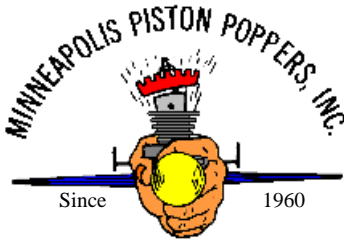


Prop



Wash

Prop Wash is a publication of the Piston Poppers Inc., an AMA U-control club

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Any articles for the newsletter are greatly appreciated and will be published as soon as possible.

July 2021



<http://www.pistonpoppers.com>

Meeting Info

Meeting at airport field, Thursday July 29th. Time to pay dues! end dues (\$45) to

John Christensen
785 Hoyt Ave W
St Paul, MN
55117-3438

June Meeting 2021

Old Business: none

New Business: Tony has been trying to get a hold of the guy at the Spring

Lake Park School system just to check in and see if everything is okay. He hasn't been able to talk to him. MAC at the airport has asked us NOT to use the field until this drought has ended so we don't damage the grass. We will be able to use the school field without any issues. We discussed getting a Porta-Potty out at the school field for the rest of the summer, the cost is about \$60.00 per month.

Just as a reminder, dues are due, if you haven't paid already. I know it's been difficult as meetings have been postponed lately. A few of us paid up at the June meeting, myself included. Our AMA Club Charter and insurance for both flying fields are all paid up through March 2022.

It was a very short meeting at the airport field, 5 members showed up and the meeting was adjourned.

Jim Gevay

A Perspective on Control Line Pitting

Unlike R/C flying where the pilot gets to taxi the airplane out to the runway, in Control Line flying we rely on an assist to get the airplane from the pits to the flying circle. That person is the Pitter. Or Pit-Man. Or Pit-Person. Or Bob, Tom or John.

The practice of Pitting in control line flying is an endeavor we must all learn to do if we engage in control line flying. It is an under-appreciated but necessary part of our hobby/sport. In the circle control line pilots fly alone. Just us and the airplane. No one within flying lines length from us as we rotate in the center of the flying circle as the airplane cuts a majestic pattern at the end of the lines, separating us from humanity. Physically and mentally. We are connected through the lines and handle to the airplane. Feeling the power, pull, effects of the wind, our vision blinded at times as the full strength of the sun blinds us in a maneuver.

In the Pit Area

Airplanes are lined up. Flight boxes sit sentinel by them. Flying Lines are rolled out and laid with handles at the end of those lines. Awaiting us to grab them and put the airplane through the flight. The Flyer is ready to fly the airplane and is standing by. The Pitter will usually carry out the Flyer's handle and they walk out to the flying

circle. Though sometimes it is the opposite. The Pitter carries the airplane and the Flyer carries the handle. Either way, the same basic procedure applies. If you don't have someone to be your Pitter just ask another Flyer. We all need an assist to fly and most are ready to step in to help you get your airplane out to the circle and assist you launch the airplane.

Carrying to the Flying Circle

They walk in step keeping the flying lines up out of the grass or dragging the tarmac.

The Flyer sets the airplane deemed the best spot for take-off. The Pitter will walk to the center circle holding the handle while keeping the lines up off the ground and set the handle down with the lines stretched out tightly. Always lay the handle down in the orientation that the Flyer had the handle in the pits. Sometimes when grabbing the handle in the pits to walk the airplane out to the circle, the safety thong loop may be closed up. It is a good idea for the Pitter to open up the loop of the safety thong. Doing this for the Flyer saves a few seconds for them as they do not have to spend the time opening the loop. This way when the Flyer goes out to the handle after starting and setting the engine run it is easy for them to reach down to grab the handle while slipping their hand through the opened safety thong. They are eager to take to the sky.

Starting Procedure for Launch

When the airplane is started by the Flyer, the Pitter holds the airplane steady by wing leading edge and rear fuselage as the Flyer needs to reach near a sharp propeller spinning at 88,000 RPM to remove the starting battery or battery clip and to adjust their needle valve and check engine RPM. The Pitter will want to hold the airplane securely during these actions.

The Pitter can help the Flyer out by making sure their line clips are straight and not kinked where they connect at the lead-outs at the end of the inboard airplane wing and the stainless steel flying lines going out to the flying handle. The Pitter can alert the Flyer of this if noticed.

Often a word of confidence is spoken by the Pitter to the Flyer. Sometimes it is best to just remain quiet but depends on how well the Pitter knows the Flyer and their pre-flight attitude. Often there is some stimulating engine and tank talk while the two of you are kneeling over the airplane. Some Flyers have a process they go through on the start procedure simulating the actions one would take competing at a Stunt Contest. Muscle memory is a powerful tool. Take heed.

Launching the Airplane

When the Flyer is satisfied all is set on the engine settings, they head to the center circle to grab the handle. Some walk. Some jog. Some grab their flying lines and walk out the twists on the way to the handle. The Pitter patiently

holds the running airplane as it blows prop wash and castor oil and then watches until the signal to launch the airplane is given by the Flyer. It is usually an arm wave or a chopping side point in the direction the airplane is pointed. Every Flyer has their own style. When that signal is given the Pitter just releases the airplane without pushing it or trying to make it go. This action of pushing or shoving the airplane often leads to a nose-over and possibly a broken propeller or misguided roll out of the airplane. Just a simple release of the airplane with a hands-up action and the airplane rolls out and takes off. Then Pitter gets up and moves out of the flight path in a no nonsense fashion. He will have 4 to 7 seconds to do this.

Clearing the Landing Zone

Some Flyers move their Flight Box out of the landing path after starting their engine and are assured all is a go for launch before heading out to the circle to grab the handle and commence flying. Some don't move their Flight Box or may be in a hurry as they may have had to fiddle with the engine settings longer than expected. Precious fuel is burning. It is the responsibility of the Pitter to then move the Flight Box out of the landing zone if the Flyer did not move it far enough away. Also the Pitter checks for glow plug battery or battery cord and clip if left at the launch spot. All of this assures a clear landing zone for the Flyer to land the airplane after the engine cuts out and

they glide the airplane down for a smooth landing.

Handling a Flyers Airplane

Another point is that some Flyers have beautiful and artistic airplanes built with silkspan covering and artistic paint jobs. Often these are Competitive Stunt Flyers. It is a good practice to ask the Flyer how best to handle their work-of-art airplane if you are going to be the one to carry it out to the circle or retrieve it after the flight ends and the airplane has landed. Nothing worse than poking a thumb through the silkspan on someones airplane wing or scratching their airplane's paint job while holding it for launch. Wedding rings can do this. So hold firmly by the wing and rear fuselage but no need to hold so firmly that you scratch the paint or damage the airplane.

Interaction with Fellow Flyer

We do so much of the process in this hobby in solitude. Such as building, painting, covering, assembling, maintaining, repairing, engine maintenance, battery upkeep, charging, storage charging, cleaning, storing, loading and unloading and flying in the circle alone. It is nice to have that short human connection with the Pitter. Having a bit of a tete-a-tete and some interaction with a fellow flyer before hustling out to the center flying circle and taking to the sky and focusing completely on the flight for the next five to seven minutes.

Becoming one with the airplane and trying to achieve a perfect Stunt Pattern. Or sometimes just trying to survive the flight and not crash.

Post Launch

Once the airplane is in the air and seems to have a good engine run, the Pitter is free to go and work on their airplane, untangle their own flying lines from their previous flight or in some cases just watch the flight in progress. Watching is good as it helps one to learn to be a better flyer. Or watch the flight of a Novice Flyer and offer them encouragement and advice.

Electric Airplanes

Most of this same info applies to Electric control line airplanes but there are a few other things to consider. It is best to check with the Flyer and check their process of shutting off the airplane's battery after the flight. Sometimes it makes sense for the Pitter to go directly to the Flyer's handle after landing and let the Flyer hand the Pitter the handle and then they go to their airplane and turn off or disengage the battery. Also the Pitter should still wait for the Flyer to give the launch signal before releasing the airplane. Electric airplanes need to rev-up to speed for a good take-off.

Be Aware of Flying Lines in the Pit Area

If new to control line flying, get used to looking down and stepping over the flying lines laid out in the pits. We all

make the mistake of walking on and tangling our feet in someones flying lines. It takes doing it a few times to really get this habit ingrained to be aware of them laying there. Nothing worse than the dance of the tangled lines and then the profuse apologies given after. Humbling.

Assisting Flyer After Landing

The flight ends as the engine quits having burned the fuel rationed out and the airplane glides in for a smooth landing and roll-out. The Pitter hopes that the airplane touches down on the side of the circle closest to the pits. Otherwise a longer trudge is required to go and grab the airplane on the far side of the circle. In some cases the Pitter is maybe older and is a bit of a slower walker. There is the choice of dropping the handle for the Pitter to grab and then the Flyer goes out to the edge of the flying circle to carry the airplane back to the pits. This is sometimes the most efficient way to handle this as the next Flyer in queue awaits their airtime eagerly. Often when only a group of three or four are flying, the Pitter and Flyer carry the airplane to the pits after the flight and the Flyer then grabs the handle or airplane of the Pitter and assists them to the flying circle for their flight. But when many club members are present to fly, everyone is jockeying for their chance to put their airplane and their flying skills into the open sky.

Sometime there is a moment when the Flyer that just landed and the Pitter who runs out to help them back to the pits have to take the lines and airplane over or under the next Flyer up and their Pitter as they head out to the flying circle. This can be an interesting bit of choreography.

Flight Debrief

Reveling in the debrief after the flight with the Pitter can most certainly help improve your flying and pattern skills. And the Pitter's flying skills will benefit as well as to watch another a club member fly and take note of what they do in their flight. This can transfer over to helping one improve their own flight. We can all help each other be better flyers.

End of Flying Day

Oh the joy of loading an intact airplane back into your vehicle for the drive home, reliving a day of triumphant control line flying. Connection. Focus. Friendship. The Quest for Perfection. And just the fun of being outdoors and enjoying an activity I'm fairly sure we all did when we were young. One of the closest things to time-travel back to youth. But the intensity and enjoyment is even more profound at this age. It is never *not* intense. Serious gratification. We fly Control Line.

Stooge Flying. Pitting for Yourself

There are times we control line flyers pit for ourselves when we go out and

fly alone and use the assist of a Stooage. A Stooage is a device that holds the airplane when running and usually has a line that runs out to the middle of the circle and runs behind and parallel to the flying lines going out to the handle in the center of the flying circle. The Flyer reaches down and pulls the line attached to the Stooage thus releasing the airplane. Upon landing the solo flyer has to get his airplane back to the Stooage for the next launch. There are several ways to handle this. You can just drag the flying lines through the grass or across the tarmac but you then risk kinking you expensive flying lines. Most of my solo flying has been at grass circles so I found it best to have a large 12" nail or spike to stick into the grass through my handle opening or handle safety thong and then walk out to the airplane and pick up the airplane and step back to tighten the flying lines and keep them out of the grass to prevent them for kinking or getting caught on weeds and such. Then I just walk the airplane back to the launch area near the Stooage. Sometimes I just need to pull the airplane a short distance to the Stooage after going out to the handle and removing the large spike that is holding the handle in place. Other times the airplane is out past the Stooage so after I re-set the airplane on the Stooage I would need to go pull the handle back to tighten the flying lines. A good practice is to put that same spike through the handle safety thong as you start your airplane. This can help if your Stooage releases

accidentally or even if your foot catches the line running from the Stooage to the circle. That way the airplane has a good chance of not taking to the air as the safety thong is at the down control end of the handle and will hopefully give down input and the airplane will nose over. So yes, sometimes we end up being our own Pitter.

Conclusion

I'm sure I missed a lot of info about pitting. Once you begin to write about a subject you realize how much there is to it.

Though I did not write about pitting at a contest, all I can say it is an amped-up version of pitting on a day out at your club flying field.

Practice patiently and profoundly to perfect your pitting procedure perfectly and passionately.

Sean Emery





**MEETING NOTICE:—July 29th at
Club Flying Field**