

RCRC ROOKIE TIPS

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The RC hobby is a potentially dangerous hobby that can cause physical harm and damage to others. Each RC pilot participates at his own risk. Rookie Tips are made available to all pilots, but are especially helpful to new pilots and members. This is a lengthy document that you need to read more than once. There is more information here than you can possibly retain in one sitting. The content is not to be construed as an all-inclusive instructional document pertaining to all RC topics. The intention of the club in providing you this document is to provide new members with something to read that hopefully encourages questions and discussions with instructors and experienced members. No one and nothing can teach you everything you need to know in one discussion, or reading. The RC hobby is a fun ongoing learning experience that encourages interaction and fellowship with fellow hobby enthusiasts. Get involved, ask questions and begin the learning process by reading RCRC Rookie Tips.

1. Rules – RC is a great hobby that is wonderful fun but it can also be dangerous if we neglect safety. We encourage membership for all ages. This means we all have a mutual responsibility to look out for each other and to help keep our club safe and fun for all members. The rules of our club were decided upon and put into effect for your safety and enjoyment. Please respect them and adhere to them. On behalf of all members, we thank you for taking this matter very seriously.
2. Asking for help and taking advice –After visiting the field a few times you will soon learn we probably have one of the best facilities in the world and decades of experience among our members. RCRC has within it's membership the finest builders and RC pilots you will find anywhere in the hobby. Each time you come to the field you should learn something new about the hobby. If you aren't learning it's because you aren't asking, or paying attention. Any question you don't know the answer to is a good question. All you have to do is ask. From time to time we all wonder why someone didn't tell us about this or that. Remember, you need to be patient and assertive in seeking out answers to your questions. Some of us are more stubborn than others, which usually is revealed by the number and variety of mistakes we make. Eventually we learn to swallow our pride and listen to the years of experience that is made available free of charge. We can't tell you how many times we all have said the following. "You know what, he/she was right." So, once you ask the question and get a good answer, pay heed to it. It may very well keep you, or someone else from losing an airplane, damaging property or becoming injured.
3. Simulator training–Before working with an instructor, many of us first learned how to fly on a simulator. Some of us didn't. Those that learned on a simulator will tell you that it makes the learning experience more fun and overall less expensive. Instructors will tell you that money spent on a

simulator will pay you back in spared airplanes. If you can save just one airplane from the garbage can you have paid for the simulator. Simulator training can be used day and night regardless of the weather, or wind conditions. The benefit of using a simulator is stick time, stick time, stick time. There are several RC simulators on the market. Ask Rick at RC Hobbies in Huntsville, or ask one of the instructors for simulator product recommendations before you buy anything.

4. Buying an airplane. This is the time to seek out an instructor, or experienced RCRC member for help. Do not buy anything without first talking to someone that knows what he is talking about. We have several expert premier builders in the club. Each has an opinion on which trainer, engine, receiver, transmitter and servo selections are the best. So, it's always good to compare ideas and suggestions by talking with more than one person. In the end, you have to make your own decision. After all, it's your money. Buying new or used is a matter of preference and budget. There are several trainer ARF (Almost ready to fly) kits available for around 350.00. If you search around you can find a used plane including the transmitter for around 200.00. The important thing is to make sure you are getting good value for your dollars by asking for help in selecting a good quality product at a fair market price before you buy. After gaining experience with a trainer you will want to move up to a more advance second airplane. Again, this is the time to seek experienced help. You need someone to guide you who is familiar with your flying skills and hobby preferences before you select your next airplane. There are different airplanes for different kinds of flying. A qualified instructor, or experienced member will be glad to help you select the right second plane for you.
5. Field Equipment – Selecting the right field equipment is as important as selecting the right airplane. Here again your preferences and budget will greatly impact the direction you take. Here are a few basic tips to get you started. For the record, you will never stop upgrading and supplying your equipment and accessories needs. Go to RC Hobbies and ask Rick for help in selecting a quality field box, battery, starter, refueling setup, glow starter and extra glow plugs. It is also recommended that you get a medium sized fishing tackle box to use as a toolbox and for storing your extra parts and pieces. Many people use fishing tackle boxes because the design is perfect for storing volumes of small things in multiple compartments. You don't get the same design and layout with a standard toolbox. Smaller tools and flight line required tools easily fit in the field box. You will need an assortment of fuel tubing, wheel collars and spare props. You will also need packages of various screws, nuts and bolts. You should include but not limit the following items in your tool kit. Scissors, Exacto knife, extra # 11 blades, tape, small drill and drill bits, small flashlight, small measuring tape, #64 size rubber bands, thin and thick CA glue, epoxy, accelerator, Goop, blue thread lock, Dremel tool and accessories, hex head set for standard and metric, wire cutters, small crescent wench, small hammer, needle nose pliers, very small to medium flat head and Philips screw drivers. This is not conclusive, but it's a start.

6. Where do you purchase what you need? – This is a good question each of us is confronted with when we get into the hobby. Do you purchase items from your local hobby store or from an online discount hobby center? In the end you have to make your own choice. Many of us are members of Tower Hobbies Super Saver club. It's not a bad deal, but you have to purchase 150.00 of merchandise to get free shipping and the 10% discount advertised with the Super Saver promo. The sales are a hit and miss and probably at times very good. If you want to use an on line service this is definitely one of the better ones. We believe the majority of our members shop directly from our local hobby store, RC Hobbies owned and operated by Rick Chambers. 256-539-1347 The benefits to all RC hobby enthusiasts are immeasurable. Let me just list a few. You get to see, touch and feel the merchandise you want to buy before you buy it. Rick and his staff will be more than glad to help you make the best decisions. These guys want you and me to promote the hobby and to be repeat customers. You will also learn that RC Hobbies is very competitive with even the lowest priced on line services. Likewise, returning faulty tools, equipment and defective products is much easier at RC Hobbies than having to box things up and ship them off. Not that you encounter defective items often, but when you do, it sure helps to have someone local to deal with. At times, and on certain things it may be a little bit more expensive at RC Hobbies, but in the end, we have a great store with great people to work with. Help keep your local hobby store in business by purchasing locally.
7. Have your stuff ready to go – This is pretty self-explanatory. Have your stuff ready to go. Nothing ruins a potentially good flying day than being pestered by the little things that can go wrong when equipment is not properly maintained, charged, cleaned, organized and ready.
8. Charging your transmitter and receiver batteries – There are now several different kinds of batteries on the market. Some are newer than others. Some have been proven with much club experience while others haven't been tested with time. You will find that most RCRC pilots use Nicad batteries. The recommended method for charging your receiver and your transmitter battery is to place them on the manufacturers recommended battery charger the night before you plan to fly. Basically you are looking for roughly ten to twelve good charging hours. Most chargers have a charging indicator light, which should light up if you have a good connection. If you have a charging light and it doesn't come on, you aren't charging your batteries. Certain battery chargers will shut down after detecting a full charge. Avoid overcharging batteries which results from letting them stay on a charger for days at a time. Once the charging cycle has been completed, use a BATTERY TESTER to check the charge level. Most receiver batteries will peak out around 5.4 volts with a full charge being 5.2 volts. Check your batteries again at the field as part of your preflight check.

Note: Nicad batteries are like water in a bucket with a hole in the bottom. If you leave them off the charger for several hours they will begin to lose power even if you are not using them. Always make certain your batteries are fully charged.

It is recommended that you check your battery charge level after each flight. The receiver battery will usually drop faster than the transmitter battery. Check the receiver battery after each flight or at least after every other flight. Avoid flying with a receiver battery below 4.8 volts. Some pilots stop flying at 4.9 volts, but no pilots fly below 4.8 volts. You can purchase a field quick charger. These small charging devices connect to a 12-volt car battery and can recharge your receiver and transmitter battery in about forty-five minutes. Not a bad idea for an occasional quick charge if needed at the field, but not recommended as a common recharging method. Special note: there are different schools of thought regarding whether or not you should cycle your batteries. It is the general opinion that Nicad batteries do not need to be cycled though you certainly can do so. Also, the life of a well maintained quality name brand battery is approximately three years. Change your batteries at three-year intervals or less.

9. Parsons Clip – This is a clip that secures your servo, battery and power switch connection wires together. Some people use waxed dental floss or electrical tape. Most pilots don't use anything when installing the wing at the field in preparation for flying. This is not good. All connections should be secured, but the one connection that connects the wing aileron servos is the one that is constantly being connected/disconnected each time you install or remove the wing. All connections should be secured, but it is this one connection that over time is prove to fail due to the number of times you connect and disconnect the wiring. The Parsons Clip can be easily installed to ensure that you never lose a plane because a servo or battery/switch connector disconnects due to vibration or stresses from flying the airplane. Airplanes have been lost because pilots failed to use this \$1.50 item. Go figure!

10. Field Check in

- Never turn your transmitter on before first signing in at the field and securing your transmitter channel pin from the transmitter pin board. If your transmitter channel pin is not available DO NOT TURN YOUR TRANSMITTER IN THE ON POSITION FOR ANY REASON WHILE AT THE FIELD. If you are not certain you understand this subject ask any club member for further explanation.
- Your RCRC club and AMA memberships must be current and up to date to fly at RCRC. If you are not certain your AMA and club membership are current and up to date, please see a board member immediately.

11. Preflight Checks

- Always check your receiver and transmitter battery charge levels with a tester before flying the airplane.
- Make sure all wiring connections are secured.

- Use Parson's Clips.
- Cut and install a short piece of fuel hose over each clevis. This keeps the clevis from opening under pressures applied to moveable surfaces when flying the airplane. This little piece of hose can save your airplane and avoid an injury. After a relatively short while the fuel hose securing the clevis will begin to crack and split. Change all cracked and split fuel hose strips before flying the airplane.
- Check to be certain that all clevis connections are tight and secure. Special Note: When using a metal clevis with a metal fully threaded push/pull rod, put a drop of CA glue on one of the rod end threads where the rod end makes contact with the clevis threads. This will keep the rod and clevis from spinning loose due to engine vibration. Apply CA glue to one rod end only and not both ends. This will enable you to keep one end free for adjustments.
- Check hinge security - The moveable ailerons on the wing, rudder on the vertical stabilizer, and elevators on the horizontal stabilizers are all secured in place usually with nylon hinges. Other materials can be used for hinges, but most trainers will use a nylon material. When building the airplane, the hinges are secured with CA glue. The hinge works as a wick, allowing the CA glue to freely flow and be absorbed into the balsawood and nylon hinges simultaneously. Once properly positioned, glued and cured, the nylon hinge and balsawood become as one. It should be so hard to remove the hinge that you actually pull pieces of balsawood with the hinge when attempting to separate. The point here is that all hinges should be tightly secured when doing a preflight check. Do not fly the aircraft if any hinges slip freely in and out of the hinge slots
- You can install short length pieces (1/8") of fuel hose on the axel between the wheel hub and the landing gear strut to create a friction break. When tightening the hex screw on the axel to tighten the wheel hub in place, first press firmly inward on the wheel hub to tightly position the hub against the fuel hose strip on the axel. Then tighten the hex head screw in the wheel collar to hold the wheel hub in position. This creates a friction brake. You know you have it tight enough if the wheel does not freely turn or spin multiple revolutions. You don't want too much friction. The friction should be just enough to stop your plane within a few feet after freely giving it a firm push and release on the taxiway. (Engine is off of course.) When pushing the aircraft, make sure the aircraft rolls in a straight line forward and not hard to the left or right. A little right and left movement can be controlled with the rudder and or nose wheel. The benefit to you is that you have created a friction brake that will help to keep the aircraft from freely

rolling forward when at slow idle. This will also assist you in stopping the aircraft more quickly if you are coming in a bit too hot on your landing approach. Note: After a few takeoffs and landings you will want to check how more freely the wheels roll. This is the result of the wheel hub wearing down the rubber fuel hose on the axel. This can vary a good bit, but the brake fuel hose strip should be changed after roughly fifteen flights. Special Note: When securing the wheel hub to the axel, using a wheel collar, use a hex screw and not the setscrews that come standard with wheel collars. The head on setscrews easily strip making it next to impossible to securely tighten the collar to the axel. This can result in losing a wheel on take off or landing. Use hex screws so you can torque down when tightening. A small drop of blue thread lock is fine.

- Check your prop to make certain it is tightly secured as a standard preflight check. Many pilots use a locking washer to add extra security. Use a crescent wrench and really torque down on the nut securing the prop.
- Check engine mounts and muffler screws for tightness. Engine vibration will cause these fittings and fasteners to loosen and fall off, or out in a very short time. Engines do fall off. Mufflers do fall off. Landing gear has fallen off. These things happen all too often. Use blue thread lock and be certain that all fittings and fasteners are tightly secured. Also, it is recommended that you coat wood screw holes with a coating of thin CA glue after threading the wood hole with a proper sized screw. The CA glue will help reinforce and strengthen the wood around the hole to provide a more secure fastener. After threading the hole it is recommended that you allow the CA glue to cure over night. When you're ready to place the screw in the hole you can also put a few drops of thin CA on the screw threads, which will work like thread lock. Be careful to not get CA glue on plastic or fiberglass canopy and cowling parts. Debonder used to remove epoxy and CA glue can discolor clear, colored plastic and fiberglass parts.
- Before mounting the wing, check inside your airplane to be ensure that all wires connecting the receiver to the servos, and the battery to the receiver, and the on off switch are thoroughly secured. Again, use Parsons Clips where appropriate. You can also use thin wiring ties to secure wiring and to keep the inside of the fuselage neat without clutter. Look for signs of connection ware and sliding wire pins within the wire connection housing. These wire pins are held in place, with a very thin piece of plastic. These can easily bend and break. When this occurs it can allow the wire pin connection to slide freely in and out of the connection housing. If this should happen, you will lose servo connection to the receiver resulting in loss of aircraft control and imminent crash. If you detect wire pin slippage you should immediately

change the wire with the bad connector before the next flight.

- The battery and the receiver are to be neatly wrapped with foam rubber and secured inside the airplane. A loose battery or receiver flopping around inside the fuselage can obstruct servo function or cause wire separation resulting in total control loss and imminent crash.
- Check for signs of a fuel leak. This is usually first detected by observing blue or pink fuel stains in the foam material wrapped around the battery, receiver and the fuel tank. If you see any signs of a fuel leak, you should immediately remove the fuel tank and correct the problem. Leaks most frequently occur at the stopper, seams, hose connections or from holes in the fuel hose. Special Note: Unfortunately, many ARF stock fuel tanks fail within the first fifteen flights. If you are flying a trainer with a stock tank you should change it out immediately. It is highly recommended that you purchase a Dubro or Hayes tank as a replacement. A fuel leak can severely break down the adhesive strength of Epoxy and CA type glues. Even the most basic fuel leak must be repaired. Check all fuel lines for cracks and leaks. Make sure the fuel tank is foam covered and not making contact with airplane structural elements, which results in vibration. Engine vibration is one of the leading causes of foam in the fuel tank, which negatively effects engine performance.
- Look for any signs of external / internal wing or fuselage cracks. Check all servo, servo horn screws and throttle connections for tightness and free movement. Check to ensure that nothing interferes with the free movement of servos, push/pull rods and throttle movement. The inside area of the fuselage should be neatly packed and secured. Special note: Wing halves should be secured with epoxy to avoid wing separation. Many trainers are designed to hold the wings together with two small wood screws and a small metal plate on the bottom of the wing. In addition, you may find that the manufacturer recommends tape for additional support. This is a problem waiting to happen. Vibration will cause the screws to come out and tape is not a sufficient fastener to hold a wing together. Use an ample supply of epoxy to coat the bare wood areas where the wing halves join the wing together. Be careful to not get epoxy on any moveable control surfaces or control rods inside or around the wing.
- Programmable radio model verification – If you are using a programmable radio, verify the recalled program model number selection with the plane you are flying. Verify that trim settings are in the same position as the previous flight. On manual radios the trim settings can be easily

changed by someone innocently fooling with your radio, or by something brushing against the manual adjustments. This can greatly impact the control functions of your airplane resulting in severe unanticipated directional control movement. If you're not confident in being able to reset trim settings to the previous flight levels, you should ask an instructor to do a test flight on our airplane to trim it out for you. .

- Verify wing alignment and the center of gravity (CG) This a critical procedure for all pilots on all airplanes. It is especially critical for new pilots with new airplanes because you may not understand the importance of having a properly balanced airplane. Never fly an airplane without checking the center of gravity (CG) of the airplane. A properly balanced airplane will have a slightly nose heavy attitude when CG is checked at the proper CG balancing points. This is usually several inches behind the leading edge of the wing close to the fuselage. CG balancing location points vary with each airplane. This is why you need your airplane directions booklet to locate the CG balancing points of your airplane. A Plane that is slightly nose heavy will fly just fine, but a plane that is tail heavy won't fly. Aligning the wing in the wing saddle is fairly self-explanatory. Verify that the wing is secured in the wing saddle with no gaps and that wing tips align left to right of the center of the fuselage. When using a trainer with wings secured by rubber bands, use nothing less than #8 and nothing smaller than #64 rubber bands to secure the wing in the wing saddle. No less than three rubber bands on each side. Cross the 7th and 8th rubber bands to keep the others from slipping off from vibration or breakage. Special Note: Most pilots throw away the rubber bands at the end of a flying day. Oil from fuel exhaust will gradually break down the rubber bands causing failure. Some pilots store used rubber bands in baking or talc powder to absorb the oil and then reuse the bands. Your choice.
- Verify moveable surface directional movement to be accurate. A good habit to develop is to always check surface movements using the same verification procedures. Many of us like to use 'right' is 'right' on the 'rudder' and 'right' is 'up' on the 'right aileron'. 'Back' is 'up' and 'forward' is 'down' on the 'elevator'. Perfect practice makes perfect performance. Get in the routine of always checking your controls in the same manner with the same routine each and every time. You are less likely to forget by developing good habits.
- Conduct a range test. A range check is required before you fly your first flight at the field even if everything checked out and worked perfectly on your previous visit. This can be accomplished by placing the airplane on the ground with engine off. With the transmitter antenna in the full down position and the transmitter and receiver in the on position, walk away from

the airplane while working the controls. You should be able to walk away from your airplane at least fifty or more paces before you notice any flutter in your controls. At about 50 paces, or more it becomes more difficult to see surface movements and flutter. A spotter can be a big help with this pre-flight function.

Special note: metal-to-metal contact within your airplane will create a signal interference, which may result in control surface flutter, and, or erratic control surface movement. A common example of metal-to-metal contact is when a metal screw, used to insall a cowling, makes physical contact with a metal engine part. Another example is when the control rod connecting the carburetor to the servo makes physical contact with the muffler, engine or metal mount. (This is not to be confused with mounting bolts going through a metal engine mount when mounting the engine. The difference here is a very tight fit connection with no tolerance between the metal parts, where as the example of the push rod making contact with a muffler is a loose intermittent contact.)

- Be sure all covering seams and edges are secured with minimal chance of covering material separating from the airplane structure during flight. A trailing section of covering material trailing behind your airplane can potentially obstruct moveable surfaces or jam servo functions resulting in limited or total control loss.

12. Starting your Engine

- Keep everything clear from the prop. If you have a question about this maybe you should consider a different hobby J Seriously, many of us have gotten careless at one time or another and accidentally stuck a finger in a moving prop when adjusting engine settings. Trust me, it hurts and the cut can be very serious. Likewise, loose drawstrings on jackets or loose clothing can easily become entangled in the prop jerking the prop quickly into your face or around your neck. This is one very good reason why you shouldn't fly at the field alone without someone there to help you in the event of emergency.
- The most common contributors to engine start failure are a dead or low charged glow starter, bad glow plug or the power switch is in the off position and the throttle is not responding when you move the throttle stick on your radio. A dead or low charged field starter battery can also make for a bad field day. Again, have your stuff ready for a fun day at the field.

- Fill your fuel tank – Some of our best and most experienced pilots occasionally have memory lapse and fail to refuel their airplanes before attempting to fly again. On a personal note, I usually refuel as soon as I land for two reasons. First it's a good habit to develop. You are less likely to forget to refill your airplane if you develop consistent good habits. Secondly, you will eventually learn that there are better times to go up than others. Maybe you like to fly when less aggressive, or fewer pilots are in the air. If you wait to fuel your airplane just before your flight you may have missed the opportunity to fly at the best time for you. Sometimes the field can be very busy, which means you had better be ready to go when a pilot station is open and available. Have everything ready to go so all you have to do is pick your time, start your airplane and go. Special note: When refueling your airplane take extra care to avoid getting fuel into your eyes. This can easily happen when a fuel filler line pops loose spewing fuel on your airplane and possibly in your face and eyes. If this should happen you will know it instantly because it burns like crazy. You should immediately ask for help. The club keeps one gallon of fresh water in the pit in the area near the first aid kit. You should familiarize yourself with its location for the benefit of everyone. Use the water to immediately flush your eyes, or to help an injured flyer do the same.
- When starting your engine the front of your airplane should be facing in towards the pit area and not out towards the field. Be careful and considerate when revving your engine in the pit area. Use the engine test stand on the north edge of the pit area for engine break in and testing. Taxi your airplane to one of the flight stations for a preflight engine power check. The prop blast from your plane can potentially damage other airplanes and throw debris and exhaust at fellow pilots and spectators. No one should ever be standing in the direct line with your prop when throttling up to even partial or full power settings. In the event the prop should separate, or come lose from the airplane, serious injury and damage can occur. This is especially important when trying to run the last remaining drops of fuel out of your engine at the end of the day. It's easy to develop a bad habit by starting the engine and then throttling up to full power with your hand holding the fuselage and your face and eyes inches away from a prop that could disintegrate in your face. Keep everything clear from your prop.
- Positioning habits are a good thing. It is recommended that you kneel off to the right side of your airplane with your left hand securely holding the fuselage so that your right hand can be free to hand start, or to use a field starter. Obviously if you are left-handed you will reverse the process. The point here is to encourage the routine in the process. Many of us prefer to use a small foam knee pad that you can pick up

at any lawn and garden center for the purpose of positioning your knee on the ground without being in direct contact with the hard asphalt. Others use a small stool to sit on and still others just lean on their knees and deal with the discomfort. Once you have successfully started the engine you can easily put the starter down, while holding the airplane securely with your other hand. Then simply slide the hand, holding the airplane, back towards the tail as you move around (keeping clear of the prop) behind the airplane to begin your taxi out to a flight station.

Special note: Now you will appreciate the small piece of fuel tubing on each wheel that works as a brake. At low idle the plane should sit in place without movement if you have the idle set right and the fuel tubing brake set up right. If your airplane moves backwards the engine has backfired and started in reverse. This happens now and then. Kill the engine and restart the engine. Pull your plane by the tail away from the pit area and position it outbound for your taxi to the flight line. As you begin your taxi, it's a good idea to again check control surface directional movements and radio settings. Be sure your transmitter antenna is fully extended.

Let's go flying J..... Please refer to the club rules for take off and landing protocol and flying rules. There are verbal pilot alerts you need to become familiar with and use. Make sure you are heard and listen for other pilots calling out their flight intentions. Develop your peripheral vision and peripheral hearing ability to avoid a midair collision. Yes, midair collisions happen more often than any of us would like. It's a big sky that can become crowded and very small when everyone wants the same airspace. Give way to slower airplanes and especially new pilots. If a midair collision happens, well, then it happened and that's the end of it. Mid-air collisions are not something to worry about. Fly your airplane. Just be alert when doing so.

Learn how to land and take off left-to-right and right-to-left. As you become more comfortable you will want to fly in light wind conditions to learn more how a little wind makes flying actually easier especially when landing. As soon as you can you need to be prepared for a dead stick landing. It's only a matter of time until you run out of fuel or your engine simply quits while in flight. No problem if you understand what you should and shouldn't do. Ask an instructor or an experienced pilot for help on this subject.

Special note to new pilots: When flying your airplane it is highly recommended that you fly more in-bound rather than way out on the outer edges of the field. It's much easier to see your airplane. This will help to avoid potentially becoming disoriented which is a common cause of crashes. If you should experience a dead stick, and you will, you are more likely to get your airplane back to the runway for a good dead stick landing. When you are way out on the outer edges of the field, possibly flying dead stick into the wind, well, sometimes it's a long walk J You will also want to become familiar with the or weathervane effect caused by a crosswind when taking off and landing. This is more of an issue with smaller tail dragger airplanes,

but even larger airplanes, and those equipped with a nose-wheel are impacted by a crosswind. The weathervane effect is best defined by the effects of the wind on take off, or when landing in a crosswind.

The runway at RCRC runs north to south. A wind blowing out of the east, or west creates a crosswind. On take off, or when landing the effects of a crosswind will blow on the airplane tail surface, pushing the tail in the same direction the wind is blowing. If you are taking off, or landing from south to north (right to left at RCRC), with a crosswind from the west, (behind you at RCRC) the cross wind will push the tail away from you, towards the open field. Likewise, the nose of your airplane will be driven inbound towards the fence potentially causing your airplane to fly into the fence, or another pilot. This is commonly referred to as the weathervane effect. This can happen in an instant with devastating results. Now you know one of the main reasons why the fence is there. In the event you should lose control of your airplane remember that safety is the primary objective. You can always build a new airplane, but an injury caused by an out of control airplane can be fatal. Crash the airplane, but never fly into the pit, or spectator areas trying to save an airplane.

Special note: New pilots should observe how more experienced pilots take off and land in a crosswind. At RCRC, the effects of a crosswind are usually more pronounced with wind blowing from behind the flight line, or blowing out of the west. In theory, we believe the pit structures create a vortex effect causing the wind to swirl near the flight line. This can cause your airplane attitude to respond strangely on take off and landing. To counter the weathervane effect, angle the airplane with the nose pointed in the same direction the wind is blowing on the landing approach, or when lining up for taking off. This will require added rudder to counter the crosswind. With tail-dragger airplanes, a very slight bit of up elevator will help keep the tail wheel on the ground for added control. The amount of rudder and elevator control required will vary with each airplane and crosswind speed. The weathervane effect can drive even the most experienced pilots into the fence if they are caught off guard, and not paying attention to wind direction and wind speed.

Lastly, there is no dishonor in asking for an instructor to get the trainer box out to work with you even after you have soloed. Go at a pace you feel comfortable with. Never hesitate to ask someone to help you get your airplane down when the knees begin to shake. We all have been there. You might also want to ask an instructor, or a fellow pilot to be your spotter at the flight line until you become more comfortable with your airplane and the field. A spotter serves as a second pair of eyes and ears. This is not the time to socialize and joke around. You need to keep your eyes and attention on your airplane at all times. When in flight never, never take your eyes off your airplane.

Ok, gas her up and let's go flying.