

DALLAS ROAD FLYING: additional notes from other pilots.

Thanks to Bruce, Eric, James, Gio, Amir, Paul & Paul, Adam, Rick, Phil, Pierre... and many more pilots who generously gave their time and experience to help keep me safer and wiser!

E

If flying in marginal light wind conditions, please be prepared to land on the beach.

I have seen a few pilots just making it back on the grass, but low and downwind, scaring the pedestrians. If you cannot land in control the path, you do not have the height to top land. The beach is safer. Bystander safety is the number one priority at Dallas, followed closely by pilot safety.

J

These things I know about Dallas after 2 years of flying there.

1. If you are only going to fly Dallas when the conditions are perfect, you are not going to fly very much and you are not going to learn very much.
2. Use the tools. With a wind meter, compass and a windsock you will safely expand your flying window and know if your wing can fly the conditions. For my Buzz Z5 I can fly in 10 knots up 240 degrees in the summer and 8.5 knots in the winter. I have spent a lot of time landing on the beach to find that out I might add.
3. In winds of 15 knots at the fence and above I don't take off. If you do and you are 50 feet over the steepest part of the ridge the wind can be 20 + knots and may push you back over the road, power lines, houses.
4. Have a plan, what you are going to do if you find yourself over the houses, in the water etc? I like to practice using the speed bar, big ears, wing overs and pitch control, heading out over the water anseeing at what point you start to drop, every time I fly Dallas.
5. Pay attention all the time. If the wind picks up, move forward to the water. Watch the water, look for dark bands and white caps indicating stronger wind coming your way.. At this point if the wind increases more, it's big ears and speed bar to land on the beach for me  
. Get a stuff sack for your wing and a line cutter.
6. Fear, most people are helpful most of the time, but fear can make some people become irrational, have a plan to deal with it. It will happen.
7. If you are below fence height past the steepest part of the ridge heading east with a tail wind, turn into the wind and land on the beach. After trying to land downwind on the path a few times, I would have to say it's not a good option.
8. Kiting, as everybody knows kiting is the single best thing you can do to become comfortable with launching and landing. Do it in high winds 15 knots, and do it lots.
9. Know how to control and drop the wing with the rear risers, a helpful pilot showed me how important that is in my early Dallas days.
10. Adjust your harness so you get into the seated position quickly and easily. A lot of people fly with their shoulder straps too tight. Struggling into your harness at take off, close to the ridge is not good. I hope these pilots with more knowledge will add more tips.
11. Big Wave Dave is my wind speed source short term. I look at Race Rocks, 20 knots west works. Only updates every hour. Ogden Point updates every 10 minutes and will read slightly higher than Dallas. Windy.com for longer term. Watch out for spike at the end of the day. No idea why this happens, but it does and is very dangerous.... See attached photo.
12. Having a Gopro camera on your helmet on cuts out a lot of nonsense from the general public and other pilots. Knowing that they will be accountable has a remarkable effect.

13. Landing on the beach... Ok, so the driftwood can be hard on your lines. So this is what I try to do, land close to the water, turn and kite the wing before it touches the ground. Walk it till you find a clear spot to lay it down.

14. Top Landing. In perfect conditions you can park over where you want to land, apply a bit of brake to control your forward speed and sink gracefully to the ground. Generally the closer to the ground the less lift when you are back from the edge of the ridge, so as the wind speed increases, my first action is to lose some height in front with a few tight 90 degree turns back to back, not really wing overs, or pull big ears and sink to say 10 feet above the fence, then side slip back to touch down and ending with wing directly into wind. When I land I like to keep flying the wing with lots of weight forward just like a take off. Then pick your moment, feeling a decent amount of weight on your feet as the wing settles, bend your knees, go hands up, stand up and turn moving in the direction thw wing is going and get your hand on the rear risers, kite wing in this position and move to where you want to drop it. Or, if there is a bit of drama going on, turn and drop immediately. Higher wind, same a s above with one windward big ear in. Higher wind, use both big ears, adding speed bar if necessary all the way to the ground if required. For less drama just move forward and land on the beach. The walk will do you good.

15. Launching like a princess. If you are lucky you get your wing over your head, turn, stroll over to the fence, get gently lifted off and float onwards and upwards... all good. If you have no idea what the wind speed is or what wind speed you need to lift off and fly, you end up spending a lot of time at the path adding to the confusion and frustration of the people, cats, dogs, kid,, joggers and crazy people who use it. So, know before you go. For me if I know I have 10 knots at the fence, I know I will fly. I move directly over the path with wing overhead, crouch down a bit and pop over the fence, release the brakes completely, fly forward, then turn. No fuss and more air time.

## G

Flying in the evening at sunset, sun going down triggers all sort of phenomena. Often bubble breaking allows flying, however, strong wind tends to set in in a very vicious way: the only indicator we have is the water and white caps that seems not to be that visible at that time of day. I was caught once and luckily we had the big LZ not accessible now.

Flying the hot moment of the day is doable, however we ar leveraging the bubble forming. I rather use the word wedge as Honza likes to call it. The heat forming creates a sort of net that harness part of th wind making it flyable. Gaining altitude in this circumstance can be very tricky. You will be soon out of the repaired area and being blown back it is likely. The net is fluid, hence is always a battle of forces between wind, heat and instability, very hard to predict, and requires immediate attention if gaining altitude. If tide is low, the beach is a great option like Dennis used to show me. S components in Race Rocks... long time ago a kite surfer told me he would remain dry those days, it took me a few years to learn what he meant.

Trials Island is back, have a look at it and have an idea of the wind in the bay. It is not flyable and all of a sudden it is... wait and see what happens before taking off. Immediate changes during transitions are often dangerous. If it stays manageable, use it. If it blows out, watch and learn.

## A

Dallas is a very special place, and as you note, there is a lot going on there with potential hazards that a newbie might not be aware of. It's not your typical ridge site and hence why we've always tried to educate and inform people who are new to the site, even though they may be experienced at flying other sites. I think as a more experienced pilot yourself you can now more fully appreciate the complexity and nuance of the place that only becomes apparent once you have flown there a lot.

I know of no other site in the worked where we ar fling so close to the general public in such a small lift band. Learning from each other and from those with experience is th bes way we can ensure safe flying for all. This is even more important now with the additional hazards of the power lines. We've lost Dallas before and had to convince the city that we would all follow certain rules and procedures. This includes site briefings, having the requisite kiting skills etc. And most importantly, have your Hpac insurance which is the only type of insurance accepted by the city which names them as the "insured" as well. People who fly without Hpac are not following the the rules and are knowingly jeopardizing the site for everyone. Ultimately, this is not about anything but flying safely and protecting the site.

B

On the insurance thing a cople of other things to add:

Your Hpac insurance may not give you the protection you need. The insurer could throw you under the bus if you are a low time pilot or you are doing something stupid (both fall under willful or gross negligence). The city could take you and the club to court, and likely will.