

Hi,

Everyone knows that when teaching, I often use analogies to automobiles and baseball. The point is that unfamiliar things such as learning to fly can be similar to things that the student is already familiar with, such as driving a car or playing a sport.

The last time I flew with Kiran, we learned what to do when two gliders are reaching the IP and attempting to enter the landing pattern at about the same time. In this case, Vinnie was flying solo in another 2-33. Kiran and I were up working thermals and saw Vinnie several times during the flight, as well as a few jets going by. I used the opportunity to teach Kiran how to tell if another plane was higher or lower than we were by seeing if from your point of view, the other plane is above or below the horizon.

If Vinnie was above the horizon, then he was higher than we were. If Vinnie was below the horizon, then he was lower than we were. Through the course of the flight, we watched Vinnie go above and below the horizon as we both gained and lost altitude. We also saw the jets go by higher than we were. This works no matter how far apart you are. You just have to see the other object. I also tell students it's nice to know who the other pilot is. This way we know their skill level.

When talking about the landing pattern I often refer to the points in the pattern as bases on a baseball diamond. The IP is first base, turning to base leg is second, turning final is third and landing is your slide into home plate after hitting an in-the-park home run. In baseball there's a rule that says 2 players can not be on the same base at the same time. In flying there is the rule of physics that says two objects can not occupy the same space at the same time. See where I'm going? "Who's" on first?

When two gliders decide to land at about the same time, some decisions need to be made by both pilots. "What" to do. We're coming down and have to land but there's that rule about being on the same base, or is it space, at the same time. "I Don't Know."

Here's what to do: The lower glider must make the decision to land first, even if it means opening spoilers or slipping to get into the pattern early. The higher glider should hold off the best he can, keeping spoilers closed and reducing the sink rate of the glider by flying at minimum sink speed. The second glider wants to get as much space between them as he can. When the first glider lands, he wants to land long and make sure to move to the right when stopping. The second glider wants to plan a shorter landing rollout just in case the first glider stops in the middle of the runway.

So as you can see, first, knowing that the other glider is there at the IP with you, and second, when possible, knowing who it is, are both important things to be aware of. This is also why we don't "hang out" right at the IP while using up that last few hundred feet before entering the pattern. We're looking around to find if any other gliders want to share the bases with us.

So again, the landing pattern is like rounding the bases. But we need to know the rules and the players. You must know: "Who's" on first, "What" you're going to do next and don't let "I Don't Know" tag you out at third.

Enjoy the routine. Who's on first?

Text

<http://www.baseball-almanac.com/humor4.shtml>

Video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sShMA85pv8M>

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