



A Dutch team builds two 8-way stars over the coast of the North sea during a 16-way relative work competition last September at Texel, Holland. Photographer Max Dereta said other teams came from Belgium, England and Germany.

Texas Drop Zone Hosts Two Competitive Events

Jumpers at The Aggies Over Texas drop zone in Bryan, Tex., packed a lot of quality skydiving into the weekend of September 28-30.

The DZ first hosted two competitive events at the same time: the 5th Annual TeXXas 20-Way Competition and the World Freestyle Skydiving Championships.

Exceptional weather and ample aircraft allowed both competitions to be finished by Saturday. Skydivers took advantage of the weather and aircraft on Sunday and completed a 64-way formation, the largest ever built in Texas.

Aircraft support included a DC-3 from

Skydive Arizona, a Twin Otter from Skydive Spaceland, a Twin Beech and two Cessna 182s.

The 280 registered jumpers made close to 1800 jumps over the three-day event.

"I think it went wonderfully," said DZ co-owner Mary Hankins. "It couldn't have been better."

20-Way Competition

Eight teams entered the 20-way RW meet. The event, organized by Madolyn Murdock, attracted jumpers from Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Arizona. Last year's event, held at Skydive Spaceland in

League City, drew 10 teams.

"Deguello," a team from Texas led by Jack Berke, took first place with 244 points after four rounds. It is the second year in a row the team has won the competition.

For Deguello it was an easy victory. The team finished the competition with a 99-point lead, even after scoring only nine points on round four after funneling its exit.

Judges used the same scoring system as last year. Each team completed as many formations as possible within the 50 seconds of working time, and received one point for every person in a formation with correct grips. Each formation had to be completed

before a team could score additional points.

Teams jumped from the DC-3 and Twin Otter.

"Texoma," a team comprised of jumpers from Texas and Oklahoma, placed second with 145 points. "Arizona Air Attack," a team from Coolidge, Ariz., placed third with 136 points.

Murdock said the team captains were very helpful getting the competition started early and running smoothly. Murdock said only one team was awarded a rejump during the competition.

The event was judged using air-to-air video. Roger Pickens organized the video. Murdock, Georgene Worthington and Cindy Collins served as judges.

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Freestyle Competition

While the 20-way competition progressed, other skydivers at the DZ were competing in freestyle.

Seven women's teams and five men's teams entered the World Freestyle Skydiving Championships. The teams were invited to the meet after submitting video tapes of their routines through the mail (SKYDIVING #105).

Jumpers traveled from as far as California, Florida and Europe to compete in the freestyle event.

Mike Sandberg, Norman Kent and Diana Kent judged the competition. Competitors had until 5 pm Saturday to submit one video of three jumps made during the day. Teams could jump out of any of the available aircraft.

The judges could award up to 180 points for each team, with each judge giving a maximum of 60 points per team.

The freestyle could score up to 10 points for each of three compulsory moves: a tee, a daffy and two consecutive loops in any direction. The team could also score up to 10 points in each of three additional categories: precision and control, creativity and communication.

Women's Division

Dale Stuart and cameraman Steve Scott, from Perris Valley, Calif., placed first in the women's division with a total of 164 points.

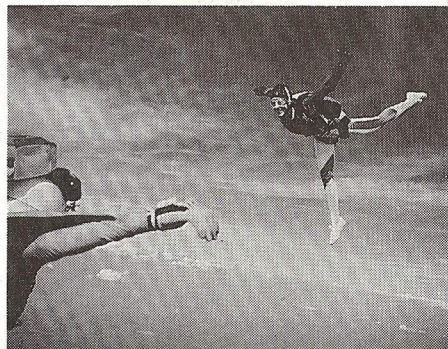
"Stuart was the most creative freestyle I've ever seen," said Sandberg. He said she earned a lot of points for creativity.

Second place in the women's division went to Christine Rivard and cameraman Marty Cooper from DeLand, Fla., with a total of 163 points. Sandberg said Rivard was very smooth and Cooper's camerawork was outstanding. He said the team earned a

lot of points for communication and control.

"The camerawork played an important role in the scoring," said Sandberg. "The photography almost made the difference between first and second place in the women's division."

Hankins and cameraman Tony Loper took third place in the women's division with 154 points. Kathryn Omelchuck and photographer Van Wideman of Florida came in fourth with 145 points.



Dale Stuart performs for cameraman Steve Scott during the World Freestyle Skydiving Championships. Stuart won the women's division. Photograph by Norman Kent.

Men's Division

Lukas Knutsson of Great Britain and cameraman Andi Duff of Switzerland took first place in the men's division with 156 points.

Joel Wade of Tennessee and photographer Sam Williams from Great Britain took second place with 137 points.

Wade surprised everyone with his bold performance of loops, twists and vertical moves. Wade started the competition with only 12 jumps and finished the freestyle event on jump number 24. Wade is an instructor at the Flyaway wind tunnel in Tennessee where he has amassed approximately 150 hours of wind tunnel time.

Jeff Lewis from England and Andi Duff (photographers could enter the competition with more than one team) placed third with

131 points.

"What is interesting about this meet is that we designed it with the least amount of creativity for the freestylers," said Sandberg.

"The amount of creativity they showed in such a defined meet was amazing. No two routines were alike. From now on, freestyle competitions can only grow. You can imagine how creative it will get when the competition is less restrictive."

Each first-place winner received 50 percent off a Jump Shack SST Racer Elite harness and container and a jumpsuit from Sandberg's company The People's Loft.

In spite of a few large signs and an extensive camera crew, most 20-way competitors seemed unaware of the freestyle competition until the night of the awards ceremony.

"We had a room full of serious relative workers, and we weren't sure what their reaction would be towards the freestylers," said Sandberg.

Boos and grumbles were heard throughout the room when videos of the 20-way dives were shut off for the freestyle awards. Sandberg eventually calmed down the jumpers and began the presentation.

The audience had quite a different reaction when Sandberg began showing footage of the top performers. By the end of the second video, the RW jumpers were giving standing ovations.

"I was overwhelmed," said Sandberg. "It sent chills down my spine. I think it's a great indicator of how freestyle will be accepted."

"Sandberg is to be commended," said Berke. "He got us to actually look at the freestylers and listen. Some of the team members had never really seen freestyle. He did an excellent job with the presentation."

Photographer Pete McKeeman of Photohawk Productions in Carrollton, Tex., is producing a video tape of the competition. He hopes to sell the video to a local cable television network.

McKeeman said he had to finance the project himself after several sponsors turned



Photographer Andi Duff films Lukas Knutsson during the World Freestyle Skydiving Championships. The team took first place in the men's division. Photograph by Norman Kent.

him down.

"It's still just too new and different for them," he said.

He hopes sponsors will change their minds about sponsoring such efforts if the video tape is aired.

"Freestyle is something the public can understand," said McKeeman.

State Record

After the RW and freestyle competitions were completed, Berke and members of his 20-way team organized the state record attempt. The 64-way formation was completed on the second skydive.

The group built a 12-way round for the base with zippers and pods on the outside. A similar formation was used for the 80-way women's RW record built last July in France (SKYDIVING #110). Berke said the large rings kept the formation falling faster and flying smoother.

"We made it look real easy," said Burke. "It was flying real flat and looked sweet."

Another attempt at a 70-way formation failed when several jumpers went low. The previous state record was a 40-way built in early 1980 over Skydive Spaceland.

"If we had more aircraft, we could have built something much larger," said Berke. "We certainly had a lot of talent on the 20-way teams." □