

## Update from the Judges Room

By Claire King



It has been a busy few months for the newly formed Judge's Committee. Inspired with fresh ideas – and caskets of wine – the committee has been working hard at skilling up, exposing the judging drive and laying the foundations for the new judging structure.

Training has been a high priority for the new committee – while each member has their own favourite discipline to judge, there is still a big shortage of judges to cover all the FAI disciplines, which means qualified judges must become leaders in their disciplines while still becoming proficient in the other disciplines.

With this in mind, our two FAI FS judges, Channel Gibbens-Robinson and Claire King, packed their bags for France last month to attend the World Parachuting Championships FS judge training. The purpose of the trip was to get world class exposure and broader experience than our small South African skydiving community can offer new judges. While there, they redid their FS judge evaluations but also received training in Vertical Formation Skydiving, which has recently been accepted into the FS discipline at FAI level.

The experience was invaluable and the girls came back motivated and armed with new idea from the professionalism, friendliness and helpfulness of the judges they met at the World Meet.

In search of more objective judging criteria, the VFS community requested that VFS be included in FS (as opposed to Artistic Events) for the objective judging criteria applied to FS. The three dimensional formations and changing camera angles creates new challenges for FS judges and it will be interesting to follow the development of this fairly new sub-discipline. Now we just need to convince our talented freeflyers in SA to 'join the revolution' and come compete!

The Freely Scrambles at JSC last month was a great training opportunity for the judges who were really encouraged to see the level of enthusiasm and participation – on both the competition and the judging side. Tracy Goetsch joined the judging panel, bringing valuable insight and information on the discipline.

Training in Canopy Piloting judging has also begun, with a course scheduled for 27-28 September. We have a few new trainees joining us and trainees from other disciplines in the existing panel. We're really excited about the interest and continue to encourage anyone interested to contact the committee for more information.

The committee is engaging SSA sub committees, jumpers, the military and international judges in a quest to expand their offering and continually improve its quality. Exciting times lie ahead.

The interest shown thus far has been really encouraging and we hope it continues, helping us to build a world class judging panel in South Africa. If you have a competition planned and would like it judged, give the committee a call to find out how you can participate and qualify and enjoy a new side to the multi-faceted sport of skydiving.