

ParaToys Hosts The 2004 Powered Paragliding Fly-In



The weather was perfect for paragliding – calm wind and 65° temperature.



A contestant maneuvers for the power-off precision spot landing.

ParaToys.com, a powered paragliding flight school in Thousand Oaks, California, hosted the 2004 Powered Paragliding Fly-in and Convention February 5-8 at Vista Del Mar Estates. Vista Del Mar Estates are on the west shore of the Salton Sea in south-central California.

One hundred sixty-six pilots participated in the fly-in, also attended by several hundred spectators and numerous vendors. Israeli pilot, Arnon Lufi, won the flying competition with a Skycruiser sc100 paramotor and a ParaToys paraglider. Along with 14 other pilots, he demonstrated supreme piloting skills as he kicked flexible poles, dragged his feet in the sand, dropped bombs, and performed precision power-off landings.

The Salton Sea is a famous recreational area not far from the Mexican border. It is a unique lake formed between 1905 and 1906 when the Colorado River flooded before the Bolder Dam was constructed. Over the years minerals have been deposited in the lake so that now it is about 25 percent saltier than the ocean. The lake is 40 miles long and 17 miles wide and is situated 265 feet below sea level. With the mountains surrounding it, the lake provides a spectacular backdrop to desert surroundings.

The Salton Sea is ideal for paragliding because it dampens wind gusts and thermals, providing a steady light wind throughout the day and creating perfect conditions for flying lightweight aircraft. Pilots were able to fly all four days, except for the afternoon of February 5, when an unusual 20-knot wind blew in from the north. Although the Salton Sea is known for 120 degree temperatures in summer, these February days held a perfect 65 degrees.

Seminars were held in the beautiful Estates clubhouse located a few hundred feet south of the launch zone. Seminar hosts were Alan Chucalate, Chris Bowles, Dave Beres, Jeff Goin, David Cook, Nick Scholtes, and Mo Shelton who respectively gave presentations on reserve parachutes, engine repairs, propeller maintenance, chart reading, thermaling, weather briefings, and tandem flight. The flying events and some seminars were filmed by Paul and Loretta Hamilton who will create a video for their company, Adventure Productions.

In addition to ParaToys.com, the event was sponsored by Red Bull, Mojosgear.com, World Talk Radio, kitchencabinetdepot.com, Paraliteusa, the USPPA, and the Pikes Peak Powered Paragliding Club. A dozen vendors displayed their wares, including Paraliteusa Skycruisers, Wills Wing, Macpara Paragliders, SD Paramotors, Apco, Action Paragliders, Fresh Breeze, Silex, Flyproducts Paramotors, and Aifer paramotors.

Spectators were offered lessons on kiting and given introductory flights in both tandem foot-launched powered paragliders and wheel-launched paragliders. Mike Masterson, from Huntington Beach, provided a towed launch with his unique battery-powered winch.

Several trikes joined the fly-in, some landing on the beach with tundra tires and others utilizing a nearby road. Mike Dowdall was present with his Mosquito foot-launched hang glider. A Radne Raket 120 engine is attached to the rear of the hang glider harness, providing 15 horsepower for level-ground launches. The engine can be shut down and the prop feathered in flight for power-off soaring.



Contestant and flight instructor Mike Masterson prepares to launch.



Contestants strive to keep their canopies inflated in the "kiting war" contest.

The flying contests consisted of several informal events and a USPPA-sanctioned competition. The informal contests included kiting wars, a two-man forward kiting race, and a log walk. The USPPA competition, won by Arnon Lufi, was composed of five tasks: Cloverleaf, Foot Drag, Touch and Go, Bomb Drop, and a Spot Landing. (See page 21 for a description of the five tasks.)

A highlight of the fly-in occurred when a powered paraglider flew overhead and dropped one hundred mini-parachutes (a few inches in diameter). As they floated down they drifted with the air currents, twisting left and right, slowing down and speeding up in their descent. Meanwhile, dozens of spectators waited below, ready to catch as many of the mini-parachutes as possible in order to win a prize. The lucky winner was Mike Willet, who won a \$5,000 Skycruiser paramotor, given by ParaToys.com and Paraliteusa.com.

Nearby residents of Salton City were enthusiastic about the fly-in and extremely hospitable. They were so intrigued by the flight demonstrations and pleased with the courteous participants that they invited ParaToys.com to host the fly-in on a regular basis at Vista Del Mar Beach. Bob Armond, owner of ParaToys.com, is to be congratulated on a friendly, fun, safe and very successful fly-in.

FIVE TASKS COMPRISE THE USPPA COMPETITIVE EVENT

The USPPA competitive event consists of five tasks, each one flown immediately after the other in one continuous flow.

1. Cloverleaf
2. Foot Drag
3. Touch and Go
4. Bomb Drop
5. Spot Landing

Cloverleaf

The cloverleaf is a low-level precision task in which the pilot maneuvers around a cloverleaf-shaped course. The course is marked by flexible "sticks" about six feet tall and placed about 150 feet apart. A stick is placed at 2:00 o'clock, 4:00 o'clock, 8:00 o'clock and 10:00 o'clock positions, and a single stick is placed exactly in the middle of the other four sticks.

The objective is for the pilot to fly an x-pattern (or cloverleaf) between the parameter sticks. As he flies the cloverleaf pattern, he must kick at the center stick each time he crosses the middle of the cloverleaf.

The task begins when the pilot flies up the middle of the cloverleaf and kicks the center stick. He then turns left and flies around the stick positioned at 10:00 o'clock. After passing the 10:00 o'clock stick he straightens out, flies to the middle of the cloverleaf, kicks the center stick, continues flying to the 4:00 o'clock stick, makes a right turn around the 4:00 o'clock stick, flies back to the middle of the cloverleaf, kicks the center stick again, turns right, flies to the 2:00 o'clock stick, makes a right turn around it, flies to the center stick again and kicks it, flies to the 8:00 o'clock stick, makes a left turn and flies around it. Then he flies back to the center stick to complete the course.

The sequence is shown below, with the center stick (x) being kicked between each circuit around the perimeter sticks.

1	3
	X
4	2

The pilot must stay below 10 meters (33 feet) throughout the flight. He is assigned 100 points each time he kicks the center stick and receives additional points based on the amount of time it takes to complete the cloverleaf. If he touches the ground at any time during the event he receives a zero score.

Foot Drag

The pilot flies around the same sticks as the cloverleaf, but this time he flies low enough to drag at least one foot on the ground during the circuit. Each time a gate (or stick) is passed with a foot dragging, 100 points are scored. Each time both feet leave the ground, 20 points are subtracted. The pilot receives a zero if he falls or if the wing touches the ground.

Touch and Go

The maneuver is performed under power. The pilot lands as close as possible to a designated bulls eye, then runs exactly 10 steps before taking off again. For traveling exactly 10 steps, 100 points are awarded. For each step over or under ten, 20 points are deducted. Additional steps are awarded for making the first ground contact close to the bulls-eye.

Bomb Drop

The pilot flies over the bulls eye at 30 feet or higher and drops a lightweight bomb. The target consists of three rings. The score is 100 points for a bulls-eye, 50 points for hitting inside the inner ring, 30 points for the middle ring, and 15 points for hitting inside the outer ring. The dimensions of the bulls-eye and three rings are: bulls-eye 25 centimeters, inner ring two meters radius, middle ring four meters, outer ring 6.5 meters.

Spot Landing

This landing is performed power-off. The pilot flies over the landing spot at least 300 feet above the ground, shuts off the motor and lands as close as possible to the bulls-eye. The target rings are the same size as the bomb drop. Points awarded are bulls-eye 250, inner ring 175, middle ring 100, outer ring 50 points.