

FRENCH FLAVOUR AT PARAGLIDING WORLD CUP

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There will be a dominant French flavour to the forthcoming Airports Authority of India Paragliding World Cup scheduled for later this month in the Bir Billing area of Himachal Pradesh. Among the strongest nations in the world of competitive aerospots, France will have 14 pilots from among the 100-odd men competing for top honours at the event, with as many as 33 Frenchmen currently ranked in the top 100.

Said Billiing Paragliding Association president Sudhir Sharma, "The French pilots have always been a force to reckon with and have a great system in place for training and encouraging pilots. I am sure their pilots will be among the top contenders at the AAI Paragliding World Cup."

Two French pilots at Bir Billing have won Superfinals — Maxime Pinot won the 2014 event in Turkey and Yann Martail won at the same venue in 2010. Martail has also won two other World Cup titles.

Besides them, Julien Wirtz, who is still looking for his first World Cup or Superfinal success, has held the world no. 1 spot for almost 20 months in the past 25, making him one of the most consistent pilots in the world today. Pinot, too, has held the top spot in the past.