

## WHY NOT TRY...

Satori Purple launch  
a bow over Seville  
by Sam Bemment

# Joining a 4-way team?



## A SEASON WITH THE SATORI ACADEMY

WORDS GEORGE GLASS

"We were impressed with your flying and enthusiasm and would love you to be on one of the teams we put together!" read the email from Julia Foxwell after surviving a 20-minute 4-way carnage-way in Airkix Milton Keynes in January 2011. The minimum commitment required was to attend an hour of tunnel each month and then a week-long training camp in Seville at Skydive Spain. Unfortunately, back then, I had never expected or budgeted to be in a serious 4-way team. I had to turn down the offer but decided at that point that the Academy was going to be my skydiving focus for 2011/2012.

## FUN(NEL?) IN THE TUNNEL

Selections rolled on again in November 2011 and once again I got the offer, only this time I was able to accept, finding myself in one of the colour-coded teams, *Satori Tangelo* AKA Orange AKA Ginger. To ensure consistency for each team's coaching, a specific member of *Satori* was designated to be our coach, remaining so throughout the season. Ours was John McIver, always ready to dispense 4-way advice and words of wisdom with a proper Mancunian lilt. The first team training session at Bedford showed a major deficit in my flying – that I couldn't arch for Scotland. Luckily, John came up with a novel solution – 19lb of lead that kept me down close enough to my teammates but did make my exits from the door much less refined, i.e. crawling on my knees. However, throughout the session, the movements and team co-

ordination improved drastically and we simultaneously had the same realisation: "Oh (bleep), we're properly flying 4-way!". Reinforced with another hour of tunnel, we were ready to apply all of the tunnel sessions into practice in actual freefall.

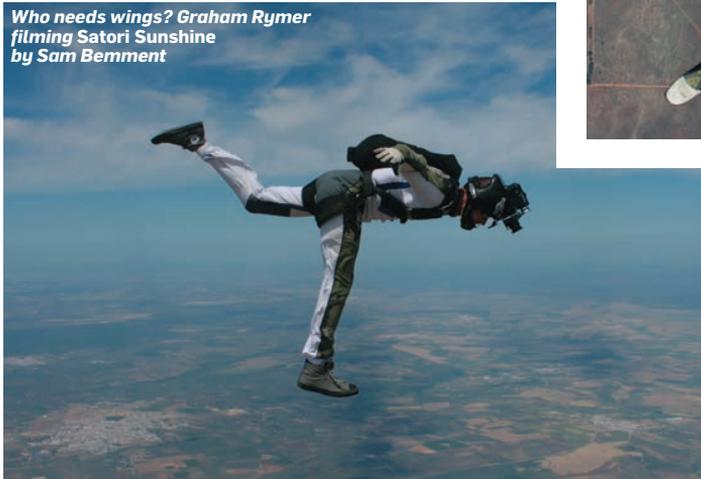
## DIVERSIÓN BAJO EL SOL EN SEVILLA (FUN IN THE SUN IN SEVILLE)

Our introduction to the training camp in Skydive Spain on Day One was short and direct: 4-way, all day. Be it back-to-back loads for the AA or AAA teams or alternating lifts for the others, we were going to jump and focus on nailing exits and work on the hill. From the first to the last lift, we began a cycle of kitting up, running to the plane, jumping, landing, placing the kit down for packing, debriefing and going up again. This gave us the opportunity to identify any problems in

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Who needs wings? Graham Rymer  
filming Satori Sunshine  
by Sam Bemment



**SATORI ORANGE RISES LIKE A PHOENIX, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT**

Unfortunately, towards the end of our training camp in Seville, our outside centre (OC) had an accident that led to a broken fibula, necessitating the search for a new OC. Luckily, we managed to find one through UKS just in time for another training weekend at Hibaldstow. Despite the fact that we had only two good days of jumping out of four (much like a proper British summer!), it was a great opportunity to get back in the air as a team. As I'm writing this, we have many more training weekends ahead to get ourselves ready for the Nationals.

**IS IT WORTH IT? YES**

The commitment needed for the team training over the past few months was considerable and, from the look of things, is going to increase over the next few weeks. It became the norm to pop in for lectures on a Monday at 9am having just returned from Bedford at 6am and to work six/seven 12-hr shifts in a row to get the time off for training camps. The budget for fun jumping has decreased to about one to two a month on average. By my count, I have missed up to four/five birthday celebrations and two/three weddings and my non-skydiving social life has more or less crumbled away. However, the wealth of knowledge and experiences I have gained, along with the strong friendships I have built over the past six months alone, makes it all worth it. While I have to return to Singapore after Nationals in August, I'm definitely going to apply all these skills in the World Challenge at iFly Singapore in December, hopefully with less lead. See you there!

The April Academy Camp



the last jump, learn how to fix it and literally do so 15 minutes later. Training in 32-35°C weather also made me appreciate why other individuals who run around in nylon like Batman and Superman choose to do so in cooler, temperate climates (ever seen them fight crime in the desert? Me neither). In short, the training was long, intense, and I loved every minute of it.

It wasn't to say that it was all hardcore 4-way training as well. While we did have an 'off', i.e. no 4-way training day, several of us made it down to the DZ to do other stuff e.g. tubes, rodeos and

taking an inflatable orca on an AFF Level 1. I and two other teammates went for Jim Harris' Safe Flight School and learnt loads on how to be a better (and safer!) canopy pilot, particularly on how to handle turbulence at 200ft without whimpering like a chihuahua at the vet.

Similarly, we followed a strict work hard, play hard attitude after training as well. Nights spent at the Phoenix Bar to cap off a great day of jumping involved great team bonding, friendships affirmed with alcohol and shots of absinthe that left your mouth tasting of copper for the rest of the night.

**TOP TIPS:  
FREEFALL  
TIP**

**Learn to track properly. If you can do it well, it's great fun. It's also a survival skill, so don't underestimate its importance.**