

N4625Y

General Background

I started towing gliders using the PA 25/235/260 at Air Sailing Glider Port (NV23) in July of 2018, I have logged over 300 tow and between 75-100 hrs of flight/tow time. During this time I have flown in gusty and turbulent conditions both aloft and at the surface during launch/tow operations with landings in the same conditions as well as recovery of gliders at distant airports. I have close to 4000 hours total time encompassing training and operations with various types of GA aircraft in a variety of weathers conditions including turbulence and 25+ kts crosswinds. The Sierras can be a challenging environment both for the novice as well as an advanced pilot. Suffice it to say I have done my share of go arounds when conditions are not suited to a safe landing.

6/12/2024

This was day 3 of a 5 day XC glider competition. I towed on Sunday 6/9 as this was a practice day about 6 or 7 tows, again on the 11th with the same amount and on 6/12 with 7 or 8 tows followed by two retrieval requests to N58 (SAMSARG FLD). The request came to me via the person running the ground ops for that day, Gene Benson [who is also a long-time tow pilot]. I consulted with him about using N58 has it had been closed [I believe it was for either UASs or RCs] but was now open. He indicated that this retrieval request met AirSailings' operations manual.

The first retrieval went fine with pretty much the same conditions encountered on the 2nd retrieval. On the trip over to N58 from NV23, at 9000' I did encounter typical turbulence going over the Virigina Range of mountains. On my descent into N58 on the first tow request I did a low approach to checkout the condition of the runway as it had been sometime since I landed there. Checking for Notams I did read that the runway 15/33 listed soft edges. Winds from the sole wind sock indicated a direct X-wind between 5-8 knots. Based upon this I noted that the recommend pattern was right for 15 and proceed to enter the downwind at the 45. I landed with no issues, no gusts, hooked up the glider and departed 33 as it was downhill with the same x-wind. We did a climbing 360 degree turn over the airport which is standard AirSailing retrieval protocol.

About half way back to NV23 the glider decided to go off tow and proceed to NV23. I was then directed by AirSailing ground that there was another retrieval request at N58 and proceeded to return via the same route with about the same conditions at altitude. As before, I did a once over and noticed the same conditions as the previous approach and landing, though it appeared that the X-winds had begun to lower. I again entered the downwind for 15 and proceeded to execute a landing. At touch down using Airsailing's protocol for wheel landings only and not 3 point, I planted the mains firmly on the runway with the centerline directly under the nose watching the speed decrease to the point that I was lowering the tail when a very robust gust from the west

picked up my right wing. My reaction was to apply aileron into the gust at the same time applying left rudder to keep the fuselage over the center of runway. When I did that, the left aileron forced the right wing down and consequently the right wheel which then contacted the 'soft' edge and directed me off the runway. I then applied full power and attempted to regain flying speed, but this was interrupted with a sand bar that brought the nose over where contact was made with prop and the right landing gear with another sand bar ripping it and pivoting me 180 degrees to the right where the left gear collapsed where N4625Y came to a final stop.

Respectfully Submitted,

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