

SPORTKITE

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Ready, Willing and Abel

An interview with a Master Class competitor from the state of Texas — Abel Ortega

When talking to Abel Ortega you get a sense of just how serious this sport can be. With over six years of experience from east to west, Abel certainly deserves the title —veteran. But he goes much beyond that. Abel has a vision of just how sport kite competitions can be. And at the same time he is waking us up to what we have to do to bring sport kiting up to the ranks of any major spectator sport. Fueled by his dedication in spreading his knowledge and with the support of Spectra Sport, the sport kiting world has yet to see the best of what he has to offer.

Teaching is something many of us find Abel involved in on the circuit whether it's giving competition seminars or taking the time to talk to a novice flier who has a thousand and one questions—Abel shares his love for our sport.

I had an opportunity to sit down and talk to him just after he took first place in Masters Individual Ballet at the Sandy Hook Sport Kite Championships.

How did it all begin for you in sport kite flying?

In 1988 I was in Galveston, Texas and saw someone flying a six pack of Peter Powells (popular dual control diamond kites). I approached him and he kindly started to explain to me how to control a dual line kite. Conveniently, there was a kite store right across the street where I purchased a single Peter Powell. Every week from there on in I got another Peter Powell until I had a complete six pack for myself. The following year I started to purchase deltas such as the Cloud Cutters 2200CC and others. And it was in 1989 that I competed for the first time.

How did you become aware of sport kite competitions?

The kite store that I frequently went to was a sponsor and they had advertisements about the event. I really didn't have any coaching to help me along other than a very simple rules book that briefly defined what you're supposed to do when you compete. I did the best that I could to research what the judges would *(cont. on pg.3)*

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VOICE IN THE SKY

Sportkite News is proud to have completed its first year of publication. As with any new publication, we've had our share of growing pains. But our objective will always be to inform you with practical information that you can take out to the field. And to also provide a better understanding of the people in our sport on all levels.

We are proud to introduce our new **Health Line** column. This unique addition of Sportkite News will focus on some of the health related issues concerning our sport. Some new items coming in 1995 will be a close up look at Quadline sport kites, the tips, techniques and the people behind them. Buggyng, Innovative Flying techniques and the rise of Indoor Flying are just a hint of what Sportkite News will bring its readers in the next year.

We've found that our sport still has long way to go before it reaches the level of popularity as other sports. But what we feel sets our sport apart from others are the very attributes that has captured our interest. Art, music, a form of self expression and most of all a sense of family are just those attributes. It doesn't matter whether or not your buying the latest kite, building your own or even competing, we are all members of the global community of kiting.

Your enthusiasm and support is what we hope will perpetuate Sportkite News to always be your voice in the sky. To share, learn and most of all help our sport grow — that is our creed. See you in 1995.

Gilbert Velazquez

LEARN TO FLY

IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS

Introducing:

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by Master Class Competitor & Instructor

Dodd Gross

(1993 Eastern League Champion)

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(cont. from pg.1) be looking for. So I entered Novice Individual Precision for the first time. There were only compulsory figures and there wasn't a freestyle portion at that time for novice fliers. I was lucky enough to get a third place finish in my first event.

What happened from there?

At the end of 1989, I decided to take a vacation out to the west coast. While I was there I went to watch the West Coast Nationals at the Marina Green. That was a big event and it gave me the opportunity to meet some of the giants in this sport such as Ron Reich, Top of the Line Flight Team, Chicago Fire Team, Cris Batdorf, Lee Sedgwick and Sue Taft to name a few. I learned so much from that event. Most importantly, it gave me the whole scope of what this sport is all about. I knew this was something I wanted to be a part of. Everybody was so helpful and they really had an impact on how I perceived this sport to be.

By 1990 I moved up to the Experienced class and competed at the East Coast Championships in Wildwood, New Jersey which was one of four events that I did that year. I was using a Fire Dart (Action Kites) which worked out for me up to a certain point. What an event! There were 200 competitors with four heats in the experienced class. You had to make the top two places in order to make the finals. I didn't do that well and got beat pretty bad. At that event I saw fliers who are now popular names on the sport kiting circuit today. People like Brian Vanderslice, Bob Hanson, and John Tavalacci.

Were you serious about competing from that point on?

Yes, in my understanding of what serious means. I've always been a competitive person and I feel being competitive or putting myself in a competitive environment is an instrument by which I can improve

myself. Competition is a means of motivation for me. I'm pretty self motivated, but I like a lot of structure in different parts of my life and competition definitely offers that. It also gives me a degree of discipline too. Not to take it to the extreme, but it teaches me some of those virtues.

So when did you and Spectra Sport link up?

Well, by the end of 1990 and up until the end of the 93 season I had been flying the Stinger 1000 as a representative of UP Sports in competition. Due to the changes that were going on in that company, I had to find another sponsor that would help me get around. In the choices that I had, which I'm very grateful for having some, Spectra seemed to be the best choice for the support that I was looking for in both the product's

As a sponsored flier, or what I would like to call a representative of Spectra, it comes down to more than just five minutes in precision or five minutes in a ballet performance.

performance and of course financial assistance. They also felt comfortable in that I was representing them in the way that they wanted to be represented. I guess you could say we had a meeting of the minds.

Not to go off on a tangent, but sponsorship is something that a lot of individuals and teams are seeking at these events to help offset their cost of going to the various competitions. You really have to do a lot of events in order for it to be worth the effort on the part of the sponsoring company.

Explain a little further your relationship with Spectra?

As a sponsored flier, or what I would like to call a representative

of Spectra, it comes down to more than just five minutes in precision or five minutes in a ballet performance. It's a public relations position because you will always have people looking at you while you're carrying that label. Especially if you're doing well you'll have even more eyes looking at you. Whether you like it or not you are an example of what the sport is, and there are responsibilities that go along with that. One of which is to help the sales for your sponsor to turn out positive. No one can afford to throw money out there just for the sake of having someone use their product. It goes much further than that. If there are no real results, then it's not worth their effort. And that's simple business and I've accepted that. As of right now I'm the first and only individual flier being represented by Spectra. Up until I came along they've only sponsored teams.

After an event I have to put together what's known as an event report for Spectra. In that report I'll include the range of activities at the sport kite event, competitor and spectator attendance, general event results as well as my own and how well I promoted their product at that particular event.

What is the feedback thus far?

Everything has been really positive thus far. In the beginning I was concerned using a new product and getting some negative feedback from people asking me "why did you stop using the Stinger and switched to Spectra?" I explained the reasons for my decision every-time it was asked. That wore off after the first few events and from there on in there was never any more questioning from my peers on that matter. Some of the things that I've just mentioned earlier I've initiated myself which Spectra really appreciated. I want to make sure they get their monies worth. I'm totally dedicated to what I've been doing for them.

Lets talk about what I feel is a very distinctive style of flying you have. Did you have in mind what type of flying style Abel Ortega was going to have five years down the line?

Definitely not. The reason I say this is because for most of my life I've been in a competitive environment whether it was playing trumpet in a band or speed skating on a team. What I've learned over the years is that if you're going to compete, you need to "conform". Or maybe a more pleasant analogy is "be flexible". What I mean by this is that you need to have an attentive eye to what's doing well and what is not doing well in sport kite competitions on a consistent basis. People have their own personalities which influences their choice of music and in turn influences their style of flying. Judges also have a preference of what they would like to see in a ballet performance despite their set of instructions before hand. It all comes down to the human factor. So with all of these issues at hand I try to analyze in detail why one routine did better than next.

In the beginning I was flying to completely different music than I do now. Early on I was flying to contemporary Christian music or slow ballads which won me some 2nd and 3rd places. But in 1992 there was

a new trend in master class performances which included a lot of tricks with a high degree of technically difficult maneuvers. Even though the rules indicated to put more weight on the choreography factor, the technical performances were winning. So by the end of the 1992 season I had to make a decision to either go with the flow or stay with what I've been doing and take the chance. I was using a piece of music by Yanni (*Reflections of Passion*) and edited another faster piece by Yanni at the end of it. In that routine I had a couple of tricks, a little bit of ground work and a couple of stalls. The choreography was basic and clean with no hard stuff. I was consistently in the top five, but it seldom gave me a 2nd or 3rd place.

So I saw the trend going towards technical performances that are interpretative and choreographed. In 1993 I pulled together a piece of music which offered a lot of room for ideas while at the same time would bring the emotions of the judges up and down during the piece. It is a combination of two pieces from a movie called *Man from Snowy River*. The decisions that I make at the end of every season is, what is the trend? Is it changing? Where is it going? I try to follow the trend.

With that in mind, do you feel you are part of the trend?

Yes and no, While I may be part of the trend, I don't consider myself an innovator or a leader in where the style of individual dual line flying is going. I've always been honest about that. I guess you could say I follow and I perfect.

Speaking of trends, where are the differences if any between the East and West Coast?

My impression is that the west coast tends to be more up tempo with a high degree of



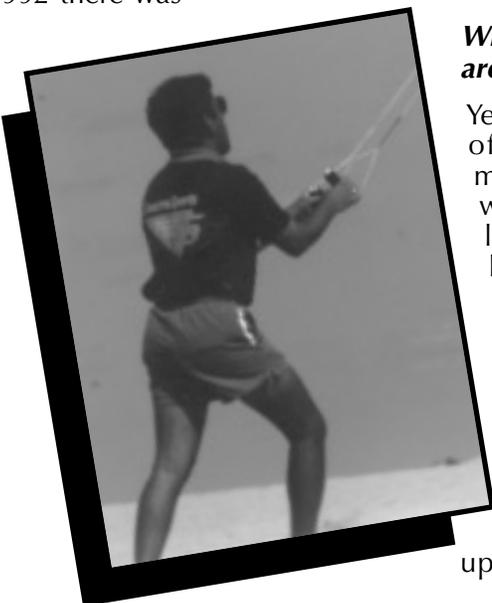
technical flying. While the east coast seems to be more pop tunes, jazz or flowing type routines with more emphasis on the creative end of the performance. I'm not saying that technical maneuvers can't be artistic. But that's the separation that I see. Fortunately I have the opportunity of seeing the best of both coasts and working them together in my flying. As far the the central part of the country, they really haven't yet worked out the high degree of difficulty maneuvers. On the other hand their choice of music along with their own technical interpretation has given them a place in the sport. I guess you could say they're on the fence looking at both sides. Sort of like me. I like being on the fence. I don't like being more of one way or the other. I'm an observer.

How do you feel about competing in general?

Some people think that competing needs to be hard core and you don't have any fun. Competing is fun for me. I have a good time with the adrenaline rush and nervousness that goes into the pressure associated with competing. Coming down is more harder for me after I'm done performing.

Are you always feeling confident that you'll be on the top three when you stage in, or are you never totally confident especially when you're up against fliers like Dodd Gross?

As far as Dodd Gross is concerned he is an incredible flier. I've



enjoyed his Harry Connick Jr. routine this year, which to me is probably one of the best performances I've ever seen. It adds a lot of style to the sport and it brings back a lot of that artistic expression to individual flying with a high level of difficult maneuvers which are choreographed and not forced in. So I have a lot of respect for Dodd. I have a philosophy that I work and prepare for the best, but expect the worst. I know it may sound cynical, but I tend not to be let down as much this way. Practice is a big part of how you feel prior to the start of your performance. As you develop your skills for the certain things that you want to do with your kite you start to become aware of what your hands are doing. This is something that I can't stress enough.

Could you elaborate more on this?

I believe that there is an intelligence of what your hands are doing at any given time when you're flying. The more you do it the more you become aware of what your body movements are at any given point of a maneuver. This is where I feel my level of accuracy comes from. Knowing what your hands are doing at all times.

When I practice, whether it is a mistake or not I mentally freeze frame and if I can, look down to see what position my hands are in. Another technique I try to use is if I can physically feel where my hands are. Lets say I'm working on something and I'll say "OK, now why is my left hand way back here?" Once you are aware, then you can make corrections. Once you get it right then muscle memory comes into play. I feel I am a perfect example of this because I have not practiced the number of hours that I should have this season. At the most two hours a week is all I've been able to do. So I credit my philosophy on muscle memory to have helped me tremendously this season.

I think you'll get this kind of philo-

sophy in any sport, look at a tennis player's swing. After some time working on this you will reach a point where it will then become natural. This has certainly allowed me to correct a lot of bad habits in my flying early on. Behind everything that I want the kite to do there is a thought process involved and muscle memory to act on it. And hopefully a little bit of good luck so that it locks in.

So where do you see our sport going?

After being in this sport for more than 6 years, I feel it has not grown. This has been my observation overall. The whole industry of dual line kite flying is not growing as it should. And being a representative of a major kite manufacturer enables me to look at things in a different way than just someone being a flier. I'm not seeing our sport being structured as a real spectator sport as we would like to think it is. I'm willing to do what ever it takes to bring the spectators in. If that means I'll have to wear flamboyant costumes or do hamstrings while I'm flying then I'll do it. I want to share the magic and enjoyment that I get out of this with other people.

Our approach to getting the exposure that sport kite competitions needs has to be looked at differently. I think we need to throw up our hands and say OK! this doesn't seem to be working. Lets look at it a different way. Throw away all of the parameters currently in place and examine whatever it will take to bring the spectators in. That's what I would like to see happen in sport kite competitions.

Where is Abel Ortega going?

I feel I have more ideas and skills that I need to work on and awards and titles that I want to win. But I will not pull out something new and innovative unless I'm hitting it 85% of the time. As I've said earlier, I take minimal risk when it comes to a difficult routine. I'm

not comfortable with taking risk on the competition field. I'm debating whether or not I want to do a grand slam season or not. What I will do in the next several years will also be influenced by Spectra's ideas as well. I have no plans on changing sponsors and I'm really happy with their product. I'm in for the long haul and they are too. They have allowed me to explore new dimensions to my flying. So we're looking into ways that can bring the people to our sport on a much larger scale.

I definitely want to give back and share my knowledge with everyone in and out of our sport. I think it's imperative for our growth to share information.



WHERE TO FLY

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- October 22
Sky Pilots 4th Annual Fun Fly
Robesonia, PA • 215-921-1190
- October 23
On the Beach Stunt Kite Competition
Folly Island, SC • 803-577-3529
- October 29
Mercer County Stunt Kite Regional
Mercer County Park, NJ • 215-736-3715
- October 30
Halloween Custume Challenge & Fun Fly
Washington Monument/Washington, DC
301-990-1673
- October 29-30
Carolina Kite Festival
Atlantic Beach, NC • 919-247-7011
- November 5-6
New Orleans Kite Festival
New Orleans, LA • 410-289-7855
- November 12-13
Golden Isles Sport Kite Championships
Jekyll Island, GA • 215-736-3715
- November 12-13
Crescent City Kite Festival
New Orleans, LA
505-538-3876 • 210-659-1803
- January 1
Annual Polar Bear Fly
Belmar, NJ • 908-657-8967 • 908-280-8084
- January 1
Sno Fly
Prairie View Park, MI • 616-383-8778

My first time

by Donna Velazquez

My husband has been competing for two years, I have been watching for two years (happily I might add, one less thing for me to worry about). Sure my husband wanted me to fly, but I just didn't have the desire. During the course of those first few years of his competing we would go to the beach to try to fly together. But it never failed, someone would seem to appear out of nowhere and walk right under my kite not realizing that I was totally out of control. I couldn't really concentrate on anything other than praying I wouldn't knock their block off. Those few times on the beach soured me on the sport. Also I didn't like the fact that I was not in total control of the flying experience but that the wind had something to do with it.

Then this past summer, Gil, (that's my husband) found this desolate park and asked me if I wanted to go flying with him. Well, I did and what a blast! The radio was blaring out the music and here I was actually flying and having fun at the same

time. The first time we were out there we must have spent about three or four hours flying. It's funny because in the past I would always say to him "how could you spend countless hours flying your kites?"

About three weeks past and I entered into the Belmar Kite Festival and signed up to fly in Intermediate Individual Ballet for the first time. I agreed to do it mainly to feel the emotions I've watched all of the fliers experience. I also wanted to hear my song of choice played louder than I could have ever imagined. Well here I was standing in front of the crowd of people that I'm usually watching. I couldn't have asked for a nicer field director. He told me to relax but advised me that I was in a fly or die situation. Great for my first time out*##? Basically there was no wind to work with and my attempt to test the "wind" window resulted in my kite falling to the ground like a brick from the Empire State Building. I said to Gil, "I don't think this is going to work". The look on his face

was of such disappointment that my first time in competition was with no wind. He quickly said "I'm getting the other kite". What other kite? I was only used to flying the one that I had. The field director sensed my apprehension and told me I could scratch. Before I could think, I saw Gil attaching a new ultralight to my lines. Wait! that's the same one he would always say to me "It's too delicate to fly when you're starting out Donna". I was determined to fly to my song so I turned to the field director and said "I'm flying". As the kite lifted into the air I said to myself — Yes! That's when my out of body experience occurred.

My song started and I basically didn't know what I was going to do under a no wind condition. I tried to do some of the moves to the song that I practiced to weeks earlier, but my main goal was to keep that darn kite off the sand and to hear my song throughout.

Well needless to say there isn't a plaque on my wall, but I had a great time and I added a new experience to my life. Isn't that what life is about anyway?

Spirits fly high in Belmar

by Mike Fitzpatrick

The first annual Belmar Kite Festival was held September 24th, on the beach in Belmar New Jersey. Organized by Sky Festival Productions with the help of the Belmar Chamber of Commerce, Fly Away Kites of Belmar and the Monmouth Ocean County Kitefliers, the festival combined an Eastern League Regional sport kite competition for novice and intermediate class competitors, with a single line kite festival. The festival was well attended by fliers from all across the Northeast.

The spectators who gathered along the boardwalk during the day were treated to a vast display of single line kites flown by members of the Lehigh Valley Kite Society. On the

sport kite field, in addition to the various competitions, various individuals, pairs and team ballet demonstrations were flown. Among the demonstrators were Brian Vanderslice, Sandy Wagner, Gil Velazquez, The Duodrones, DK Breezin and teams Up Roar, Legend, MOCK IV and the Valley Boyz. The tone of the festival was laid back and fun. All of the fliers enjoyed the chance to get together and have a good time without the stress of a serious competition. Members of the Monmouth Ocean County Kitefliers provided free stunt kite lessons to the public, as well as kite games for the children. While the novice and intermediate came to compete, they were also given a

competition seminar given by experienced class fliers Mark Douches and Gil Velazquez. After a day of challenging extreme low wind flying, everyone enjoyed a barbecue and a no-rules volleyball game at a local establishment

Many fliers returned to the beach on Sunday for a day of unorganized flying. It was a great opportunity to try each others kites, show one another the latest tricks, or put together some impromptu pairs ballet routines. Members of teams Up Roar, MOCK IV, Valley Boyz and the Duodrones put together a 13 kite mega-team, (using four different types of kites), much to the amazement and delight of the passers-by on the boardwalk.

Judging from the good time had by the kitefliers and spectators, as well as the positive response of the people and merchants of Belmar, the second annual Belmar Kite Festival should be an event not to be missed.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

A look at one of the most leading causes of discomfort for sport kite fliers today.

While sport kite flying may not be as strenuous as other outdoor sports, it can take its toll on your wrist. One particular concern is the proper use of flying straps. Using your flying straps in an improper fashion can lead to condition known as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. A median nerve which carries signals between the brain and the hands passes through a tunnel formed by the wrist bones (carpals). The surrounding area also contains a tough membrane on the underside of the wrist that binds the bones together (fig 1). Since the nerve runs through this confined space, it is apt to be severely pinched should the surrounding tissue become swollen. This can lead to a painful condition known as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS).

The symptoms for CTS are an intermittent numbness or tingling of a portion of the hand, periodically accompanied by a pain which shoots up the arm from the wrist. At night time the pain can be generally worse and may be severe enough to wake you up. If the condition is severe enough CTS can result in weakness and permanent numbness in one or more fingers including the thumb.

Treatment

In some cases which are mild, CTS could clear up on its own. To reduce swelling, your physician may pre-

scribe a diuretic drug. But if the pain is too severe and persists, the suggested treatment could be surgery. This is performed by cutting through the tough membrane, thus creating more space for the pinched nerve.

Flying technique

The main objective is to take pressure off of the wrist while flying. In figure 2 you'll see the most common mistake fliers make in the beginning using wrist straps. There are several

options available. First, you can use thickly padded flying straps which don't cut into your hands or restrict circulation. Second, should you have an opening at the top of the strap, insert one or more fingers in this area. This will allow your fingers to take more of the pull while not sacrificing control (fig 3). Finally, you can simply wrap your strap around the back of your hand and allow it to pass in between two fingers (fig 4). The amount of pull your kite is exerting and the strength of the wind will dictate what technique you will use. Should you be experiencing any discomfort in your wrist, please see a physician for an examination.

Fig 2. Improper use of wrist straps

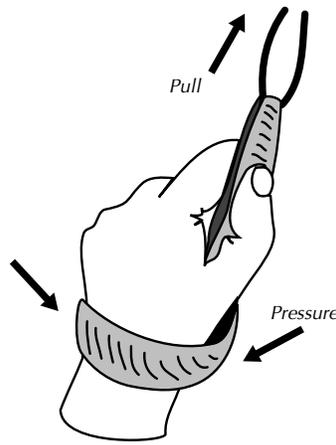


Fig 3. Use of your fingers to lessen the pressure around your wrist.

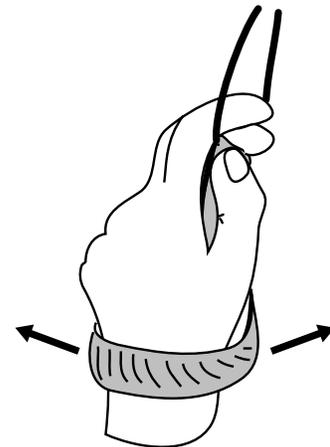


Fig 4. Wrapping the strap around the back of your hand and through two fingers.

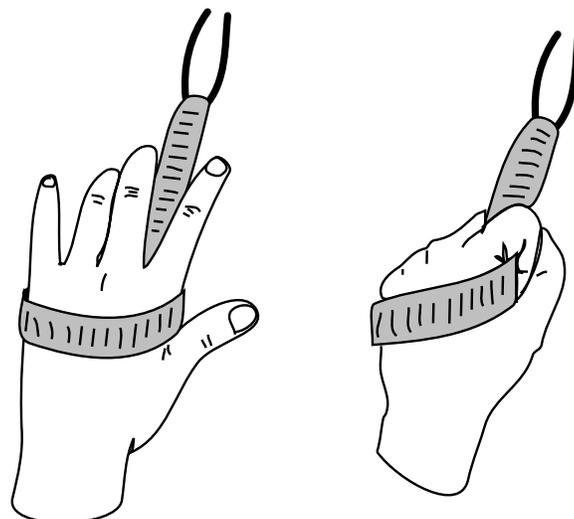
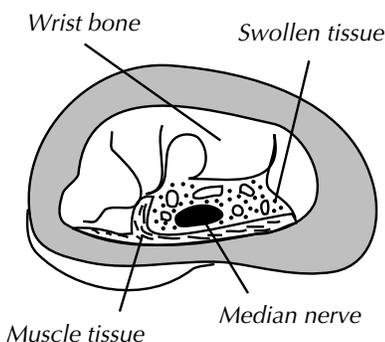


Fig 1. Cross-section through the wrist.



Secure your investment

The last thing any flier wants is to see their sport kite tumbling through the air without them in control. *Sportkite News* hopes the following two tips will help prevent you from having such an experience.

Many of today's sport kites have a knot attachment on their bridle for you to conveniently attach your flying lines using a larks head knot. We would like to suggest that you double up on the knot as added security. This will ensure you don't have your flying lines slip off from your bridle while you're flying (fig 1). The thick-

ness of your sleeving material should also be taken into account in determining the size of your knot.

"There I was flying in a 20mph wind along the beach when suddenly my brand new kite was spinning wildly over the ocean with only one line attached to it". Not what we would call a nice day flying at the beach. After a careful examination, I found that it wasn't the line that snapped, but the dacron attachment to my flying straps. We suggest that every 6 months you examine it for fraying and replace the dacron. You really

can't see if it's fraying unless you pull the dacron out from under the flying straps (fig 2). A small amount of sand or dirt can contribute to the wearing of the dacron over time.

Spending a few minutes checking the condition of all of your equipment can really pay off.

Editor's note: That kite was recovered, but it took two days for it to dry.

Fig 1. Adding a larger knot to line attachment on bridle.

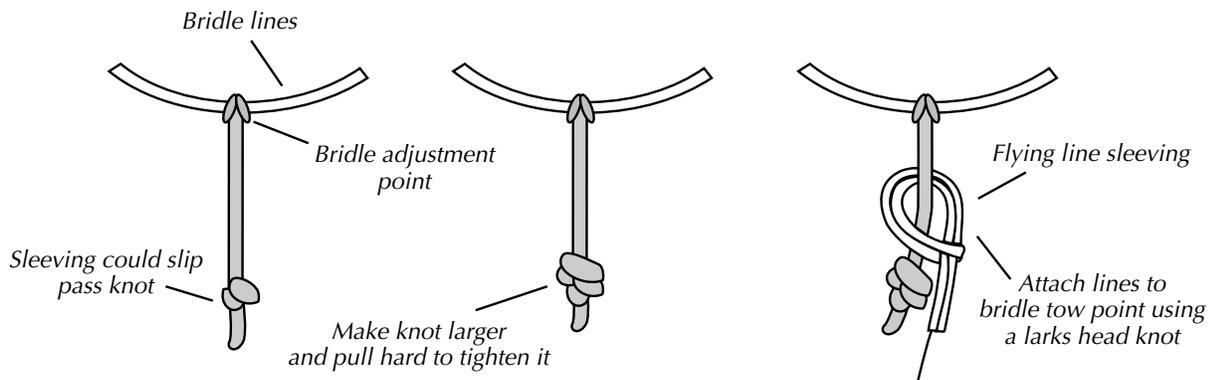
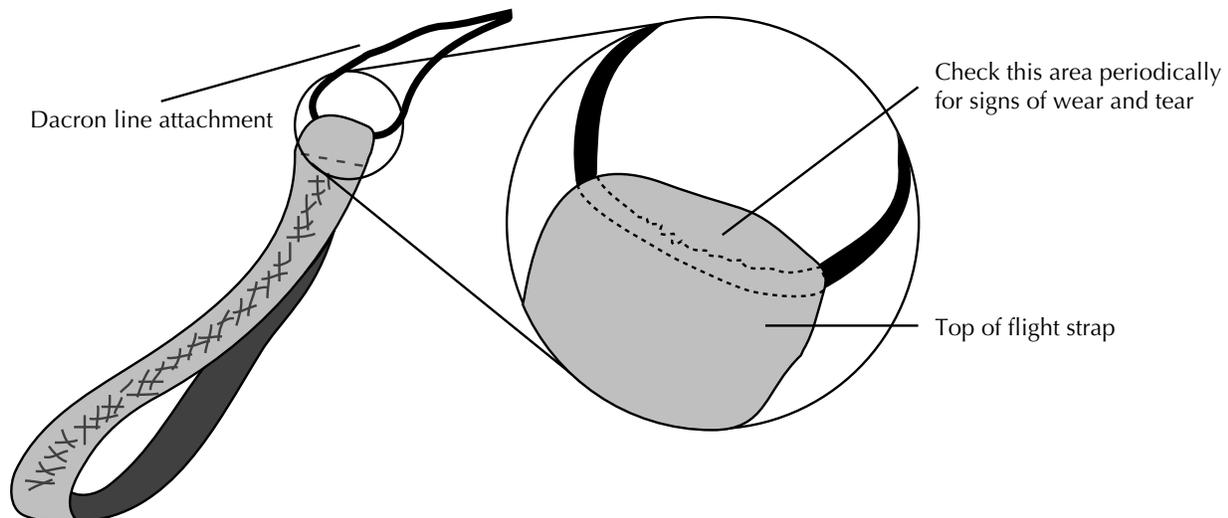


Fig 2. Inspection and replacement of dacron on wrist straps.



Part One
Your Flight Window

Sportkite News would like to introduce the **Basic Training** section of our **Pushing the Envelope** column. Part one will be on the understanding of the wind window.

There is a right way to swing a golf club or a tennis racket. The same holds true for our sport. In order to polish any skill, it never hurts to look back at some of the basic concepts. While to some readers this may be

old hash, for the novice flier this can only help. Even the experienced flier can forget a few small details from time to time, or may have just learned them the wrong way.

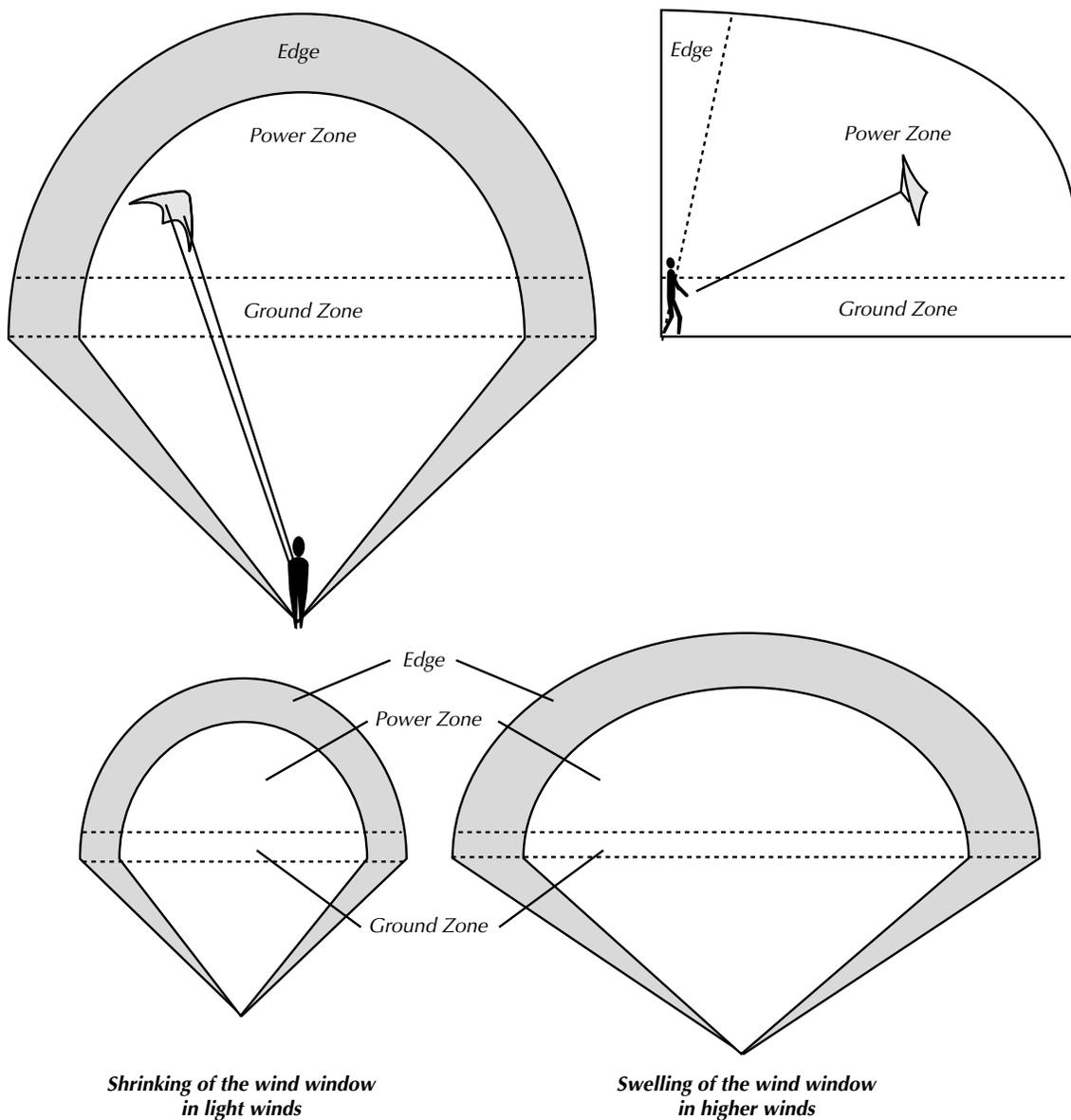
Wind Window

An imaginary half hemisphere which shrinks (low wind) and swells (high wind) depending upon the wind speed. It is divided into three primary zones, the power zone, the edge and the ground zone (fig 1). The wind window can also be affected by tall obstacles within your imme-

diated area. Trees, buildings or even the topography of the land can have some adverse effect on your wind window. The general rule is that any tall object can affect the characteristics of the wind by as much as seven times its height. So choose your flying site carefully.

Once you have learned the concept of the wind window, you can actually change the zones based upon your position relative to your kite. (see Vol.1 No.3) You will also be able to expand your level of flying in almost any type of wind conditions.

Fig 1. The three primary zones of the wind window (pilot's view and side view).



BASIC TRAINING

Power Zone

This is where the wind strength is the greatest and where the beginning flier learns to stay aloft. It is here where you will feel the most pull. Being able to sense where the kite is pulling the most is a second sense every flier should develop early on. Being able to feel where the kite is pulling the most will be the signal of where your power zone is at all times. Your speed will also be the greatest in the power zone, which will require good eye/hand coordination when flying close to the ground. If you are looking for consistent speed with the least amount of adjustment in your flying, the power zone is where you should stay.

Edge

This zones is all around you, from the far left, to the top and the far right. This is where you will feel the least amount of pull and where you will need to make an extra effort to keep your kite in control. Landings will be easiest in the edge and it is where most of the advanced

maneuvers are performed or at least started from. In higher winds the edge can provide a bit of relief from all of that pull you've been experiencing in the power zone. Your flying will be more graceful in the edge, especially when the wind starts to increase.

Ground Zone

When there is friction there is turbulence. Just as obstacles can affect your wind window so can hills and the very topography of your flying field (fig 2).

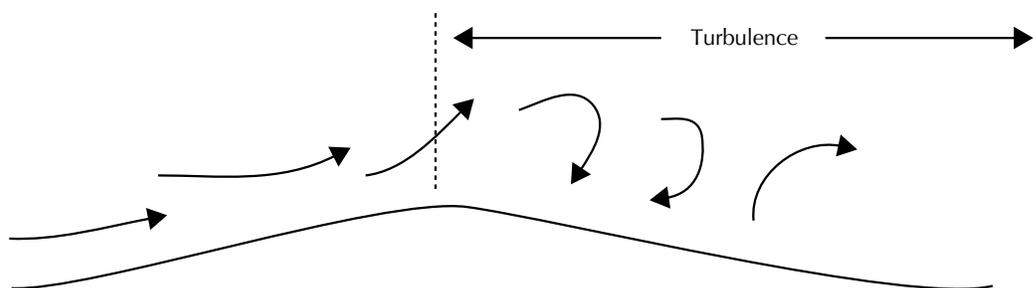
On the front side of our example, the air flows is compressed and its speed increased. While on the back side of our example, the air flow breaks up and causes turbulence

which can be either mild or severe depending upon the contour of the flying site and the speed of the wind. The air that is near the surface will move more slowly due to the friction with the ground. Even the heat rising from off the surface of the ground can have an affect on the wind patterns in your wind window.

Once you have a full understanding of the wind window you will start to look at it as a complete environment which has many facets interacting with each other.

Should there be a specific area of sport kite flying you would like us to cover in future issues, drop us a note.

Fig 2. Ground turbulence



PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Turn over a Turtle

Now here is a move that can really add a dynamic touch to the ending of a ballet routine or provide you with a pause in flying, while your sport kite is still in the air.

The beginner shouldn't find this move too intimidating to do. Actually, you get back from a turtle what you put into a turtle. "Now I have to think about that one for a moment". Fly your kite to the top of the wind window and throw both hands forward. In higher winds you're going to have to actually pull the kite pass what may seem to be the top of the window and then quickly move forward while throwing both hands forward. The kite should now be on it's back with the

nose pointed away from you. If enough momentum was created when you pushed forward, the kite will go into a free fall tumble towards the ground. Once you've initiated a turtle you have a choice as to what you would like to do next.

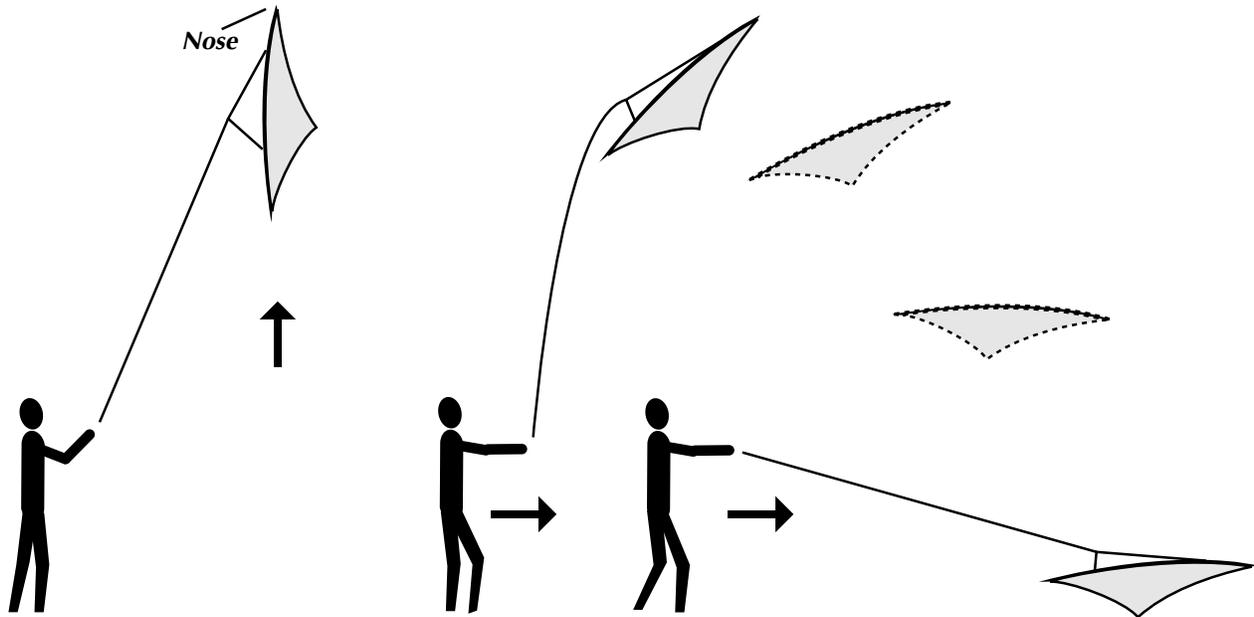
First, you could simply allow your kite to **Leaf Float** to the ground. This works best in light to medium winds. Once the kite has settled to the ground on its back, pull to set it up on its wing tips and then relaunch (fig 1). Second, continue to step forward once the sport kite begins to leaf float and push with both hands even further. What will start to happen is the kite will now be pointed nose down with its back facing you.

It's at that point when you can initiate a **Turtle Release** by snapping both hands towards you to pop the kite into the nose up position (fig 2).

It's inevitable that your lines or bridle will get hung up on some part of your sport kite while executing these maneuvers. Using some of the tips in our Skin & Bones sections in Volume 1, Number 1 and 3 can make a difference. You will start to think of streamlining your kite in a whole new light.

Just remember, a happy turtle is one who turns over and eventually is right side up.

Fig 1. Initiating a turtle and a leaf float landing (side view).

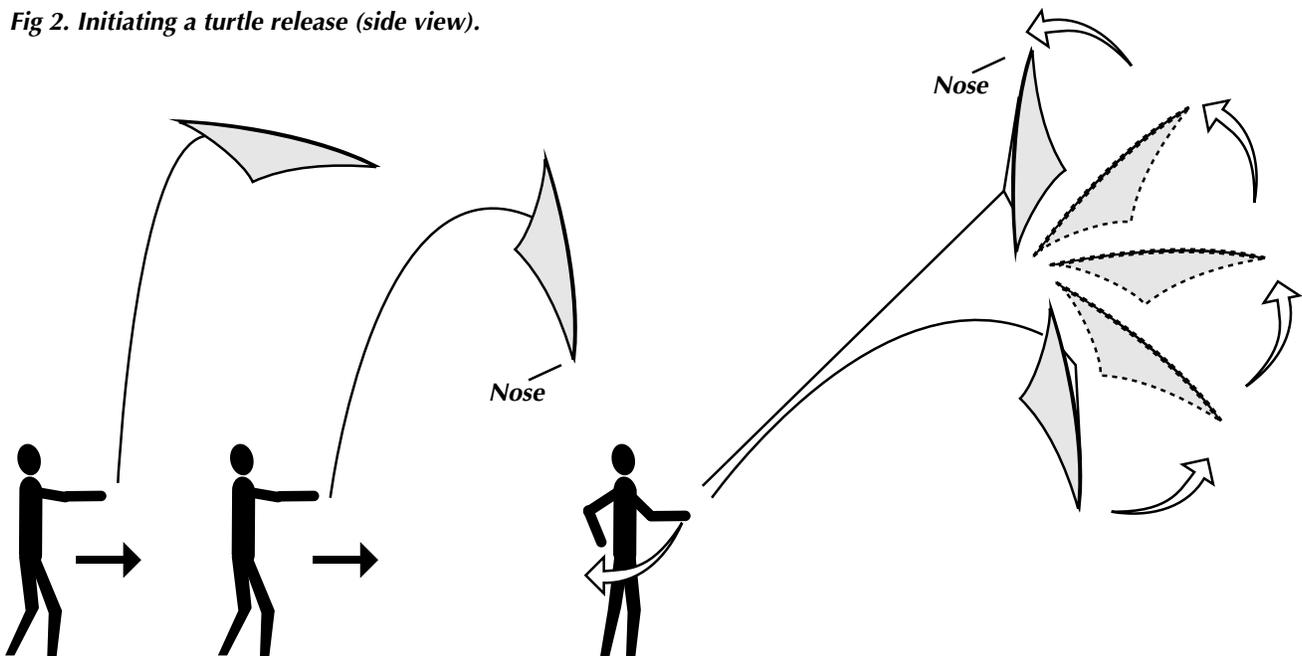


1. Fly to the top of the wind window.

2. Once the kite reaches the top of the wind window, pull both hands back and then push both hands forward while stepping forward.

3. Continue to walk forward allowing the kite to land on its back.

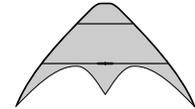
Fig 2. Initiating a turtle release (side view).



1. Once you initiate a turtle, push even further with both hands while moving forward. Allow the nose to fall back and point to the ground. How far back the kite flips will determine how easily it will do a turtle release.

2. Snap both hands back to pop the kite back into the nose up position. This will have to be done very quickly.

NOTE: DO NOT ALLOW THE KITE TO FLIP OVER.



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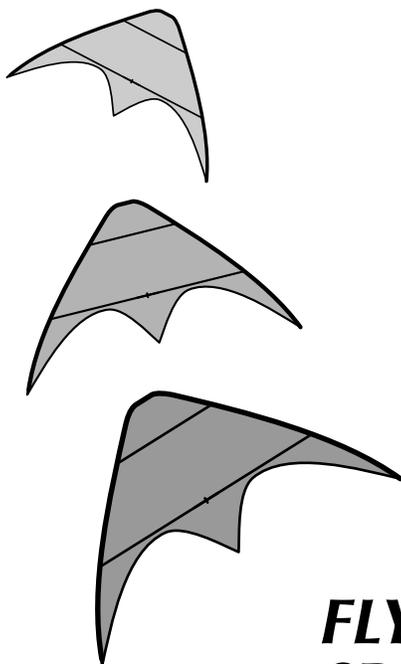
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