I actually dislike that it's called this, as the skills you learn aren't solely for formation skydiving; they're really about controlling your body and staying safe when sharing the sky with others. It's an essential skill that forms the foundation for everything that follows.

Other stickers are of course available, but my best advice, especially for those under 200 jumps, is to look out for opportunities to progress in FS first. FS1+ is a great next goal, so too are beginner bigway camps, intermediate events and, eventually, the more advanced, cool stuff like multiplane jumps or record attempts. All of which only become available to those people who hone their skills before moving on to the next discipline.

### C LICENCE AND ABOVE

For those with 200 jumps or more, the opportunity to hone your FS skills is still a valuable one, meaning you'll be much better equipped to target those next disciplines. Tracking tends to be popular because it's something that is very accessible to newer participants in particular – if you don't manage to keep up on a tracking dive, it doesn't really matter (as long as you're safe) whereas failure to dock on your FS group can feel like you're letting the group down (you're not, but I do get it).

Freeflying is also a lot of fun and a great way to learn to fly on different axes. Then you've got CF, WS, CP... There are so many things to learn! Just remember to get a good coach

and take the necessary time to learn in a safe way.

### THINKING FURTHER AHEAD; WHAT ARE YOUR LONG TERM GOALS?

Hopefully, the majority of people reading this are in skydiving for the long term, and that means having goals that extend beyond 2025, too!

As someone who has been skydiving for 17 years (!) and has spent the majority of that time on my belly, I can safely say I know the sense of reward and accomplishment you get when you make long term plans and focus on mastery of your skill. One of my proudest life achievements so far is the time I spent in Chimera and the medals we won along the way are testament to the hard work and dedication we put in. If competition feels like it could be for you, I'd highly recommend it.

Of course, competition isn't for everyone, and there are other ways to develop in our sport. Becoming a more active contributor to the community can be really rewarding and by building up your skills, you could become an event organiser, load organising groups, coaching people or even making your skydiving hobby into a job.

Perhaps you might be more driven by travel. Fancy going on that skydiving holiday in that exciting new country? That's great... but registration might require you to show you've got certain skills or a certain level of experience first.

### SETTING GOALS THAT YOU CAN STICK TO

Having goals is one thing... but can you stick to them? If you're anything like me, you've started the year with the best intentions, but unless we have a clear plan and can hold ourselves accountable, it can be tricky to achieve your goals.

My friend told me at the end of 2024 that he had written down all of his goals at the start of the year and kept them pinned on a notice board so he could remind himself each day. That's a great way to stay focused and provides a little motivation along the way, too.

For me, I tend to be more list driven and, because I'm often travelling around, I find it easier to keep my goals listed in an online format using a spreadsheet (I know, what a nerd! Way to take the fun out of skydiving, eh?!).

But seriously, having your goals listed out can be really helpful. Here are my tips for successful goal planning in 2025:

# 1

Make a list, starting at the top level. What do you ultimately want to achieve? It could be something like 'get my FF1' or 'become a better FS flyer'

# 2

Go a bit deeper. What are the steps required to achieve that goal? Maybe note them down as 'sub-goals' below your main ones. For example: 'get my FF1' could have a sub-goal of 'sign up for a coaching weekend' or 'become a better FS flyer' would be 'attend 5 bigway FS events this year'

# 3

Give yourself a timeline. It's super difficult if you leave your goals to the very end of the year because, firstly, you run out of time and, secondly, it's hard to motivate yourself when you know your goal is unlikely to happen as you left it until the last minute. Make your goals more tangible by writing something like 'attend 5 bigway FS events by July 2025' and that can help to shape your plans

# 4

Hold yourself accountable... but be fair. Track the progress you're making against your goals but also be fair to yourself if there are things like weather, finance, personal challenges, work stuff or anything else that gets in the way. It's OK not to achieve all of your goals, just try again next year!

Above all else, remember that skydiving isn't just about what tangible goals we can achieve, but what an amazing journey we can have along the way. As someone who's been in it for a while, I encourage you all in 2025: be kind to yourself, be kind to others and enjoy every moment in the sky and on the ground. It's going to be a great year. Good luck!



# EURO TOUR 25

In which the iron-willed Joel Strickland vanlives around the Eurowilderness, rig in hand

*By Joel Strickland*

**A**cross much of western Europe, it is the small details that separate adjacent skydiving experiences. Climbing into and jumping out of a Caravan or a Porter doesn't change a lot between places, and the sky is the sky everywhere. Planning a boogie tour well means planning a route that limits the seemingly endless lengths of road between dropzones, making the space to spend less time

commuting and more time enjoying. With a plan like that, it's the shifting and oozing of cultures that resonates as you hop between locations, far enough apart for different experiences, but not too far.

#### **DROPZONE DENMARK**

The rules for paying beer fines vary between operations as much as between countries. Here, one must ring the big bell, causing a stampede from every single person on the

dropzone. Beers (or excellent local chocolate milk) are distributed and recorded until there are no more empty hands, which on party night for their 10th anniversary can become a spendy affair. The Danes will then all sing an adorable song – probably to do with windmills or something – and you must clink bottles with every last one of them.

They have a sauna at Dropzone Denmark now, a collective club expense to celebrate a decade of



personal policies (one for liability and one for medical).

While generally not a fan of gender-based exclusivity, skydiving is such a dude-fest that I think female-only skydiving events should be a thing. This is partly from occupying a position inside the industry as it presents an opportunity for some great media, and I get to go anyway. Turns out that all you have to do is up the female percentage to 100 and I will wear face glitter and temporary tattoos at the party, thus willfully abandoning all of my British reserve.

**SKYDIVE TEUGE**

Every single person you care to ask pronounces Teuge differently. I have given up trying to get it right and am convinced the Dutch do this as some kind of pompous cryptic jest over their mastery of many languages. As a good Briton should, I have left behind feeling sheepish about negligible additional language skills in a world of English. One does try here and there, but skydiving culture is anchored to internationalism more than most. It is maybe one conversation in a hundred that contains any real barrier to communication when you can build on the framework, phraseology and vernacular of a niche sport.

Now and then, we lose an event to the weather, reduced to huddling in the event tents through howling wind or driving rain or both. Only the brave then enter the tents, as they have become a den of coaches and staff hiding from the overcrowded indoor spaces – a troll cave of fancy people being intimidating with their

operation, inexplicably delivered by lorry late on Friday evening. This was already well into party time, and served to efficiently separate those who get involved in operational tasks from those definitely-not-getting-involved. Then add seven brand-new students to proceedings, who all look excited and confused in equal measure as they file directly out of the ground school and into the bar.

**SKYDIVE AROS**

Spending time in the north means adjusting to the different sauna cultures of our Scandinavian friends. For the British, being bare ass naked in or near to the sauna takes a minute, but not as long as you might think. This is normally limited to the hot room itself, or the immediate surroundings where one showers or plunges and whatnot. In Sweden, the normalised proximity of being gloriously clothing-free extends to the campground, the barbecue area, the bonfire, and sometimes the kitchen.

For the beer process here, your task is to carry a full case to a convenient open area and place it on the ground. Prepared as such, you then yell "case" or "beers" or anything similar and prepare for the rush of Swedes who will grab a beer, hug you thoroughly and bound off back to whatever they were doing. The trick is to choose your moment carefully and minimise the number of naked dropzone weirdos involved.

**SKYDIVE HILDESHEIM**

Skydiving is a niche sport that much of the outside world doesn't understand very well. Whenever there is some kind

of circumstantial shift (like Brexit, or the Covid-19 pandemic), it can take time for the handful of companies that offer realistic insurance options to catch up. For a few years, I've been using a single adventure package for both medical and liability concerns, suitable for life-flight repatriation if required, plus any third-party catastrophe across all relevant countries and appropriate sports. As of the moment, there is no single option I can find that offers the requisite 3 million for Germany (bumped up by total turbine aircraft costs), leaving the only option to buy into their €55 local national sign-up on top of already two





FLYING DEVIL



insouciance. This is not the reality, but it could be without care and professionalism.

At the time, Teuge was preparing to host the freefall elements of the World Cup for 2025, and while they expressed a bit of nervousness when asked, I knew it would go well. Self-awareness is step one to getting a big event right. We are happy to be returning there later to support them with another go.

### YUU SKYDIVE

YUU Skydive is in the north of Germany, and with Hamburg just down the road, it attracts the city folk. This means the crowd are somewhat younger and the vehicles in the camping area are a little bit fancier than some more rural spots. This used to be an occupied airfield, but following the rebuilding of Germany, when everyone eventually went home, skydivers moved into the old fire station, which provides a solid base of operations for a dropzone with a good kitchen and spacious bunk rooms.

Ballageddon leans hip, as much as the nerdfest that is skydiving ever does. Ceaseless techno oozes from a sound system dance tent mobile truck assembly, dished out by some hairy scenesters. Luckily, this is the least offended I have been by dropzone music in living memory. Hats off, hipsters. I draw the line at a tiny dance party in the bit next to the sauna though, as there is already enough to deal with without learning another set of rules.

### SKYDIVE FLYING DEVIL

Bex is one of two Flying Devil locations (with Ecuwillens) squirrelled away in the French part of the High Alps. The kind of place with a 360-degree view of snowy mountains that the posh kids at school went on holiday to. Back in 2020, we promised to attend their 25th anniversary celebrations, but like much else for pretty much everyone, this didn't pan out. Supporting events requires notice, but not nearly as much front-end work as the boogie itself. Now, 30 years have rolled around, and we pushed out the extra miles to be there this time.

Switzerland is proportionately expensive compared to how good the view is. It is getting on for twice as much to jump here as the more affordable skydiving locations Europe can offer. Don't let that put you off, though, as if you visit somewhere as pretty as this and only jump half as much, you will leave satisfied. Plus, if they like you, they might let you fly the mountain, or they might feed you a giant bubbling cauldron of cheese



*“These experiences in skydiving are sought after and treasured”*

after jumping into a field a couple of thousand feet up the valley. These kinds of experiences in skydiving are sought after and treasured, but dropzones are faced with the eternal balance of factors to keep something accessible and special, or risk it getting mobbed and possibly compromised.

### SKYDIVE TØNSBERG

Norway is a pretty fancy place and Tønsberg is a suitably spiffy spot to go skydiving. They employ a Twin Otter, occupy nice buildings with a sauna, and when invited on a midsummer beach jump a few years ago, there was an old-timey jazz band playing songs from *The Jungle Book*. For reals. The town of Fryesdal is a bit to the north, and quite pretty by normal standards,

with a big lake and some mini mountains. It's not a tourist destination though, made very clear by the 100-or-so big white camper vans that all turn immediately west off the Denmark ferry towards the coastal mega-fjords, leaving me to solo the interior route.

The Skydive Tønsberg community now make use of this location to avoid a big annual RC event at their home airfield, after learning the hard way last summer about how much space those things use. Modern radio-controlled model culture is fascinating and spectacular, with their FPV and their specificity and their power-to-weight ratios, but I cannot be the only gravity-and-fabric enthusiast who sees an aircraft that you cannot fly in, that costs the same as an aircraft you can fly in, as a missed opportunity.

So, we swooped the little mountains and jumped by the big lake somewhere else while they got on with it.

### SKYDIVE SKÅNE

A place where you can make all the noise you want is of paramount importance to the success of an old-school tutu and facepaint boogie. Additionally, a space to party in that is not the same hangar where everyone spends their daylight hours is a vital upgrade. Over 20 years of events, Tora Tora have learned these lessons well, and elected to use Skåne, Sweden, as their anniversary jamboree facility.

I am not one for party games and fancy dress and whatnot, but a great many people find these things a way to connect and bond with one another. This is what skydiving is for, too, so here you can choose: go hard through the night among the trees and bonfires and sleep late, or jump in true freeform boogie style by corralling a group and a coach while the sun is up. I don't know who won the games. I am an early morning type, by necessity. I hide behind workday professionalism, but in reality, one must make it through the season alive. All versions of a skydiving event have their own particular value, and while there are voices out there



that decry the erosion of "traditional" dropzone experiences in favour of new ways, this is proof that it is still perfectly alright to be deeply hungover in an aeroplane.

### SKYDIVE STOCKHOLM

At the nutrition-and-bedtime end of the events scale, Fly4Life offers a premium product. While knowing them

individually, I had previously never been present for a camp, so remaining in Sweden to check out Gryttjom and do so seemed like a nice idea. Some legit admin tasks needed doing, but after a big and busy couple of things one must also consider the effects of everyone going hard around you all the time. Small details make real differences to how an event can go, and if there is something in particular you get to understand well by bouncing from one thing to the next, it's that any and all successful skydiving is an exercise in communication.

Hard-earned practical flying skills will only get you so far if you cannot telegraph them into other people's brains and bodies, and this extends from individuals to groups and teams. A huge part of maintaining progression and consistently enjoying skydiving is always reaching for and understanding the next level of information transfer between each element of the whole show. Your perception of how every cause-and-effect function on a dropzone adds up to a good day grows over time, and can be facilitated by a good team that likes each other and works well as a unit. If every piece of the puzzle is managed and smooth, there is direct access to understanding it. This is how you occupy the top of the pile.

### SKYDIVE WARSAW

Novelty jumps are an important part of one's skydiving journey. Expensive and logistically complicated, it takes a brave operation to aim for as many of these as possible all at the same time. The Warsaw Sky Festival promised pretty much the full set, with night jumps, a couple of different





helicopters, glider slots, balloons on multiple days and two innhopp. The desire to do these things doesn't go away over time, but becomes tempered by the inevitable, unavoidable logistical faffing about. One is both hungriest and most patient for this stuff in the earlier years of a skydiving career, which means I signed up for everything but only ultimately achieved half – these being the things I could get done without having to commit to mystery timeframes and administrative vagaries. I need consistent sleep and regular feeding to be a friendly boogie rep. The girls and boys of Skydive Warsaw did a good job of keeping this one on course. With so many moving parts to attend to, it is no small achievement that most of those who turned out for such a rare gathering of parachuting opportunities will tell you it was great.

### SKYDIVE HOHENEMS

People ask a lot about where my favourite dropzone is, which is a difficult question to definitively answer. This is partly because things change with the ebb and flow of the industry

– the whims of whichever forces alter our sport from year to year. It is also that my priorities can be somewhat different. With a week-by-week list of skydiving locations to occupy, the opportunity to jump is less of a concern than running out of clean underpants. When I present my opinions as a points-based list regarding the quality of the showers, the presence and reliability of the laundry facilities and the specific walk/bike/drive distance to an acceptable supermarket – mentioning nothing of aircraft or ticket prices and such – people nod and smile politely. By way of resolution, I will often say Skydive Hohenems, because it is lovely.

This time we are here for the IPC Speed Skydiving World Cup. Speed is an odd affair, and while doubtless both scary and difficult to do well, it also has a generous barrier for entry and a very supportive community. Within the realms of sport skydiving, the speed folk are super niche – but simultaneously the gig is simple to understand for non-jumpers who will offer anything from mild confusion

to total incomprehension when presented with any other ruleset. Go fast towards the ground. *Got it.*

In a sport of many contradictions, speed skydiving contains some of the most fun. At the serious end, the numbers are wild and represent the ability to go faster than every other human pursuit that doesn't potentially end by dying in a massive explosion. On the way in, though, you can sign up at the start of the season, march through an Austrian village to a band with trombones and tubas in August, and look like a bad mother\*\*\*er on the front page of your local newspaper when you get home. Glorious.

### AU REVOIR, SUMMER

By the time the temperature drops and the rain comes, I am ready for it. Touring like this is a unique way to engage with the communities around the world that we support, and I am grateful to everyone who plays a part in being able to do so. It never stops for long though, and only the briefest interlude leads to the next logistical spider web as we look towards what is next. Thanks everyone.



# **YOUR RIG:** **WINGSUIT**

# **SAFE**

Spoiler: you're (very likely) good to get started. Here's the beta

*By Chris Judd*

**F**or many, a major blocker to getting into wingsuits can be the misunderstanding that their kit is not suitable – even dangerous! – for wingsuiting. The discipline might appeal, but getting a whole new kit is just too expensive... or simply not worth the investment of time, cash and energy.

While it is true a few simple considerations are necessary, you may be surprised to find that your *very own* rig may be closer to being able to use a

wingsuit safely than you may think. Interested? Good.

Herein, I'll go over the main considerations. I'll highlight which criteria are *really* required, and clarify those that aren't – but that you *may* wish to bridge into, should you continue on your wingsuit journey. The general aim is to provide you with a better understanding of your options – and to leave you with the knowledge that you don't necessarily *need* to change a huge amount to actually

start flying wingsuits.<sup>1</sup>

## **BASIC CONSIDERATIONS**

As a general rule, there are surprisingly few additional considerations that wingsuiting places upon your rig, over and above the requirement that it be freefly friendly. Why freefly-friendly? Well: while the bulk of your early wingsuit flying will be performed in a belly-to-earth position, you can't discard the possibility that you may find yourself in odd orientations. In

general, if you wouldn't freefly your rig (either head-up or -down), then you probably should not fly a wingsuit in it.

Additionally, UK Wingsuiting strongly recommends that your rig is in good overall condition and packed so that the bridle, risers and lineset are stored correctly – but this should be in line with your everyday jumping practices.

### PILOT CHUTE

One's pilot chute represents the first contact point with the air during the deployment sequence. As discussed in a later section, one of the main features of wingsuiting is the reduction of our vertical (downwards) speed. Since this results in less air for the pilot chute to "grab onto" during deployment, we need to be mindful of the fact that one is, in effect, always executing a sub-terminal deployment in a wingsuit.

This means our pilot chute will be much less effective if...

...the pilot chute is showing extensive signs of ageing. Hold it in front of a light source. Are there lots of bright patches?

...the kill line for a collapsible pilot chute is shrinking (making it harder to 'cock' the pilot chute).

You're probably aware of the wingsuit-specific pilot chute designs that have emerged in recent years (such as the Squirrel SkySnatch). Firstly, these pilot chutes can be used just fine for normal skydiving; secondly, these designs are not "more effective" or "better" at extracting your main canopy. They make use of their signature "doughnut" shape to ensure that the pilot chute is more 'stable' when being thrown.

As this design can reduce "wobbling" (and the risks associated with twists), many dedicated wingsuiters do choose



to use them; however, for your first wingsuit jumps, you only need a pilot chute in good condition. That's it.

### BRIDLE

*To extend or not to extend*, that is the question. Right?

In general, when we fly a wingsuit we are creating *three* burbles. If we don't execute a good throw, they're bound to interact with the pilot chute, creating hesitations (and possible problems further down the line). A longer, "extended" bridle gives the pilot chute more travel time to line stretch, facilitating it to get further away from the burble.

While the aim of this modification is to reduce risk, there is, however, a trade off: the longer the bridle, the more separation speed is generated

between you and the pilot chute. This results in a more positive pull. That's not always a bad thing, but it *can* deliver a whacker of an opening.

An extended bridle also presents a packing challenge: what to do with all the extra bridle. Especially if you stuff the pilot chute, extending your bridle means that you'll probably need to change the way you pack. The extra length also adds the risk of knotting in the BOC, making for a hard pull. I've experienced that myself – at 4k.

Not to worry, though. In general, for jumps with small or intermediate suits (and with a well-coached deployment technique), a standard-length bridle is *just* fine. You can wait to think about extending the bridle until you're in a bigger, faster suit.

### DEPLOYMENT BAG

Deployment bags generally come in two styles: standard and stowless. Both are just fine for use with wingsuits. I myself have a standard deployment bag, and I double-stow everything when packing. Suffice to say: there's no need to switch methods when you put on a wingsuit.

### RSL, SKYHOOK AND MARD (OH, MY!)

It's a classic debate in wingsuit circles: *do systems that reduce the time from cutting your main canopy away to a reserve canopy being inflated cause more problems than they solve? Why would you not use device systems like a Skyhook or an RSL? They've been around for decades and are proven to save lives.*



Please keep in mind that I will not, in this article, offer any advice. In wingsuiting, we're at the sharp end of skydiving. Getting to this point means you already have a level of experience and judgement under your belt, and that background will facilitate you to take in the information and make the right decision *for you*. On these pages, I'll simply lay out the arguments as they stand.

The main concern around the use of MARD systems for wingsuiting centres on the issue of *spins*. As we know, a wingsuit can enter a flat spin. If the jumper is unable to recover stable flight, the advice is to deploy the main something along the lines of a "sacrificial drogue."

Perhaps evidently, the main concern that follows is that the wingsuit spin will induce extreme line twists which require emergency canopy procedures. If the jumper is spinning aggressively under the main when cutting it away – and the MARD leaves no time for regaining stable flight – it's more than likely that the reserve will deploy in line twists. These line twists may be unstable, and they will now need to be *immediately* resolved by a very dizzy, probably nauseated, tightly-zipped-up pilot.

This potential scenario has scared generations of wingsuit pilots out of using a MARD. I know at least one wingsuiter who doesn't even use an RSL, preferring the idea of attempting to correct a spin manually before going for a reserve canopy.

While I *will* not give advice, I will tell you *my* decision. I personally use a Skyhook *and* an RSL.

My thinking is that, if things have gone that wrong, I want some kind of material over my head – as quickly as possible.

As with such vital topics of safety, *do* speak with instructors and coaches. Get all the facts. Make a judgement call that works for you. In general I would personally recommend, but not mandate, RSL/Skyhook use. The fact is that you simply do not *have* to have either to wingsuit.

### **BOTTOMLESS CORNERS**

Lots of skydivers who spend most of their jumps flying wingsuits (or fly high-performance canopies for swoop competitions) tend to choose containers with bottomless corners.

Why? During the deployment sequence, a "bottomless" tray will open out flat, allowing the deployment bag to leave the container without contacting any of the closing flaps (and perhaps imparting a rotation



that may result in line twists and complications further down the deployment sequence).

This can be helpful when flying wingsuits, as the increased forward speed means that the deployment bag often releases at an angle towards our feet, rather than the traditional, "straight up" deployments that most slick jumpers enjoy.

The trade-off with these cleaner deployments is that our packing routine gets harder. Since a "bottomless" configuration provides less of a container tray to guide the packing, the entire process becomes trickier, especially the act

of ensuring the bridle is hidden.

Vitality, bottomless corners do not guarantee that line twists are a thing of the past. They'll still happen from time to time. Fact of life, that.

The moral of this story is that you absolutely do not need a container with bottomless corners to fly a wingsuit. I know several pilots that fly some super-big and very fast suits that have bog-standard corners on their containers (I myself certainly wish I hadn't optioned them – but each to their own).

### **THE MAIN (CANOPY) EVENT**

Let's get straight to it: when you zip

nto a wingsuit, the most likely tweak to your kit isn't your helmet, altimeter, or even your pilot chute – it's your main canopy. But before you start shopping for new nylon, let's unpack why you might not *need* to change a thing. Or, well, *buy* a thing (and that's often the kicker, isn't it?).

Many a skygod/AFFI/TI who wanted to try flying a wingsuit has been pre-emptively stopped in their tracks by tiny nylon. That Velocity, Valkyrie or Leia just isn't the rock-solid platform under which to grapple with a spinning skirt. We have to accept that there are some canopies that are simply un(wing)suitable.

The [British Skydiving Wingsuit Coach manual](#) (page seven, for the curious) spells it out: if you're comfortable with the consequences of flying a swoop canopy, you *can* wingsuit with it. With that said, though, "comfortable" means being *comfortable with the facts* about what happens when your deployment doesn't go to plan. Wingsuits let us blast forward far faster than most trackers, and those first few deployments tend to be rushed, with not enough speed bled off before pitching. The result? Line twists, off-headings, and the occasional

"flying bodybag" moment (especially if your canopy isn't forgiving).

As wingsuiting has exploded in popularity, manufacturers have responded with canopies designed for the job: the Horizon (Performance Designs), Kraken (JYRO), Pilot 7 (Aerodyne), Epicene (Squirrel), and WinX (Atair) are all tailored for wingsuiters. They're typically 7-cell designs, often using low pack volume materials. Some, like the Horizon, aren't recommended for regular terminal deployments if you want them to last.

But here's the kicker, you don't need a wingsuit-specific canopy for your first flights. Most mainstream canopies are just fine if they tick a few boxes:

- React well to line twists and uneven deployments.
- Stay above your head during line twists so you can sort things out.
- Aren't ground-hungry, high-performance swoop machines.

Look for non-elliptical designs – think Sabre 2, Pulse, Spectre, Pilot, and their kin. Keep your wing loading sensible (no more than 1.2 with your kit; [check the calculator at Pure Skydive](#)) and make sure your lines

are in good condition.

Follow those guidelines, and your current canopy is probably ready for your first wingsuit jumps. When you graduate to bigger suits or start chasing performance, then it's time to consider a canopy built for wingsuiting. Until then, save your cash for jump tickets.

### THE ABCS OF AADS

Wingsuits these days can do arguably incredible things: flying next to fully inflated canopies (XRW, anyone?) and even beating them for glide. But with great power comes... well, a bit of extra thinking about your automatic activation device (AAD).

Modern AADs have come a long way. There are flavours for every requirement in the sport, now: Speed CYPRES for those who swoop, Tandem for "work mode," Student and Expert settings for every stage of your skydiving life. Adding a wingsuit doesn't mean you need to swap out your AAD, but it does mean you need to be more mindful of what you're packing in your AAD slot.

The main aim of a wingsuit is to fly forward, fast. That means much lower vertical speeds. The bigger the suit,





*"That set-up  
saw me through  
hundreds of  
jumps: no drama,  
no regrets"*



the slower you fall, and the closer your descent rate gets to what your AAD expects under canopy. The question: if you're incapacitated in a wingsuit, will your AAD realise you need help? Most of the time, yes. But the line gets blurry as you move to larger, higher-performance suits.

If you're using a standard, well-maintained AAD (not set to Speed, Student, or Tandem), you're good for or small to intermediate wingsuits – the kind you'll be flying for your WS1 and WS2 stickers. No need to change a thing.

But as you step up to the big suits, be aware, your fall rate might start to mimic that of a deployed canopy. The safety net your AAD provides becomes a little less certain. At this point, you must speak to an expert about your specific situation. You neglect this at your peril.

### GETTING STARTED: WHAT YOU ACTUALLY NEED

To wrap this up, let's put those myths in the ground. For your first wingsuit

jumps, you do *not* need:

- A special container – just one that's freefly-friendly.
- A special pilot chute – just one in good condition.
- A longer bridle.
- A special deployment bag.
- A massive "tank" of a canopy – just a sensible one.
- A special AAD – a standard one is fine.
- Skyhook/MARD – they help, but aren't essential.
- Bottomless corners – actually, they're pretty annoying.

Take it from me: my first wingsuit jump (Z-Hills, Florida, 2011) was on an old Icon I5 (2004 vintage), with a Pulse 150 (semi-elliptical 9-cell), no Skyhook, no extended bridle or wingsuit-specific pilot chute, and no bottomless corners. An Expert CYPRES, a wrist altimeter, and a big grin were all I needed. That set-up saw me through hundreds of wingsuit jumps: no drama, no regrets.

So, if you're itching to spread your wings, don't let kit anxiety hold you

back. Most likely, what you have is already good to go. And if you're unsure? Reach out to your [UK Wingsuit Coaches](#), we're always happy to help.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Judd (the wingsuit one) has been skydiving since 2006 and flying wingsuits since 2011. A resident Phoenix-Fly fanboy, he is the 2023 Intermediate Performance Nationals winner, a British Skydive Wingsuit Coach, and, in conjunction with Indoor Wingsuit, runs indoor camps

for UK wingsuit pilots several times per year. He does not like thick clouds and can be contacted at [wingsuiting.uk/coaches](mailto:wingsuiting.uk/coaches).

<sup>1</sup> Since this article covers aspects of safety, I am obliged to highlight these two points: if you have any questions regarding the fundamentals of getting into wingsuiting, please reach out to your local dropzone Wingsuit Coach for answers; if you have any questions concerning your particular rig, please reach out to your rigger.

# SKY



# TO SEA



Andy Torbet brings together two worlds in the UK's first civilian skydive-to-SCUBA dive at Scoob and Snork Fest

*Words by (and all images courtesy of) Andy Torbet*

**A**s we banked over Spring Lakes – the venue for the inaugural Scoob and Snork Fest – I had an uninterrupted view of the water, shoreline and gathering crowd below. My view was so clear because I was perched on the edge of a Cessna 172 that had, until very recently, possessed a door. Said door, which made up most of the aircraft’s right-hand side, had been removed to allow an easy exit.

“In-flight disembarkation,” as it turned out, was still going to be a little awkward. My manoeuvrability was already limited by the usual skydiving kit – plus a large smoke canister strapped to my ankle – and now an extra, rather less common, addition: SCUBA gear. At an exit height of just 2,500 feet, a clean exit and quick deployment would be more than just a good idea.

According to both British Skydiving and the British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC) – the governing bodies of their respective sports – this would be the first ever non-military skydive-to-SCUBA dive in the UK.

### THE IDEA TAKES FLIGHT

The story really began when, as a

BSAC diving ambassador, I was invited to the new festival to give a talk and run a few workshops. Knowing that Skydive Langar was only minutes away by aircraft, I half-jokingly replied that I’d parachute in.

Instead of the expected awkward silence, I got an enthusiastic: “Could you? Yes please!”

It’s always gratifying when people not only humour your ideas, but actively encourage them.

What followed was less daring but just as essential: logistics and paperwork. A jump like this has to be registered as an official demo, which comes with its own stipulations. We’d also be entering controlled airspace under East Midlands Airport, meaning we had to negotiate a time slot and a (relatively low) exit altitude.

The admin alone demands time, technical knowledge, and at least an Advanced Instructor qualification – of which I possess none. Thankfully, this was to be a two-person demo.

### THE DREAM TEAM

Enter my friend Ally Milne. Freshly qualified as a PADI Divemaster, Ally could handle the short 50-metre underwater swim from our landing point in the lake to the beachside

exit in front of the crowd. More importantly, he’s a British Skydiving Instructor Examiner, a seasoned demo jumper, and the mastermind behind several complex events – including a few recent Red Bull projects.

I “volunteered” him to handle all the paperwork and co-ordination with British Skydiving, the CAA, and East Midlands Airport, while I focused on the small matter of rigging the dive gear.

### BLUE SKIES, BLACK RUBBER

The weather was spectacular – cloudless skies, blazing sun, and temperatures topping 30°C. Perfect for the festival; less so for two blokes wrestling into black rubber wetsuits, strapping on steel tanks, and trying not to boil alive (for reference, tungsten melts at 3,422°C – a fact that felt oddly relevant at the time).

I’d done a few test jumps the day before to check that the dive kit didn’t interfere with handles or stability. Standard SCUBA cylinders are back-mounted but, *naturellement*, that spot was already occupied by our containers, so we belly-mounted them instead. The hoses and regulators were strapped down tight to prevent any flailing in freefall or under canopy.



Fortunately, dive gear comes with its own eye protection. Our low-volume freediving masks worked perfectly, though they fog easily, so I slathered mine in anti-fog gel. And because British Skydiving requires demo jumpers to wear helmets, I wore my cave diving lid and lent my spare helmet to Ally.

### DOOR OFF, GAME ON

We boarded the little Cessna – Ally behind the pilot, me sitting where the co-pilot’s seat would’ve been, had we not removed it to make space for all the kit. With the door gone, the 10-minute flight from Langar to Spring Lakes offered a spectacular view.

I hung partly out the side to catch the breeze, trying to cool down inside the now sweat-soaked wetsuit. We made a pass over the cluster of eight lakes to confirm our target. Landing in the wrong one would have been mortifying.

Below us, the festival came into view – tents, dive-agency stands, and a crowd gathering on the beach. The buoy marking our landing spot gleamed below.

As we turned upwind, the pilot gave the thumbs-up. That was my cue. I climbed out, stood on the wheel, and gripped the wing’s strut. Pulling the pin on the red smoke canister strapped to my ankle, I hung for a heartbeat – then released myself into the slipstream.

The extra weight of the dive gear threw off my balance for a second or two, but I recovered, stabilised and deployed by 1,500 feet. Seconds later, Ally exited cleanly – a textbook demonstration of grace and control.

### SPLASHDOWN

We flew downwind over the cheering crowd, then turned 180 degrees to line up with the buoy – our target and our shot line, a rope leading down to a submerged feature divers use to navigate.

The water, surprisingly warm, swallowed me up. My red smoke still fizzed away underwater, sending a stream of bubbles to the surface as I unclipped my harness.

I swam to help Ally untangle his canopy lines, which had drifted back in the light wind. Both skydiving and cave diving teach you the same lesson: line entanglement is bad news. With the extra dive kit, there were plenty of snag points to catch the thin parachute lines, but a quick bit of buddy work sorted it.

For safety, demo jumps into water require one rescue boat per jumper, but ours held off unless we signalled



**Scan the QR code to watch Andy touch-down with a splash on his incredible jump**



an emergency – [clarified: per demo regulation, not a record requirement] we wanted the transition to remain entirely self-contained.

### BELOW THE SURFACE

Visibility in the lake was better than expected. We dropped down the shot line and finned along the silty bottom until we reached the shingle beach.

Surfacing in front of the crowd felt oddly surreal – like the world’s slowest Taylor Swift concert. I’ve done public demos and talks before, but I’ve never been greeted by so many phones filming me.

I’d worried that, however much fun the jump was, it might not land with a diving and snorkelling audience. But the reaction was electric. The stunt created a buzz among the exhibitors and drew huge interest from festival-goers.

The aim was to draw attention to this first-ever Scoob and Snork Fest,

and to promote diving and snorkelling to a broader audience – including potential newcomers. Sometimes, as skydivers, we forget just how jaw-dropping a simple demo jump can be to the public eye.

### NEXT YEAR...?

Before heading back to Langar – this time by the far less glamorous route of the A52 – we were already being asked: “What can you do next year?” Ideas are bubbling, boats are on standby, and the water awaits. Watch this space.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Torbet is an adventure sportsman, underwater explorer, stunt performer, and TV presenter. He is best known for his documentary work, including *Beyond Bionic* for CBBC, *Defending Europe* for National

Geographic, and *Coast* for the BBC. Andy spent ten years in the British Forces as a diver, paratrooper, and bomb disposal officer before turning to the world of adventure sports and expeditions, then on to documentary making. He is now a member of the esteemed British Stunt Register, having worked on productions such as *No Time To Die*, *Knives Out*, *Jack Ryan*, and more.

Andy holds a British Skydiving D Licence and has performed skydiving on television documentaries, notably racing a peregrine falcon while wearing prototype jet engines for Children’s BBC, and completing a HAHO jump from 28,000 ft for *BBC Science*. His stunt skydiving has included Second World War recreations in *Masters of the Air*. He competed for Team GB in the 2022 World Championships in Speed Skydiving and is a civilian HALO/HAHO operator and wingsuiter.



***C'MON, C'MON***  
***GET APPY***

Bring on the new digital companions

*All images by Gary Wainwright*



If it isn't broken, don't fix it. Right? But how are we defining "broken" here, anyway?

Think about rifling through a gear bag for the paper logbook you were sure went in the outside pocket – the same one you dropped in the dog's water bowl last week and lost a few pages to the flood. Think about smooshing the tiny buttons on an altimeter with the pointy bit of your pinkie finger, over and over and over, until you get the timing right. Think about hearing your five-minute call as you're frantically leafing through a fat little manual, desperate to incant the cryptic spell of a DZ offset.

Yeah, it's not *broken*-broke, but it's not *not* broken, either...

Happily, over the last couple of seasons, as you may have noticed, a few developers and manufacturers have been quietly un-breaking things. A slow, steady stream of new apps, each designed to work with the equipment we already use, aims to help us jump more wisely, analyse those jumps better and simplify the documentation that's needed to progress through the sport.

Here, we'll take a look at three interesting newcomers – Airtime BT, the CYPRES App and LB Altimeters' JumpTrack – and investigate how they

aim to make our dropzone lives just *that* much sweeter.

### AIRTIME BT – UNLOCKING THE DATA FROM FLYSIGHT DEVICES

The venerable FlySight has been the go-to training tool for wingsuiters, swoopers and speed skydivers for more than a decade, yet most software designed to analyse the device's data runs exclusively on laptops. [Airtime BT](#) aims to change that. The app, created by Guillaume Ferrand, is built on Jordan Gould's open-source [Airtime: Infinite project](#) and is designed to let jumpers access and analyse FlySight data directly on an iPhone.

### THE FEATURE LINE-UP

- **Mix metric and imperial units.** For jumpers who still use feet for altitude but metres for other data, this is a welcome touch.
- **Automatically find the start of a swoop in the data,** with the option to cut the display so only the swoop is shown. If no swoop is detected, it falls back to cutting the track between exit and landing.
- **Use a competition-ready "speed run analysis" tool** to see performance and validation windows as per competition standards. It also calculates tracking errors.

- **Retrieve local elevation** from an API and use it to calculate ground level even when there's no internet access.
- **See a speed polar chart,** so wingsuit pilots can assess glide performance and their top three-second average vertical speed.
- **Lock the view, share and save tracks locally** for detailed analysis.
- **Connect via Bluetooth** to the FlySight 2 – a fundamental improvement – but earlier FlySight units can still connect via USB.

The app remains free. However, since Airtime BT is an independent, open-source passion project, there are no plans for an Android version. With that said, developer Ferrand is wide open to feedback regarding the additional functionality his app might facilitate in the future.

### CYPRES APP – A POCKET MANUAL, PLUS-PLUS

Airtec's CYPRES automatic activation devices (AADs) have saved thousands of lives: far, *far* more lives than skydivers who can honestly say that they've read more than a page of the manual. And who can blame us? That's a *dense* little black-and-purple bible,



*“These apps are more than a little nifty, they are likely to influence how our sport evolves”*



that manual. And where'd you put yours, anyway...?

Certainly not oblivious to this, the team at Airtec rolled up their collective sleeves and built *an app for that*. It's not a classical app, it's a PWA – that is to say, not a download, but a mobile-first interface that works across the full range of smartphones.

The app is designed to be triggered by the QR code on a CYPRES test certificate. Upon scan, that QR code opens a personalised web app that includes the unit's serial number, service data and expiration date. It can be added to the home screen like a native app, and it works with no- or low-internet connection.

#### THE FEATURE LINE-UP

- A library of short videos to **walk you through how to perform adjustments** (such as setting an altitude offset for landing at a higher or lower elevation, changing the activation altitude, and switching between modes) and answers to common questions.
- **Country-specific travel documents** to get you through the airport gauntlet.
- **A comprehensive list of error codes** explains what each code means and what action to take.
- A clean little summary of your device's **service intervals**.

The app currently supports only one device, which may limit those with multiple rigs, but Airtec reassures us that updates are on the way.

#### JUMPTRACK – A DIGITAL LOGBOOK AND ALTIMETER CONTROLLER

Ah, Larsen & Brusgaard – the sweetest of beeps; forever at the leading edge of altitude awareness, especially with the 2024-2025 releases of LB Altimeters' Bluetooth-enabled Optima 3, Quattro 3 and ProTrack 3 units. To manage these fancy new devices without hideous fiddliness (and to supplant paper logbooks; and to manage regular gear

maintenance, to boot), LB created the JumpTrack app. It's available for both iOS and Android and is described as “the next generation skydiving app” that lets users set warning altitudes, set offset altitudes, and import jump data from compatible altimeters.

#### THE FEATURE LINE-UP

- **Control your device from your phone, *naturellement***: set your climb-to-altitude, high-speed and low-speed warnings; turn the OPTIMA 3, QUATTRO 3 or PROTRACK 3 off remotely; set the time manually or synchronise it with your phone; choose between feet and metres and adjust volume and pitch.
- Use **jump templates** to quickly add jumps to your logbook.
- **Track jumps made on a container, main, reserve and AAD**, and to receive maintenance notifications (such as when your lines need replacing).
- **Segregate the jumps in your logbook by tag** so you can separate AFF, tandem, coach, hop-and-pop, events, aircraft or drop-zone-specific jumps at a glance.
- **Export jump data with a digital signature**.
- Keep a **cloud-based back-up** of logbook and jump information.

Sure, JumpTrack currently only works with LB's latest Bluetooth-enabled altimeters, but for those invested in the LB eco-system, the benefits far outweigh the cost.

#### WHAT'S NEXT?

The introduction of these apps is more than a little nifty. It also reflects a broader trend: manufacturers have officially begun to use mobile device technology not just as a marketing add-on but as an integral part of their safety and service offering.

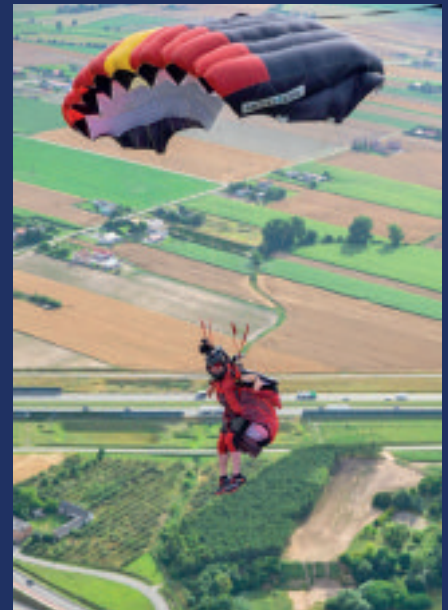
As the next seasons unfold, we can expect that more of these tools are likely to become standard – and they're more and more likely to influence how our sport evolves.



THE SAME 10 QUESTIONS  
**WE ALWAYS ASK**

We all wanted to be Andy Ford when we grew up,  
but only one of us was quite that lucky

<b>NAME:</b>	Andrew "Fordy" Ford
<b>BIRTHPLACE:</b>	Weymouth, Dorset
<b>CURRENT HOME DZ:</b>	Hinton – and wherever future events take me
<b>JUMPS:</b>	19,600 (plus a few miscellaneous military jumps I never added to my civilian logbook)
<b>CUTAWAYS:</b>	One
<b>SPONSORSHIPS/TEAMS:</b>	Squirrel, CYPRES, LB and Travel Parachute Systems
<b>GEAR</b>	
<b>MAIN:</b>	Squirrel Omicron 150
<b>CONTAINER:</b>	Travel Parachute Systems
<b>RESERVE:</b>	Skylark STANDARD 7 162
<b>AAD:</b>	CYPRES



**1. WHERE, WHEN AND WHY DID YOU MAKE YOUR VERY FIRST JUMP?**

Dunkeswell International Skydiving Centre (DISC), 7th August 1988. A passing comment in a pub on a Friday evening – where I was taken too seriously, I didn't back out and that set everything in motion.

**2. WHAT ARE YOUR THREE FAVOURITE THINGS TO DO WHEN YOU'RE NOT JUMPING?**

I'm passionate about all aspects of photography, just like I am with coffee, and I absolutely love to read.

**3. WHAT PHILOSOPHY GUIDES YOUR LIFE IN GENERAL? IF DIFFERENT, WHAT PHILOSOPHY GUIDES YOUR LIFE IN SKYDIVING?**

If you're going to do something, give it 100 per cent and *do it right*. This applies to everything, and I truly believe it's the only path to success.

**4. WHAT ITEMS ON YOUR "SKYDIVING CV" ARE YOU PROUDEST OF?**

It's hard to pinpoint just one thing. My ego points to the medals, podium finishes, filming jobs and incredible jumps over the years. But my heart

says it's the friendships I've built and the opportunity to mentor newcomers in a sport I've always been passionate about.

**5. WHO HAVE BEEN YOUR MENTORS IN THE SPORT, AND WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON EACH OF THEM TAUGHT YOU?**

My mentors were definitely Nutty Norma, Ian Louttit and Steve Fitchett (who still jumps in Australia) – my early-days instructors who introduced me to this madness. Dave Wood at Weston – and a list too long to mention of people who shaped me in the sport, stopped me from being a statistic and allowed me to find my way without injury on this journey.

**6. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE EVERY NEW SKYDIVER TO KNOW?**

Like many hobbies, pastimes, and passions, there is no final destination. The game keeps evolving and growing. The most rewarding part is simply being part of the journey. Don't rush to get to the next thing; if you do, it likely means you haven't truly mastered the first.

**7. WHAT ABOUT THE SPORT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO CHANGE, AND WHY?**

The sport, like a meandering river, evolves as needed. Rules and regulations don't always make it safer – common sense and humility do. I wouldn't change the sport; its beauty lies in its ability to mean different things to different people.







*"I was fortunate to experience some truly iconic jumps"*

**8. WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST CHALLENGING MOMENT IN THE SPORT, AND WHY?**

Maintaining my passion for jumping after a long career has been a challenge. I returned from Dubai having completed an incredible number of jumps and been part of an amazing team. I was fortunate to experience some truly iconic jumps, but once back in the UK, I felt adrift – I struggled with depression, like an extreme version of the post-holiday blues. At one point, I nearly walked away from it all.

Finding my way through that post-Dubai chapter and adjusting my

perception of where I am now has been difficult. I'm not there yet, but I've come to accept the change in course.

**9. WHAT'S THE NEXT CHALLENGE YOU'VE SET FOR YOURSELF?**

Building on that idea, my challenge is to actively seek out what drives me – to find what pushes me forward and the challenges that keep me motivated.

**10. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE A BRITISH SKYDIVER?**

Being a British skydiver and skydiving in Britain are two very different things. I'm proud of what I've achieved, especially

considering that many of my jumps take place on a small, windswept island where battling the weather and staying current is a constant challenge. But in many ways, that struggle has made me a stronger jumper. Having the opportunity to go to the dropzone every day and do 10 jumps in perfect sunshine is incredible, but without adversity, the learning is limited.

Being a British skydiver is just a matter of postcode. On the world stage, I'm certainly patriotic, but in the skydiving community, nationality doesn't matter – we're all part of the same family.



# SPEEDING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

How fast can speed skydiving really take you? Here's the lowdown on the niche sport and get into the nitty gritty of exactly how fast you *could* go

*Text and illustrations by Niklas Daniel*

**S**peed skydiving is the fastest non-motorised sport on Earth. As it increases in popularity and expands from a handful of European practitioners to a growing group of athletes from around the world,

skydivers are becoming curious about the discipline. So, where is it now and what is possible – theoretically and practically – as the discipline grows?

For a small few, the dream is to put 600kmh (373mph) on a competition score board before the end of the decade. Theoretically, and with some

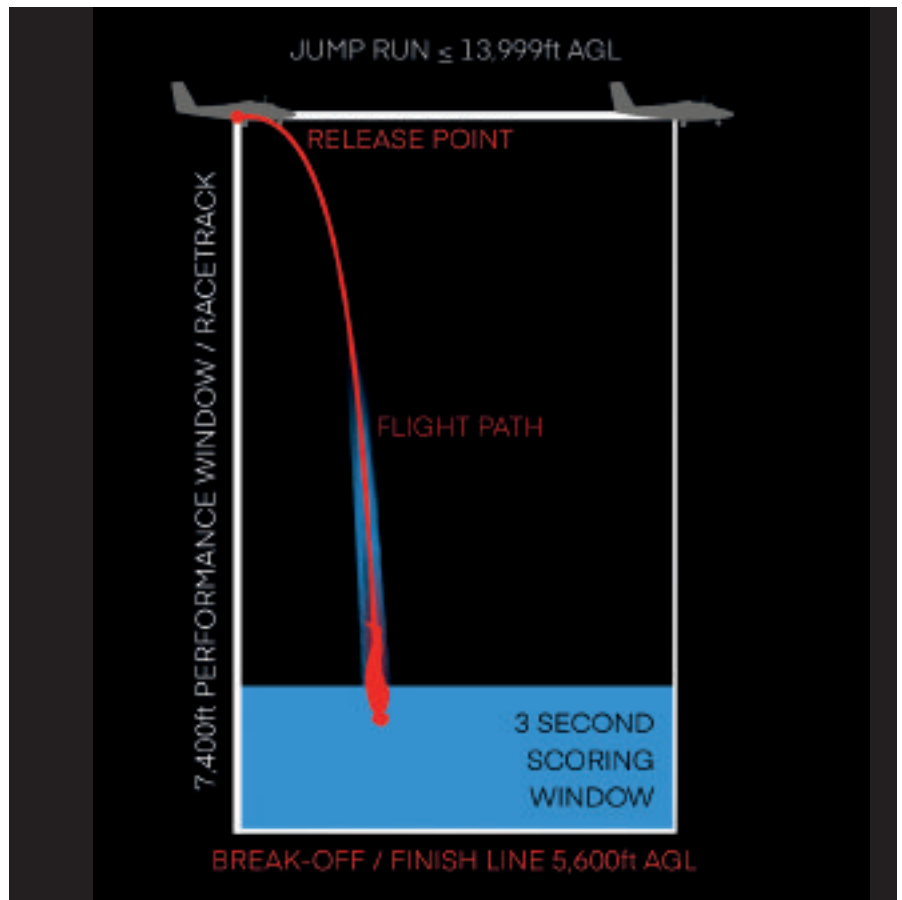
luck, this may be possible, but it is a daunting challenge.

## **THE PRECISION OF COMPETITION**

The first thing to understand about speed skydiving – and especially about record-setting – is that it is a competition discipline subject to

a specific set of rules. In short, competitors exit below 14,000ft AGL and enter a “performance window” after they reach a speed of 10m/s. The average of a competitor’s three fastest consecutive seconds in that window is the score of a run. Competitors wear position logging devices (FlySight GPS recorders) to log their speeds, and these devices are much more accurate at recording speed than barometric-pressure-based altimeters since the pressure near a jumper’s body can fluctuate wildly. Currently, 17 jumpers have broken into the “500 Club” (500kmh/311 mph) in speed competition history (so far, all of them have been men, but many women are getting very close).

The competitor with the highest total at the end of an event (eight rounds) wins the competition, not who has the fastest single scoring round. Therefore, consistency is vital for success. Speed skydives have several phases – exit presentation, flying the hill, the straightaway, and break off to slow down to a manageable deployment speed – each with its unique challenges. Because speeders are limited on altitude, they must accelerate as quickly as possible by streamlining. But the more one streamlines, the



**DOING THE MATHS**  
Maximum velocity in a vacuum

*How fast a speeder could theoretically fall (kmh) if the performance window were a vacuum without air resistance.*

- Convert 7,400 feet to metres:  $7,400\text{ft} * (1\text{m} / 3.28\text{ft}) \approx 2,256\text{m}$
- Calculate the Time of Fall ( $h$  = fall height;  $g$  = gravitational acceleration):  
 $\text{Time } t = \sqrt{(2 * h) / g} = \sqrt{(2 * 2,256\text{m}) / 9.81\text{m/s}^2} \approx 21.45 \text{ seconds}$
- Calculate the final velocity ( $g$  = gravitational acceleration):  
Final Velocity  $v_m = g * t = 9.81\text{m/s}^2 * 21.45\text{s} \approx 210\text{m/s} \approx 0.210\text{km/s}$   
Final Velocity  $v_f = v_m * (3.28\text{ft/m}) \approx 210\text{m/s} * (3.28\text{ft/m}) \approx 689 \text{ ft/s}$
- Convert final velocities to kmh and mph:  
 $v_{\text{kmh}} = 0.210\text{km/s} * 3600 \text{ s/h} \approx 756\text{km/h}$   
 $v_{\text{mph}} = 756\text{kmh} * 0.621371 \text{ mi/km} \approx 468 \text{ mph}$

**Equation for Terminal Velocity**

- $V_t$  = terminal velocity, the result when all variables are calculated
- $m$  = the mass of the athlete (exit weight)
- $g$  = the acceleration due to earth’s gravity ( $9.8 \text{ m/s}^2$ )
- $C_d$  = the drag coefficient
- $p$  = the density of the air through which the athlete is flying

( $1.23 \text{ kg/m}^3$  for air at sea level, and  $-0.99 \text{ kg/m}^3$  at the middle of the scoring window (2,200m))

- $A$  = the projected area of the athlete

more difficult it is to maintain control. The slightest wobble has detrimental effects on performance because even a momentary mis-presentation to the relative wind slows them down.

**PEAK PERFORMANCE RESTS ON THREE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES:**

- Execution: skill and repeatability.
- Geometry: combination of flight-orientation, body-posture and equipment.
- Atmospheric Conditions: location and weather.

Consequently, competition records are far different from performance records. Take, for example, Felix Baumgartner’s world record for maximum vertical speed of 1,357.6kmh/843.6mph, which he set while falling through the thin atmosphere from more than 120,000ft. With no performance windows or altitude restrictions in place, it’s no surprise that the speed was higher, and indeed, he couldn’t have gone slower if he wanted to. The accuracy of competition equipment also explains why fun jumpers may momentarily seem to log rate of speed that rivals a pro speed skydiver’s average of the three-second window over eight rounds.

DESCRIPTION	IMAGE Photos by Jochen Althoff	A - PROJECTED AREA (M <sup>2</sup> )
High Angle of Attack		0.204
Lower AoA w/wide posture		0.2026
Neutral Spine		0.1647
Arms Forward		0.1639
Personalised method		0.1508

**FALLING DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE**

Speed skydiving aerodynamics is a difficult topic because each competitor has a unique shape. While computational fluid dynamics simulations offer interesting insights when learning to go faster, they need to be accompanied by real-world testing. A jumper must slowly build skill and make aerodynamic refinements over many jumps to gather empirical data on the validity of an idea or technique.

Those looking to reach 600kmh in competition first need to understand what's possible. Travelling the full length of the performance window in a vacuum without air resistance, a speeder could reach 756kmh (469.7mph) at 21.45s, meaning it's physically impossible for a speed skydiver to travel faster than 750 kmh in competition. A speeder could reach 600kmh (372.8mph) at 17 seconds after falling for 4,650ft.

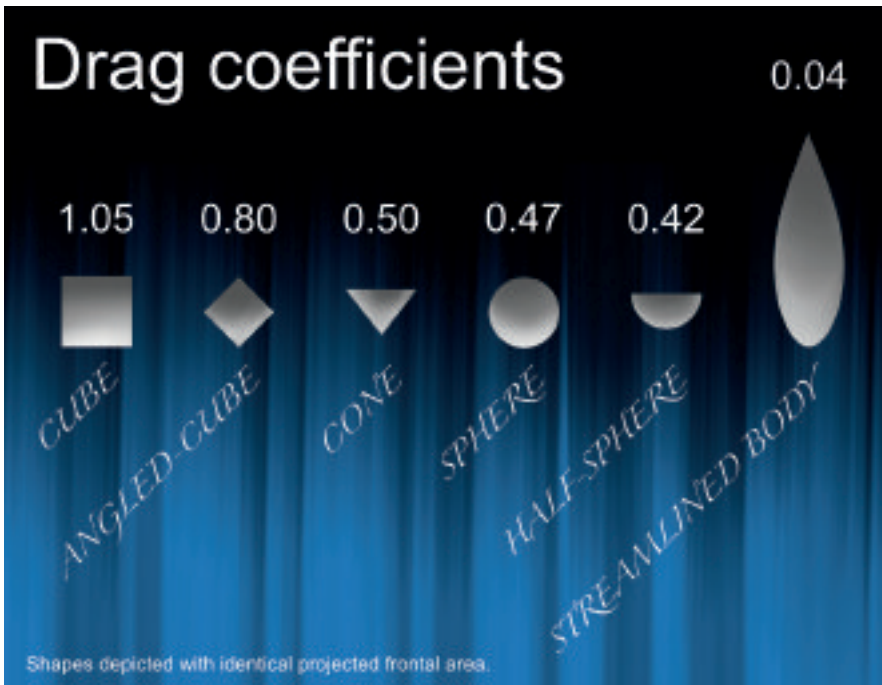
Calculating an individual's theoretical peak performance in a competition setting is vastly more difficult when considering air resistance. Competitors are not allowed to wear added weight or use devices that produce thrust. There are no rules dictating which body-flight orientation an athlete must adopt, but a steep, head-down dive is the standard.

In simple terms, if you want to fall as fast as possible, you should have mass (high muscle density) with minimal surface area to minimise drag. While weight is a significant variable, bulking up with muscles appears to have limitations. As mass increases typically so does surface area.

**PROJECTED AREA**

Since every competitor is built differently, their optimised method of reducing the projected area – the two-dimensional area the air strikes when viewed on the plane perpendicular to the direction of airflow – will also be unique. As helmets come in only a handful of sizes, the projected area among competitors is fairly similar with success coming from how well they can “hide” their body and rig from the relative wind behind their helmet.

A jumper can alter their fall rate by spreading out or concentrating their mass. By analysing photographs containing “casted shadows” of different flight-orientations, body postures and alignments, skydivers can determine which posture creates the smallest projected area by counting the number of pixels inside the shadow. The speed skydiver's goal is to find the optimal combination of factors that creates the smallest casted shadow that they can fly without wobbling.



those reductions. The shape of a bullet (half sphere with a cylinder) has a Cd of approximately 0.3. If speeders can clean up their shapes to this value, it could theoretically push their terminal velocities well past 600kmh.

While optimising gear to reduce drag may improve performance, the design options may be impractical, unsafe to implement or too costly to produce. For example, equipment that is constructed of materials that cannot withstand the forces imposed upon them are not viable options. Custom-shaped helmets and rigs might be difficult or impossible to control at high speeds. The forces produced would be amplified during moments of instability, possibly creating risky amounts of torque on the neck. The equipment's geometry could also interfere with or obstruct parachute deployment.

**DRAG COEFFICIENT**

Once a speed skydiver tunes in their body-flight skills and technique, the next most important task is minimising their drag coefficient (Cd). In fluid dynamics, Cd is used to quantify the level of resistance an object experiences in the air, which is associated with a particular shape.

The Cd of a jumper includes the effects of parasitic drag, a collective term for all drag components that are not related to lift generation (e.g., form drag, skin friction and interference drag). For example, a belly flyer has an approximate Cd of 1.0 whereas a head-down flyer's is around 0.7. This is why freeflyers typically fall faster than belly flyers. Skilled speed skydivers take it one step further by streamlining their "flying form," which includes equipment, to 0.5 or less.

Reducing the projected area and elongating and tapering the body's trailing surfaces and rig achieves streamlining. Doing so reduces the size of the wake (a.k.a. burble), and the resulting pressure drag. However, these changes come at a cost. Increasing an athlete's profile shape (side view) increases skin friction, another type of drag. This is where wearing tight and slick materials can help.

For speed skydivers, aerodynamic optimisation consists of finding the optimal length of surfaces: one long enough to reduce pressure drag but short enough to ensure that skin friction does not offset

STREAMLINED BODY

Small Wake

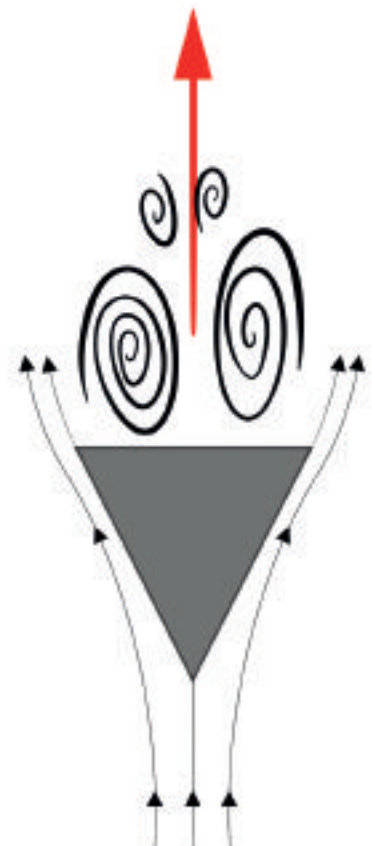
LOW PRESSURE DRAG

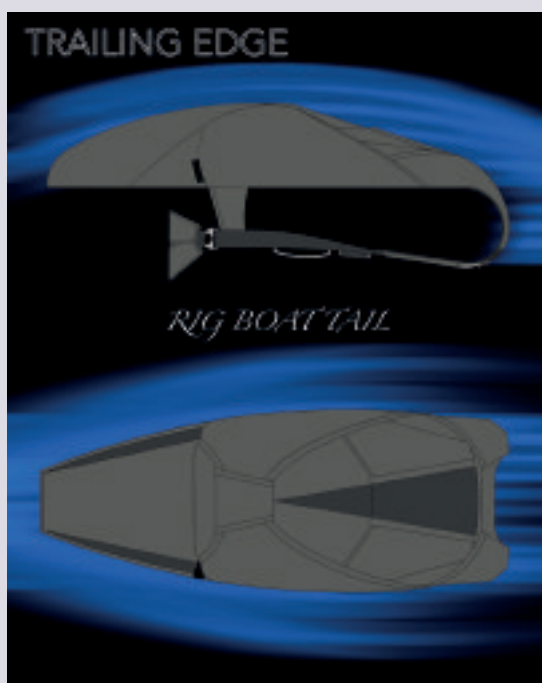
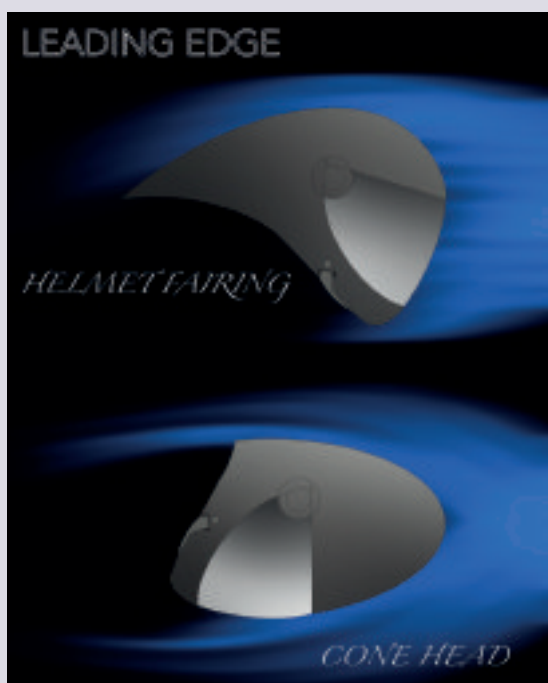


BLUFF BODY

Large Wake

HIGH PRESSURE DRAG





*Adding a helmet fairing (left) or a rig boat-tail (right) could significantly delay flow separation, thereby reducing drag*

**ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS: LOCATION AND WEATHER**

The density of air decreases with altitude and with higher temperatures. Therefore, the hotter and higher the field elevation of a competition site, the more likely competitors will be able to fly faster. The formulas for calculating density altitude and the complex interplay between how quickly a speeder can accelerate and how quickly the atmosphere gets thicker are too lengthy to go into here, but for elite-level competitors, a 500m (1,600ft) increase in field elevation generally correlates with a 3 per cent increase in maximum velocity. Therefore, competitors love jumping in the early afternoon at sites with high field elevations and hot climates from aircraft that can reach 13,999ft AGL. Training in this type of environment helps athletes build the skills necessary to capitalise on the good fortune of competing in ideal conditions.

**CONSISTENCY: PERFORMANCE REPEATABILITY**

Standard deviation is a valuable training tool that measures how dispersed data is in relation to the mean. A low value indicates consistent performance with minimal variation in results across training sessions or competitions. Utilising this metric can help identify areas of improvement, monitor progress and compare athletes.

**THE FORMULA FOR SAMPLE STANDARD DEVIATION IS AS FOLLOWS:**

$$s = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^N (x_i - \bar{x})^2}{N - 1}}$$

- s = the sample standard deviation
- N = the number of observations
- xi = the observed values of a sample item
- $\bar{x}$  = the mean value of the observations

There are several tools and programs available for analysing performance. At present, only two programs have official International Skydiving Commission approval for judging purposes –SKYDERBY and InTimeScoring – but they do not provide an athlete with the analytics necessary for training. Several speeders have developed their own to track and monitor progress. While there may be some minor discrepancies between results of these programs, these training aids are extremely valuable when used consistently.

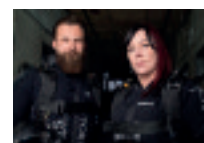
**SPEED SKYDIVING'S FINAL FRONTIER: THE 600 CLUB**

Is breaking 600kmh (373mph) in competition parameters even possible? The 2026 FAI Speed Skydiving World Championships will take place in October at Skydive Arizona in Eloy; a great place and time to go fast. What will speed skydivers achieve? Will there be an "aero arms race" where

athletes focus on improving their drag coefficient once they have reached their full potential with regular equipment? The hurdles for equipment innovation are plenty, but tackling just one of these variables may open the door to new possibilities. New talent and ideas are emerging all the time that may very well lead to someone breaking into the 600 Club.

**LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SPEED SKYDIVING? CHECK OUT:**

- August 2023 Parachutist "Who Says Solos Can't Be Fun? The Challenge of Speed Skydiving"
- USPA Skydiver's Information Manual Chapter 5-11: Speed Skydiving
- USPA Skydiver's Competition Manual Chapter 15
- International Speed Skydiving Association at issa.one



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Niklas Daniel is an ISC Speed Skydiving

Committee Member. In 2024, he became the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale Speed Skydiving World Champion, ISSA World Cup Series Champion and USPA National Champion. With Brianne (also pictured), he is co-founder of AXIS Flight School, which specialises in coaching body- and canopy-flight skills at Skydive Arizona year-round.

# CHIRP

CHIRP  
CONFIDENTIAL HUMAN FACTORS INCIDENT REPORTING PROGRAM



Concerned about something you have seen or experienced in the air or on the DZ?



Not confident to report it to the PTO, CI or British Skydiving?



Would you like others to be able to learn from it?

Scan the QR code or go to <https://chirp.co.uk/aviation/> for a confidential and independent reporting system.



Reports are disidentified and then analysed by experts. There is a quarterly publication of disidentified conclusions.

Further details can be found on the British Skydiving website.

[britishskydiving.org/reporting-chirp/](https://britishskydiving.org/reporting-chirp/)



# NEW RECORDS



British Skydiving is pleased to celebrate the success our members have achieved, both at home and abroad. Check out the results from our high flyers...

<b>BRITISH RECORD</b> – Wingsuit Acrobatics Advanced – Highest Number of Docks in a Round
<b>RECORD DATE:</b> 2 October 2025
<b>LOCATION:</b> Skydive Langar
<b>EVENT:</b> British Skydiving Nationals
<b>RECORD HOLDERS:</b> Team Turbo Ice Cloud – Jack Peplow, David Picton (camera), Matt Webster
<b>PILOT:</b> Jacob Barnes
<b>RECORD:</b> 28 docks – round 3

<b>BRITISH RECORD</b> – Wingsuit Acrobatics Intermediate – Highest Number of Docks in a Round
<b>RECORD DATE:</b> 2 October 2025
<b>LOCATION:</b> Skydive Langar
<b>EVENT:</b> British Skydiving Nationals
<b>RECORD HOLDERS:</b> Team Flips 'n' Grips – Ryan Garner (camera), George Stuart Ranchev, Paul Rooney
<b>PILOT:</b> Jacob Barnes
<b>RECORD:</b> Round 5, 7 pts

*Turbo Ice Clouds:* Highest Number of Docks in a Round



<b>BRITISH RECORD</b> – Wingsuit Performance Time
<b>RECORD DATE:</b> 19 August 2025
<b>LOCATION:</b> Prostějov, Czech Republic
<b>EVENT:</b> FAI Wingsuit World Cup 2025
<b>RECORD HOLDER:</b> Casey Flay
<b>RECORD:</b> 98 seconds

<b>BRITISH RECORD</b> – Female Highest Average Speed
<b>RECORD DATE:</b> 29 August 2025
<b>LOCATION:</b> Hohenems, Austria
<b>EVENT:</b> World Cup and European Championships of Speed Skydiving
<b>RECORD HOLDER:</b> Anna Lea
<b>RECORD:</b> 458.63km/h

<b>BRITISH RECORD</b> – Female Highest Overall Average Speed
<b>RECORD DATE:</b> 29 August 2025
<b>LOCATION:</b> Hohenems, Austria
<b>EVENT:</b> World Cup and European Championships of Speed Skydiving
<b>RECORD HOLDER:</b> Anna Lea
<b>RECORD:</b> 453.43km/h

<b>BRITISH RECORD</b> – Highest Average FS 4-Way (A)
<b>RECORD DATE:</b> 24 August 2025
<b>LOCATION:</b> Skydive Hibaldstow
<b>RECORD HOLDERS:</b> Fall Fast Finish Last – Tom Fagan, Matt Oldham, Peerapong Rithisith, Gabrielle Rock
<b>CAMERA:</b> Charlie Thacker
<b>PILOT:</b> Paul Hollow
<b>RECORD:</b> 12.8 points

<b>BRITISH RECORD</b> – Highest Scoring Sequence FS 4-Way (AA)
<b>RECORD DATE:</b> 24 August 2025
<b>LOCATION:</b> Skydive Hibaldstow
<b>RECORD HOLDERS:</b> Nakama – Eoin Black, Debbie Dobson, Sally Gittings, Chris Massey
<b>CAMERA:</b> Duncan Haynes
<b>RECORD:</b> 17 points

<b>BRITISH RECORD</b> – Highest Average Score FS 4-Way (AA)
<b>RECORD DATE:</b> 24 August 2025
<b>LOCATION:</b> Skydive Hibaldstow
<b>RECORD HOLDERS:</b> Nakama – Eoin Black, Debbie Dobson, Sally Gittings, Chris Massey
<b>CAMERA:</b> Duncan Haynes
<b>RECORD:</b> 9.3 points

<b>BRITISH RECORD</b> – Highest Average Speed in a Single Female Category (Junior)
<b>RECORD DATE:</b> 10 August 2025
<b>LOCATION:</b> APA (Netheravon)
<b>EVENT:</b> British Skydiving Speed Nationals
<b>RECORD HOLDER:</b> Paige Smith
<b>RECORD:</b> 340.73km/h

<b>BRITISH RECORD</b> – Highest Average Speed in a Single Open Category (Junior)
<b>RECORD DATE:</b> 10 August 2025
<b>LOCATION:</b> APA (Netheravon)
<b>EVENT:</b> British Skydiving Speed Nationals
<b>RECORD HOLDER:</b> Cian Moore
<b>RECORD:</b> 411.62km/h

# TOP 2025

**BRITISH RECORD** – Longest Sequence FS 8-Way Junior

**RECORD DATE:** 10 August 2025

**LOCATION:** APA (Netheravon)

**EVENT:** British Skydiving FS 8-Way Nationals

**RECORD HOLDERS:** Gesticul8 – Sam Anderson-Peled, Ezra Attwood, Greg Bradley, David Flood, Andrea Jones, Dewi Jones, Chlöe Lintott, Paul Morgan, Sabina Zadlo

**CAMERA:** Dave Curtin

**RECORD:** 6 points

**BRITISH RECORD** – Highest Average FS 8-Way Junior

**RECORD DATE:** 10 August 2025

**LOCATION:** APA (Netheravon)

**EVENT:** British Skydiving FS 8-Way Nationals

**RECORD HOLDERS:** Gesticul8 – Sam Anderson-Peled, Ezra Attwood, Greg Bradley, David Flood, Andrea Jones, Dewi Jones, Chlöe Lintott, Paul Morgan, Sabina Zadlo

**CAMERA:** Dave Curtin

**RECORD:** 4 points



43 way sequential record

**BRITISH RECORD** – 43-Way FS Total Break Sequence

**RECORD DATE:** 21 July 2025

**LOCATION:** Skydive Hibaldstow

**RECORD HOLDERS:** Katie Balmer, Simon Beck, Jack Bradford, Ash Bunn, Chris Chittock, Fabrizio Colonna, Sarah Cullen, Matt Cumming, Jack Davies, Claire Delle Luche, Tom Dent, Sam Etchells, Tom Fagan, Neal Fitzpatrick, Liam Flavin, Jodie-Leigh Foster, Lydia Gallagher, Christabel Gordon, Murray Hendriksen, Sonia Holland, James Johnston, Dominic Kelsey, Adam Lockwood, Andrej Markus, Chris Massey, Ash Mohanty, Tano Parker, Jen Porter, Cara Pritchard, Peerapong Rithisith, Bea Rix, Oliver Sheppard, Dean Smith, Maciej Sobczak, Owen Steadman, Martijn Steedvoorde, Kirsty Tidmus, Kim Tyler, Tim Veel, Abigail Virgo, Paul Willcock, Bryony Wilson, Elliot Wright

**CAMERA:** Jake Coloretti, William Sean Roberts

Pilots: Ben Gilmore, Paul Hollow, James Swallow

**RECORD:** 2 points

**BRITISH RECORD** – Sport Accuracy Senior

**RECORD DATE:** 17 May 2025

**LOCATION:** APA (Netheravon)

**EVENT:** Accuracy Grand Prix Meet 1

**RECORD HOLDER:** Alec Flint

**RECORD:** 8.39m over six rounds

**BRITISH RECORD** – Sport Accuracy Intermediate

**RECORD DATE:** 17 May 2025

**LOCATION:** APA (Netheravon)

**EVENT:** Accuracy Grand Prix Meet 1

**RECORD HOLDER:** William Lawson

**RECORD:** 24.32m over six rounds



Gesticul8: rookie 8way record

**BRITISH RECORD** – Sport Accuracy Novice

**RECORD DATE:** 17 May 2025

**LOCATION:** APA (Netheravon)

**EVENT:** Accuracy Grand Prix Meet 1

**RECORD HOLDER:** Paul Stigwood

**RECORD:** 34.63m over six rounds

**BRITISH RECORD** – 29-Way FS Large Formation Sequential

**RECORD DATE:** 20 July 2025

**LOCATION:** Skydive Hibaldstow

**RECORD HOLDERS:** PUPS 2025 – Katie Balmer, Simon Beck, Jack Bradford, Ash Bunn, Chris Chittock, Fabrizio Colonna, Sarah Cullen, Matt Cumming, Tom Dent, Phil Eichhorn, Sam Etchells, Tom Fagan, Liam Flavin, Jodie-Leigh Foster, Murray Hendriksen, Sonia Holland, Andrej Markus, Chris Massey, Ash Mohanty, Tano Parker, Cara Pritchard, Peerapong Rithisith, Bea Rix, Dean Smith, Maciej Sobczak, Owen Steadman, Tim Veel, Paul Willcock, Bryony Wilson

**CAMERA:** Paul Rimmington

**PILOTS:** Pilots: Paul Hollow, James Swallow

**RECORD:** 4 points

# **FRESHLY MINT**

# **UK SOS RECORD**

Hibaldstow, 2025

*Words by Leo O'Neill*

*Images courtesy of POPS*



# TED: RD







**SETTING THE SCENE**

On 16th June 2025, Hibaldstow played host to a determined band of 44 skydivers, members of Skydivers Over Sixty (SOS) and Parachutists Over Forty (POPS), all with one goal: to smash the previous British SOS big-way formation record of 18. Last year’s attempt had been scuppered by the weather, but this time, optimism was high. Mike Nisbet had “booked the weather,” and team captains Larry Henderson and Scott Latinis had flown in from the US. Some, like Nao Shimura, had travelled from as far as Japan. Patrick Passe was due to lead as a team captain but, following surgery, cheered from France.

**THE BUILD-UP**

Monday saw the group split in two:

- Group 1 – 30 skydivers working on 15-way builds.
- Group 2 – A mix of SOS and POPS, also building 15-ways.

This format continued through Monday and Tuesday, with plenty of dirt dives and camaraderie. By Wednesday, Group 1 slimmed down to 22 for multi-aircraft jumps, while Group 2 worked on 14-ways across two aircraft. There was a near-miss – one wrong slot and a dodgy grip – but spirits remained high.

**THE RECORD-BREAKING DAY**

Thursday dawned with a sense that the record was within reach. At 8am, jumpsuits zipped and nerves steeled, Group 1 took to the skies. The first attempt was close, but not quite there. On the second jump, everything clicked: a 22-way formation, all docked by 9,000ft, flying for a glorious five seconds. Celebrations erupted on landing, high fives all round.

With the record in the bag, Friday brought more perfect weather and another 22-way, this time with a blend of SOS and POPS. The groove was well and truly found.

**THE RECORD BREAKERS**

Lead Aircraft (Cpt Larry Henderson)	Trail Aircraft (Cpt Scot Latinis)
Pete Gallagher	Mike Nisbet
Liz Hurry	Martin Clarke
Chris Spirit	Geoff McVey
Chris Shaw	John Bowles
Wayne Collier	Jane Buckle
Phil Cosgrove	Pete Sizer
Paul Ledden	Jaz Singh
Johnathan Smith	Nao Shimura
John Miller	Johnathan Ashton
Adam Pemble	Chris Mizzi

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Breaking a record is a unique achievement, only possible through teamwork and a healthy dose of esprit de corps. Special thanks go to the camera team: Sandy Spence, Dave Curtin, and Simon Donnelly, whose footage made it all possible. The team also extends gratitude

to Skydive Hibaldstow, British Skydiving, and Patrick Passé, the original lead LO.

These unsung heroes and heroines are the backbone of such events, their support and advice making the magic happen. Next time you’re on a DZ, don’t forget to shake a hand and say thank you.

# THE YEAR **IN**

Chris Cook



Chris Cook

Alan Higgins



Chris Cook



Gesticul8



Gary Wainwright



Mark Stevenson



Chris Cook

# JUMPS



Nigel O'Brien



Tom Fagan



Catherine Kempton



Amber Ruxton



Gary Wainwright



Gavin Brookfield



Matt Falloon



William Sean Roberts



Gary Wainwright



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**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:** Annette O'Neil  
**PRODUCTION EDITOR:** Wendy Brooking  
**DESIGNER:** Billy Betts  
**HEAD OF DIGITAL:** Mark Ovens  
**DIGITAL LEAD:** Vicki Sherman  
**ACCOUNT DIRECTOR:** Rachel Tanner  
**HEAD OF DESIGN:** Nicola Preston  
**CEO:** Zoë Francis-Cox

dialogue...

**SALES DIRECTOR:** Gary Millone  
*gary.millone@dialogue.agency*  
+44(0)7843 369124

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Tel: 0116 278 5271 Website: *britishskydiving.org*

Membership Services: *membership@britishskydiving.org*  
Administration: *info@britishskydiving.org*

**VICE PRESIDENTS:** Chris Allen, John Hitchen, John Lines, John Smyth MVO, Martin Soulsby, Tony Butler

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Craig Poxon, Interim Chair of Council  
*craig@britishskydiving.org*

Tony Crilly, Vice Chair of Council  
*tony.crilly@britishskydiving.org*

\*Richard Lockwood, Treasurer and Chair of Finance Committee  
*richard.lockwood@britishskydiving.org*

Karl Kojro, Chair of Membership Development Committee (MDC) - Interim Chair IDE  
*karl@britishskydiving.org*

Dr Mary Barratt  
*mary@britishskydiving.org*

\*Lauren Durkan  
*lauren@britishskydiving.org*

Roumie Radountcheva  
*roumie@britishskydiving.org*

Alex Mercer  
*alex.mercer@britishskydiving.org*

Alex Potter  
*alex.potter@britishskydiving.org*

Fannie Grondon  
*fannie@britishskydiving.org*

Michael Brodbin  
*michael@britishskydiving.org*

Tom Rofe  
*tom@britishskydiving.org*

\*Independent

#### STC AND RIGGERS

Jeff Montgomery, Chair of Safety and Training Committee (STC)  
*jeff@britishskydiving.org*

Pete Sizer, Chair of Riggers' Subcommittee  
*pete@britishskydiving.org*

#### DELEGATES

Martin Soulsby, Royal Aero Club Delegate

Craig Poxon, RAeC Alternate Delegate

John Smyth, MVO International Skydiving Commission Delegate

Craig Poxon, International Skydiving Commission Alternate Delegate

#### STAFF

Robert Gibson, Chief Executive Officer  
*robert.gibson@britishskydiving.org*

Jeff Montgomery, Head of Safety, Training and Competitions  
*jeff@britishskydiving.org*

Ryan Mancey, Safety and Training Officer  
*ryan@britishskydiving.org*

Hans Donner, Safety and Training Officer  
*hans@britishskydiving.org*

Trudy Kemp, STC Administrator  
*trudy@britishskydiving.org*

Lise Moore, Head of Finance and Operations  
*lise@britishskydiving.org*

Nandhita Anandh, Marketing and Communications Executive  
*nandhita@britishskydiving.org*

Shasha Jackson, Operations and Membership Services Executive  
*shasha@britishskydiving.org*

Karey Goodwin, Membership Services  
*karey@britishskydiving.org*

Stacey Halford, Events and Competitions Manager  
*stacey@britishskydiving.org*

Meghan Sheedy, Events and Competitions Manager  
*membership@britishskydiving.org*

Vivien Burchnell, Finance Assistant  
*finance@britishskydiving.org*

#### ADVISERS

Dr Jake Hard, Medical Adviser  
*medicaladviser@britishskydiving.org*