

Safe Flying Tip number eleven: “Touch and Go’s make poor pilots”

Harold took delivery of his new Bristell in August 2016. He and his CFI received a brief check out in Lancaster, PA and then flew to Carson City, NV. The LSA Transition Course was cut short as weather was approaching and Harold and his CFI wanted to take off and make the long flight while the forecast was good. They had a great adventure flying across the country and arrived safely. Harold flew often and accumulated over 100 hours during the next two months. Sport Flying USA, Inc., the seller of the Bristell offers a complimentary 5 hour LSA Transition Course with the sale of every Bristell. The Bristell LSA Transition Course calls for earning a Bristell Challenge Coin. To earn the coin, the pilot is required to make a landing with a minimum of 6 knot direct crosswind equivalent to the following standard:

He must land within 400 feet of the desired touch down spot, on the main wheels, on the centerline. He must keep the nose wheel off the runway for 300 feet and then initiate a go-around without letting the nose wheel touch the ground. He must not let the nose get too high while accelerating to best rate of climb speed (Vy) of 67 KIAS while remaining in ground affect. Here is what the coin looks like.

Harold did not take the time to earn a Challenge Coin.

On the day of his accident, he landed just fine, but was a few feet left of the centerline. He touched down with a little too much energy (too fast). He decided to add some right rudder to get the plane back towards the centerline, but over controlled. He quickly found the plane right of the centerline and then added too much left rudder making the plane swerve to the left rapidly. The right gear collapsed and the right wing contacted the ground. Harold’s poorly executed touch and go, was the cause of this accident. He did not get rid of enough energy before landing and started the go around while much too fast.

My son, Michael Mancuso, a CFI with about 14,000 hours, was formerly #4 wing man for the Northern Lights Aerobatic team and he is the best pilot that I know. To the best of my knowledge, none of his students ever damaged a plane. He created a learning atmosphere which included no touch n go’s if the nose wheel contacted the ground. The pilot was required to get rid of all excess energy before landing or soon after landing with the nose wheel off the ground. If the nose touched, the landing needed to be a full stop landing. This discipline worked well for Mike and I suggest you adopt Mike’s landing standard. If the nose wheel comes in contact with the runway, then you must make a full stop landing. If Harold had adopted Mike’s philosophy, he would not have damaged his beautiful Bristell, which we call “The Rock Star” due to its stunning paint scheme.