

THE NATIONALS



TUG PILOTS ON STRIKE
AND ITS ONLY DAY TWO.



SECOND DAY OF COMPETITION

Yesterday was a disaster for pilots who out-landed. Others, like Chad, made excellent time only to be deducted 150 points for crossing the wrong start point. Bugga. A difficult lesson learned. Read the task sheet!!

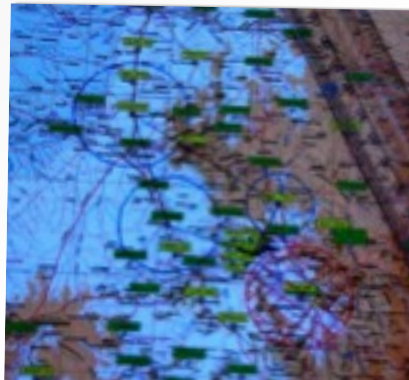
One has to marvel at how quickly pilots simplify the task for the day. Once the briefing is finished there is a flurry of activity where circles are drawn on the contour maps, the coordinates are entered in to hand held computers and GPSs and the weather conditions are discussed in detail with other pilots.

Each pilot needs to formulate a general plan of how they need to tackle the course. Pilots compare strategies but don't give much away. Local knowledge is much sought after by non locals. The common conundrum is always "should I go early or should I leave late?" Go early and risk poor thermal activity and therefore slow flying speed. Go later and risk thermals disappearing. Either way there are risks. Decisions, decisions, decisions. But the crucial decisions are crucially made on the run. Conditions change and change often.

The task gets far more complicated when there are no clouds. The "blue screen of death" takes no prisoners, so making a fateful decision about direction and height may be based on skill but there is also luck involved. Chad "sniffs" out a thermal by sight, sound and feel. - sometimes even buy smell. Pilots must be "as one" with their aircraft. Flying with others can be both a hinderance and a help. Following someone blindly can bring trouble. So its basically "know the signs and act on your experience." Hopefully luck will be on your side



THIS DOES NOT COMPUTE

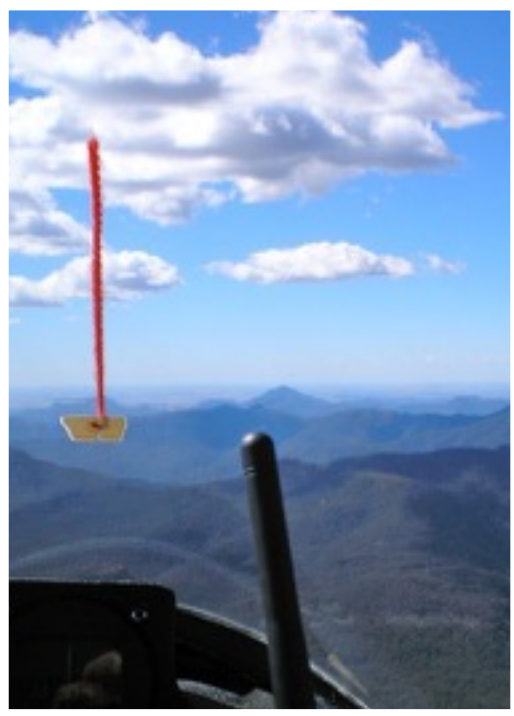


HAVE YOU GOT THE RIGHT
START POINT SON?



MEET THE LOCAL BEE KEEPER

PHOTOS



A GLIDER PILOT HAS TO BE A MASTER OF MANY THINGS. HE/SHE HAS TO BE AN EXPERT AT READING THE WEATHER AND INTERPRETING THE SKY. HE/SHE HAS TO BE A TECHIE AND WELL VERSED IN GADGETRY AND INSTRUMENTATION. HE/SHE HAS TO UNDERSTAND MECHANICS AND ENGINEERING. HE/SHE BE CAPABLE WITH TOOLS. HE/SHE HAS TO PROJECT MANAGER WITH GOOD DECISION MAKING SKILLS. HE/SHE HAS TO BE ABLE TO BE PROFICIENT AT READING MAPS AND PLOTTING DISTANCE AND HEIGHT. HE/SHE HAS TO BE A PRACTICAL MATHEMATICIAN AND BE ABLE TO WORK OUT FIGURES AND FORMULAS. HE/SHE HAS TO BE EMOTIONALLY STABLE AND HAVE A STEELY DETERMINATION TO SUCCEED - EVEN AFTER THE 100TH OUT-LANDING. NOW YOU KNOW WHY THERE ARE NOT MANY GLIDER PILOTS IN THE WORLD