WING RUNNER BRIEFING

AIM
Keep the wings of the glider clear of the ground and the glider running straight until the pilot has sufficient airspeed to get both aileron and rudder control.

CONSIDERATIONS
1. DIRECTION: Check the glider is lined exactly with the runway, not pointing left or right.
2. CROSSWINDS: Ask the pilot if they want the into-wind wing held down to prevent crosswind getting under it & lifting it. (some may have water ballast in the wings so may not)
3. VERTICAL FORCES: If you feel any while holding the wing remember the pilot is **totally unaware** of this dangerous force and *the glider will roll the instant YOU LET GO the wing!!*

ACTION: Before the launch warn the pilot of any vertical force, do whatever is needed to attract attention; e.g.shouting or shaking / banging the wing. Once the pilot is watching you, point the direction the wingtip wants to go and momentarily release it to show the roll. Get them to balance it with aileron.
Fatal accidents result from wing drops after a wing runner released with roll force on so - DO NOT LAUNCH THE GLIDER UNTIL THE ROLL FORCE IS DEALT WITH.

Wing-Runner Actions:

1. Glider: Check that wing and tail dollies are off. This is the pilot's responsibility but a double check won't hurt.
2. Runway ahead: is it clear of obstructions both for the glider and your run with the wing?
3. Your running stance: Stand level with the wingtip but clear outside it, hold the wingtip's trailing edge using your thumb and first finger. (see photo, too tight grip can overcome pilot's control)
4. Hold the wings parallel to the local ground surface (immediately prior to launch in significant crosswinds hold the into-wind wing down ten degrees ought to remove any vertical force on it).
5. If you still feel significant force up or down on the wing warn the pilot before launch.
If they ignore your warning or are already hooked on raise your arm to STOP THE LAUNCH and wait till the pilot resets the ailerons to reduce the roll force you feel.
6. As the glider accelerates run forward but do not tighten your grip in case you turn the glider.
7. DO NOT push or pull the wingtip. DO NOT try to hang on to it as it gets too fast for you.
8. When you can't keep up with the wingtip release it promptly & cleanly from your fingers.
9. Watch the glider rotate into the climb. Be ready to raise your arm to signal STOP if you see a problem.
10. After the glider is safely airborne turn, look for hazards and get safely back to the launch point.

Safety points:

*** Accidents are caused by wing drop after the wing runner released with roll force on.**
*** Accidents are caused by rings or clothing worn by the wing runner catching on skids or wing tip. The runner should hold the wing by their finger and thumb in such a way that nothing can catch on the wingtip. (see photo)**

Other considerations:

Strong crosswinds: The wing runner normally holds the upwind wing but, when there is a strong cross wind, the glider may tend to yaw during the ground run so hold the downwind wing to help prevent weather-cocking by keeping the glider's initial run straight. It's easier to hold back a wing than push it forward.

Lookout: The wing runner is also an additional pair of eyes for the launch and should be alert to eventualities such as obstructions in front of the glider, tail-dollies still attached, canopies not properly closed, airbrakes left open, gliders on approach, aircraft overflying the airfield - anything else that might impact the safety of the launch. ANYONE can STOP a launch, not just the signaler.

Airbrakes - exceptions: Some gliders use air brake at launch for improved aileron control or to apply wheel-brake to prevent over-running the cable. Do query this though in case it's a pilot error.