

Accuracy competition rules

IGNORANCE OF THE RULES IS NO GROUNDS FOR A RE-JUMP OR GRIEVANCE. This statement, from the Classic Accuracy Nationals programme, sums up why knowledge of the rules may be beneficial to an accuracy pilot. It cannot be said that accuracy rules are a stimulating read; nevertheless I hope this article will provide some useful background into the rules for both Classic and Paragliding Accuracy competitions.

Photo: Tomas Lednik
Judges at the ready at the World Games



There are different rules for Classic and Paragliding Accuracy competitions, the latter being a lot more in-depth due to FAI governance. The rules for Classic Accuracy competitions have developed over the years and consist of five pages of rules and three pages of the Judging Code. The rules cover areas such as trophy categories, competition procedures, scoring, reasons for re-launch, equipment and safety. The Judging Code stipulates the required judging team members and methods of measuring. The rules are included in the Classic Accuracy Nationals programme; the Judging Code is a separate document. All League, National and European Grand Prix competitions follow the same rules and Judging Code.

In contrast to the simplicity of Classic Accuracy rules, the Paragliding Accuracy rules are a long-drawn-out affair consisting of the FAI General Section, FAI Section 7C, Local Regulations and the Judging Code. To further complicate matters, within the above framework

there are differences in the rules for Category 1 and Category 2 competitions (Category 1 competitions are World and Continental Championships and World Games; Category 2 competitions

are events such as National Championships and the World Cup series.)

The General Section of the FAI Sporting Code is a high-level document that includes general

information about the FAI and running FAI events. The Section 7 document covers hang gliding and paragliding XC competitions, Paragliding Accuracy competitions and records and badges, with Section 7C being devoted to Paragliding Accuracy competitions. Section 7C goes into great detail; it states the differences between Category 1 and Category 2 competition rules as well as discretionary requirements. Category 1 competitions cannot conflict with Section 7C rules, whereas the rules for Category 2 events are only based on Section 7C as far as appropriate and should not conflict with them in principle.

Local Regulations are particular to an event and provide additional information to Section 7C, as well as covering areas where the Section 7C rules give discretion. For Category 1 competitions the Local Regulations follow a specific format (found in Section 8 of Section 7C) covering issues such as team composition, number of rounds, site details, maximum wind speed and protest time limits. There is a lot of information in these regulations that I feel

could go in the Section 7C rules, and there is also some unnecessary duplication.

Local Regulations for Category 2 competitions do not have to follow the Section 8 format and allows organisers to use their local knowledge to record rules that are appropriate for their event. This arrangement can be confusing for competitors, as familiar rules that appear in the Category 1 Local Regulations may not appear in the Category 2 Local Regulations. An example of this is the Category 1 Local Regulation rule, 'Competitors should be afforded a fair attempt at a target landing. They should have sufficient time during the flight to reach the target area directly from launch to make a considered final approach to the target;' that may not appear in the Category 2 Local Regulations. In any event, I feel this rule is so fundamental to accuracy competitions that it should be in Section 7C.

The Judging Code is found at the back of Section 7C and is applicable to both

Category 1 and 2 competitions. There are, however, small differences in the judging team composition and nationalities, and also the level of experience of the judges, for Category 1 and 2 competitions. The FAI rules can be found on the FAI.org website; they come up for review once a year at the February CIVL Plenary meeting. Anyone wishing to raise any comments on the rules should contact the CIVL Paragliding Accuracy Subcommittee by December. If you have any queries about the rules or the Judging Code, please contact BHPA Accuracy Panel Rules Officer Nikki Bodill.

As far as most pilots are concerned, the most important rules to know are reasons for a re-launch. The table below details re-launch rules for both Classic and Paragliding Accuracy competitions. In most cases the rules are very similar, however there can be some subtle differences that pilots and judges who switch between codes need to appreciate.

Article by Andy Webster

2014 competition calendar

Jun 7 - 9	Germany World Cup	Winterburg, Germany
Jun 14 - 15	UK Paragliding Accuracy Nationals	Shropshire / Wales
Jul 26 - 27	Birdwings Classic Accuracy Competition	South Cerney, Gloucs
Aug 23 - 25	UK Classic Accuracy Nationals	South Cerney, Gloucs
Aug 31 - Sep 7	European Paragliding Accuracy Championships	Vrsac, Serbia
Sep 25 - 28	Indonesia World Cup	Pandawa Beach, Indonesia
Oct 24 - 26	Turkey World Cup	Sakaraya, Turkey

All World Cup competitions are FAI Category 2 events and open to any pilot with an FAI licence. Pilots can only fly in one team for the duration of a series, however the composition of the four-pilot teams can be changed between competitions. Further competition details will be available on the PGAWC website where pilots are also required to register for a World Cup competition at least a week before the event takes place.

The Category 2 European Paragliding Accuracy Championship is only open to national teams. Selection of pilots to represent the UK team is by the BHPA Accuracy Panel performance-based selection process.

Re-launch reason	Classic Accuracy	Paragliding Accuracy
Wind speed	> 7m/s for 30 seconds prior to touching down Re-launch automatically offered	Limit as per Local Regs (max 7m/s) for 30 seconds prior to touching down
	Pilot decides to accept score or take re-launch	Pilot decides to accept score or take re-launch
Windssock giving false indication	Yes	No rule
Insufficient height/time to reach target	Yes if 15-second final not possible	Judge's discretion if pilot has been in heavy sink Cat 1 Local Regs also allow for insufficient time to reach target area (1)
Target obscured on final approach	Yes (2)	Yes (2)
Flight plan changed for safety reasons	Only to avoid another competitor (2)	Yes (2)
Personal equipment malfunction	Yes (2)	Yes (2)
Pilot disturbed (tow or weather conds)	Yes (2)	No rule
Failed take-off or safety issue after take-off	No rule; pilot will get a re-launch	Yes
Significant distraction	Yes	Yes
Judges unable to determine first contact point	Yes	Yes
At discretion of Chief Judge	Yes	Yes
Notes		
1 From a hill launch.		
2 In all these cases a re-launch is only given if pilot does not attempt a target landing.		
In all cases a pilot must make a request for a re-launch to the Event Judge before communicating with anyone else.		
In Classic Accuracy a re-launch is taken at the end of the round; in Paragliding Accuracy this is at the discretion of the Meet Director.		

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