

“Purposeful Flight”

Does your club hold a “training night” on a regular basis to help new club members learn to fly? What kind of training is accomplished during these sessions?

Many clubs hold training sessions at regular intervals during the flying season. During the flying season, most training seems to consist of just getting airborne and back on the ground with a flyable aircraft. I’ve seen takeoffs, circles, horizontal eights, loops, rolls, and landings practiced.

Is this really enough? I know that some clubs must do this, but I have never personally seen any club provide a “ground school” before a “newbie” was allowed to put their airplane in the air. I’ve seldom seen flight emergencies like out-of-trim airplanes, failed servos, or even engine out emergencies taught or practiced. I’ve seldom seen anyone practicing crosswind take-offs and/or landings. Yet the students get signed of as “Solo” pilots without this training.

I have seen newly “soloed” pilots crash aircraft unnecessarily due to some fairly routine problems. I have even seen them crash in low crosswind situations because they were never trained to fly in the wind.

Some might say that it is too hard to learn all of these things...this hobby is suppose to be fun, not work. I can understand that...but I also feel that learning to be a proficient and safe pilot doesn’t have to be work, it can be fun.

I know that not everyone is into competition, but we can all still learn things from competitors. Watch the way a competitor practices. I don’t care if it is RC Pattern, or C/L Stunt, or what it is. They all have one thing in common...purposeful flight. They fly with specific goals in mind. They practice until they have mastered those goals to the best of their abilities. Should we be any less demanding of ourselves as instructors or students?

The next time you observe your club training night, ask yourself what is really being taught and what is really being learned. Are the students being trained to the best of your clubs’ abilities? Are they developing the skills necessary to become proficient and safe pilots? And when they get there solo sign-off....will they be assets or liabilities to the club and to themselves?

As always, if you have any question, give me a call at 765-287-1256 Ext 515