

Pawnee Towing

In case you have not been towed behind a powerful Pawnee or its been a long time since you have done so, I offer these points for you to consider as preparation to do so.

- **Acceleration.** You will reach a flying speed sooner than you are use to, and thus a shorter time to react in case of a SWERVE. So, practice that reach to the tow release handle and be ready to pull it to let go of the tow rope. Don't hesitate. And expect, even insist, that the forward areas to the left and right of your launching glider are clear of other aircraft and ground moving equipment.
- **Prop Swirl.** That powerful motor and its prop will swirl lots of air when it first goes to full throttle. That swirl will nearly stay in-place when you pass through it with your glider, rocking the wings, and maybe even causing a wing tip to touch the ground. React with opposite rudder to lift the dropping wing, or reach to the tow release and lose the tow rope if necessary. Don't hesitate.
- **Climb Rate.** After lift-off, the tow plane will climb quickly - again, faster than what you are used to. You will need to add more back stick pressure to STAY with the climbing tow plane. This will seem uncomfortable at first because of a higher nose-up pitch for your glider, and you will see the same with the tow plane. Remember - pressure the stick forward after an emergency release to attain a safe maneuvering speed and then execute the rest of your take-off emergency plan.
- **Airport View.** When looking back at the airport while executing some phase of your take-off emergency plan, you will see a closer airport, requiring a steeper descent for you to land at your runway aiming point. The airport will be closer than what you are used to, and that's GREAT because you will achieve a safe altitude to return to the airport, sooner than behind the Super Cub. But, that might be a bit unnerving at first, because you might have the impression that you will fly past the other end of the runway if you turn back to the runway you just departed from. Again, upon release or a rope break, pressure the stick forward to attain a safe maneuvering air speed before you turn the glider and be prepared to use the airbrakes and maybe even a slip to descend to your aiming point. If high enough, you might even consider flying forward for a moment to lengthen your return, downwind leg to the airport.
- **Normal Tow.** Expect similar speeds as the Super Cub, but if you need to speed-up or slow down, call the tow pilot to ask for a relative speed change, "Pawnee, speed-up 5 mph". Put the wheels on the horizon and let the tow plane climb. There might be a better position but too high is not one of them. Fly around the wake to discover the new sight references, maneuvering precisely as needed into and out of the wake - after all, that's the point of "Boxing the Wake". Finally, the wing tip vortices from the low-winged Pawnee will be lower than what you are

used to, so if you are willing to try, fly the glider to that vortex and notice the lines of sight to the towplane.

- Normal Release. Nothing will change and keep in mind that the tow rope needs to spring away before you turn. Turn right into the glider air space, and remember that the tow plane will turn left and descend into its airspace. You will be closer to the airport after you release, but as high as needed, thus, say on a pattern tow, your planning to the 45 to the pattern may require a change in your usual methods. You may have to deliberately fly away from the airport and your release point in order to enter the pattern, and that's an interesting idea.
- Cycling. The tow plane with its faster climb rate will have a shorter route back to the airport after its last tow, and so its cycling of gliders can be as high as seven or eight launches per hour, presuming there are that many gliders to launch. Pay attention to all this activity by monitoring 122.8 on the radio, look out for traffic, and be ready to go.

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