

PARAGLIDER: 'HORRIFYING PLUNGE NEARLY MADE ME QUIT THE

SPO

FROM TERROR IN THE SKY TO A CHAMPION

A champion paraglider today told of the terrifying moment she plunged hundreds of metres out of control.

Nicky Moss tumbled towards the earth after the canopy that was carrying her through the air collapsed.

Ms Moss, 38, from Loughborough, was crowned the British women's paragliding champion last week, but today revealed that the accident had almost prompted her to quit the sport.

She was competing in Australia in January when strong winds caused the canopy to fold in on itself.

She was able to activate her reserve parachute and though she crashed into a forest, she walked away uninjured.

by **DAN MARTIN**

Ms Moss said: "After spiralling several hundred metres towards the ground, I threw my reserve parachute.

"This slowed my fall, but meant I landed in a forest.

"I came down under my reserve, crashed through the trees and ended up hanging from a branch by one line.

"I was upside down, only three feet from the forest floor."

Ms Moss grew up in Loughborough, but quit her job as a chartered quantity surveyor and moved to Barcelona three years ago to carve out a career in paragliding.

She said the Australian accident had severely knocked her confidence.

She then broke her foot during a subsequent flight.

She said: "After what happened in Australia in January, I really

thought about giving up the sport. The second accident wasn't so bad - I just tripped when I was landing, really, but it was all wrapped up with my loss of faith in myself.

"I didn't believe I could still fly and, after that, I was grounded for six weeks. I spent most of the summer at home recovering.

"I went through a period of real introspection, but decided the only thing to do was take a deep breath and try again."

Her injury caused her to miss a number of key competitions, but she decided to try out in the British Open, held in the mountains of northern Spain, and won.

She said: "I was top among the women, which is a great result. It won me a place on the podium. I'm back."

Ms Moss currently holds a British record in paragliding and has been part of the British team for the past two years. She is the number one female pilot in the world rankings.



FLYING: Nicky Moss in action and safely on the ground



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