

Subject:	PAPER FROM UK REGARDING INDOOR SKYDIVING AND IPC	Annex No. -	21
Author:	British Parachute Association & John Smyth MVO, IPC Delegate, UK	Agenda ref. -	11.3
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British Parachute Association

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FAI International Parachuting Commission IPC Plenary Meeting 2015

Agenda item

IPC & indoor skydiving

John Smyth MVO

UK Delegate to IPC

For and on behalf of British Parachute Association Ltd

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We are British Parachute Association (BPA), the National Governing Body for Sport Parachuting in the UK, and a member of the UK National Airsport Control, the Royal Aero Club of the UK.
- 1.2 Through our Delegate John Smyth MVO and Alternate Delegate John Hitchen, we respectfully request this letter to be included as a supporting paper to an item on the agenda for the IPC Plenary Meeting in 2015. The subject of the agenda item is 'IPC & indoor skydiving'.
- 1.3 **We wish IPC kindly to clarify arrangements for the governance and regulation of indoor skydiving.**

2 Clarification of process

- 2.1 We seek clarification of whether IPC Delegates, before or after the IPC's decision to include indoor skydiving as coming within its scope have, engaged in a full consultation process on the consequences of this decision with the national bodies they represent. We fully recognise that - as in our own case - these consequences may have come to light only after the decision was made, as a result of our seeking to put in place arrangements for the 1st World Cup in Indoor Skydiving.
- 2.2 Initially, we considered that our involvement in indoor skydiving was simply an issue of selecting a team to represent our nation at the 1st World Cup in Indoor Skydiving. But then we realised that we were constitutionally not in a position to select such a team. It became clear to us that we were faced not with a matter of selection, but with a far more fundamental, constitutional issue - relating to the governance and regulation of indoor skydiving.

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- 2.3 On reviewing the audit trail of IPC back papers, it appears to us that indoor skydiving has come to be under IPC's wing because of the undoubted synergy, from the competitor's perspective, between indoor skydiving and outdoor skydiving, and the boost that indoor skydiving can give to skydiving overall. We can see that the passion for competitive skydiving - both indoor and outdoor - has enthused IPC to re-define the term 'skydiving' to embrace indoor skydiving.
- 2.4 **BPA fully accepts and endorses the value of indoor skydiving as a training aid for outdoor skydiving and an appetite whetter/recruiter for outdoor skydiving. We also accept the recognition of indoor skydiving as an event - and even more than that, a sport - in its own right.**
- 2.5 However, there is we believe another important perspective to consider. In our review of the paperwork leading up to IPC's decision to recognise indoor skydiving as an IPC activity, we have been able to find no reference to this other perspective. This is the **governance and regulation of indoor skydiving.**

3 Representation of indoor skydiving

- 3.1 We raise the following issue, necessarily from a UK perspective as BPA is the National Governing Body for Sport Parachuting in the UK. However, our informal liaison with colleagues in other sport parachuting nations leads us to believe that at least some of the points we set out below may apply, in whole or in part, to sister skydiving (sport parachuting) bodies in other nations. Therefore, we believe there to be a valid international dimension to the issues we set out below, and that justifies our calling for them to be considered at the IPC Plenary Meeting.
- 3.2 We ask Delegates from other nations kindly to consult with their own National Airsport Controls or Sport Parachuting National Governing Bodies, in nations where these exist, on the matters raised in this paper. This will ensure that appropriate consideration has been given at national level before this, our present paper, is discussed at IPC - which is important for true representation and good governance.
- 3.3 Although there is a well-documented synergy between indoor skydiving in wind tunnels and outdoor skydiving from the athlete's perspective, we believe that IPC may not fully have considered and discussed the equally significant differences from the perspective of governance and regulation.
- 3.4 Compared with outdoor skydiving / sport parachuting, indoor skydiving uses:
- different technology;
 - different locations (ground-based rather than in the air);
 - neither airspace nor parachuting from aircraft - surely the two most fundamental descriptors of sport parachuting or outdoor skydiving;
 - instructor ratings awarded by different bodies;
 - in the UK, different insurance policies covering different safety and commercial risks.

This means that, when it is viewed from the perspective of governance and regulation, indoor skydiving appears to have the characteristics of a completely different sport.

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- 3.5 IPC's decision to include indoor skydiving has therefore raised some fundamental constitutional issues for us as the UK's National Governing Body for sport parachuting/outdoor skydiving, as set out in 3.6 to 3.13 below.
- 3.6 In the UK, BPA does not regulate indoor skydiving and has therefore has no control over it.
- 3.7 In the UK, BPA does not train or qualify instructors for indoor skydiving and therefore has no authority over them.
- 3.8 In the UK, Indoor Skydiving Operators are not eligible to Affiliate to the BPA. BPA has no regulatory authority over them and does not therefore audit them. BPA does not have the competence to audit wind tunnel operations because it is an entirely different technology with completely different hazards and risks.
- 3.9 In the UK, indoor skydivers do not need to be BPA members. We have no reason to believe that non-skydiving tunnel flyers would wish to be BPA members - or that the UK wind tunnel operators would wish tunnel flyers to be obliged to join BPA.
- 3.10 In the UK, BPA insurance specifically excludes indoor skydiving, and to seek to extend it to do so may impact adversely on BPA members in relation to the cover provided by the BPA insurance policy, or the cost of its premium, or both.
- 3.11 Indoor skydiving competitions in the UK are not run under the authority of BPA.
- 3.12 In the UK, the minimum age to make a sport parachute jump is 16 years, with parent's or guardian's written consent. Most jumpers are aged 18+ (adults). A junior competition category in an indoor skydiving competition would be likely to involve many more young people below the age of majority (in law, children). This opens up a raft of child protection and safeguarding issues, with the associated costs of discharging these responsibilities. (We recognise that the age of majority may vary from one country to another.)
- 3.13 Indoor skydivers, including all under-16 indoor skydivers in the UK, will not be BPA members. Not all of them are likely to be, or to aspire to become, sport parachutists. Yet BPA is an association of sport parachutists.

4 Governance and regulation of indoor skydiving

- 4.1 As stated at 2.4, **BPA fully accepts and endorses the value of indoor skydiving as a training aid for outdoor skydiving and an appetite whetter/recruiter for outdoor skydiving. We also accept the recognition of indoor skydiving as an event - indeed a sport - in its own right.** However, as stated at 3.4, when viewed from the equally significant perspective of governance and regulation - both surely an essential complement to the competitive dimension of any sport - the situation appears to us raise a number of possibly unconsidered and, for our part, unresolved issues.
- 4.2 Operationally, outdoor skydiving has less in common with indoor skydiving than it does with, for example, hang-gliding and paragliding which, in the UK, has its own well-established governing body, British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association.

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- 4.3 BPA believes that IPC's decision to run a tunnel competition (1st World Cup in Indoor Skydiving) through sport parachuting national representative bodies may repay more detailed consideration from the perspectives of (i) good governance, (ii) competence and (iii) risk management because it gives national bodies *responsibility* without the *authority* to govern and regulate the sport of indoor skydiving which we, believe, will inevitably lead to problems.
- 4.5 BPA believes that it has been placed in a difficult position by IPC. Naturally BPA, as a National Governing Body, would normally be expected to follow the lead of our International Governing Body, FAI/IPC. However, BPA regrets that it has been unable to do that on this occasion because we are concerned that IPC may have taken its decision to include indoor skydiving without full consideration of its governance and regulation.
- 4.6 Therefore, we respectfully ask IPC to review, or at least clarify, the position of indoor skydiving as regards international and national governance and regulation in the light of the issues set out in this document (3.6 to 3.13 inclusive). On such an important and fundamental constitutional issue as the scope of our sport, we ask IPC to do this through formal consultation with NACs and relevant skydiving NGBs with a view to reaching a solution that is acceptable not only to IPC, but also to national outdoor skydiving bodies such as ourselves.**
- 4.7 There are, in the back papers associated with IPC's decision to include indoor skydiving in its scope, correspondence from what appear to be representative bodies of indoor skydiving. We are not familiar with the scope, status or constitution of such bodies, but would have thought, *prima facie*, that they may be in a better position than ourselves to develop and put in place mechanisms and structures to select and support teams for indoor skydiving competitions - rather than put the onus on bodies such as ourselves whose constitution and competence covers the operationally entirely distinctive dimension of outdoor skydiving/freefall/sport parachuting.**
- 4.8 Or, if IPC decides that indoor skydiving is to remain in scope to IPC, what arrangements will IPC put in place for representation (Delegates, etc) from that sport - or that side of the sport, if IPC's view is that all skydiving, whether indoor or outdoor, is part of the same sport?**
- 4.9 Even in IPC's name is this issue evident. Indoor skydiving makes no use of parachutes. Yet IPC is the International Parachuting Commission.**
- 4.10 One way forward might be for IPC to decide to establish a working party to consider the governance and regulation of indoor skydiving and its relation to outdoor skydiving and IPC. BPA, through the UK Delegation to IPC, offers its full support to any such review, in which we should be pleased to play a part.**

May we thank IPC in advance for considering this important issue.

BPA, Leicester, UK, 22 November 2014