

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
SAFETY AND TRAINING COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 5 JUNE 2008

Present:

John Hitchen	-	Chairman STC
Pete Sizer	-	Headcorn
John Page	-	Skydive London
Stuart Meacock	-	Skydive Airkix
Paul Hollow	-	Target Skysports
Dave Hickling	-	BPS, Langar
Mike Rust	-	NLPC
Ian Roseninge	-	Peterlee
Phil Cavanagh	-	Black Knights
Mark Tether	-	JSPC (L) RAPA
Steve Scott	-	Skydive Weston
Steve Thomas	-	Cyprus
Nigel Allen	-	JSPC (N)
Paul Applegate	-	Riggers

Apologies: Tony Goodman, Dave Wood, Ray Armstrong, Jason Thompson.

In Attendance:

Tony Butler	-	Technical Officer
Dr John Carter	-	BPA Medical Adviser
Trudy Kemp	-	Assistant to NCSO/TO

Observers: Martin Harris, Hans Donner, Phill Elston, Rick Boardman, Dave Major, Nick Brown, Bryan Poole, Chris McCann, Mick Nealis, Tony Knight.

ITEM

1. MINUTES OF THE STC MEETING OF THE 10 APRIL 2008

It was proposed by John Page and seconded by Mike Rust that the Minutes of the STC Meeting of the 10 April 2008 be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 10 APRIL 2008

Page 1, Item 2 – Matters Arising – (Tandem Working Group). The Working Group had held another meeting in the afternoon. Mike Rust reported that on the last Tandem Instructor Course the new Tandem Emergency Sheets had been used and there had been some positive feedback on those. He stated that the WG had been working on a new Tandem Instructor Manual and a new Packing Book, both of which it was hoped would be available for consideration by STC at the next meeting. Mike expressed his thanks to the members of this Working Group for their continued work.

The Chairman stated that there were now six different Tandem systems in use, candidates attending a Tandem Instructor Course needed to be totally familiar with their equipment, particularly to any modifications that had been carried out. They also needed to ensure that any relative paperwork for the equipment was in order.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS' SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 10 APRIL 2008

There being no matters arising from the previous Minutes, it was proposed by Paul Applegate and seconded by Pete Sizer that the Minutes of the Riggers Sub-Committee Meeting of the 10 April 2008 be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

Paul Applegate reported on the meeting held that afternoon and stated that the Committee had discussed the BPA Safety Notice issued by himself on the grounding of Vigil AADs.

Paul stated that following a lengthy discussion on this issue, the Committee had agreed that with immediate effect all Vigil AADs must be fitted with Type 3 cutters. For those Vigil units with serial numbers lower than 8000 that may have either Type 1 or Type 2 cutters, these need to be replaced immediately by the manufacturer or their dealer. The reserve packing card must also be annotated to indicate that the Type 3 cutter has been fitted. The Committee had agreed that a BPA Safety Information Bulletin be issued reflecting this decision.

4. INCIDENT/INJURY REPORTS - RESUME

- i) There had been 17 Student injury reports received since the last meeting. 10 male and 7 female. One injury was to a Student who dislocated his shoulder whilst flaring to land. Another was a Student who had landed and was struck by an experienced parachutist landing. The remaining 14 were landing injuries, the majority of which were minor, including a Student landing in a tree.
- ii) There had been 9 injury reports received for 'A' Certificate or above parachutists. 3 male and 6 female. One was to a parachutist who was struck in the mouth by his risers on deployment, knocking out several teeth. All other injuries were on landing.
- iii) Since the last meeting there had been 13 Student Parachutist Malfunction/Deployment Problems reported. 10 male and 3 female. Several of the reports involved were of Students becoming entangled with equipment.
- iv) There had been 36 reports of Malfunction/Deployment Problems to 'A' Certificate parachutists and above since the last meeting. 29 male and 7 female.
- v) There had been 3 Tandem Injury reports received since the last meeting. All female and all very minor. There had also been 6 Tandem Malfunction/Deployment Problems reports received.

This next part of the meeting was held in camera, with those other than CCIs, one of the Instructors concerned and Members of staff leaving the room.

The Chairman advised those present that an Incident report had been received of 4 Tandem Instructors who were jumping a Skyvan and who failed to connect their Students up prior to the aircraft taking off and had the Students sitting next to them in the aircraft unattached. The CCI had taken disciplinary action regarding the instructors concerned. The CCI concerned was able to provide the Committee with further details of the incident. He stated that letters from himself had been sent to the instructors concerned, reminding 3 of them of their responsibilities and grounding another from carrying out Tandems until the 20 June 2008, as the instructor had previously had a written warning.

The Instructor concerned who was present that evening was asked to give his comments on the incident after which, he was asked to leave the meeting to enable CCIs to consider this matter further.

A number of comments were made by members of STC on the serious nature of this incident and of the blatant disregard of the BPA Operations Manual.

The Chairman pointed out to those present that if STC Members considered taking any disciplinary action then they would have to follow BPA Tribunal system.

A great deal of discussion took place on this incident during which a number of comments were made by those present on the current Tribunal system, which they would need to follow if they believed any disciplinary action was deemed necessary.

It was generally felt by those present that this incident was a clear example of why STC should be able to make a disciplinary decision against Instructors and this was clearly one they did not believe should have to go to a Tribunal. They considered that Tribunals were a costly and timely process.

They did however believe that that in cases of gross misconduct where someone was seriously injured or killed, then the Tribunal system was essential, but in lesser cases such as this, if a disciplinary matter needed to be decided on, they should as a Committee with the experience they had around the table be able to deal with it.

It was clear from the discussion that many CCIs were not happy with the system as it stood and it was agreed by those present that the feelings of the Committee be conveyed to Council.

Following further discussion on this matter, it was agreed by those present that because this was a serious incident it required further investigation.

It was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by David Hickling that a Panel of Inquiry be instigated to investigate the incident, which would be given a 'Terms of Reference' by the TO and/or NCSO and that in the meantime the Tandem Instructor ratings of those Instructors involved be suspended until the outcome of the Panel's findings.

Carried Unanimously

The Instructor concerned was invited to return to the meeting where he was advised of STC's decision concerning this matter.

The observers were then invited to rejoin the meeting, and the Chairman continued with the resume of the remaining Incident/Injury reports.

- vi) There had been 4 reports received of AAD firings since the last meeting. The first was a jumper with 190 descents who deployed at 4,000ft, had twists, attempted to clear them, but was unable. Cutaway, missed the reserve handle, rolled on back and the Cypres then fired. The second was a military jumper with 196 jumps, who could not locate the main toggle and then pulled his cutaway pad instead of his reserve handle. His Cypres fired and deployed the reserve. It was felt that he was confused having just completed a military freefall course, using equipment with ripcord and spring pilot chute.

The third was an inexperienced parachutist with 21 descents, who was rotating out of control in freefall, lost altitude awareness, regained control and remained on heading until her Cypres fired. The final one was a parachutist with 700 descents who deployed low, fumbled with the pull and the Cypres fired as the main inflated.

- vii) One report had been received of a canopy entanglement, during CF. Another report had been received of a canopy collision on deployment. One of the jumpers had to cutaway.
- viii) Eighteen reports had been received of 'off landings' at Clubs. 5 of them were Students landing in trees. One was a Student with 13 jumps who hit a pick-up truck, then a metal sign, finally stopping after hitting another vehicle. The Student was unhurt.
- ix) Four reports had been received of display misfires. One concerned a jumper jumping a flag, which was connected to an outside rigging line, above the slider and to the jumper's foot. The flag became detached from his foot and wrapped around the lines, which collapsed the right-hand side of the canopy. The other report was of a display jumper injuring himself on landing having missed the arena. The remaining 2 were 'off landings'.
- x) Four reports had been received of jumpers losing items in free fall, including cameras, camera brackets and a Student radio.
- xi) Two reports had been received of aircraft problems. One involved minor damage to an aircraft tail wheel, which occurred on landing. The other involved an air intake heater pod on the wing of the aircraft. As the pilot shut down the engines after a lift, the pod which was protruding forward of its normal location, was struck by the propeller, knocking it off. Afterwards, an experienced parachutist who had been on the aircraft, said that he had noticed the pod wobbling during flight. The Chairman stated that this highlighted the importance of parachutists who may notice something wrong with any part of an aircraft, of notifying the pilot straight away.

5. BPA PILOTS MANUAL

The Chairman stated that Tony Knight (Chairman of the Pilots' Working Group) had completed the new Pilots' Manual, which involved a considerable amount of work. The proposed manual had been circulated to CCIs with the main agenda.

Tony was present at the meeting and was able to answer any questions relating to the Manual. He stated that there was one minor amendment to the proposed Manual since the draft version previously circulated, which related to pilot age.

It was proposed by Stuart Meacock and seconded by Mark Tether that the re-written Pilots' Manual be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Committee gave Tony Knight and the Working Group a vote of thanks for the tremendous amount of work that had been carried out in producing the re-written Pilots Manual.

Tony Knight advised that this now concluded the work of the Pilots' Working Group and he also wished to record his thanks to the other members of the Group, which included Stuart Meacock, Steve Wilkins, Mike Westwood and Kieran Brady.

6. FULL-FACED HELMETS

A paper by Paul Hollow had been circulated with the agenda, requesting that STC consider changing the requirement when parachutists may jump a full-faced helmet.

Paul was present at the meeting and was able to provide further details of his request.

Paul stated that the requirements to gain a 'B' Certificate (Red) are an 'A' Certificate (Red), 50 descents, JM Grade 1 and CH Grade 2. While he believed this was reasonable for a 'B' Certificate (Red), he could see no reason why the requirements of JM1 and CH2 (for example, the ability to spot, knowledge of the Ops Manual or the ability to flight line check somebody else) have any bearing on the safety and ability of a parachutist to wear a "hard protective [full face]" helmet.

In addition, Paul also stated that a great number of skydivers already believe (in error) that the current requirement to wear a full face helmet is only a 50 jump limit, not a complete 'B' Certificate (Red). Consequently, he wished to propose that a simple jump number limit, which he felt was proportional to a jumpers' skydiving experience be placed on "hard protective [full face]" helmets. He stated that in his opinion the rule works well within many other skydiving organisations and governing bodies.

Paul had therefore proposed the following change the Operations Manual as follows:

BPA Operation Manual, Section 6 (Equipment), Subparagraph 3.1.3. amend to read:

3.1.3. 'A' Certificate (Red) parachutists with a minimum of 50 descents may wear hard protective helmets acceptable to, and at the discretion of, the CCI.

Paul stated that he believe that this change would keep a minimum experience level required before jumpers start to wear full face helmets, whilst preventing them from inadvertently breaking the rules of the Operations Manual. This was the same jump number requirement as was currently required to gain a 'B' Certificate (Red).

The Chairman reported that an e-mail from Ian Rosenvinge opposing Paul's proposal had been received, a copy of which had been circulated to those present. Ian was able to provide the Committee with further details.

Ian stated that whilst other considerations could be satisfied by jump numbers rather than a 'B' Certificate, one important consideration to retain the current 'B' Certificate ruling is that it actually better facilitated spotting and JM training/qualification which requires verbal communication between the supervisor and the trainee.

Ian also stated that the benefits of the current ruling also give the jumpers the incentive to gain the 'B' Certificate in order to be allowed to wear a full face or soft fronted helmet, whilst assisting the identification of sub 'B' certificates holders not necessarily by centre staff but by other jumpers.

This proposal generated a great deal of discussion. A number of CCIs present agreed with Paul's proposal as they saw the requirements for a 'B' Certificate as extra hoops to jump through. Other CCIs present shared Ian's views and they felt that the requirements for jumping a full faced helmet should remain the same.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Paul Hollow and seconded by John Page that the above Paul Hollow's proposal concerning full-faced helmets be accepted

For: 6

Against: 6

Abstentions: 0

In accordance with normal practice, because of a tied vote, the status quo remained the same regarding the rules for full-faced helmets and thus the proposal was not carried.

Not Carried

7. **INSTRUCTOR COURSES**

The Chairman reported there had been two Instructor courses held since the last meeting:

a. **Tandem/AFF Instructor Course – Target Skysports**

The Association wished to thank Target Skysports - Hibaldstow for hosting the Course, from the 28th – 30th April 2008. The report was for information only.

b. **Instructor Course 2/2008 – Skydive Strathallan**

The Association wished to thank Skydive Strathallan for hosting the Course, which ran from the 12th – 21st May 2008.

There was one recommendation from the Course Examiners that required STC acceptance:

‘That Justin Everitt and Andy Hutchison be given six-month extensions to their Category System Basic Instructor ratings.’

It was proposed by Mike Rust and seconded by Stuart Meacock that the above recommendation be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Chairman stated that he was still encountering problems with incorrect paperwork on Instructor Courses. He urged CCIs to ensure that their potential candidates had all the correct documentation in place prior to their attendance on a Course, as this would avoid candidates not being permitted on the Course.

8. **PERMISSIONS**

There were no Permission requests for this meeting.

9. **A.O.B.**

- a. A letter from Ray Armstrong had been circulated with the agenda stating that he currently had a student from Poland whom was working towards his FAI ‘A’ Certificate and needed to finish off work on his CH1, after which he would be working towards his ‘B’ Certificate, which included CH2 and JM1.

Ray’s letter also stated that the student was very capable, who had proven his abilities in both freefall and canopy control, but he did not speak, read or write English. This presented a problem with administering the CH1, CH2 and JM1 tests.

Ray had asked STC as to how he should progress this matter.

Following some discussion on this matter, it was proposed by Mike Rust and seconded by Pete Sizer that Ray be permitted to employ the services of interpreter for administering the CH1, CH2 and JM1 tests.

Carried Unanimously

- b. Ian Rosenvinge advised those present that he was considering making a proposal to STC at the next meeting regarding AFF Level 8 being removed from AFF progression, but remain a requirement for Category 8.

Following some consideration by the Committee on this matter, there was little support expressed from those present for Ian's suggested proposal.

- c. As there were no longer any Clubs teaching ab-initio Students on round or aeroconical canopies, the Technical Officer asked for STC's opinion as to whether he should submit a proposal for the next STC meeting, that the Operations Manual be amended to remove references to 'Traditional' parachuting and that Student Parachutist may only parachute using ram-air main canopies.

Following some consideration, no objections were raised by those present to this.

- d. The Chairman advised those present that Ronnie O'Brien was retiring his Instructor ratings this year after 40 years as a BPA Instructor. The Chairman and members of STC wished Ronnie all the best for the future.

Dates of next Meeting: Thursday 31 July 2008
 BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester
 at 7.00 p.m

9 June 2008

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