

# Forming a Team

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What many of us love most about our sport is the constant challenge that it presents. The more we learn, the better we fly, the deeper our level of enjoyment and fulfillment. This quest for personal best is the most common motivation that keeps people in our sport. Without it, our drive to continue diminishes.

During student training and our initial introduction to Formation Skydiving, our learning curve is steep and our enthusiasm soars. We are no longer falling: we are flying. But, somewhere around the first one to two hundred jumps, the challenge starts to taper off. The weekend fun jumps are not pushing us like they did in the beginning. Then we look at teams and notice the constant challenge they face, regardless of what their level of skydiving is. They are learning and improving with every jump and having more fun.

This is the main reason people start teams. Training with a team is the best way to continue your learning, become challenged and improve your personal growth. The challenge towards personal and team best, not the pursuit of gold medals, is the primary goal of the world's best teams.

Teams usually begin with one enthusiastic person who is the motivating force behind the whole thing. They may have a personal long-term goal of winning the World Championship, and putting a team together is the first step in that direction.

For the purpose of this discussion let us say this is you. You begin your search for teammates. You have a list of qualifications:

- People who have the same short and long-term goals;
- People who are willing to commit to the same degree;
- People who have the money and time;
- People with equal or better ability;
- People you like.

But after examining all of the interested candidates there are only three people who want to be a part of your team. They are:

The first candidate is a young inexperienced skydiver who does not have much skill, money, or obvious natural ability. But wants this so bad, he is willing to sell everything he owns, move to the DZ and live in a tent to make it happen.

The second candidate is a fantastic skydiver who is far better than you. This person has a lot of team training experience and enough money to jump as much

as needed. But he is really not too excited about being on a team, although he is willing to commit only because he is bored with the sport and does not have anything else to do when he is at the DZ.

The last candidate is a person with the same experience and goals as you. He is also the same age as you. Sounds like he would be perfect for the team, except for one slight problem: you never liked this person actually you cannot even stand to look at him.

Believe it or not this team can work and become a great experience for you!

You do not need teammates who have the same goals. You need teammates who can agree on a common goal. This common goal is the key to all teams. It may be less than what you wanted, and more than what other members of the team wanted. But it is what everyone can agree to.

From this everyone will be able to contribute a 100% effort all the time. This will also provide what each one needs to continue working towards their personal goals. These teams will rejuvenate enthusiasm for your bored teammate. The young jumper who did not appear to have much potential, will bloom to levels you did not even imagine. Sharing a common goal with the person you hated will bring you closer together. You may not love each other, but a certain mutual respect has definitely started to develop. You are one step closer to that World Championship than you were before. When that year is finished, you may find that the ideal team you had been searching for, but could not find, is the one that you created.

Guidelines for building a team:

1. Find individuals who can agree on a common goal;
2. Define the commitment towards the goal: time, money, jumping and non-skydiving training;
3. Refer to the dirt diving and debriefing sections for good systems that focus your efforts in a positive direction;
4. Develop and define your communication plan.

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