



# British Paragliding Competitions

Advance British Club Challenge	Activity Risk Assessment
Assessment Scope: Conduct of a British Club Challenge (BCC) Round in any location	Type: COVID-19 Compliance
Date of Assessment: Monday 17 May 2021	Name of Assessor: Matthew Tandy

The following links provide background and supporting information, which underpin many aspects of this Risk Assessment.

GOV.UK - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): grassroots sports guidance for safe provision including team sport, contact combat sport and organised sport events](#)

Welsh Government - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

## Executive Summary:

COVID-19 is a relatively new and emerging biological threat; the science is constantly evolving and as a result so does Government guidance. It is recognised by the British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (BHPA), as our National Governing Body (NGB), that it is essential that the United Kingdom's national strategy is mirrored in our own processes to enable the safe conduct of our sport in a manner which is familiar to the participants from day-to-day life.

This Risk Assessment (RA) focuses solely on how the sport of Paragliding, in the context of the British Club Challenge (BCC) competition can be conducted in a legal, COVID-19 secure manner, without increasing the risks from COVID-19 to pilots, supporters or third parties alike. It aims to provide the means of staying within the legislative framework, and the spirit of Government guidance across the Home Nations of the United Kingdom.

**Key Factors.** There are no fixed flying sites for the BCC; some are far more accessible and accommodate greater numbers of participants and third party passers by than others. This RA is written on the working assumption that large and busy site, such as Pandy in SE Wales (which sits astride the Offa's Dike trail) or Hundred House in mid Wales (which is accessed via a popular camp site) is being used; the guidance applies equally for smaller and more remote sites.

When national legislation allows for Paragliding, it is important to create a COVID-19 secure set of processes to allow people to undertake the BCC, as a grass roots level sporting competition, in such a manner that adheres to the extant Government guidance. Of note, the air volumes and natural ventilation involved in outside activity render the risk from conducting a BCC round as very low; the identified risk points are detailed and covered in the RA.

**COVID-19 Residual Risk.** The physical activity of Paragliding, other than tandem flying, has been identified as a *Nil Risk* activity from a COVID-19 point of view. The highest risk areas for the BCC occur during transport to and from the site, the pre-flight briefing and any debriefs and post flight retrieves. These areas have been assessed

as *Low Risk* activity.

**Role of Host Club.** This RA works on the reasonable assumption that the host club will have extant COVID-19 mitigation measures, which will be communicated to all BCC competitors and supporters as required (eg via Telegram) in the run up to the event and during the key pre-flight briefings. These must be adhered to at all times; if this is not possible, activity should be ceased immediately and the situation dynamically reassessed to identify the means of achieving compliance.

#### Summary of Mitigation Activity:

- **Adherence to UK Government and Home Nation COVID-19 mitigation measures.**
- **Adherence to Host Club mitigation measures.**
- **Employing effective COVID-19 secure (hands, face, space, fresh air) measures for briefs and debriefs.**
- **Checking that participants are content with how to conduct effective COVID-19 secure retrieve procedures.**

Reference:

A. BHPA (National Governing Body) COVID guidance dated 10 Apr 21.

1. **Assumptions.** The following assumptions were made in making this assessment:

a. The BCC is a UK-based competition; each round consists of a paragliding day, which begins with reporting for the pre-flight brief and concludes with departing post any end of day debrief. It does not include use of accommodation or dining facilities or how competitors travel to and from the round.

b. Social distancing protocols as per extant Government guidelines are to be observed whenever possible. When this is not possible the relevant protocols, including the use of face-coverings, will be followed

c. The impact of any changes to Governmental or National Governing Body (NGB) policy will be dynamically assessed by the OIC of the Event and the activity continued, modified or cancelled as appropriate to the change. The most recent NGB guidance was issued at Reference A.

#### Paragliding activities

2. Each paragliding day will consist of the following general stages:

a. **Travel to/from flying site.** Return journey to one or several different paragliding sites (not risk assessed).

b. **Task and site brief.** On arrival at the paragliding site a pre-flight briefing will be conducted.

c. **Paragliding activity.** Conduct briefed paragliding activity, this may also involve cross country flying where retrieval by vehicle is necessary.

d. **Retrieval post cross-country flying.** Once pilots have flown cross country, they may need to retrieve back to their vehicles at launch. This can be on foot, via use of public transport or retrieve by another team member or supporter. Although hitching is possible, in a COVID-19 environment, it is not recommended.

e. **Debrief.** Group debrief as required either conducted at the paragliding site or at the accommodation location as required.

## Procedures

3. **General.** All pers are to continue to follow current widely available advice and where applicable legally enforceable direction relating to the control of COVID-19. This advice and direction includes, but is not limited to: immediate reporting of symptoms and precautionary isolation, maintaining social distancing and enhanced hand hygiene (hands, space, face, fresh air).
4. **Travel to/from flying sites.** COVID-compliant travel must be conducted in accordance with extant Government guidance, especially where vehicle multiple occupancy is utilised.
5. **Task and Site Briefs.** All pers should maintain appropriate physical spacing during the pre-flight brief. Electronic devices such as GPS tablets should not be passed around the group.
6. **Solo Paragliding.** Solo paragliding is a naturally distanced activity and therefore no additional measures are required once airborne. In general, pers should not physically assist each other during the launch phase of flight but this guidance should clearly not prevent assisting in the event of a potentially unsafe situation. If a paragliding launch site becomes too busy to effectively maintain social distancing, then the activity should be paused or relocated.
7. **Dual Paragliding.** Wearing of face-coverings for both Pilot and passenger is necessary to minimise the risk of cross-contamination. Appropriate distancing until donning a harness and preparing to fly should also be employed. NGB Guidance must be reviewed by all dual qualified pilots, who will supervise or conduct any dual activity in accordance with that guidance.
8. **Pilot retrieve.** If public transport must be used, then extant government guidelines are to be followed. Another team member, following the guidelines for the use of transport to/from site, is a controllable and pragmatic method for the conduct of retrieves. It is recognised that there is a degree of personal choice in the conduct of retrieves which is beyond the gift of the BCC coordinator to oversee, which is why retrieves are not considered in the RA.
9. **Debrief.** Any debrief should be carried out in the open if possible, with appropriate social distancing. If GPS track downloads are required these should be transmitted wirelessly between team members to avoid the need to touch/share devices. If a device must be shared, then it should be cleaned using >70% alcohol wipes. All pilots are to have a face covering readily available in case it becomes necessary to briefly close to 1m+ separation at any stage of debriefing

## Key Identified Risks for Advance British Club Challenge

Risk No (a)	Summary of Location/Role/Area (b)	Identified Risk/Hazards (c)	Inherent Risk Low/Med/High (d)	Risk Mitigation Measures (if applicable) (e)	Residual Risk Low/Med/High
01	Pilot (Competitors) - Those of a current age banding that government advice suggests should limit social contact/shield/practice social distancing with extreme care	Age can be a factor in the risk to health from COVID-19 to the individual; however, the guidance also makes reference to the disparity of health conditions by using age ranges solely.	High	<p>The BCC coordinator and team captains should strongly suggest that those over current government age guidelines do not fly; particularly if they have underlying health issues; low levels of fitness or are of poor health.</p> <p>However, an absolute ban should not be considered for specific age bands as they can be in hugely different states of health and as and when the government's position on age moves and shifts, then this advice allows it to harmonise with it.</p> <p>Absolute bans on the basis solely of age could be discriminatory.</p> <p>Government Vaccination strategy may also render the age aspect less relevant.</p>	Low
02	Pilots (Competitors)	<p>The risk of coming into close contact with other individuals who may have COVID-19 and infect them.</p> <p>The risk of coming into close contact with others, whilst they have COVID-19 and infecting others.</p>	Medium	<p>Pilots should be informed that they should not attend if they feel ill in ANY way especially if they or family members have any symptoms.</p> <p>Pilots waiting to fly should consider prepare their equipment and maintain social distancing prior to strapping in.</p> <p>Pilots should not socialise or gather at the launch and should not loiter at car parks or briefing locations.</p> <p>Upon completion of flying all pilots should then pack away and ensure they maintain social distancing; this includes not assisting others with packing up unless there is a safety consideration.</p> <p>Unless there is a significant</p>	Low

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				<p>risk to life all pilots on launch must maintain social distancing.</p> <p>Air Volume of open-air spaces renders this activity extremely low risk, and there is Nil Risk once airborne (Risk Removed)</p>	
03	Signs/Gates/Padlocks	Contamination risk due to handling	Medium	<p>Pilots should sanitise hands before and after handling padlock, gates, or signs.</p> <p>Where hand sanitiser is not available, flying gloves will offer a degree of protection.</p> <p>The pre-flight brief for all pilots should reflect this advice.</p>	Low
04	Supporters and wider members of the public	<p>The risk of coming into close contact with other individuals who may have COVID-19 and infect them.</p> <p>The risk of coming into close contact with others, whilst they have COVID-19 and infecting others.</p>	Low for all BCC sites	<p>The risk of groups, including members of the public, gathering and social distancing being compromised is highest at take off, especially where a public footpath is present.</p> <p>As such team captains should ensure that their pilots maintain social distancing and not actively congregate with spectators or members of other teams.</p> <p>Although members of the public have a duty to not gather and follow social distancing measures, if necessary they should politely be reminded of this and given advice on where they can watch the flying activity from.</p>	Low
05	Tandem Pilots and passengers	<p>The risk of coming into close contact with other individuals who may have COVID-19 and infect them.</p> <p>The risk of coming into close contact with others, whilst</p>	High	<p>Current BHPA guidance to be followed in regards to the management of Tandem flights.</p> <p>Social Distancing cannot be maintained and as such only family members or people in the same social bubble (which may include team members) should safely engage in a Tandem flight.</p>	Low

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		they have COVID-19 and infecting others.			

This RA is COVID specific and pre-existing risk assessments related to British Paragliding Competitions for the BHPA are still relevant and in effect. Minor COVID related risks that are not identified in this RA have been considered; however, they are not considered significant enough to pose even a low a risk and therefore have not been captured.