

Foundations of Flight

Sole-to-Sole

Brought to you by Niklas Daniel of AXIS Flight School at Skydive Arizona in Eloy with his teammate from Arizona Arsenal, Steve Curtis. Photos by Travis Mills.

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The sole-to-sole is a competitive freefly maneuver, formation FF-3 of the open-class compulsory dive pool. It consists of a head-down flyer and a head-up flyer making stationary contact with the sole of the other jumper's foot.

Execution

Before attempting this maneuver in the sky, the jumpers should take a look at their alignment on the ground by lying down on their sides. A quick dirt dive will bring to light any difficulties, such as obstructed sight lines, that may occur in the air.

Once in the air, both jumpers should start this move facing one another in a sit-fly position. Jumper A should then transition to his head. His only focus now is to maintain a solid body position, utilizing the "daffy" maneuver (one leg forward and one leg back).

Matching Jumper A's fall rate, Jumper B should move into a "stag" (one leg pointed straight down, the other bent so that his foot is in a higher position). This will help the performers stay on level. Jumper B should keep most of his weight on the heel of his docking foot, flexing his toes upward.

While both performers maintain eye contact, Jumper B (the head-up flyer) touches his higher foot to Jumper A's forward foot. During competition, maintaining stationary contact is critical to demonstrating control to the judges. Simply kicking the other jumper's foot will not score points.

Helpful Hints

Jumper A (the head-down flyer) has to be very disciplined when flying his slot. Any excess movement, such as reaching with his front leg to try to dock more quickly, will only make the dock more difficult. If Jumper A stretches his front leg forward, he can cause an unwanted backward drive (effectively moving away from the sit-flyer), and stretching his foot upward will cause his fall rate to increase (also moving him away from the sit-flyer).

