

What the GNZ Operations Team is Talking About . . .

A summary of key items discussed at the Operations Team on-line meeting on 27 September 2022. David Moody (North), David Hirst (Central), Wal Bethwaite (South) and Martyn Cook (NOO).

1. Incident Reports for August - September 2022

- emergency release after PIO on takeoff, landed ahead, first flight on type, first flight with flaps
- launched on solo flight in twin with excessive ballast in tail, previous solo pilot much heavier

Commentary on Selected Incident Reports

Type Conversion: The pilot was attempting to launch on their first flight in a new type of glider, with a view to possible purchase. What could possibly go wrong, you ask? Here are some clues:

- first flight on type
- first flight with flaps
- second flight in a glider with belly hook
- 5 knot cross wind
- technique recommended to the pilot was to adjust the flap setting during the take-off roll
- the potential for a sudden pitch change if this was done too quickly was not explained

The pilot correctly released as soon as pitch control was lost and the glider was landed ahead safely without damage or risk to the tow plane. The reviewer reported that all club instructors had been reminded of the need for good pilot preparation prior to first flight in any new type - as well as making an objective assessment of whether the pilot has the required experience and ability. There are briefing notes in the PTP under *Soaring Pilot > Convert to Single Seater > Type Conversion*.

Weight and Balance Check Not Performed: An experienced instructor failed to check the ballast carried in the fin box of a 2-seat glider prior to conducting a solo flight. The assumption was made that because the glider had been flown solo on the previous flight the same ballast would apply. However, the previous pilot had compensated for their body weight by adding tail ballast to bring the CG back towards the rear limit. The next pilot was 30 kg lighter, so the glider was launched and flown with the CG calculated to be aft of the rear limit. The pilot reports that the glider was pitch-sensitive on takeoff but there were no handling difficulties during a 45-minute flight.

This pilot was lucky. This glider type is known to have benign handling characteristics, and the manufacturer may have been conservative in defining the aft CG limit. But a high-performance single-seat racing glider might not have been so forgiving. The pilot admits to not performing the pre-boarding checks, so the "B" for Ballast item was not checked. The reviewer commented that this is "a good example of how we all take things for granted . . . and how mistakes happen". It's also a reminder that the current set of check lists has been highly refined over decades and does tend to capture the common errors - provided we work through these check lists one step at a time.

2. Getting Started Again After Winter

For some clubs it has been a long, wet winter with several NZ airfields closed and not much flying. This is a reminder that clubs and individuals should not expect to "pick up where they left off" at the end of last season, but to reintroduce club flying slowly and carefully. Some clubs have a start-of-season briefing to remind pilots of standard procedures, and most pilots will require a check flight prior to flying solo. Be mindful that we are all human and we do forget important stuff at times.

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