

Austrian daredevil eyes new space jump at weekend

October 11 2012, by Michael Thurston



Handout photo shows Austrian daredevil Felix Baumgartner after successfully completing his second manned test flight for Red Bull Stratos in July. He hopes to make a new attempt to jump from the edge of space Sunday, after his initial bid was aborted due to strong winds, organizers said.

An Austrian daredevil hopes to make a new record-breaking attempt to jump from the edge of space Sunday, after his initial launch bid was aborted due to gusting winds, organizers said.

[Felix Baumgartner](#) was seconds away from lift-off in the US state of New Mexico Tuesday when mission control decided to cancel it because the huge balloon taking him up was buffeted badly, even while still on the ground.

The [Red Bull](#) Stratos mission organizers had said shortly afterwards that Thursday could work for a new bid. That was ruled out Wednesday, but a weekend [launch](#) is now a definite possibility.

"Everything is looking very good" for Sunday, spokeswoman Sarah Anderson told AFP on Wednesday, while a mission statement said the 43-year-old was getting over his disappointment, and focusing on the next attempt.

The [skydiver](#) "was surprised and disappointed that his attempt to become the first person to break the sound barrier in freefall had to be scrapped due to gusts of wind near the top of his 850,000 cubic meters balloon," it said.

But it added: "Weather permitting, the Austrian will likely get another chance to to write history while breaking four world records with his jump from the edge of space on Sunday."



Handout photo shows Austrian daredevil Felix Baumgartner lifting up during his second manned test flight for Red Bull Stratos in July. He was seconds away from lift-off on Tuesday when mission control decided to cancel it because the balloon taking him up was buffeted badly.

Baumgartner plans to jump from an altitude of 23 miles (36 kilometers) in a pressurized [space suit](#) after being taken aloft in a capsule suspended under a giant helium balloon.

He aims to break at least three records: the highest freefall leap; the fastest speed ever achieved by a human; and become the first person to break the sound barrier of around around 690 miles per hour (1,100 kph) in freefall.

Baumgartner has been training for five years for the jump, during which he will be in freefall for some five minutes before opening a parachute at 5,000 feet (1,500 meters) to float back to the ground.

The biggest danger he faces is spinning out of control, which could exert G forces and make him lose consciousness. A controlled dive from the capsule is essential, putting him in a head-down position to increase speed.

Baumgartner has broken several records in the past, notably with spectacular base jumps from the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur and the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The mission, backed by a 100-strong team of experts, also hopes to contribute to medical and aeronautical research aimed at improving the safety of astronauts.

If and when it does go ahead, the ascent is expected to take between two and three hours. If all goes well, the descent will take about 15 to 20 minutes—five minutes or so in freefall, and 10 to 15 floating down with his [parachute](#).

Baumgartner has spoken of his disappointment when the first launch was aborted. "When (mission director) Art (Thompson) told me we were aborting the mission I thought it was a joke," he said.

"I want this to happen this year. We've made it so far. There's no turning back," he added. "We're here, we've got the helium and we're good to go. Whether that's tomorrow or the first day next week, I don't really care."

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