



An Introduction to Kite Competition

The following pages attempt to briefly explain the following:

- What STACK UK is and does,
- What the STACK National Championship is,
- How Kite Precision and Ballet competitions are organized, and
- What the trial Multi-kite competition is.

What is STACK?

STACK UK – Sport, Team and Competitive Kiting in the UK – is a voluntary organization that aims to encourage and promote all aspects of sport kite flying.

STACK UK’s web page is at <http://www.stackuk.org>.

In particular STACK promotes:

- Flying with multiple kites,
- Coordinated kite flying with groups of flyers (pairs and teams), and
- Competing with sport kites.

One of the main roles of STACK is to organize sport kite competitions. This includes:

- Assisting local clubs to organize competitions at a local level.
- Helping festivals run informal competitions.
- Organizes and running the UK National Championships.
- Selecting competitors to represent the UK at international competitions.

The main format for sport kite competition is the “Precision and Ballet” competition, more often called IRB competition (as the rules and format are defined by an “International Rule Book”). This format has two components – “precision”, where the flyer must show skill, control and accurate flying including a number of compulsory figures, and “ballet, where the flyer choreographs the kite flight to interpret a piece of music. This is the format used in the National Championship,

and in international competitions. More details are given below, and on the “IRB Competition” page of the STACK UK website.

In recent years another competition form has emerged – the “Tricks Party”. This format is aimed at freestyle flyers – where there is a significant amount of slack line or trick flying. Competitors must demonstrate a number of compulsory tricks, followed by a ballet performance which includes a number of defined tricks. More details are on the “Freestyle Competition” page of the STACK UK website.

This year, for the first time, STACK also intends to run a competition specifically for kite flyers who individually fly two or more sport kites. This competition will be a ballet only competition (no compulsory figures).

In addition to competitions, STACK also organizes training events such as flying days and “boot camps” to introduce people to sport kite competition, and/or improve kite flying skills.

People can support STACKs aims by becoming members. As well as supporting STACK, members also receive kite flying insurance (arranged in conjunction with the British Kite Flying Association). Membership is open to individuals, or families, with a reduced rate for additional family members. More details are available on the “Join” page on the STACK website.

National Championships

STACK UK has run a UK National Championship every year since 1988. The competition is based on the IRB competition format (see below for more information).

The National Championship has separate classes of competition for individuals, pairs and teams, and in each of these there are separate classes for dual line kite flyers and multi-line kite flyers (typically Revolution kites, though any 3 or 4 line kite may be used). A National Champion declared in each of these classes (provided there is a competitor in that class).

There are three skill levels in the National Championship – novice (for competitors competing for the first time), Experienced, and Masters (for competitors who have won at experience level, or are consistently scoring 60% or more). In addition to the main National Champions, Champions may also declared at experienced and novice levels.

The National Championship is based on two or more rounds of competition. Competition rounds may take place at kite festivals or at special competition events. Normally the result is based on the best two results scored by each competitor in each class.

This year two rounds will be held at a competition event over the weekend of 13th – 14th June 2015 at Dunstable Downs.

In addition to the IRB format competition, a single round Tricks party competition will be held to determine the STACK UK Freestyle National Champion.

As mentioned above, at this year’s National Championship weekend there will also be a trial of a ballet only competition for individual kites flying two or more sport kites simultaneously.

IRB Format Competition

An IRB format competition is one run according to the rules laid out in the International Sport Kite Rule Book. The international rule book and the compulsory figures book can be found at <http://www.worldsportkite.com/irbc-rules/>.

A competition consists of two parts (called disciplines), Precision and Ballet.

The precision discipline consists of 3 compulsory figures and a technical routine. The figures are selected from the IRB compulsory figures book, and there are separate figures for dual and

multi-line competitors, and for individuals, pairs and teams (of 3, 4 or 5 flyers). Figures are marked on how well the flying matches the figure. The technical routine is flown after the figures. It should show evidence of planning and flow, and showcase the technical skills of the competitor. It is marked on execution – how well it is flown – and content – including variety and technical difficulty.

The ballet is a routine which is choreographed to a piece of music. It is marked on how well it is choreographed – that is how well it fits with or interprets the music – and on execution – how well it is flown. (In ballet, teams are be 3 or more kites- so 6 is allowed.)

There is a slightly shorter form of IRB competition called “Mix Discipline”. This format drops the precision technical routine, so that competitors fly three compulsory figures and then a ballet (so it mixes precision and ballet). This saves time in the arena. This year’s UK National Championships will use this mix discipline format.

The competition takes place in an arena (approximately 110m square). Competitors are invited into the arena by the Field Director who is in charge of the arena. The field director will try to stay near the competitor during the entire performance (*though maybe not if you go for a 360*).

The arena is marked by a rope boundary, called the red boundary. This is for the safety of the audience. Competitors may not fly over the red boundary, or touch it with their body at any time (except when entering or leaving the arena). Anyone violating the red boundary is disqualified. An inner boundary – “the yellow” – is marked on the ground in the arena, about 3m in from the red; this is to help competitors avoid the red boundary. The field director will try to warn you when you reach a yellow (though this is not guaranteed, as sometime things can happen fast).

Also in the arena will be the Judges – usually between 3 and 5 of them, who will record scores for the performance. They will try to stay roughly behind the competitor, so as to get a similar perspective on the kite.

In addition, two Line Judges sit in two corners of the arena. They watch the boundaries and will try to warn the field director if a kite passes the yellow, or the red, boundary.

Each competitors is allowed a set-up time to get ready and to fly a bit to test the wind (set-up times are defined in the rule book).

Each competitor may have Ground Crew to help with setting up the kite (or recovery from crashes). Individual and pairs competitors can have two ground crew, teams may have one per team member.

Competitors wait for the field director to tell them the judges are ready before each component of a performance (a figure, a routine or a ballet). They then call “IN” at the start of each component, and “OUT” at the end. (Strictly, this is optional for ballet, if you don’t call anything the start and end of music are taken as in and out.)

Minimum and maximum times for technical routines and ballets are defined in the rule book – for example minimum length for a ballet is 2 minutes and the maximum length for pair or team ballets is 5 minutes.

Minimum and maximum wind speeds for competition are also in the rule book – minimum wind speed is approximately 2.5 mph and the maximum is about 28 mph (though for novices this is relaxed to 4 mph and 19 mph approximately). A competitor can request a wind check from the field director before calling in, or at any point up to minimum time in a routine or ballet. If the field director finds the wind is below minimum or above maximum, the competitor can choose to stop and restart after a short recess.

Competitors in the National Championships need to hold a STACK Competition Licence. The competition licence exists to help cover the costs of running the National Championship (the

main cost being the PA hire charge). The licence fee depends on the number of disciplines being competed, and there are discounts for new (novice) competitors, and junior (under 16) competitors.

Multi-kite Competition

This year STACK intend to trial a competition specifically for individual kites flying two or more kites simultaneously. This will be a ballet only competition (*as trying to make one person fly a pair or team figure with multiple kites seems a bit harsh*). In all other aspects it will be run in the same way as an IRB competition. All set-up times and minimum and maximum ballet lengths will be as for the team competition. Wind limits will be the same as for novices (*in deference to the fact that flying 2 or 3 kites is hard*).