

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 6 AUGUST 2009

Present: John Hitchen - Chairman STC
Steve Thomas
Rick Boardman
Chris Gilmore (NV) until item 8(v)

Apologies: Paul Applegate, Phill Elston, Pete Sizer, George Panagopoulos

In Attendance: Tony Butler - Technical Officer
Trudy Kemp - Assistant to NCSO/TO

Observers: Dean Fisher, Nick Brownhill, Terry Sullivan, Billy Steele,
Jason Thompson.

In the absence of Paul Applegate, the meeting was Chaired by John Hitchen (Chairman STC). As the Committee was not quorate, any decisions would be deferred until the next quorate meeting.

ITEM

1. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 11 JUNE 2009**

As the meeting was not quorate, the Minutes from the Riggers Meeting of the 11 June 2009 would need to be formally ratified at the next meeting.

Page 2, Item 6 – Tandem Harness Locking Pins. At the previous meeting the Riggers Committee had recommended to STC that they consider the mandatory use of locking pins on Tandem Student Harnesses. However, after careful consideration STC had voted not to mandate the use of locking pins. The Chairman of STC reported that at the Council meeting on 23 June 09, Council had discussed this matter at some length and had voted on a motion that STC be asked to re-visit this decision.

Page 5, Item 8 – Working Group into Lifting of Equipment. This was a main agenda item.

2. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 11 JUNE 2009**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

3. **AUTOMATIC ISSUE OF AP RATINGS TO RIGGERS**

A proposal had been received from Bill Sharp regarding the automatic issue of AP ratings to Riggers, a copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda. This item would now be deferred until the next meeting.

4. WORKING GROUP (WG) INTO LIFING OF EQUIPMENT

A report from the inaugural meeting of the WG into Lifting of Equipment had been circulated with the Agenda. The WG had held its second meeting prior to the Riggers meeting that afternoon. Rick Boardman (Chair) briefly outlined the work carried out by the WG to date and also reported on a recent visit to Airborne Systems.

Rick Boardman advised those present that it was his intention to invite a number of individuals from Council & STC to formally join the WG.

5. ADVANCED PACKER COURSE REPORTS

- i) An Advanced Packers Examination Course had been held at Netheravon from the 22 – 23 June 2009. Paul Burns had submitted a Course report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

Alex Wilson, Mick McPhee and Christopher Sharman successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

The Committee was advised that when checking the paperwork in the office, it was found that Paul Burns had not sent in a Course report and accompanying paperwork for the initial AP training Course attended by Alex Wilson and Mick McPhee. This Course had been held at Netheravon from the 26 – 29 August 2008 and had also been attended by Spencer Hogg.

This had been an oversight by Paul Burn's for which he has apologised. Paul had now submitted a report for the initial training course, which would be kept on file.

- ii) An Advanced Packers Examination Course had been held at Headcorn Parachute Club from the 7 – 8 July 2009. Pete Sizer had submitted a Course Report, of copy of which had been circulated to those present.

Karl Horton successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

6. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

There had been no BPA Safety Notices or Information Bulletins issued since the last meeting.

7. MANUFACTURER'S SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

- i) An information notice had been circulated regarding the Infinity parachute harness/container system, which had included an Infinity Owner's Manual Supplement, issued by Velocity Sports Equipment Inc. and had included details of AAD Cutter location.
- ii) Strong Enterprises had released a report into a Strong Tandem fatality in the Czech Republic on 21 June 2009, a copy of which had been previously circulated for information.

8. A.O.B

- i) A letter had been received from Dean Fisher, a copy of which had been previously circulated requesting an exemption to the new packing rules, which would allow him to continue to pack his own reserve. Correspondence on this item had also been received from Phill Elston and Dr John Carter (BPA Medical Adviser), copies of which had been circulated to those present.

Dean Fisher was present at the meeting to give details of his request. He stated that he understood the reasons why the rules concerning packing had needed to be updated and clarified. However, he had been in the sport over 40 years and in that time had accumulated over 7,000 jumps and in his opinion, it seemed unjust when those with similar experience had to comply with the new rules when they only wished to pack purely their own reserves for their own personal use.

Rick Boardman expressed his concern in that if this exemption was granted it could open the floodgates to similar requests and he was concerned that the introduction of new system would seem to be a waste of time. He stated that the reason for the introduction of the new packing rules was so that everyone was working too one system.

The TO stated that we had a system in the BPA where people could apply for exemptions to rules and any request such as this would need to be considered on a merit by merit basis.

Following further discussion, the general feeling amongst those present was that they could not see why someone who was extremely experienced and who had been packing their own equipment for their own personal use and that they held a packing certificate to cover them for that equipment, should not be given an exemption against the new packing rules. It was pointed out that obviously, if they then changed their equipment, they would need to work under new packing rules.

As the Committee was not quorate, a vote of this item would be deferred until the next meeting.

- ii) A letter had been received from Nick Brownhill of the Royal Engineers Parachute Team, a copy of which had been previously circulated. Nick had requested an exemption to the rule requiring a person to have been a member of the BPA for 18 months prior to becoming an Advanced Parachute Packer. This request was for a Terry Sullivan. Both Nick and Terry were present at the meeting to give details of the request.

As the Committee was not quorate, a vote on this item was deferred until the next meeting.

- iii) A Student Parachutist Equipment Change Proposal Application Request had been received from Jason Thompson, a copy of which had been previously circulated.

Jason had stated that PD manufactures a Sigma 395 for the civilian market. They also manufacture a Phoenix 400 for the military market, which was exactly the same canopy spec, the only difference being the name change to Phoenix. Jason had provided a spec for the 400, which had also been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Following some discussion on this request, it was pointed out by those present that this canopy did not require the Committee's acceptance, as it already fulfilled the required criteria for Tandem main canopies.

- iv) A letter had been received from Barry Maple, a copy of which had been circulated to those present asking for the Committee's guidance with regard to the re-instatement of his Advanced Packer (AP) ratings. Barry's AP (Grade S & T) ratings had expired on 31 March 2007.

Following some discussion on this matter, the general feeling from those present that Barry should complete the AP system again, by undertaking the AP training course followed by the examination phase of the Course.

Rick Boardman stated that this issue had highlighted the fact that there was no set criteria for AP's to follow if their ratings had lapsed. He believed that this was something that required addressing in the future.

- v) The Chairman of STC reported on a Packing/Rigging Confidential Report that had been received.

Following consideration of this matter, and the fact that the person concerned had a number of other confidential reports held on file at the office, the Committee agreed that a Panel be instigated to investigate these reports. The Chairman of STC stated that he would refer this matter to STC that evening for further guidance.

- vi) The TO advised those present that he was in the process of updating the current Approved Packing Certificate to remove any reference to 'round' parachutes.

- vii) John Page asked for some guidance on an equipment related issue. Following some discussion by those present, it was felt that this matter be referred to STC that evening for consideration.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 1 October 2009
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester
at 4.00 p.m

13 August 2009

Distribution:

Chairperson Riggers Committee
All CCIs
All Riggers
Advanced Packers
Council
D. Beaven (CAA)
Lesley Gale

PAPERWORK REQUIRING CIRCULATION WITH THE NEXT AGENDA MUST REACH THE BPA OFFICE BY FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2009