

## History of the Australian Paragliding Open

Contributed by Ian Ladyman

### Beginning:

Parachutists have ridge soared our coastal cliffs since 1982, Paragliding with purpose built Paragliders became popular when Rick Wilson, Heinze Gloor, Phill Teese, Ian Ladyman and Brian Webb began instructing Paragliding around 1989. The HGFA took us under their umbrella and Australia was represented at the first Paragliding World Championships (recognised by CIVIL and FAI) in Austria by Ian Ladyman, Rick Wilson and Bill Kernott. Brian Webb, Heinze Gloor and Ian Ladyman as members of a HGFA Paragliding committee formulated operating procedures for Australian Paragliding.

### 1990

The first Australian National Championships were organised by Heinze Gloor and Stewart Andrews with the help of Kosciusko Alpine Paragliding Club. The launch for the first days task was from the summit of Mount Kosciusko. 20 Australians and 8 international Pilots completed 3 tasks which included maxi-time in the air, speed to the landing, some turn points in a very small cats cradle and target accuracy bonus's. Theyry Barboux flying an ITV Saphir contrasted greatly with some Australians flying very old glider designs. Ian Ladyman and Heinze Gloor Fought over first Placed Australian. The event was filmed by Television and screened a few weeks later. The first instructors seminar for Paragliding followed the competition.

### 1991

Brian Webb hosted the 91 Nationals at Bright. 30 pilots competed in five thermalling cross country tasks using the Hang Gliding competition manual rules. Open distance or tasks of a few kilometre's down wind were set. Target accuracy was no longer included. Pilots with experience from thermalling hang gliders contrasted with those new to the sport. Bernie O'Reilly, Ian Ladyman, Rob Schroettner and Tony Armstrong filled the top Australian positions.

Four Paragliding pilots Brian Webb, Shaun Keane, David DeGunzburg and Ted Jenkins entered the Hang Gliding Flatland competition.

### 1992

Charly Fellay organised the Nationals at the mount Cole area. Good thermalling tasks of 30 to 60 km down wind were set. When the wind changed direction pilots could not penetrate. Gliders were capable of approximately 40km/hr at a glide of 6 to 1. Yves Gilliand, Cameron Young and Rob Schroetner filled the top Australian Positions.

### 1993

Brian Webb won the Victorian Open and a new pilot Fred Gungl came into the sport. The Nationals at Mount Cole were plagued by strong winds and with only two significant rounds the competition went to Jurgen Stock. The Australian positions were Cameron Young ahead of Bernie O'Reilly and Ron McKenzie.

Geoff Robertson organised the first Paragliding flatland competition at Forbes. Good weather allowed several pilots to make unofficial Australian records with Xavier Murillo flying 155km in open distance and several

achieving 73km declared goal. Germany's Harry Buntz and Xavier Murillo from France placed ahead of Australia's Ian Ladyman, Scott Stenson and Ron McKenzie.

## 1994

The Nationals were introduced to Corryong where 40 pilots enjoyed six good tasks approximately 30 km in length. Japanese pilot Osamu Koeda won with Cameron Young, Bernie O'Reilly and Fred Gungl best placed Australians.

The weather for the flatlands compounded with stricter air space restrictions at Forbes reduced the performance this year. Phil Brown won ahead of Fred Gungl.

## 1995

The flatlands moved to Hay following after the Hang gliding Wetlands. New Australian distance records were set during the competition. Wally Taws flew 160km infringing airspace to set the unofficial Australian on Australian soil record. A French pilot earlier this season flew 205km. Ian Ladyman claimed the official record of 133km. Ondra Dupal won ahead of Fred Gungl. Richard Walbec placed 3rd after he withdrew to assist with the recovery of Eric Poulet who was injured after a serious collapse streamed for several hundred meters.

The Open moved to Manilla with Red Jack used as the main launch which allowed for open window starts. 71 pilots flew 3 valid rounds with Charly Fellay winning ahead of Wally Taws and Bernie O'Reilly.

## 1996

The largest calendar for PG ladder competitions included Killarney, Manilla and Bright.

The flatlands returned to Hay for 4 rounds with no records set this season.

The open at Bright was combined with the first Trans-Tasman Challenge (team event with New Zealand) and also a pre-World Cup of paragliding. A new turn point checking display ensured thorough sector requirements were adhered to after several scores were reduced by bad photos. Harry Buntz from Germany Won ahead of Rob Schroettner and Fred Gungl.

A look at the top 10 ladder pilots this season includes Fred Gungl in first place after top scoring 5 of the competitions. Then Ian Ladyman, Rob Schroettner, Andrew Kemp, Ron McKenzie, Brian Webb, Warick Taws, Gary Stevenson, Bernie O'Reilley and Cameron Young.

## 1997

The flatlands moved to Birchip and the open to Manilla. Ross Johnston from New Zealand won ahead of Fred Gungl and Lee Scott.

The top ten on the ladder changed to also include the newer pilots of Peter Bower, Enda Murphy and David Mills.