

Disclaimer

The above notes are simply my observations and opinions about Dallas Rd that I've accumulated over 14 years of flying the site. I'm sure many will disagree with certain points and that's great as I hope we can all learn from each other. Take them for what it's worth to you. I am continuously learning about the site and in no way claim to be an expert about the subject. As far as I'm concerned were all student forever.

Dallas Specifics – Items of Concern for this particular flying site

Following is a list of items that each pilot should be aware of. If you're not clear on the particulars of any of the items on the list then I strongly encourage you to ask a pilot that is familiar with the site and that you trust will give you sound advice.

- Venture around Clover point behind the monument – Don't fly too far back from the ridge in this location
- The Bubble – Ask Senior Pilots about this strange and at times dangerous phenomenon
- The shape of the ridge and how it influences the lift band we fly in and the way in which we launch.
- Beach landings - Get use to it as an awesome plan B
- Lots of People with Pets = Obstacles on take off and landing. Crowds of people will sometimes gather around you as you attempt to launch. Your ground handing skills should be expert level if you intend to interact with crowds of people with your wing inflated.
- Power Lines – Pilots have been caught off guard and had their wings interact with the power lines.
- Houses
- Road and cars
- New power lines and smaller main landing zone
- Bike Path which is loose gravel – Now paved
- New wooden barricade near path and other construction related obstructions

Water Observation

- Whitecaps are harder to see in lower light - Sunset flights require more attention to the water
- Whitecaps are harder to see the more vertical you are
- Medium whitecaps usually start at 20km/h
- Watch for Cat paws / Wind lines on the water. Many times they appear before whitecaps
- Watch for the formation of the bubble (Water texture will be obvious) as well as wind observations on various points of the ridge. Moving grass, or lack of it, and bushes are a good indicator. If the bubble has established, you will notice a complete absence of wind on the ridge below you and the water will be very smooth and glassy

Disturbances in the Force

- Bumpy air is a sure indicator of changing conditions. Sometimes better, sometimes worse. I would encourage and new pilot to take this as an opportunity to land and observe what happens over the next 10 mins or so. Do not use other pilots as indicators of when to land.
- Strong temperature gradient at different altitudes. You are likely, but not certainly, flying with a bubble present. The temperature will noticeably drop as you descend.
- Dallas will vary in strength and direction quickly. Use your observation skills and glider reactions to gather this information and apply it to your current flight model. Don't be a static pilot. Dallas is an ever-changing site so you must be an ever changing pilot.
- Ground speed traveling up and down the ridge may change rapidly for varying reasons. This relates to the quickly changing conditions. Wind speed and direction must be reassessed frequently.

Assessment of Conditions Before Launching

- Wind socks at Dallas will only tell you the wind strength on the ground at one specific location along the ridge. Dallas often has a large wind gradient so ground conditions is only one point to consider before launching.
- It will not be uncommon to have large variations in wind speed and direction along the length of the ridge. Don't assume your windsock at one end of the ridge will have any relation to your current conditions at the other end of the ridge. Or even the middle. I would encourage pilots to avoid the use of wind socks as they may even lead you astray.
- Never assume you will have full control of where you going to land so don't fixate on a specific spot and learn to land anywhere. Practice. On a good day try landing in as many different places you can along the ridge. Be that pilot that has all options available to them.
- Wind meter. Good for single point information but will not provide a full picture. No information will be gleaned of the conditions along the ridge or at altitude. Wind gradients at Dallas can be surprisingly large. Don't get caught off guard with preconceived ideas of conditions.
- Use Big Wave Dave's wind reading for - Race Rocks, Gonzales, Ogdgen Point, Trialalls Is. Talk to experienced pilots about how to apply what you see on the site.
- Look for a bubble
- Look for whitecaps and wind lines
- Kiting for 5 minutes will give you a wealth of information and has many times changed my mind about launching. Unless someone is in the air it's my go to method for checking wind speed and direction as well as gusts and turbulence. Learn to trust your wind and what it's telling you. It's like a huge windsock attached to you providing a lot of useful information about wind strength, direction, and gusts.

Knowing Your Limitations And That Of Your Gear

- What level of glider are you flying? There are speed limitations you will be subject to. As well as how well the profile of your glider deals with high winds and penetrating them. This will relate to flying and launching.
- What is the top speed and stall speed of your current glider? If you don't know your making decisions about launching with only partial information. Make sure you're an informed pilot.
- How well does your glider penetrate compared to the gliders you see already in the air? Know the differences between glider classes and don't assume your glider will perform like the gliders you see in the air.
- Don't get suckered into launching, into conditions that exceed your gliders capabilities, by those of a wing already in the air. The pilot in the air may be flying a high-performance glider or perhaps a glider with trimmers that he has released to increase his trim speed. You won't see them using speedbar but they may already be flying accelerated.

- How does your wing ground handle compared to other gliders. Higher class gliders can be a handful, especially launching in high winds. Caution should be shown if trying someone else's glider. Pick nice conditions to demo new wings or other equipment.
- Pod harness or not? If you have the option, I recommend that new pilots use open harness for their initial flights. It will simplify the things you have to deal with on take off and reduce the chances of the harness becoming caught on the fence during launch.
- How you attach your speedbar is important. Use a method that ensures it won't come undone. Brummle hooks/sister clips can, at times, come loose. You don't want to be distracted attaching a loose speedbar line while flying in close proximity to the ground and other pilots.
- Always double check speedbar before launching. You're launching at a site where you know conditions change quickly. Every flight is a flight you may need to use your speedbar.
- How much space do you need to inflate and land? How long are your lines and how quickly does your glider rise into flying position in all conditions?
- If conditions change once you're in the air you'll know how much space you need to land and kill your wing safely in higher winds. Choose your landing area appropriately.

Bubble Basics

- The water and wind speed at the ridge is your best indicator of a bubble that has formed or is forming.
- While flying with the presence of a bubble you will likely have a large and very noticeable change in air temperature at different altitudes. If the air suddenly gets cool and you experience mild to severe turbulence, you've likely descended through the bubble and you should prepare for a possible sudden and fast (No Wind) landing
- Keep in mind your airspeed when descending through the bubble. You'll go from a good airspeed to possibly dangerously close to stall while descending below the bubble.
- Pick a landing close, clear of people and obstacles, and do not attempt to glide to a "familiar" landing spot (Target fixation)
- Do not underestimate how quickly you will descend. It's very possible to descend straight down the last 15 to 20 feet. Hard landings are common and a good PLF may be needed

Techniques

Inflation

- A's and D's – Mitsos – My preferred launch technique in most conditions
- A's and Brake Lines – Fun if you're playing on the ground and will reduce wear on your brake lines from rubbing on your risers
- A Riser in each hand – Dallas is a good place to play with technique. There are some advantages as well as disadvantages to this particular method.
- Inside A's – High performance gliders benefit from this type of inflation. Play with this technique and see how your wing responds
- Cobra Launch – I use this for tandem and really high winds.
- Release trimmers slightly – Tandem and Acro gliders. Gets the glider above you quicker.

Glider Control

- Brake position Forward and Reverse – Practice and become familiar with kiting in both positions in varying strengths and conditions.
- Forward with lean – A large powerful lean will be required to get to the ridge at times. Be dialed in before hand so your prepared to launch with full control
- Reverse Rear Riser – Works well to stop the glider from lifting you off the ground.
- Wing tip touches – A must while practicing kiting. You should be able to touch each wingtip on the ground, one after the other will full control. You'll be the guy launching off the mountains in style and full control while others struggle.
- Figure 8's – Place a few items on the ground and practice moving around them in full control
- Hover off ground – practice pulling enough brake to hover off the ground. Just enough brake to hold your body weight off the ground. This is “the” technique used to launch.

Take off / Launching

- No anchors or pushes to edge. If you can't kite in a particular wind strength you surely shouldn't be flying in it
- No kiting over path unless you intend to launch. The path is for people walking. It's not for us to kite on. This is just respecting people space. There are people and dogs that are afraid of the gliders. We should respect their space.
- If you insist on kiting on the path be aware people tend to walk behind the glider not in front and you will no doubt be making some people nervous. **Yes** you're that guy.
- If our wing or lines drop on someone, then apologize, because it's very obviously our error. Make sure you keep control of your glider while the person step out from the lines. Keep in mind a wing thrashing around has lines, that if wrapped around some part of someones body, can cut them or cause painful burns. This is a bad situation to be in and fairly easily avoidable.
- NO jumping over the fence unless you plan on landing on the beach which is where you'll likely end up. This is part of our glider control and being able to hover off the ground. If launching you should be gently lifted off the ground and float over the fence.
- It's very easy to catch clothing, pod, relax bar, speedbar on fence. By lifting off and not jumping over the fence you can avoid getting caught up on the fence altogether.
- If you do jump the fence your glider will end up having to dive in front of you to gain speed upon takeoff, putting you immediately below launch and close to terrain.
- It will also be difficult to slide into the lift band, and more likely, you'll have to fly straight out before initiating a turn which will increase you sink even more.
- Once on the other side of the fence you'll have a hard time dropping your wing back down from the other side of the fence for several reasons.
 1. Your glider will pitch in front of you to try to face into the air flow , which is now flowing upwards.
 - 2.The amount of brake needed will be immense at times
 - 3.The brake pressure can become very heavy
 - 4.You may need to stall the wind which will be difficult and may possibly pull you back towards and or over the fence. Dropping you wing on the path and people.
- You should be lifted at or before the fence if you want a guaranteed flight
- Be aware that when you launch you will be approaching pilots already in the air from below and they may not immediately see you and you will definitely have a hard time seeing them through your glider. Don't be afraid to yell "hey I'm below you!" Communication is especially important when flying in confined conditions.

- Make sure when launching you're not swinging and oscillating around. Even brake pressure and small movements. Move in a controlled and predictable manner. This will make it easier for other pilots to keep a safe distance from you.
- Once in the air if you find you need speed bar to move forward push it quickly and aggressively. There's no penalty for quick but there is for slow and delayed responses.
- When launching in strong winds you can be pushed high above the ridge where the winds can increase significantly with altitude. You may find yourself in these higher winds quickly with no other option than to accelerate your glider to full speed just to get away from the ridge. Worst case, you get pushed up into winds that exceed the top speed of your particular glider.
- Do not launch in strong winds and run the ridge closely. This maneuver has put many pilots into a very undesirable position in less than a minute after takeoff. You must adjust your launch to the present conditions. Use the following tips to explore the lift band. In strong conditions you may be surprised how far out from the ridge the lift will be.
- Launching in strong conditions and pushing out front will achieve the following.
 1. You will know how far from the ridge you can pass other pilots safely, without sinking
 2. It will put you in a safer position if the winds are surprisingly brisk. You won't get pushed up into the higher winds immediately.
 3. You learn about the lift band in different conditions, at different points of the ridge, at your home site. You expand on your knowledge base

Decent Techniques

- In high winds using the speedbar to push out over the water and out of the lift band should be your first option. It will require the least amount of skill and lowest level of risk. If following the above tips you will already know, roughly, how far out the lift band extends.
- Pushing out front and doing wing overs or swinging turns. Be aware that in strong winds if you don't push out far enough or your turns are not aggressive enough you will actually gain altitude. This is a more advanced technique and should be approached very gradually and with some coaching from a more experienced pilot.
- Never do wing overs until you have many hours of practice in open air. Never practice true wing overs at Dallas. Bad things will eventually happen.
- Big ears – If you don't know how then practice during a mountain flight first in open air at altitude.
- Big ears and speedbar – Same as above. This should be a basic technique you've mastered before your first Dallas flights.
- Pitch oscillations or Dolphins with or without speedbar. This is an advanced maneuver that must be learned gradually. Consequences of getting this one wrong will likely be a front collapse close to the ground.
- Moving out of the lift band preferably over water but in lighter winds it's completely acceptable to go behind the path. Not over the path.

Landing

- Quick turn around and grab rear risers – This is essential if you don't want to be dragged. Practice it many times while kiting in higher winds.
- Rear riser kill of wing – Use the rear risers to kill the wind instead of the brakes.
- It may be necessary to use the speedbar to the ground – Avoid releasing the speedbar suddenly at the last moment. Your glider will likely pitch back and climb. Not what you want in a high wind landing situation.
- Slowly release the speedbar before landing in time to get out of your harness and get your feet into position below you.

- Or use the speedbar in a vertical orientation which will causes more drag and degrades your glide. Practice different landing configurations before you actually need them.
- Frontal upon landing is an option but can lead to a quick shock re-inflation. Again practice
- Pull one single A riser and opposite brake handle. Interesting collapse. Practice
- Release one riser with quickout carabiner. I use this on my tandem with great success.
- Get one wingtip into the wind direction once wing is on the ground. This can assist in stopping the glider from reinflating.
- Land in a place clear of people if possible. Give yourself time and try not to make large turns close to the ground. It's easy to misjudge how much ground you will travel with a large tail wind. Turning back into wind can become challenging
- You may observe very different conditions along the length of the ridge. Keep this in mind for landing. Practice landing all along the ridge in ideal condition beforehand.
- Beach landing is always an option and there should be no shame whatsoever in using it. Keep in mind that landing in sand with rocks and large stumps and logs has it's own challenges. Especially in higher tides.
- Strong wind landings on beach are always a safer option if there is low tide.

Miscellaneous Items

- Point hopping – Always fun as it open a whole new part of the ridge to explore. For a first point hop I strongly suggest following a pilot with experience in this area. There are good lines across the point and bad lines that will leave you in a bad position.
- The first bowl past the point has been named Amir's bowl. Ask him why?
- You may be tempted to tuck into Amir's bowl to gain some needed height after the crossing. It doesn't work so you should take this into account when choosing your line for crossing. Again follow someone who knows for your first few crossings.
- Landing options on the other side of the point can be a little more challenging with obstacles that can produce substantial rotor. To make the first crossings fun and pleasant follow someone who knows it's an easy crossing. See the theme here ;)
- Be prepared to be waked. It's simply a part of flying Dallas. When you fly behind another glider your going to fly through their wake. It's funky feeling the first few times. Be especially cautious flying behind tandem gliders. Big glider = big wake.
- Seasoned pilots can help the new pilots by altering your elevation in a number of ways or slightly turning one wing tip towards them to help limit the amount of wake you subject them to.

“Be fully versed in the right away rules of ridge flying”

These are rules we have all agreed on that will keep us safe. They are much like rules of the road. When flying close to other pilots and the ground there are times when quick decisions have to be made. As long as were all following the same, agreed upon, rules we stand a better chance of keeping safe.

Dallas Rd flying site is an absolutely beautiful and special site. I'm always amazed that the city of Victoria allows us to fly this location. It's an absolute privilege we have be given and we must do our best to be respectful of the Cities requests and the people we share this beautiful place with.

Take your time to talk to the passerby's and try to answer all their questions, remembering your an ambassador for the sport of paragliding. I've experienced so much joy and excitement from people that watch as we take to the sky it's hard to describe. Let's all work together to keep Dallas Rd flying site a place we can all enjoy for many years to come.