



Soaring Achievements

Launching and Tracking

Narrator:

With a glide angle of 40:1, the Discus is more than capable of racing a triangular course and there are several taking part in the race in France. However, getting twenty-two gliders into the air takes time. Let's hear from two of the pilots still waiting for the launch.

Ian Johnston:

Julie, you're flying a Discus today – how do you feel about that?

Julie Angell:

Good. The sky looks very good now and there was some cirrus hanging around high cloud earlier that that seems to be dissipating, and we've got nice cumulus around, generally around the task area, so it's looking good.

Ian Johnston:

So it's a good day for flying this glider?

Julie Angell:

Yes I would think so, yeah. I mean you can only make that decision when you're actually up there but I don't foresee any major problems flying this glider at all.

Ian Johnston:

Well, good luck.

Julie Angell:

Thank you.

Narrator:

Also waiting is glider number 108, an ASH 25, with a performance of 58:1, but that performance suits some days better than others.

Ian Johnston:

Is this a particularly good glider to be flying on today?

Richard Blackmore:

No, because this is a handicap competition, and on days when the tasks are at high speed the gliders with the shorter wing spans actually have a handicap advantage over us effectively. We score out on the days like yesterday when there are long, long glides at best glide angle. It's supposed to all average out in the end but on fast days the small gliders have a definite advantage.

Narrator:

Once you've got them all up into the air the race can commence. Then it's a matter of sitting back and waiting for them to return, but how can you confirm where they went?

Brian Spreckley:

We'll be able to verify the flight from a black box recorder which is carried in the glider and the black box recorder is something like this, and it's a small device which is plugged into a GPS, a global satellite positioning instrument. That records every ten seconds the position of the glider, and the time and the altitude of the glider. We then take the information out of here into a computer, and we then show that information on a screen and it will show us the exact

track of the glider and the exact position at any one time from which we can get the start time, the position at each of the turning points, and the finish time.