

THE NATIONALS



IT TAKES ALMOST TWO HOURS TO GET 60 GLIDERS INTO THE AIR

FLYING BY INSTRUMENTS

Day 6 of competition started with a very hot 37 degrees on the ground at midday. There was very little cloud about. It was going to be a fast day but there was some hint of thunderstorms later in the day. The day's task was cut from 3 to 2.5 hours. Plan B caused everyone in Club Class to rejig their plans and reorganize their flight paths.

Glider pilots, in the "good old days", set off with an aerial map, a trusty radio and some basic instruments. The glider was made from wood and canvas.

The introduction of digital technology, global positioning systems and modern construction materials has changed the sport dramatically - and speed and efficiency have improved substantially. Glider pilots now have an array of devices to help them make more informed decision more quickly.

Many of the traditional instruments can still be found in the cockpit to measure altitude, speed and direction but now there are personal digital assistants to inform the pilot and improve adeptness.

And at the end of the flight all the information is stored digitally and downloaded onto computer. The process to work out scores in a competition is very quick. Pilots too can view their flights (and mistakes) on a computer screen in real time. This information is very helpful to other pilots who wish to improve their techniques.

The best gliders come with full computer instrumentation so that the pilot only has to find winds and steer.



TEAM DINGO

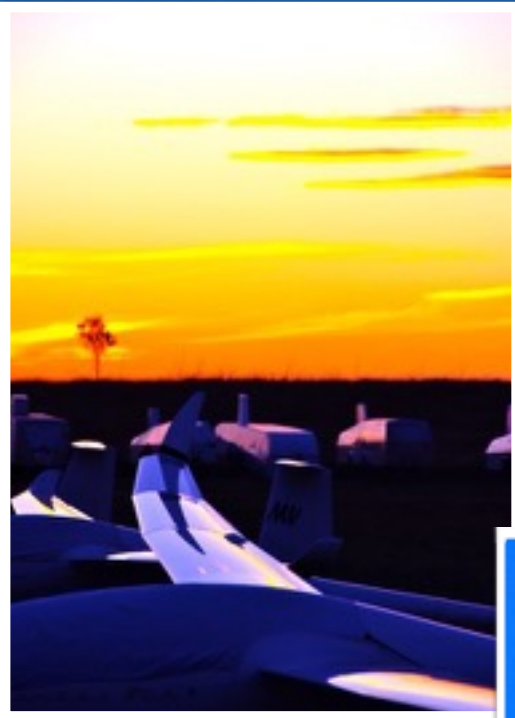


SAFETY OFFICER PUMPKIN HEAD



TECHNOLOGY

PHOTOS



LANDING IS THE MOST RISKY PART OF ANY GLIDER FLIGHT. THINGS CAN GET TRICKY WHEN A PILOT HAS LOST HEIGHT AND IS REALLY STRETCHING TO LAND HIS GLIDER AT THE AIRFIELD. A MAJOR AREA OF CONCERN IS WHERE THERE ARE MULTIPLE GLIDERS WISH TO LAND AT THE SAME TIME. 3 OR 4 GLIDERS LANDING AT THE SAME TIME LOOKS AMAZING