Technology Tuesday

Description

Someone had to test itâ€¦.

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Itâ€™s not in English, butâ€¦when they hold up the < href=â€• http://www.icaruscanopies.aero/main.htmâ€•>Icarus VX-39 canopy, itâ€™s the one Luigi is jumpingâ€¦

That number, 39, you ask? Stands for 39 square feet of surface areaâ€¦.if you must know.

Once I â€œtrustedâ€• my life to a â€œsquareâ€• in the late 70â€™s, my first one was a 230 sq ft â€œStrato-Cloud.â€• Went to a 200 Sq Ft Pegasus, then a 150 sq ft Performance Designs Sabre 150 and (so far) ended with a Sabre 120. When I made that transition, I was doing about 160+ jumps/year and I was loading the wing up nicely, thank you. Exit weight wasâ€¦how shall I say thisâ€¦more than the â€œtail tagâ€• said, but I flew it well and have no injuries, or even close calls, because of problems handling the canopy to discuss as a result.

Parachute technology in the civilian sector has come a long way since guys with hot knifes and a few C-9 (28 ft diameter) surplus military parachutes (still with lines, they didnâ€™t chop them off back then) could slice out a few panels to see how they flew. My first â€œownedâ€• parachute was in fact, a C-9, formerly white, but dyed maroon by the prior owner.

When â€œsquaresâ€• appeared in the mid-70s, they had 5 â€œcellsâ€• (chambers). Most jumpers today have 9 cell canopies, but the â€œextremeâ€• jumpers, who love the â€œswoop,â€• some of them use 21 cell versions, to get a thinner wing, and more â€œstiffness,â€• to generate better lift and speed. Some canopies have air locks, which, once the air is rammed in during the opening sequence to shape the cell, is trapped within, also providing a stiffer wing to the air, with improved performance.

â€œWeâ€• have come a long, baby!

Oh, and when youâ€™re bored with your canopyâ€™s performance, then you can strap on a â€œwingsuitâ€• and have a â€œcome to Jesusâ€• experienceâ€¦

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Helicopter not includedâ€¦

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