

MEDIA ALERT

August 2025

Sydney's Handifly Race Delivers Podium Success for Australian Flyers

12 Australians and 3 international athletes competed in the only Australian leg of the Handifly World Series

SYDNEY, August 2025: The Handifly Race touched down at iFLY Indoor Skydiving Downunder in Penrith earlier this month, marking the only Australian leg of the international World Series and highlighting the growing future of adaptive skydiving.

The event welcomed 12 Australian competitors and three international flyers, who tested their skills in the solo, timed flying discipline designed specifically for athletes with disabilities. The atmosphere was both competitive and collaborative, as athletes not only battled for podium places but also exchanged knowledge, shared equipment tips, and supported each other throughout the weekend.

Podium Finishers

- Australian winners: 1st place: Heath Lehr, 2nd: Greg Pinson, 3rd: Chris Astill
- International & overall winners: 1st place: Cyril Moré (France), 2nd: Niko Johann (Germany), 3rd: Sabrina Schoenmaker (Netherlands)

Two blind athletes, Tom and Joanne, also participated in the event outside of the official Handifly classification. For Joanne, it was her first time flying in Sydney, a much larger tunnel than she's used to in Brisbane. The milestone highlighted both her progression as a flyer and the welcoming spirit of the competition.

"The determination of every flyer was remarkable," said Lauren Hearn, Assistant Manager at iFLY Downunder. "One of the most powerful moments was seeing Joanne fly in our 16ft tunnel for the first time. It showed that Handifly is about much more than competition, it's about opening the tunnel to everyone who wants to experience flight."

The event also became a space for practical innovation, as athletes trialled and shared adaptive gear. Many discovered that hospital knee braces offered a simple, affordable alternative to custom supports, while webbed gloves proved invaluable in helping athletes without leg control manoeuvre in the tunnel.

"For me, the highlight was watching the athletes adapt the sport to themselves," said Doni Gales, iFLY Coach and event organiser. "They weren't just competing, they were collaborating, inventing solutions, and showing what can be achieved when the community comes together."

With its mix of competition, creativity and camaraderie, the Sydney event proved to be a powerful showcase of resilience and the growing global future of adaptive skydiving.

The Handifly World Series now moves to France in September for its final stage, where overall international rankings will be confirmed.

More Information for Media;

Athlete Profiles

- **Greg Pinson (Lower Blue Mountains)**
Greg has spina bifida and is a full-time wheelchair user. As iFLY Downunder's All Abilities Ambassador, he has been central to growing adaptive flying in Australia. Greg mentors newcomers, advocates for accessibility, and this weekend took silver in the Australian standings.
- **Chris Astill (Crow's Nest, Sydney)**
Chris is a former paragliding pilot who took up indoor skydiving in 2022 after an accident left him using a wheelchair. He now leads the Handifly initiative at iFLY Downunder and works with the Adaptive Athlete Academy to mentor new flyers. Chris's bronze medal reinforced his dual role as competitor and community leader.
- **Heath Lehr (Sydney)**
At just 11 years old, Heath was the youngest athlete on the podium. He has come through iFLY's All Abilities program and continues to push his flying skills forward, showing promise as one of the next generation of Australian competitors.
- **Cyril (France)**
A leading competitor from France, where the Handifly program was first established, Cyril's victory in Sydney highlights Europe's deep experience and training in adaptive indoor skydiving.
- **Niko (Germany)**
Representing Germany, Niko's silver medal demonstrates the country's growing adaptive sport presence and adds to Europe's strong showing on the global Handifly stage.
- **Sabrina (Netherlands)**
Claiming bronze overall, Sabrina's podium finish strengthens the international reach of the competition and represents female adaptive athletes on the global circuit.

High-resolution images and athlete profiles are available on request.

More info: ifly.com.au | [Handifly International on Facebook](#)

For interviews, athlete profiles, or further details, contact:

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Media Kit

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1K5W6G0FR1cBe0Hrrr8VY0kcffqHH_gh6?usp=drive_link