

WAKE UP

I HAVE RECENTLY RETURNED FROM A 6 MONTH STAY IN THE U.S. WHILST I WAS THERE I NOTICED A TREND IN THE INCIDENT REPORTS FOR LOW TURN FATALITIES, THE VICTIMS HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY WARNED ABOUT THEIR BEHAVIOUR UNDER CANOPY. UNFORTUNATELY THE WARNINGS WERE IGNORED WITH FATAL RESULTS. FROM WHAT I CAN GATHER ABOUT THE RECENT LOW TURN FATALITY IN THE UK THERE WERE SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES.

IN VIEW OF THIS I WISH TO APPEAL TO ANYONE CONSIDERING SWOOP LANDINGS THAT THEY DO NOT ATTEMPT IT WITHOUT SOME GROUND SCHOOLING & COACHING. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO APPEAL TO ALL CHIEF INSTRUCTORS THAT THEY DO NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO ATTEMPT SWOOP LANDINGS WITHOUT COACHING & THAT THIS IS STRONGLY ENFORCED. I WOULD FURTHER LIKE TO APPEAL TO ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN WARNED ABOUT THEIR BEHAVIOUR UNDER CANOPY, PARTICULARLY SWOOPING, THAT THEY HEED THE WARNINGS. THERE IS A VERY GOOD CHANCE THAT THE WARNING HAS COME FROM SOMEONE WHO HAS A BETTER PERSPECTIVE OF THE SWOOP THAN THE CANOPY PILOT IN QUESTION & HAS SEEN THAT THE CORNER IS BEING CUT. WAKE UP, STOW YOUR EGO & LISTEN TO THIS FREE ADVICE.

IT TAKES A LONG LONG TIME TO BECOME PROFICIENT ENOUGH AT FLYING A CANOPY TO ATTEMPT SWOOPING, TRYING TO TAKE SHORT CUTS CAN BE FATAL, WAY TOO MANY VICTIMS HAVE PROVED THIS TO BE TRUE. THERE IS A LOT OF PREPARATION THAT MUST BE MADE BEFORE ATTEMPTING ANY KIND OF TURNING APPROACH. STRONG OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS & GOOD ALTITUDE AWARENESS UNDER CANOPY ARE BOTH ESSENTIAL. LOTS OF PRACTISE & EXPERIMENTATION AT ALTITUDE IS VITAL. DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE HOW MUCH PREPARATION GOES INTO SAFE SWOOPING.

EVERY SWOOPER NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND THAT SOONER OR LATER WE WILL TURN TOO LOW, THAT IS GUARANTEED, ALL SWOOPERS DO IT FROM TIME TO TIME BUT THE GOOD ONES REALISE IT EARLY & ONLY HAVE TO DO MINOR WORK TO REGAIN THE SAFETY MARGIN. UNFORTUNATELY THERE ARE MANY SWOOPERS THAT USE THE MID RANGE OF THEIR URGENT RECOVERY ALL THE TIME BECAUSE THEY TURN TOO LOW. THIS MEANS THAT APPROXIMATELY 50% OF THEIR SAFETY MARGIN IS ALREADY USED UP. THEY ARE NOT ONLY ENDANGERING THEMSELVES THEY ARE ALSO SETTING A BAD EXAMPLE OF HOW SWOOPING SHOULD BE DONE. IF YOU NEED TO USE TOGGLE INPUT TO GET BACK ONTO A SAFE GLIDE ANGLE THEN DO IT, THE SOONER THE BETTER, BUT REALISE THAT THIS MEANS YOU ARE TURNING TOO LOW & YOU ARE IN THE CORNER, WHICH MEANS YOU ARE IN DANGER. WAKE UP.

THE WHOLE POINT OF SWOOPING A CANOPY IS TO CREATE EXTRA SPEED, IF YOU ARE TURNING FROM AN ALTITUDE THAT REQUIRES YOU TO APPLY BRAKES TO PULL THE CANOPY OUT OF THE DIVE YOU ARE SLOWING THE CANOPY DOWN. WHICH MEANS THERE WAS VERY LITTLE POINT TO PERFORMING THE MANOEUVRE IN THE FIRST PLACE. IF YOU DON'T WANT ALL THE EXTRA SPEED GAINED FROM SWOOPING STICK TO STRAIGHT IN APPROACHES, THEY ARE VERY COOL. IF YOU THINK THAT YOU HAVE TO SWOOP TO GET A DECENT LANDING YOU PROBABLY SHOULD NOT BE JUMPING THE CANOPY YOU HAVE.

IF YOU DO SWOOP I WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND THE USE OF AN ACCURATE ALTIMETER TO HELP YOU ASSESS ALTITUDE LOSS DURING YOUR HIGH ALTITUDE TRAINING & AS A DOUBLE CHECK JUST PRIOR TO MAKING A TURNING APPROACH. PERSONALLY I USE ONE ALL THE TIME BECAUSE IT HELPS ME BE MORE CONSISTENT & IT GIVES ME A PRECISE MEASUREMENT WHICH MAKES IT EASIER TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS IF NECESSARY ON LATER JUMPS. DO REMEMBER THAT THE PRIORITY UNDER CANOPY IS OBSERVATION OF TRAFFIC & LANDING SAFELY.

I ALSO WISH TO ADD THAT SWOOPING TANDEM IS COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY & SHOULD BE BANNED IMMEDIATELY. TANDEM PASSENGERS DO NOT NEED THE EXTRA BUZZ & IT'S RIDICULOUS TO ENDANGER THEM FOR THE SAKE OF SATIFYING THE TANDEM MASTERS EGO. IF YOUR TANDEM CANOPY NEEDS MORE SPEED TO CREATE ENOUGH LIFT FOR A GENTLE LANDING YOU PROBABLY NEED A NEWER CANOPY.

COMPETITIVE SWOOPING

ANYONE CONSIDERING ENTERING A SWOOPING COMPETITION NEEDS TO UNDERSTANDS THAT IT IS VERY DIFFERENT TO SWOOPING THE DZ. THE ADDED PRESSURE OF GETTING INTO A POSITION TO MAKE THE GATE & FLY THROUGH THE COURSE REQUIRES PLENTY OF PLANNING & A VERY HIGH DEGREE OF SKILL. TO HAVE A COMPETITION YOU NEED OFFICIALS WHO WILL BE IN VERY CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE COURSE. WE ALSO HOPE TO HAVE SPECTATORS CLOSE ENOUGH TO SEE THE ACTION. THIS IS WHY ONLY EXTREMELY COMPETENT CANOPY PILOTS ARE ALLOWED TO ENTER & WHY QUALIFYING WILL BE MANDATORY.