



Press Release

The current state of affairs regarding professional kitesurfing has led the Global Kitesports Association (GKA) to introduce key competition concepts for the 2016 Season.

General goal of GKA

One of the GKA's declared goals is to develop professional kitesurfing. Together with all stake holders (athletes, sanctioning bodies, tour operators etc.) the GKA aims to bring the sport forward constructively.

The GKA members have a keen interest in professional competitions as they showcase the sport to a wide audience and create a platform for professional athletes. There's no event without athletes. As one of the main contributors to professional sports all GKA members are aim for a positive development in professional kiteboarding for athletes and all other stakeholders. Negative developments for example could be the exclusion of athletes because of their participation in any event or series of a different sanctioning body, delayed payments of prize-money or lack of media coverage.

The GKA is not linked to any of the two existing tour bodies IKA or WKT. The GKA and its members will generally support all events and will not hinder their athletes to participate on IKA events or WKT events.

Today it seems very likely that at least IKA and WKT will offer each its own tour. Therefore, the GKA decided to start publishing its own GKA ranking based on the results from major events of both tours.

The GKA likes to reflect also results from events like King of the Air or Triple S in the new GKA ranking. At the same time the GKA wants to create more attention for kitesurfing in Waves and new developments in strapless Wave/Freestyle.

For the development of the sport and the recognition of professional kite surfing the GKA desires to improve the spectator experience. A first step is to simplify the current of the various disciplines.

The GKA will run its own ranking in two disciplines. At the end of the contest-year the GKA will crown the *GKA-Riders of the Year* in these two disciplines.

Freestyle / Big Air

Current Freestyle and Big Air Events count equally towards one GKA Rider of the Year award.

Wave and Wave/Freestyle

To improve the representation of Wave and Wave/Freestyle GKA will offer it's other Rider of the Year award in this new discipline.

As a guidance for our riders and for event organizers the GKA will position itself for the running year as follows:

Roles of the GKA within the current competition landscape

In the dispute between IKA and WKT the GKA keeps its neutral position. The GKA will support the key-event organizers and ensure participation of the riders and the industry where appropriate.

GKA recognized events

GKA will recognize a limited amount of key events for the calendar year. The role of the recognition is to ensure that the GKA will support their riders to participate in the listed events.

The GKA recognized events will be promoted as GKA-Grand-Slam events. GKA requirements must be met.

Rider of the Year

Within the framework of an annual GKA Industry Awards ceremony the GKA will present the

GKA-Freestyle Rider of the Year and the **GKA-Wave Rider of the Year** (female and male).

GKA rider of the year will become who achieved the best results in the GKA recognized events.

Support for emerging events and broad participation

The GKA will actively campaign against any event organization or sanctioning body in case riders being banned from participation. The GKA will stand in for the rights of the riders.

The GKA aims to act in the best interest of the sport and all it's stakeholders. 2016 will be a transition season for the professional sport and the GKA believes that its constructive solution will be for the benefit of all.

Hamburg / Germany , 6.2.2016

Dr. Jürgen Vogt

Secretary General

Global Kitesports Association

A. General overview of the GKA-Rider of the Year concept

1. The GKA will work very closely with the event organizers.
2. The GKA will work closely and stay in close correspondence with World Sailing (WS).
3. The GKA will stay neutral regarding IKA and WKT. That means that the GKA will neither support or prefer nor ban events who are either sanctioned by IKA or WKT. Important and deciding for the GKA will be the professionalism of the event organizers and the event as such.
4. The GKA will bring kitesurfing back to the roots as a multifaceted sport and will crown a GKA-Rider of the year in the discipline Freestyle and in the discipline Wave.
5. The GKA-rankings are composed purely by the final results of existing events.
6. For the GKA-overall ranking in freestyle approximately 6 events will be chosen from existing events. The following events are under consideration by GKA:
 - King of the Air
 - Triple S (to be discussed with the riders)
 - Leucate / France (confirmed as GKA Grand Slam event)
 - Fuerteventura
 - Dakhla
 - Fehmarn / Germany (confirmed as GKA Grand Slam event)
 - More or other events can be taken under consideration as well. An Announcement about the final list of GKA-Grand Slam events will be made soon.
7. For GKA overall ranking in wave approximately 4 events will be chosen. The following events are under consideration by GKA:
 - Tarifa (Strapless Freestyle) ; (not confirmed)
 - Dakhla (Wave / strapless) ; (not confirmed)
 - Fehmarn / Germany (Strapless Freestyle) (not confirmed)
 - Mauritius (Wave / strapless) ; (not confirmed)
 - Maui (Wave / straps or strapless) ; (not confirmed)
 - Cape Town (Wave / straps or strapless) ; (not confirmed)

For the season 2017 organizers can apply with GKA until the 31st October to be a registered event.

8. The winner (male and female) in the discipline freestyle will be called:
GKA- Freestyle Rider of the Year
9. The winner (male and female) in the discipline wave will be called:
GKA- Wave Rider of the Year
10. Besides the GKA-Global-Freestyle/Wave Rider of the year a title **Rooky of the Year** (male and female) will be established.

B. Details of the GKA-Rider of the Year concept

1. GKA – Grand Slam Format

- (1) The GKA will recognise all relevant events regardless whether the events are single events like Red Bull King of the Air or events sanctioned by IKA or WKT. Relevant for becoming a GKA recognised event are the positive answers to the following questions:
 - a) Is the event organised by a professional and reliable organizer (experience and history etc.)?
 - b) Is the event professionally organised and financially sound (minimum budget, concept, sponsors etc.)?
 - c) Is the media coverage of the event ensured and on a sufficient level (locally, national and international etc.)?
 - d) Is a reasonable price money for the riders guaranteed?
 - e) Are the riders treated well and supported professionally by the organizer (free food, save storage at the beach, massage etc.)?
 - f) Is professional and qualified judging guaranteed (judging team can be an IKA or WKT judging team or any other professional team accepted by riders and GKA)
 - g) Is the event relevant for the kitesport-industry (customers)?
 - h) Is the the event on a for kiting commercial interesting location?

GKA assumption details are given to the event organizers directly.

- (2) Events which are chosen by GKA to become relevant for the GKA ranking can call themselves “**GKA-Grand-Slam**”.
- (3) The GKA and its members will use their media channels and business-relationships to magazines and media to make those events the most important and most well known kite-competition-events worldwide.
- (4) Any event will be evaluated by the GKA. In case the event does not fulfil the requirements of the GKA it will not be recognised as GKA-Grand-Slam event anymore in the following year.
- (5) The event organizer must send the final results in the disciplines freestyle and wave to the GKA office by email within 3 hours after the event is finished.
- (6) The ranking for the GKA-Rider of the Year is composed by the final results of any “GKA-Grand-Slam” event as follows:

1st place = 0,7 points
2nd place = 2 points
3rd place = 3 points
until place 30

In case 6 GKA-Grand-Slam events in freestyle are announced 5 out of 6 GKA-Grand-Slam results count (one discard).

In case 4 GKA-Grand-Slam events in wave can be announced 3 out of 4 GKA-Grand-Slam results count (one discard).

Example:

King of the Air: Place 5 = 5 points
Leucate: Place 2 = 2 points
Dakhla: Place 1 = 0,7 points
Fuerteventura: Place 4 = 4 points
Triple S (overall) Place 15 = 15 points (discard)
Fehmarn: Place 3 = 3 points
GKA points 14,7 points

Rider with less points are ranking better than rider x at the GKA Rider of the year and rider with more points are ranked behind rider x.

Example using 2015 results on a random selection of events:
 Male comparison between Aron Hadlow and Liam Whaley and
 Female comparison between Gisela Pulido and Karolina Winkowska

	KOTA	Dakhla (FS)	Venezuela	Tripple S	Tarifa (Big Air)	Fuerte	SPO	Total minus discard
Aron Hadlow	0,7	3	3	3	5	5	2	16,7
Liam Whaley	15	0,7	0,7	15	15	15	0,7	47,1

	Dakhla (FS)	Venezuela	Tarifa (Big Air)	Fuerte	SPO	Total minus discard
Gisela Pulido	2	3	0,7	3	0,7	6,4
Karolina Winkowska	0,7	0,7	15	5	7	13,4

- (7) Crowning: The crowning of the GKA-Rider of the Year will happen at the last GKA Grand Slam event in the year. In 2016 it will be for freestyle (and wave most likely) the Worldcup at Fehmarn in Germany which takes place from the 26th August until the 4th September.

2. Guarantee by GKA

- (1) The GKA and its member-companies will make sure that there is a special coverage by kitesurf-magazines and specialist media of the GKA-Global-Grand-Slam events.
- (2) The GKA member-companies will make sure that all their top-riders will attend at all GKA-Grand-Slam events in their various disciplines unless they are injured.
- (3) The GKA will send the event-report delivered by the organizer (to be delivered within 48 hours after the event is finished) to all relevant media partners. The GKA will use its influence on special interest media to ensure good coverage.
- (4) The GKA will build up their own social media channels to assist on a neutral platform.

C. GKA-Awards

At the crowning ceremony for GKA-Global-Freestyle/Wave- Rider of the year and Rooky of the Year a few other key awards will be offered covering media and products, this will be defined by the GKA Awards working group. Detailed information about the different GKA-Award categories are coming soon.