

Girls Go Large @TOOGOOLAWAH

By Kristina Hicks Photos by Steve Fitchett

THIS YEAR IS WITNESSING MOVEMENT IN BRINGING SOME AWESOME LIKE-MINDED CHICKADEES TOGETHER AND PERFORMING SOME AMAZING FORMATIONS, AND NOT JUST YOUR TYPICAL ROUNDY! LAURENCE GARCEAU MADE HER WAY FROM SYDNEY TO OUR WARMER CLIMATE AT TOOGOOLAWAH TO BE OUR COACH AND I BELIEVE EVEN GOT A BIT OF TAN!

This event was focused on encouraging the chickas to gain their Star Crest and RW skills for Big-way formations. Starting off with some intense starter briefs, we became focused right from the get go. LG gave us a realistic taste to how to prepare and what to expect in all stages of planning for Big-ways, from planning, to dirt dives to keeping a clear mindset in the plane. It was all covered.

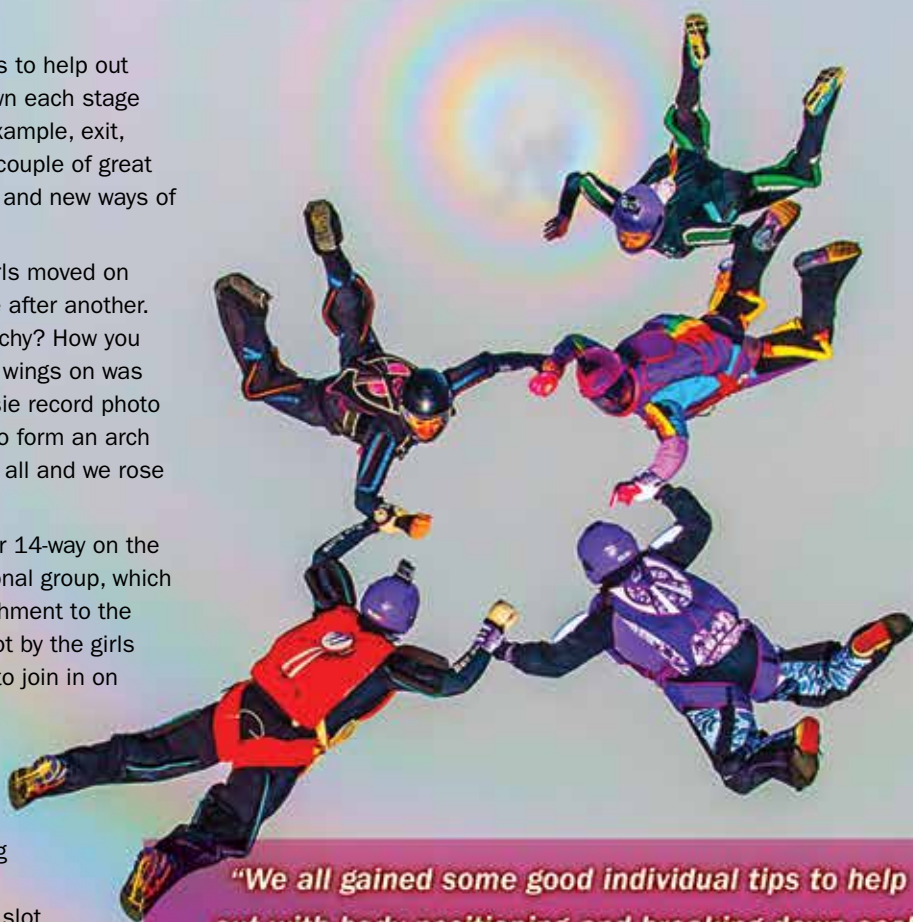
We all gained some good individual tips to help out with body positioning and breaking down each stage of the jump; bit by bit to discuss, for example, exit, freefall and breakoff. We celebrated a couple of great 8-way jumps with a few geek moments and new ways of tracking off!

After some Star Crest attempts, the girls moved on to learning new skills on diving out one after another. It was an interesting adventure, hey Fitchy? How you got down before some of our girls with wings on was amazing! Inspired by the previous Aussie record photo displayed at Toogoolawah, we set out to form an arch off the formation, which was new to us all and we rose to the challenge!

Saturday finished off with a spectacular 14-way on the sunset load joining with John's invitational group, which gave an awesome feeling of accomplishment to the girls, especially after a slight funnel (not by the girls I might add!) and finishing with a race to join in on the final few feet with all smiles round.

Sunday was a big leap forward, as it involved some undeniably complex work indeed. This was no ordinary formation work. Working on more diving exits, to rotating spider formations, the art of sheep dogging, to flying your slot solidly, and of course the continued endless geeking in a final roundy upon successful completion of three-point jumps became our tradition.

I definitely felt I was far exceeding my expectations of my flying ability. Thank you, LG, for your invaluable contribution to increasing the level of expectancy, and for designing jumps that truly helped in progressing RW. This was a great move forward for Big-ways and the path to the next Australian record event in 2019.



"We all gained some good individual tips to help out with body positioning and breaking down each stage of the jump bit by bit to discuss e.g. exit, freefall and breakoff." – Laura Fitzpatrick

Girls Go Large @TOOGOO LAWAH



"The highlight was not only seeing myself, but watching an amazing group of women progress, and taking Big-ways to the next level – not just making a round." – Monique Rothe

A big thank you to Laurence Garceau our super coach for imparting your wisdom, experience and all round good vibes. Steve Fitchett for your superb work and some awesome snaps. To the pilots that make it all possible and get us in the air.

Thanks also to Jon and his invitational group for the sunset load on Saturday, and Ben Nordkamp, Kerry Hook, Jon Kent and Luke Morley for filling on some load space on Sunday!

Thank you, Macca at Skydive Ramblers, for hosting and supporting this event.

A big shout out to Alan Deadman, Melissa Harvie, Martin Klapper, Leanne Critchley, Matt Blaiklock (Jeebus) and SEQSClub for their guidance and support throughout the process from start to finish. Without your help I couldn't have made this happen.

To the APF Fi Fund and South Queensland Parachute Council for their funding support of this event. Thank you for making it possible for us to progress further towards that 2019 Record.

And last but definitely not least, thanks to all the girls who turned up and made a great jumping event at Toogoolawah. May we continue to progress in blue skies.



"Learning from someone so experienced was great. Also, I was really happy to be jumping with all you gals! Good information about track off and body position." – Holly Ahern



“Always great to hear and learn different perspectives and picked up some new techniques to help me in all my flying, not just Big-ways.” –

Laura Williams

INTRODUCING: *Kristina Hicks*

FROM A NERVOUS AFF STUDENT, TO A WINGSUIT RODEO AT EQUINOX BOOGIE, TO AIMING TO BE ON BIG-WAY RECORDS, HOW THINGS CHANGE IN EIGHTEEN MONTHS! WHAT STARTED OUT AS A TICK ON THE BUCKET LIST HAS SOON TURNED INTO A LIFE CHANGING HOBBY!



It hasn't been all smooth sailing. On my fifth ever jump, I had a pretty gnarly off-landing, which found me in marshlands with water up to my knees and rushes above my head. Getting picked up by a tractor was a nice touch to that jump! The following week, after injuring my arm, saw me take a break for three months and questioning if this really was for me.

However, what is truly unique about this community is the continual encouragement and support that I was given and still am to this day. I came back with a new outlook and determined to make a new check list of things to do. In the past year, I have completed over 150 jumps, finished my B and C licenses, Display General, Star Crest, Packer B, am on a girl's 4-way team, and am now organising events. One of the best jumps to date was my

100th, a 6-way Hybrid, and yes, I completed my dare of doing the no-undie hundy!

The best part of this lifestyle is that I've had the opportunity to bring it into the classroom. As a science teacher, I illustrate to students the physics behind flying and even managed to have a tunnel excursion (of course I sneaked a little time in myself)! I'm truly in love with this sport and look forward to seeing where it takes me!



CYPRES 24 hours
verified waterproof