



Hang gliders from 12 nations in Forbes for Flatlands championship

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The "dragon flies" tow hang gliders to 2000 feet at the Forbes Flatlands Hang Gliding championships. File picture

Forbes is set to welcome hang gliders from all over the world this weekend with the Forbes Flatlands Hang Gliding Championship starting Tuesday, January 16.

Some 40 pilots from 12 nations, along with competition organisers, are hoping for the sort of summer weather conditions Forbes is renowned for to get in some good flying across the nine-day event.

Three world champions are among this year's registrations: the current Women's World Champion, Alexandra Serebrennikova coming from Austria, a previous Women's World Champion Françoise Dieuzeide-Banet coming from France and Attila Bertok, 2007 World Champion.

Organiser Vicki Cain explained tasks would be set based on the conditions each day.

A task committee and safety committee are appointed to work with a weather advisor to set the tasks for each day before they're presented to the competition.

Whether they set out to cover world record distances - as they did in 2016 and 2021 - or whether they come in closer to home or back at base all depends on the day.

Winds will lead to longer tasks in one direction, for example.

"If it's light winds they can do a triangle, if it's switching winds they can go out and return - there are different sort of tasks just depending on the weather," Ms Cain said.

Launches usually start from 12.30pm, and anyone who would like to watch the spectacle is urged to go to the Forbes Aero Club (rather than the paddock the gliders are launching from).

One of the features of the Forbes Flatlands competition is the "dragon flies", owned by Ms Cain's father Bill Moyes, that are used to launch the gliders each day.

There are three tug pilots who work through the hour-or-so window it takes to launch each of the gliders to a height of 2000 feet from where they can prepare for the start.

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