

A lot of training has gone at their home drop zones and it all comes down to a few days of 4-Way in a single location. It was a hot, exciting and anything goes kind of competition. So without further adieu, congratulations!!

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This year we have 8 Freestyle teams (the most teams in about a decade). I got the opportunity to sit down with a unique fellow from Arizona who too loves this discipline I like to call, gymnastics without a floorboard.

BRYCE WITCHER

Home DZ: Skydive Arizona

Jumps: 2300

Event: Freestyle Open

Car Accidents: 2

Skydiving Accidents: 1

Cutaways: 1

What attracts you to freestyle?

- It's pretty yet so challenging. It's the search of the perfect skydive; you almost reach it, but you never get there. It's like a good game of SODUKU.

What's the challenge of freestyle?

- It's working with your teammate. It's not all about the camera flyer or the performer. It's a constant challenge.

Why don't more people do freestyle?

- More people should try it. The compulsory moves look impossible, but they're not. I think some people are afraid of messing up (setting up standards) and a lot of discipline is involved.

How did you learn freestyle?

- I figured most of it out myself. I have some 'sticking-point' days when I can ask Omar, Betsy, Yoko or even Craig some pointers.

What accomplishments have you done and what are your goals?

- 2006 World Meet - Gera, Germany - Bronze (with Bronze Altimeters)

- After Nationals I want to go as far as I can go. I want to compete at a World Games and I want skydiving to be in the Olympics.



There are many aspects involved with our sport's organization, USPA and many people who help make this a great sport. Let's me one person whose been a part of USPA for a long time helping skydiving evolve.

CHRIS NEEDLES

Home DZ: Skydive Orange

Jumps: 3 to 4,000

USPA Title: Executive Director

What do you do exactly as our Executive Director?

- I am the Chief Staff Executive - I run the Head Quarters Staff.

USPA just moved, how was this for you?

- The move has been great. We hope people come to see it. It was designed by skydivers for skydivers. It has a 6 foot logo at the entrance, it's next to the interstate for easy access and it's here to serve our members.

What are you doing here at Nationals?

- Well, I haven't missed a Nationals in 12 years. This is the first time in 10 years that I'm not competing. I am here to promote skydiving in the media.

Shout Out - "Hi to D 2766.

Former US Team Member and also my wife."

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SHOUT OUTS

"Yipee! SDC Furies! You ladies ROCK!!! Congrats on a Great Meet!!! 3rd Place!!! Yee-haw!"

- Mr. & Mrs. Cheese

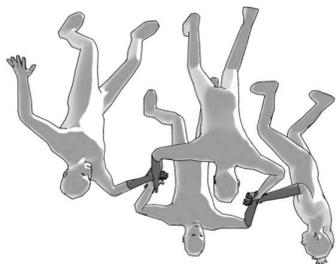
Want to give a 'shout out'? Want to tell me about your favorite team? Have any questions or ideas for the Spotlight? Please e-mail me SDASpotlight@Yahoo.com or see me around the DZ!!

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Corrections - Yesterday I interviewed Kevin Keenan from Florida, in his interview (and again today) he reminded me an important note for his interview that I will mention here... he is NOT an athlete. Thanks Kevin!! You rock!!

VRW 4-WAY – What does 2007 have in store?

by eric deren



◆ VRW 4-Way will make its debut this year as a USPA Nationals exhibition event. There are ten teams projected to compete. The goal is to add 4-way as a medal event in the 2007 USPA nationals.

◆ The current VRW dive pool has enough formations to complete four rounds before formations are used again. After this year's USPA nationals, 10 new formations will be added to the dive pool. The new formations will mainly be intermediate skill level moves with a couple advanced moves. The goal is to keep the dive pool achievable for new VRW teams but challenging for experienced flyers.

◆ A VRW 8-Way dive pool is under development and will be unveiled at this year's USPA nationals after the 4-way competition is complete. There will also be an impromptu 8-way meet with all of the 4-way team members using the new 8-way dive pool.

◆ VRW engineering and speed will continue to improve as more teams get involved and share their ideas and creativity. VRW will continue growing as more teams train, compete and push this new discipline.

The test event will take place this Friday, October 27th!!

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WEATHER

(According to www.Weather.com)

TODAY 10.24.06

- * Mostly Cloudy
- * Now 73F
- * Winds - WNW 2 mph

TOMORROW 10.25.06

- * Mostly Sunny
- * High 82F; Low 54F
- * Winds: SW 6 mph to NNE 4 mph
- * SUNRISE: 6:38 a.m.
- * SUNSET: 5:42 p.m.

THURSDAY 10.26.06

- * Sunny
- * High 82F; Low 50F
- * Winds: NNE 9 mph to N 6 mph
- * SUNRISE: 6:39 a.m.
- * SUNSET: 5:41 p.m.

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It's all on
www.OmniSkore.com

Artistic Events - A Personal Story

by melissa nelson

For many previous years the Artistic Events, which include Freestyle, Freefly and Skysurf have been the least attended events at Nationals. For that matter, at local drop zones. What's the interest in these sports? Why are they the least attended?

I feel that I can speak for most AE competitors that it was easy to fall in love with freestyle, freefly or skysurf after watching a captivating and visually aesthetic routine. It's like poetry in motion - it's just beautiful.

After attending the USPA Board of Directors competition committee the issue was addressed that there are so few competitors in these events. USPA came up with combining Men & Women and if that less than 3 teams participate, the event will be banished (PLEASE see www.USPA.org for complete details on these rules. This article was written on a deadline and many BOD's were busy at the time of printing).

So what's the interest even at all and why hasn't these disciplines grown? I spoke with a few AE competitors and they add it's a challenging discipline. Camera flyers have to compensate for dramatic speed changes all while keeping the performer up close and in frame. It's hard to spread the word as it's on each person's own time and dime. And when people try it, they'll either fall in love straight away or they'll hang it up. There isn't much in the way

of a structured course in learning Skysurfing or Freestyle as there is in Freely.

Even though there is a guideline for AE Events, the judging is still subjective. As these are 3-dimensional disciplines and are almost unlimited to moves and camera angles, when you are doing "new" moves or old moves with flare, there isn't a consistent way to judge. And it's then all in the judges hands. Some may like your routine, others may not. And of course if you get a low score, this will put a bad taste in your mouth.

It's easy to lose the drive in these disciplines as there is not much support. However there are a few who've held on to carry on the torch to help others learn, to help increase their learning curve and to share their hard work so others don't have to go through the lengthy trial and error period that may turn many off.

On the other side, competition gives those who love the challenge a drive to want to get better, learn new tricks, find new camera angles and be creative and involved in the artistic impression. It also seems to have opened up the Freely event to a whole new generation of competitors since the previous winners and competitors are now doing 4-Way VRW.

I believe Artistic Events are a bridge to the gap in our sport. Like CRW, not everyone likes to do it (however may try it), but everyone loves to watch it.

I know for myself that Dale Stuart and Stephania Martenego

(freestylers) and Eric Fredet and Patrick DeGayardon (skysurfers) are still ahead of their time having shown such beautiful and amazing skills in the air. Thanks to those that have gone before us and for those today paving the way for the future.

There are 8 Freestyle teams this year. The most in a VERY long time! Go Teams!

If you have ideas on how to improve judging, rules, etc. for Artistic Competition, have a way to promote these disciplines, write up your ideas and send them to our Competition Committee on the USPA Board of Directors (www.USPA.org) who meet twice a year to discuss such issues brought up by members.

Thank you to Lawrence Heltzer, Karl and Meriah Eakins helping me write this article. Many of their ideas and feelings have been expressed in this article.

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SPECTATORS

By Kim Pothuisje

We are being watched! They're coming in droves to see in person what they're hearing about on the radio and are watching on the news. Their reactions range from gasps to applause and some are even asking questions. Spectators are curious about what we're doing and they are entertained by our landings...some landings are more entertaining than others, of course.

They are showing an interest in what we do and have taken the time to come out and watch. It may seem like such a small

thing, but taking the time to help them understand what they're seeing is huge. They watch the planes go up, they see parachutes open, and they see us land without any idea what happens in between.

It is in our best interest to include them in our world. We don't have to give them a full ground school on the how's and why's of skydiving, but some basic information can go a long way into helping them understand what they're seeing. They will carry these little nuggets of knowledge back to their friends and families. If we have done it right, they will speak well of their experience. The people who came to watch may never get the skydiving itch, but possibly a friend, co-worker, or family member who hears them talking about their day watching the skydivers will.

Helping spectators feel welcome and interacting with them on a personal level will begin to show them what skydiving is all about. We know what skydiving is, what it means to each and every one of us, and why it's so important to us. We love what we do and what better way to give back than to share it with someone. A few minutes of our time can give them a glimpse into our life and help them understand why we "jump out of perfectly good airplanes."

