



THE NATIONALS



THERE ARE ALWAYS URGENT JOBS FOR THE GROUND CREW

FLYING IN RARIFIED AIR

Chad came 8th place on Day 7 and was running 8th overall. This was an excellent effort for a novice pilot. But Day 8 took a turn for the worse.

It was a very hot 43 degrees and thermals were expected to rise well over 10,000 feet. All pilots know that they had rise over this level to gain the extra speed necessary to win. Fly high and fly faster. Chad certainly rose high very quickly. In fact he got to 14,000 feet but this is where problems set in.

Higher than 10,000 feet and most pilots need access to oxygen in their cabin. Chad did not have oxygen and suffered badly. He spent too long in the rarified air and got both a very bad headache and cramps in his arms and legs. The lack of oxygen made him ill and not able to think properly. He always knew that he had to be careful but never thought lack of oxygen would interfere so much with his decision making. Not only could he not concentrate properly he realised that if he continued to rise

above 10,000 feet often he may not have got home safely. He thought about out-landing so he could have a rest and sleep. But he persevered and was able to fly home safely, much to the relief of his ground crew who were very concerned when he did not arrive at the allotted time. An oxygen system is expensive so not all pilots have it in their cockpit. Chad has learned a valuable lesson. He never believed he would have been affected by lack of oxygen so much. Now he understands.



CHECK THIS OUT



KANGAROO CROSSING



PILOT MOTHER

PHOTOS



PILOTS (AND GROUND CREW) CAN BE FORCED TO WAIT FOR MANY HOURS BEFORE THE COMPETITION ACTUALLY GETS GOING. AT 11 O'CLOCK GLIDERS ARE WHEELED OUT INTO POSITION. AT 12.30 THE GLIDERS ARE TOWED INTO THE AIR. TAKE-OFF LASTS ABOUT 1 HOUR. THE START GATE OPENS ABOUT 30 MINUTES