

“Auguring Etiquette”

→ OR ←

How to “*Fly Like Bob*” aka “Pile it in with Pride”

By: Bob Beswetherick

When a fellow club member asked me to write an article about the dos and don'ts of the dreaded “C word” (GASP), at first I didn't know what to think. I asked him “why me?” to which he replied matter of factly, “You have more experience than anyone else in the Club, and you have the right attitude”. Further discussion revealed that he really likes my attitude regarding my contacts with Tierra firma and he thought I could write an article to relay my ideas and why crashing (There, I said it.) doesn't normally bother me.

Now, let me preface this by saying that I in no way am suggesting any kind of unsafe flying. Furthermore, I am not saying that if you punch in your beautiful 42% Extra 260 you should be anything but completely devastated. What I am saying is keep it all in perspective. Take all the necessary steps to work up to that big beautiful bird. Don't get impatient and ahead of yourself or you will most likely plant it quicker than you think. Were YOU ready to crank the sticks on that plane? Was the equipment that YOU put in it up to the stresses? There are dozens of reasons for a “mishap” but in reality, they happen. The steps to necessary to graduate up to one of those big beautiful birds can be a long process and hopefully this will serve as kind of a guide to make it as painless as possible. Even equipment malfunctions will happen, there's no way to completely guard against them, but the right attitude can make a loss become a win if you ask yourself why? Above all else, LEARN from it.

Typically I fly “Foamies” both Depron and Blue foam. I get plans off the Internet such as on R/C Groups and other sites. Download the plans in Pdf format to a disk; take the PDF file to a local copy shop and Viola!! I have FULL SIZE PLANS. They can also be scaled large to small for simply the price of another copy. Then I go to a site such as R/C Foam.com who stocks Depron or the home improvement store for some blue fan fold. I also get some Carbon from various places. After a little cutting, Gluing, Cussing, and Truing, I can have a Foamy in the air in a few days. If it winds up being a design that I really like, I have been known to fly

(and crash) as many as 8 of the same design just to really find the good and bad points of the design in relation to my skill level. All of my foamies have a limited life span. But, I can typically replace one of them for as little as about \$10 because I build from plans and get material in semi-bulk.

My basic philosophy is simple (I like things simple), if I am going to push the envelope... I know IT'S GONNA PUSH BACK!!! It is that simple, and that complicated. So, fly accordingly. If it's a first flight on an unproven (to you) airframe, revert back to flight training 101, AILTITUDE IS YOUR FRIEND!! Clear enough? Right now is time to find out all the basics with the airframe. Try right side up, stall, inverted, etc. at least 4 mistakes high for now (you know, oops, try again, oops, try again, oops, try again, whew!). There will be time for rolling harrier circles on the deck with the stereo blasting and your wingtips on fire (sounds like fun don't it?) in due time, now is the time for PATIENCE (not my greatest virtue, "*fly like Bob*").

I have also been blessed with a LOT of good friends that have given me Great advice that I can pass along:

- 1) Practice with a purpose. Thanks' Craig, you are sorely missed by all of us. What this means is whatever you are doing, mean to do it. If your plane struggles just to keep aloft, practice flying smooth. Make every flight count. Don't let the plane fly you. You fly the plane, ALL the time.
- 2) Takeoffs are optional, but landings are mandatory. Thanks Kendall. This one is pretty easy to understand, gravity SUCKS.
- 3) Stick time is stick time. Thanks again Kendall. Whatever and however you are flying, just fly it! Whether trying for smoothness or banging sticks to try experiments, it ALL helps.
- 4) Practice landing, spelled "t-o-u-c-h-a-n-d-g-o". Thanks Jerry. So many times a pilot figures that there is only one landing per flight and that's when there is no other choice, miss it and OOPS!

5) The left stick is more than throttle. Thanks again Jerry. The rudder is key to all aerobatics and sadly, lack of rudder experience is a big contributing factor to planting planes.

Now, you might be asking what is, and what is not accepted as “Crashing with Cool”? Well, I have some suggestions for both.

1) **Crashing with Cool:**

- a) Admit to a “Dumb thumb”. It’s Ok, we ALL do it. Hint: Experiment with something you are not afraid to trash.
- b) Two arm up thrust (gesture for touchdown). Looks like you may have planned it, which can make others wonder if you really did. (hehehe)
- c) Say “oh well”. See dumb thumb.
- d) Just SMILE. Even the pros thump one from time to time. Ever wonder how many airframes someone like Jason Shulman or Mark Leeseburg had to go through to get where they are today? Hmmm.

You see, if and when you feel confident enough to fly fewer and fewer mistakes high, the margin for error gets less and less (that’s a real duh moment ‘aint it?). The key is practicing with an airplane that will first off, do what you want to do, but above all is “expendable”. When the plane meets both, “fly it like you hate it” and you won’t mind when you “Bob” it into the ground. Didn’t know if you caught that or not, but at my field, my name has become a verb that can be substituted for “crash”. This is something most of us never can hope to attain and I feel honored (?) to have achieved.

Whatever you do, keep things in perspective. We are talking about airplanes here, not medical emergencies or Nuclear Physics. In the grand scheme of things, money bought it and money can replace it, right? So, take a moment to collect your composure (if needed) and remember the saying, “Lord let my words be tender and sweet for tomorrow I may have to *EAT THEM*”. The last big splat I had was a midair with another club member. When he took off, guess who was right in his way? Well it rained Depron for a few minutes and several feet. All I

could do was drop my head for a few seconds. I then decided I would make another just like it, and just smiled. My Girlfriend even came up with the perfect name for the replacement, “FoamFetti” oh yah!

Don't:

- 1) Scream NOOOOO!!!! It happened. Screaming won't turn back time, sorry. And acting like a child won't bring your plane back.
- 2) Drop face down kicking and screaming. This is a notch above screaming. Also acting as a child.
- 3) Transmitter toss. Hey, the transmitter didn't crash your plane for you, now did it? If that darn box failed then we're talking equipment failure. Throwing it won't help your argument with the manufacturer if you try to tell them it caused you to lose your plane. Really acting like a child.
- 4) Stomping your plane into the ground. Well, I think this is self-explanatory don't you?

What's the main thing to remember about all this? The inevitable WILL happen and how do you express your disdain? Think of how you want to be looked at by others. Do you want to be thought of as someone who, not getting your way, throws a fit, or someone who can go with the flow and accept that life happens to all of us? Well, remember to use your head for more than a hatrack. Realize that for experimentation; pick an airframe that will get the job done on a budget. Fly like Bob and have fun with it. Develop the necessary skills and muscle memory ***before*** you risk your prize bird. When the time is right, you may surprise yourself by how far you've come.

I guess its' kind of like everything else, nothing ventured, nothing gained. However, sanity has to reign. Adjust your flying style accordingly. If I'm flying a little foamy, I'm not really going to worry about the ground too much. Low level hovers, rolling circles on the deck and catching it at the end of the flight become commonplace. However, let the value of the plane go up, and the level of sanity goes up with it. I have to then fly much more ahead of the plane and think before I act or prepare for the consequences. Whatever and however you fly,

remember to have fun, be safe, use your head, and when the time is right, “FLY LIKE BOB”.

However, when you do “Bob it”, try to let go of your frustration and LEARN!