

Wind delays Austrian's edge of space jump in US (Update)

October 6 2012



In this image obtained from www.redbullcontentpool.com, pilot Felix Baumgartner of Austria shows a piece of the balloon material during the Red Bull Stratos egress training in Lancaster, California, in February 2012. US organizers of Baumgartner's record-breaking attempt to jump from the edge of space have delayed the mission by a day due to forecast wind, they said.

US organizers of an Austrian daredevil's record-breaking attempt to jump from the edge of space have delayed the mission by a day due to forecast wind, they said Friday.

Felix Baumgartner, aiming to break a number of records including being the first man to exceed the speed of sound in free fall, is now scheduled to jump Tuesday instead of Monday over the US state of New Mexico.

"The reason for the delay is a strong cold front with sharply colder temperatures... over the weekend," said the organizers of the Red Bull Stratos mission.

"While the weather will greatly improve on Monday .. wind speeds are expected to be above acceptable levels for a safe launch on Monday morning," at up to 24 kmh (15 mph), said meteorologist Don Day.

Baumgartner aims to ascend 120,000 feet—nearly 23 miles, (36 kilometers)—in a capsule taken up to the edge of the stratosphere by a gigantic helium balloon, before stepping out in a pressurized suit to fall back to earth.

The 43-year-old has been training for five years for the jump, during which he will be in free fall for five minutes before opening a parachute at 5,000 feet up 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.

Among the records he is seeking to break is that of the highest ever jump—at over three times the average airliner cruising altitude.

The Red Bull Stratos mission, backed by a 100-strong team of experts and centered on the launch site in Roswell, New Mexico, also hopes to contribute to medical and aeronautical research.

Organizers say that despite the delay from the originally planned Monday launch, the attempt will "most probably" go ahead Tuesday morning.

"The good news is that we usually have a day or two after this type of cold front moves through where the weather can be favorable for a balloon launch," said Day.

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Citation: Wind delays Austrian's edge of space jump in US (Update) (2012, October 6) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-10-highest-free-fall-postponed-due.html>

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