

PROFILE

NIKLAS DANIEL

D-28906



by Brian Giboney

Niklas Daniel is a formation skydiving, vertical formation skydiving and canopy piloting coach at AXIS Flight School, which he owns and runs with Brianne Thompson at Skydive Arizona in Eloy. He is also a wind tunnel instructor, freefall photographer, regular on the boogie circuit and member of VFS team Arizona Arsenal.

**Age:** 28

**Birthplace:** Atlanta, Georgia

**Nationality:** American and German

**Marital Status:** In a relationship

**Occupation:** Skydiver

**Education:** Some college

**Pet Peeves:** Overall, I would have to say inefficiency, but when it comes to skydiving: jumpers who listen to headphones on the airplane; people not being jump ready when boarding; jumpers who do not secure themselves or their equipment before takeoff; inadequate separation among freefall groups.

**Jump Philosophy:** With the wealth of information that is available, remaining ignorant is a choice.

**Team Names:** AXIS Flight School and Arizona Arsenal

**Sponsors:** Adrenaline Obsession, Airtec, Bev Suits, Cookie Composites, Hypoxic, Larsen & Brusgaard, Performance Designs, Skydive Arizona, SkyVenture Arizona, United Parachute Technologies and Vertical Suits

**Container:** United Parachute Technologies Vector Micron

**Main Canopies:** Performance Designs Velocity 84 and 75. I also quite frequently use a Performance Designs Pulse 190 and Storm 170 when flying with students.

**Reserve Canopy:** Performance Designs Optimum 126

**AAD:** Airtec CYPRES 2

**Discipline:** I take an interest in all disciplines because they complement each other.

**Home Drop Zone:** Skydive Arizona in Eloy

**First Jump:** An AFF on December 19, 2004

**USPA Licenses, Ratings and Appointments:** D-28906, Coach, AFF and Tandem Instructor, PRO, Safety and Training Advisor

**Championships and Medals:** World championships: bronze flying video for the U.S. women's 4-way FS team (2010); silver flying video for the U.S. women's 4-way FS team (2008). USPA Nationals: silver flying video in 4-way FS open and bronze flying video in 8-way FS open (2008).

**Total Number of Jumps:** 7,500-plus

**Camera:** 4,000 **Freely:** 3,000 **Tandems:** 250

**FS:** 100 **CF:** 40 **Wingsuit:** 25

**Balloon:** 5 **Demos:** 4

**Tunnel Time:** 3,500-plus hours

**Total Number of Cutaways:** 23  
(18 sport, one tandem, four intentional)

**What was your canopy progression?**

Aerodyne Pilot 210, 188, 168 and 150: 1,200 jumps. Performance Designs Sabre 2 135 and 107: 2,500 jumps. Performance Designs Katana 120, 107 and 97: 300 jumps. Performance Designs Velocity 111, 103, 96, 90, 84, 79 and 75: 3,500-plus jumps. Whenever I switched models, especially to one more aggressive than the previous model, I upsized. Whenever I downsized, I stuck to the same model. The canopies above are the ones I spent the most time with; however, I have flown many more.

**Of all of your skydives, is there one jump that stands out the most?**

A stunt I performed for a music video where I burned a canopy [I was flying]. The three-story fireball that was created during the explosion was blinding. Even as the canopy disintegrated and I reentered freefall, the heat from the flames was incredible.

**Who have been your skydiving mentors?**

Scott Roberts and Isaiah McCauliffe heavily influenced my canopy progression. Kris Reynolds and Joao Tambor's flying and coaching styles are something I have aspired to as an instructor.

**How did you become interested in skydiving?**

I have always had a fascination with the sky and flying. I believe this was influenced by my mother's love of airplanes.

Because of this, I was lucky to have started flying glider planes at an early age. When I was old enough to skydive, I gave jumping a try and never turned back.

**What are your future skydiving goals?**

Win the 2014 world championships in VFS with Arizona Arsenal and continue to grow AXIS Flight School as a leading coaching entity within the industry.

**Do you have any suggestions for students?**

Stay current, be patient, listen and get as much coaching as possible. Do not make decisions based on image.

**If you could do a fantasy 2-way with anybody, whom would it be with?**

I would like to make a jump with my stepfather, Jochen. He is one of the coolest people I know and has been instrumental in making AXIS Flight School a success.

**The toughest thing to do in skydiving is:**

Remembering that jumping is supposed to be fun. Many fall victim to wanting something now. Whether it's flying head down, swooping, building a team, becoming an instructor or whatever else. Remember to be patient and not get frustrated. Enjoy the ride.

**What kind of skydiving student were you?**

I never failed an AFF level; however, I was overly aggressive with my learning approach. At the time I figured if something was not working, simply add more power. This method may work in some places but not in skydiving. Even though I may have appeared as a natural at face value, I was definitely a mental flailer. Some of my hardest lessons to learn were patience, exercising restraint and slowing down to see the big picture. Everything in moderation.

**Is there one jump you would like to do again?**

I would have to go with Todd Love's first AFF jump. [Love lost both legs and one arm while serving in the military. He learned to skydive in the wind tunnel and then in the air with AXIS Flight School.] This was an incredible experience because it demonstrated to me that anything can be accomplished if you put your mind to it. There were a lot of behind-the-scenes things going on to make Todd's jumping a reality. Jumping with him was just the icing on the cake where we got to see all of our hard work pay off.