

Accessibility of paragliding accuracy to people with disabilities and medical conditions

Accuracy, as a discipline within paragliding, is accessible to pilots with a range of physical disabilities and medical conditions provided they are able to launch, control their canopy onto a target and make safe landings on their feet.

Paragliding accuracy as a sport relies on aptitude and skill rather than strength and stamina, enabling pilots of both sexes and those with certain disabilities and medical conditions to compete on equal terms.

Unlike cross-country flying, flights are of short duration (typically 2-10 minutes) as the aim is to reach the target area as quickly and directly as possible from a launch point that is close to and usually visible from the target area.

Launch may be on foot from a hill or achieved using a winch on a flat field.

On winch sites the launch point will be a short walk from the target (typically 50-100 m). Transport can be provided where necessary.

On hill sites transport from the target back to the launch point is provided in all major competitions and most smaller ones.

Landings are required to be accurate and controlled, not high impact.

In competitions the length of a round of flying (one flight per competitor) can vary widely, depending on the number of competitors and the weather conditions, but is seldom less than 1 hour. This allows pilots considerable rest time at the target, launch or onboard the transport, between flights.

Most competitions are of 2-3 days duration. Major championships last for up to 10 days but include a rest day, unless there has been considerable stand-down time due to weather conditions (which is also rest time).

The maximum number of flights permitted in a competition is 12, with a minimum of 1, although competitions of shorter duration may not achieve the maximum. In smaller competitions up to 6 flights in a day could be expected. In a major championship, because of the large number of competitors, this would be reduced to 1 or 2 flights per day.

During training sessions flights may be more frequent but adaptations to the number and timing of flights can be made where required. Training and coaching plans should consider both flying/accuracy skills and the physical and mental needs of each pilot.

Accuracy is both an individual and a team sport; when flying as part of a team, competitors with and without disabilities have the support of team-mates and, in major championships, a team leader/manager to help them to manage any challenges during the competition.

The British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (BHPA) actively promotes access to free flight for pilots with disabilities through its Flyability initiative.

The Accuracy panel is committed to supporting pilots with disabilities and medical conditions to achieve their goals and inspire others.