

FOUNDATIONS OF FLIGHT | MIXED FORMATION SKYDIVING BLOCK 10 (FLAT STAIRSTEP)

Brought to you by Niklas Daniel and Brianne Thompson of AXIS Flight School at Skydive Arizona in Eloy. Photos by David Wybenga. Information about AXIS' coaching and instructional services is available at axisflightschool.com.



Move Description

Both performers orient horizontally to the relative wind on their bellies. One performer grips the other's leg with the opposing arm (as if building the phalanx formation in the formation skydiving dive pool). Flyer A (the tail of the phalanx) grips the outfacing Flyer B (the head of the phalanx) by the leg, right hand to left leg or left hand to right leg. In this example, the tail flyer takes a grip with his left hand at the top of the block.

During the inter, both competitors perform individual 360 degree turns. The closing formation is also a phalanx but the leg grip is on the opposite side. (Flyer A now takes a right-hand grip on the left leg of Flyer B.)

For judging purposes, it is the team's responsibility to clearly present the correct formation and complete separation between points to the videographer. The formation does not need to be perfectly symmetrical,

but the team must perform it in a controlled manner and close the formation with stationary contact. (For more information, refer to Chapter 9 of the USPA Skydiver's Competition Manual.)

Execution

Both performers may turn in the direction of their choosing. However, in this example, the performers utilize cogging (think gear wheels), in which the performers turn in opposing directions to keep their centerpoints close to one another. This allows the outfacing flyer (Flyer B) to have a visual on her partner throughout the entire move.

To keep the centerpoints of the two flyers close, the tail flyer should turn in place while the outfacing flyer should look for a side-body picture, then finish her 360 with a slight translation to the side. Since the outfacing flyer can see her partner during the entire

move, she is responsible for putting her other leg into position for her partner to grip.

After the tail flyer head-switches, he should be ready to pick up the grip with the hand opposite of the one he used at the top of the formation, effectively mirroring it on the close of the block.

Helpful Hints

The outfacing flyer at the top of the phalanx can translate more effectively using a side slide after the first 180, then feeding the leg to the other competitor on the close.

The flyer at the top of the phalanx should turn toward the center of the formation, avoiding a head-switch. This will allow the top flyer to always keep the formation in view.

The authors intend this article to be an educational guideline. It is not a substitute for professional instruction.