

Stick & Rudder Aviation
sample
Lesson plan
for (tailwheel configured)
Kitfox STi & Series 7 *Super Sport*

Objective:

Safe, consistent, and proficient operation of a tailwheel Kitfox - in cross-winds winds up to 15 mph, on paved and un-paved runways, with varying runway lengths & widths, and with non-standard traffic patterns and approaches.

Approach to training:

“This training is not a test of your experience or skills” – “You are not here to please me, my satisfaction comes from witnessing your progression of proficiency” – “Our training is focused on educational, but must remain fun”

We expect you to always try to fly the aircraft – We will cover for you if you get into trouble.

This program will take you, as long as it takes – do not take the minimum hours required as a stopping point (or a reflection on your ability).

Let us not bend a Kitfox...our Kitfoxes are considered our most important flight school tool. To continue to offer training to other pilots from around-the-world, we train to a level where we BOTH are confident you can return home - a safe & proficient tailwheel Kitfox pilot - and responsible to carry a passenger.

Assumptions:

Minimum 2-3 hour lesson lengths (dependent on the training pilots absorption ability & physical endurance). Often once familiarity and comfort set in - weather permitting we will train together most of the day. We only schedule one training pilot, per Kitfox, per instructor, per day.

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Depending on the training pilots past experience and currency in comparable “Types” - more than one lesson can be accomplished in one day.

Fully review our web site:

“HOW TO PREP FOR YOUR TRAINING:”

For our suggested reading (or watching) prior to your first lesson:
Specifically the yellow links containing the area of operations you are training for.

Lesson 1:

Preparatory ground schooling (see web site study suggestions)

Plan up to 2 hours in discussion (with your questions) to prepare you to get the most out of the flight.

Review Rotax engine components and operation limitations.
Suggested watching the Rotax pre-flight/operational videos

Pre-flight specifics to Kitfox, and tailwheel (metal tube & fabric) airplanes

Note V speeds

Instructor runs the radios and navigation – it is suggested the training pilot just focus on flying.

Taxi practice – memorize sight picture

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“Stick back” - keeping the little tailwheel tire, firmly planted on the ground.

Instructor will demonstrated the 1st normal takeoff & 3-point landing (at a minimum - repeated as many times as needed).

Air work:

Normal tailwheel airplane (“soft field”) - tail low, maintaining positive angle-of-attack takeoff.

Use of flaps & trim - note the pitch change

Sight picture - for level flight

Varying bank angle turns – note the sight picture cues (brace struts) and lack of stick back pressure (when less than 30 degrees of bank).

Slow flight (5 mph above stall) – note adverse yaw potential when flaps deployed - requiring leading turns with rudder.

Stalls all configurations, in turns, power on & off – confirm docile

Skid/slip coordination (“waking the feet up”) - following the river(s)

Canyon turns – coarse reversal – slower the airspeed = lower the turn radius, therefore less space & lower bank angle required

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Orbiting (ground reference maneuvers) for search or photo's
(opening the door versus door removed)

Review of un-controlled field operations

Recommended power, airspeeds, configuration, and rate of decent at various points in the traffic pattern – to set a stabilized approach. Instructor-demonstrated normal, no-cross wind, full stall, 3 point landing (training pilot performs all subsequent landings)

3-point landings only – wheel landings demonstrated and practiced will be in lesson 3

Average 10 landings this lesson

Lesson 2:

More takeoffs and landings – training rule #1 “you can't pass an airport without landing at it”.

Training pilot flies – instructor runs the radios, and glass panel (unless requested by training pilot or to meet BFR requirements).

All different airports from Lesson 1 – usually shorter, narrower, sloped, with varying runway markings (non-existent centerlines), and with obstacles. Some grass & dirt.

Average 3 takeoffs and landings per airport – to be a good neighbor (minimizing noise) and to vary the ground references, traffic pattern direction, and sight picture. 25+ airports within a 60 mile radius of BOI.

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Goal: Looking for consistency in takeoffs and landings

Remember – the follow through on landing – target speed, power comes to idle (< ½ wing span up), as stick comes back (to flair close to the ground – looking way down the runway to see the sink or balloon), as wing stalls, as all three wheels touch, as stick continues into your belly (to hold the tailwheel to the ground for steering). Then add slight power by sound (>2000 rpm) - to allow air through slowly spinning propellor disk, for flow over empennage to minimize yaw sway.

If you can see all the runway in the flair – you're probably going to land on the mains and bounce – remember the taxi sight picture.

Review of forward slips (even on base), OR over-shoot final (to remain stabilized) - as another landing tool

In-flight emergency review

- Gliding from a distance

- Picking an emergency landing area

- Aim point versus landing point

- Power off 180 - simulated engine failure turning pattern downwind

- “Impossible turn” - landing back on the runway just departed (tailwind?).

Average 20 landings this lesson

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Lesson 3:

If high gusty winds – we stay in the Treasure Valley and seek out cross-winds.

Landing in a cross wind is a subtle forward slip (reviewed in previous lesson) – to remove any sideways drift (but the wheels must roll onto the runway in the direction of travel).

In a 3 point landing – land on 2 wheels first (the upwind main and tailwheel), then allow the downwind main to settle onto the runway as the crosswind component effect is diminished with loss of airspeed.

Wheel landing demonstrated and practiced – training pilot is cautioned that this technique requires a higher degree of skill and timing, and exaggerates any lack of proficiency. Review our web site “TAILWHEEL PROCEDURES” yellow links to articles.

Remember – you still have to transition to a 3-point landing at some point to taxi to the hanger !

Averages 20 landings this lesson

If no winds – we head into the backcountry for Mountain Flying proficiency training

Density Altitude issues and loss of performance

Reading the effects the weather has – on the terrain – on the air you fly in.

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Navigating by pilotage (GPS is a backup) – review any charts and airport directories (not to be memorized)

“Shopping” the field

Step #1

Runway conditions - always overfly first! (preferably @ your “standard” pattern altitude of 1000’ AGL. Slow down if you don’t feel like you have the room to maneuver.

Look for the slope (with <10mph wind) – “land uphill, takeoff downhill”. There are always exceptions. If the wind is > than 10 mph – one way (landing or taking off) will have a tailwind - therefore, ask yourself “why am I flying in the backcountry – maybe I should sit this one out?”

Step #2

Look at the go-around corridor - pick an “Abort Point” (a geographic location or altitude) - where if you aren’t stabilized and maintaining the aim point - the airplane has the performance (and you have the skill) to comfortably go-around for another try. If inside the abort point - you use all your tools and skills to get the airplane on the ground with remaining runway.

Step #3

Look at your departure corridor (while shopping from above, NOT after landing with confusing topography). Remember you are taking off the opposite direction you landed (especially with DA considerations - most airplanes can NOT follow the same path as they used for approach).

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3-4 hour circuit (tank of gas) – with multiple landings and varying approaches at significantly different and increasingly difficult one-way, short, sloped, un-paved airstrips – all with threshold obstacles and topography constraints.

Averages 10-12 landings this lesson

Lesson 4:

Same as above (yet dependent on winds)

Lesson 5:

Introduce distractions, asymmetry in control, and alternate abbreviated pattern requests to challenge the training pilots ability to focus, remain consistent in their flying, react appropriately to aircraft deviations, correct my mistakes, and prove to both of us they are truly pilot-in-command.

Correct any bad habits

Work on areas of weaknesses

Discuss personal minimums (winds & weather) - based on their ability and proficiency

Shortest of the lessons – averages 1½ hours

The culmination of this lesson plan - should more than meet the requirements of a Biennial Flight Review

Averages 10 landings this lesson