

Gliding artfully from the mountain directly into the box | Zell am See-Kaprun hosting the 'Paranoia Acrobatixx' World Cup for paragliders

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In Ovid's Greek legend of Icarus, in the skilfully drawn flying machines of Leonardo da Vinci or in the first attempts at flying made by the Wright Brothers - flying has always fascinated mankind. Even today, that 'state of suspense' is one of the last adventures. For some, however, that challenge is still not great enough: for that reason, more than 50 daredevil men and women from all over the world are meeting in Zell am See from 1st to 4th August. Their common objective: determining who is the 'king or queen of the air' at the Paranoia Acrobatixx - one of just four paragliding competitions held by the World Air Sports Federation FAI. Sensational action is guaranteed there, for the pilots in the sky as well as for the spectators on the ground.

It is the third time already for the 'Europa-Sportregion' to be the venue for the international FAI World Glider Aerobatic Championship. With its picturesque Alpine panorama, the region offers the very best prerequisites for impressive hours in the air to all friends of this sport that is all about the 'over-sized air mattress'. When the wind and the weather are at their best between Kitzsteinhorn and Schmittenhöhe, gliders can rise to up to 1,000 metres of altitude at a speed of up to 28 kilometres per hour. And many a holidaymaker has already been able to experience the fascination of 'flying' first-hand in a tandem flight - securely fastened to an experienced pilot or flying instructor by belts.

The 'Paranoia Acrobatixx' competitions call for strong nerves and the absolute control of one's paraglider. The competitors start off right on top of Schmittenhöhe. Their flights then take them from the local mountain through the air down to Lake Zell. It is here that the 'aerobats' have their real 'playing field': the so-called 'box', an area of the lake marked out by buoys. It is above that clearly defined area that the pros show their breathtaking tricks. Their objective is to do the tricks that the jurors have chosen in advance as precisely and as skilfully as possible.

The athletes can increase the number of points they score by e.g. artfully grazing the water surface with their paraglider or by ending their run with a precision landing on a raft right in the middle of the 'box'. The organizers have chosen the position of the flight area with special regard to the spectators - the box is located in the so-called 'Acrobay' right next to the lakeshore in Zell am See.

There can only be one: in a knock-out competition, the paragliders work their way through seven qualifying rounds to the final, the Expression Session. The paragliding acrobats now start out off a helicopter and, alone or in a synchronous flight

together with their partners, show off all their skills. And of course, they all look forward to the winners' ceremony and the big party that are to follow later. Parallel to the competitions, there will be four days of party and varied fringe events. 'Acro Fritz' Dorninger will be in on that, too. When the Austrian pioneer of air sports recounts the story of his great passion, it suddenly becomes very much alive - the fascination of flying like a bird.

You can find more information about the '3rd Paranoia Acrobatixx' at www.acro.cc on the Internet.

General Information:

With its 14,000 beds and two million overnight stays a year, the 'Europa-Sportregion Zell am See-Kaprun' is one of the most important holiday regions in Austria. At any time of the year, the region offers its guests a very varied range of holiday choices. During the summer months it convinces with ideal conditions for all kinds of sports - from golf or walking to biking to water sports. Its special highlight: you can always ski on finest powder snow here - even in warm weather. It is the glacier of Kitzsteinhorn situated at an altitude of 3,000 metres that makes this possible. Visitors of the 'Europa-Sportregion' can quickly and easily reach day-trip destinations like Mount Grossglockner, the mountain reservoirs of Kaprun, or the City of Salzburg where Mozart was born. Moreover, Zell am See-Kaprun offers its guests a unique mixture of events - from great concerts to first-class sports events.

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