

14th World POPS Meet

19-28 Apr 2018

Nagambie, Australia

14th World Meet scores

4way FS Scrambles

Team 10	34 pts (Erica Franz – Switz, Polly Chandler – UK, Jim Mclean - NZ, Chris Betchley - Australia)
Team 15	30 pts (Alberto – USA, Cindy – USA, Robert Troegele – Germany, Peter Schmid - Switzerland)
Team 09 “Common Not Wealthy”	26 pts (Guido - USA, Nicola Bagwell - UK, Mal Ferrier - Aus, “Charley” Haeusler - Germany)

Classic Accuracy

POPS

Erica Franz – Switz	08 cm
Sergei Trofimov - Russia	14 cm
Roman Wejksznia - Poland	16 cm

SOS

Andrezej Nalepa - Poland	20 cm
Valentin Huhs - Austria	27 cm
Mike Dyer - Australia	32 cm

Hit N Rock

POPS

Oleg Chlek - Russia	5.82 seconds
Erica Franz - Switz	7.03 sec

Sergei Trofimov - Russia 7.12 sec

SOS

Mike Dyer - Australia 9.08 sec

Peter Schmid - Switzerland 9.37 sec

Joseph Dorkota - Australia 9.39 sec

Nationals 4way FS

POPS

USA1 (Mike Raible, Alberto Alibrandi, Randy Cutlip, Steve Wertheimer, camera – “Cracker J” Jason Castenollos) 89 pts

UK (Polly Chandler, Nicola Bagwell, John Bagwell, Joanna Haggarty, camera – Simon Donnelly) 49 pts

Australia1 (Matt Hill, John Winkler, Kelly Brennan, Nicole Kerns) 24 pts

SOS

Germany (Robert Troegele, Martin Stromeyer, Hans-Deiter Pfeifer, Ulrich Sehrbrook, camera – Ralph Speicher) 83 pts

Australia2 (Chris Betchley, Andy Mulholland, Mike Dyer, Greg Hill, camera – Dave Ellen) 32 pts

Australia1 (John Kinton, John Merrifield, Dave Betts, Mal Ferrier) 2 pts

8 way Speed Star

Team 4 (Aleksei Alekhin, Andreas Franz, Jim McLean, Klaus Schenkel, Martin Stromeyer, Pat Moorehead, Sigfried Haeusler, Susanne Berger) 24 pts 90.65 seconds

Team 8 (Joanna Haggerty, Hugo Ricardo Darman, Olga Odintsova, Pepe Brittenbring, Polly Chandler, Robert Troegele, Sergei Bestuzhev, Stephen Pandelus) 24 pts 91.48 sec

Team 7 (Mike Raible, David Betts, Greg Hill, Luis Angel Osvaldo Ram, Mike Dyer, Niels Jensen, Ralph Speicher, Volker Cornils) 24 pts 108.6 sec

Sport Accuracy

POPS

Edwardo "Luis" Huttiger - Argentina	140 pts
Frank Conway - NZ	130 pts
Michael Lilja - Sweden	110 pts

SOS

"Uli" Sehrbrock - Germany	130 pts
Mike Dyer - Australia	110 pts
"Buzz" Bennett - Canada	90 pts

After a 15 hour flight South of LAX, and 1.5 hour drive North of Melbourne, you find yourself in the quaint little town of Nagambie, Australia. Normally a quite little town with a population of 1800, the population and activities in town were increased about 11% for two weeks by 132 skydivers plus several handfuls more of spouses and fun jumpers from 17 countries around the world.

On a warm Australian day, on the 19th of April, all of these visitors were given a welcome brief for the 14th POPS World Meet. The calendar was posted on the wall for the six events that were to take place over the next 10 days.

Some people brought or rented campers, some set up tents, there was a bunkhouse on the DZ, and the rest stayed in town at one of the three hotels. The Skydive Nagambie DZ was only a short 15min drive from town, using the LEFT side of the road, with a 100Kph speed limit, however, guests were warned to be cautious of two native animals that are oblivious to these metal machines, these natives would be kangaroos and wombats.

Another interesting anecdote that everyone used to driving on the RIGHT side of the road found themselves doing was one, that they all wanted to enter the car from the wrong side, and two, that when they went to use their turn signal, they found themselves turning their wipers on.

If you were driving from town to the DZ, every couple hundred meters or so, some people noticed small wooden airplanes in the trees, indicating this was the road to the DZ. If you were one of these guests, how many planes did you find?

A few people arrived early and did some fun jumps and get some practice in before the competitions started, while some people only came to do fun jumps and hang out with old friends and meet some new ones. Skydiving boogies are like dysfunctional family reunions, some people you may see on a regular basis at your home DZ, while others you may not have seen in years. One big difference in these family reunions, most of the people here, you are GLAD to see. With a World Meet, you meet family from all over the WORLD. Don and Louise Cross, the DZ owners, managers, and manifest, made everyone feel welcome.

The competitions started on April 20th with 4way FS Scrambles. The neat thing about these FS Scrambles is that they try to ensure all four team members are from different countries. There were four rounds of

Scrambles that were followed by five rounds of 4way Nationals FS. The Nationals event is like the Olympics, where teams represented their respective countries and had practiced together well before this event, sometimes extending out several years. This year, as in years past, they used a "Draw" from "Randoms", however, there has since been a discussion about possibly incorporating "A blocks" in the future. Thirteen teams from eight different countries represented their nations with pride. For some of the events there were two divisions, a POPS division and an SOS division, and the Nationals was one such event. SOS stands for Skydivers Over Sixty, while POPS are over Phorty, but don't let the ages fool you, the German SOS team has been the team to beat in BOTH of these age groups, and fierce competitions have inspired all the teams to continue to give top notch performances!

The USA had two National teams competing this year, Team1, "Team America", consisting of Mike Raible, Scott Wertheimer, Alberto Alibrandi, and Randy Cutlip, with cameraman Cracker J, took center stage on the platform coming in First Place. Team2 for the USA would have ranked second; however, by POPS rules competitors MUST compete in at least two events to be able to receive a medal. Team2 knew this going in, and were glad just to come out and compete. This gave way to the team from Great Britain to place second, with an Australian team making third. In the overall combined scores between POPS and SOS teams, the German SOS team came in second, with a total of 83 points over five rounds, with "Team America" placing first with 89 points and an average of 17.8 points per round.

The 4way Scrambles teams didn't rack up as high of point values as the National teams, but they did have a tight battle all the same. The top three placing teams came in with scores of 34, 30, and 26, respectfully, with barely a 3 point difference by the next couple teams that just missed out on placing. There were a total of 14 Scrambles teams. For teams of people that had never jumped together, not too mention all being from different countries, the top teams racked up impressive 6 to 9 point averages over four rounds.

While these FS events were taking place, large accuracy canopies, some over 300 sq/feet, were landing on a 10x10ft inflated tuffet. This was the Classic Accuracy event, which consisted of six rounds, where competitors in this event tried to get the LOWEST score by striking their heel against a scoring device placed in the center of the tuffet, measuring down to the nearest centimeter. After six rounds, Erica Franz from Switzerland came in with a single digit total of 8cm, followed by Sergei Trofimov with 14cm and Roman Wejksznia scoring 16 cm.

Most evenings people were free to have dinner in town with other friends and/or competitors, or just mingle with the locals for a beer at one of the local pubs. One evening, a group of jumpers, Skydive Museum Ambassadors, and Hall of Fame members, got together to honor and remember Larry Bagley, who passed away just prior to this event.

After the large accuracy canopies were done jumping, the smaller canopies came out to compete in the Sport Accuracy event. These canopies needed to have a larger than 1.0 wing loading to compete, so they are not meant to come straight down on an inflated tuffet, they instead have a 45m x 15m rectangular grid, that is divided into 27 squares, 3m x 3m, which have point values assigned to them. The center of the rectangle scores 50 points, the next ring being 40 points, and out to 5 points for the outer squares. The score is graded by the jumper's first point of contact, with the stipulation they must stop their movement within the overall rectangle. There is a penalty if they run out of the rectangle, or if they fall down. This competition also had POPS and SOS classes, but once again, the ages didn't matter. In the overall scoring, they literally alternated with a POPS jumper coming in First, an SOS jumper second, and continued POPS/SOS for the next several placings. When the two classes were separated, Eduardo "Luis" Huttinger from Argentina came in First for the POPS class with an almost perfect score of 140 out of 50, only missing the center square one time. Second place went to Frank Conway from New Zealand, and third to Michael Lilja from Sweden.

Half way through the event came the 25th of April which was a National Holiday in both Australia and New Zealand called ANZAC day. On this day, both countries remembered their military members who gave their all in wars gone past. Within the POPS organization there were several military members and they were welcome to join in the remembrance day activities, while other POPS jumpers simply observed. The day started at a local hall in town, while some cities in Australia and New Zealand had a "dawn service". At the hall, several speeches were given, songs were sung, and two elementary girls told proud stories of their grandfathers whom they sadly had never met. The gathering then proceeded outside for a short parade walk down two blocks to a park in the center of town. This was the 103rd year of this event. More speeches were given in the park, concluded with a wreath laying ceremony. The event then continued to the RSL, which was a senior lodge, where small sandwiches and snacks were had, there was also a bar for those caring to partake. A traditional ANZAC game of "Two Up" was played by some of the locals along with some jumpers.

The next day, competitions resumed with the 8way SpeedStar event. Once again the team members consisted of jumpers from various countries. For those not familiar with the SpeedStar event, competitors leave the aircraft one at a time, no grips on exit, and must build an 8 way star formation as quickly as possible. Some over eager jumpers that went a little lower than the formation were not able to make it in, so some of the teams received scores for the amount of team members in the star, in the allotted working time. The three top placing teams were able to get all eight members in their stars, so they were battling for the quickest time. The DZ chose to use only team numbers and not names to identify the teams, so team 4 received the Gold with a total time of 90.65 seconds, followed by team 8 with barely a 2 second difference of 91.48 seconds, and team 7 placed Bronze with a 108.6 second score. In the middle of round three of this event was the only weather issue for the entire event, a few clouds rolled in, so the competition was concluded on the following day.

All that was left now was the final, and traditional POPS event, the Hit N Rock, which is always left as the very last event of any POPS boogie. It is a fun combination of accuracy and speed. There are five steps that must be accomplished in this order, land, stop all movement, remove your gear, touch the target, then run 40 feet to a big comfy chair and sit down. Time starts when your feet touch the ground, or whichever body part touches first, and your time stops when your butt is in the chair, the one with the lowest time wins! Even if you don't compete, you have to come out and watch!

The evening before the Hit N Rock event, a team USA dinner was arranged at a local winery by the Top POP from the USA, James "Guido" Davis. This was only the second time a Team USA dinner has ever been done in the POPS history, but after the first one that was done in Germany at the last POPS World Meet, it will now be added as a tradition. There were 20 US personnel at this meet, the Team2 National team had to leave early, but there were still 15 people present for the dinner. The table was done up with some Red, White, and Blue table dressings. A few thanks, congratulations, and speeches were given, and then a nice meal was had by all.

Once the Hit N Rock was completed, the awards were presented at the DZ, so that in the evening, the few speeches that needed to be traditionally given, would not be dragged out with all the medal ceremonies. A nice dinner was put together at another local winery, and people took their final pictures with old friends and new ones they had made there. Everyone shook hands, said their farewells, and "see you in England in 2020" as Gary Z handed the reigns of the next POPS World Meet to Polly Chandler, where it will be held in Dunkeswell, England, exact date to be decided on soon.

Many POPS members were not able to attend, because meanwhile in the US, JOS jumpers were busy making a 25way record, and SOS made a 66way record.

The next POPS Nationals will be Oct 2-6, 2019 at Spaceland Houston, TX, with SpringFest sometime in the Spring of 2019 at Lake Wales, FL.