



FAI Awards – Nomination Form

FAI Hang-Gliding & Paragliding Commission (CIVL)

(one form per nomination)

Submitted by – the FAI Statutes 9.1.3.2			
NAC			
Name			
Position/Function			
Date		Email Address	
Name of the Award	Description	Nomination	
The Pepe Lopes Medal <i>the FAI By-Laws- 7.10.1</i>	<i>The medal may be awarded for outstanding contributions to sportsmanship or international understanding in the sport of hang-gliding and paragliding. The medal will only be awarded for truly significant acts or services and will not necessarily be awarded every year.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The FAI Hang-Gliding and Paragliding Diploma <i>the FAI By-Laws- 7.10.2</i>	<i>It may be awarded to an individual who is considered to have made an outstanding contribution to the development of hang-gliding and/or paragliding by his or her initiative, work or leadership in flight achievement</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Nomination for			
First Name		Family Name	
Birthdate		Email Address	
Citations* for the Nomination <i>(Shall not exceeding 250 words based on the FAI By-Laws 7.2.1)</i> <i>*Will be uploaded to FAI Database and presented at fai.org</i>			
Additional information about of the nominee Add the links website/social media, photos, articles etc. <i>(All in relation while practicing his/her sport or achievement he/she is nominated for)</i>			
<i>All nominations must be received at the FAI Secretariat in electronic format latest 60 days before the Commission Plenary Meeting based on the FAI By-Laws 7.1.2. Please submit your nomination to commissions@fai.org</i>			

FAI CIVL Pepe Lopes Medal - 2025 Nomination

“For outstanding contributions to sportsmanship or international understanding in the sport of hang gliding”

NOMINATED BY: US Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association, US

CITATION:

TAVO GUTIERREZ is nominated for the *Pepe Lopes Medal* in recognition of his selfless, persistent and vital actions that contributed to the successful transport to hospital of a fellow hang glider pilot and competitor during the 2023 El Penon Classic Race in Temascaltepec near Valle de Bravo, Mexico. Without Tavo’s multiple level-headed, dedicated, and compassionate interventions, this would have been a fatal accident.

DESCRIPTION OF NOMINEE’S ACTIONS:

On 25th February 2023, during the final day of the competition, US-based British pilot Richard Milla crashed shortly after take-off, sustaining multiple life-threatening injuries. Tavo, who was also participating in the competition, was one of the first people to reach Richard, and he remained by Richard’s side to the Emergency Room at the Centro Medico ABC (American-British Cowdray) hospital in Mexico City, where Richard was finally admitted for treatment.

Highlights of Tavo’s exemplary, life-saving action that day include:

- At every step of the way, Tavo provided vital English-Spanish translation between Richard and all the rescuers, paramedics, nurses and doctors.
- During the ambulance ride down the hill to the medical-evacuation helicopter landing zone, Tavo urged paramedics to administer additional pain medication to relieve Richard’s suffering with every jolt and jerk as the driver negotiated the off-road conditions.
- Tavo set aside his personal anxiety with helicopter flight (he had previously vowed never to fly in one by choice) to accompany Richard to the local hospital in Toluca and personally address Richard’s discomfort with broken teeth and other painful injuries.
- On arrival in Toluca, Tavo successfully persuaded the local hospital staff to provide Richard with essential, life-sustaining stabilization prior to transferring him to a Level 1

trauma hospital in Mexico City, which was required due to the severity of Richard's injuries.

- Without Tavo's quick thinking, cultural familiarity, and persuasive arguments, Richard would not have received the stabilization treatment that then ensured he could survive onward travel to the trauma-center hospital.
- In Toluca, because the local hospital did not have one available, Tavo went to the local medical supply company and himself bought the drain-tube kit required to prevent Richard from suffocating due to the lung puncture and multiple broken ribs.
- Tavo negotiated and coordinated payment for expedited ambulance transfer from Toluca to Mexico City.
- Tavo accompanied Richard in the ambulance ride to Mexico City and then advocated for Richard during his admission to Centro Medico ABC hospital, including personally guaranteeing payment until Richard's wife could arrive.
- Tavo arranged transportation for Richard's wife from the Mexico City airport to the hospital.

After reaching Mexico City, Tavo stayed by Richard's side for days to provide physical and emotional support to Richard's wife when she arrived.

Tavo and Richard were only fellow competitors before the accident. Tavo's bilingual skills and familiarity with Mexican culture made him uniquely capable to navigate the emergency situation. However, capability is only the beginning. Through his fortitude of character, Tavo remained calm, took action, and persisted in the face of obstacles. Without Tavo's dedication to Richard's medical care, over the course of more than 10 hours on the day of the accident and multiple days after the accident, Richard would not have received the necessary level of care with the urgency required to save his life.