

RipCORDS detail plans for skydive show

There is a saying among sport parachutists that, "He who hesitates inherits the earth," but hesitation is the name of the game for the professional skydiving team known as the "Northeast Pennsylvania RipCORDS." The RipCORDS are scheduled to perform at the Luzerne County Fair Saturday 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The RipCORDS are a group of skydivers that have been in existence since 1961. Since that time they have performed before thrillseeking crowds throughout the state of Pennsylvania. They are by far one of the most active sport parachuting clubs in the East. Stepping from their airplane more than one mile above the earth the team streaks towards the surface at speeds up to 250 mph. Freefalling for 20 seconds, they perform intricate movements as they fall, then open their brightly colored parachutes at 2,500 feet and land with precision on a preselected spot.

Skydiving as a sport came to the U.S. from France in 1958. A short three years later Don Kellner of Conyngham Valley formed the organization. Don is still the club's most active member and president of the corporation. A conscientious instructor, Don has taught countless hundreds of students.

In Don's career as a skydiver, he has accumulated over 3000 jumps for fun, exhibition, and national competition. Out of 30,000 jumpers in the U.S. today, there are less than 50 who have attained this magical 3000 mark. Today Don will be jumping a white and blue Parafoil. The Parafoil is classified as a non rigid glider. It has the aerodynamic qualities of an airplane wing and flies forward at speeds up to 30 mph. As you will see, it is highly maneuverable.

The second member of the team is Gary Van Horn of Freeland. Gary started as a student with the RipCORDS in 1971 and became a member of the exhibition team in 1972. At the present time Gary has logged over 900 jumps and holds a Class "D", expert, parachuting license. He too has won trophies in various competitions throughout the country. He holds a club safety officer rating issued by the national organization, the United States Parachute Association. Gary is jumping a multi-colored American

Papillon canopy designed for superior handling capabilities in accuracy competition.

Our third team member is Mike DiMenichi of Bethlehem. Mike began his jumping career in 1973 and has over 500 jumps to his credit. Mike is jumping a black and red Para Cloud which resembles Don's Parafoil in looks and flying characteristics. Mike holds a Class "D", advanced, parachutist license and is also active on the student scene. Mike lost his right foot in a tragic skydiving mishap recently. However, seven weeks later he was back in the air jumping. He is to be commended for his fortitude and stamina.

Bringing up the rear is Bob Grimes from Allentown. Bob too started jumping in 1973 and has more than 400 jumps at the time. Bob, as did Mike, started as one of Don's students. Today Bob is jumping a red, white, and blue Strato-Star.

As you can see the RipCORDS are using a wide variety of equipment. Although similar in appearance each canopy was chosen for its specific characteristics based on personal preference. Each jumper has about \$1,200 invested in his gear.

Last but not least is our pilot Dave Price, also of

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RIPCORDS--The RipCORDS sport parachute club will provide an exhibition again this year at the Luzerne County Fair at the Lehman Horse Show Grounds west of Dallas.

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