

SOARING

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Pre-Power Flight Training

On reading the Civil Aeronautics Board reports on the investigation of accidents involving aircraft, one is struck with the frequency with which this statement appears at the end; "The probable cause of this accident was an inadvertent stall at low altitude." If the "inadvertent stall" could be overcome there would be hardly any accidents involving aircraft.

We feel that one approach to the elimination of this major cause of accidents is compulsory training in gliding as a prerequisite to power plane flying.

Yes, we do have accidents involving gliders because of inadvertent stalls. But, in all of the accidents investigated the pilot had taken up glider flying after learning to fly power planes. "The cart is before the horse."

We suspect that a power plane man unconsciously believes that safe flying is a function of the Attitude of his plane and ignores the Relative Wind. He carries this viewpoint into his glider flying. A glider pilot, without a motor, learns very early that it is only the Relative Wind that counts.

Sitting out in front of the wing in a glider, with no structural member of his plane to line up with the horizon, a glider pilot cannot be taught to maintain level flight with the help of a part of the plane and the horizon. He is taught to keep his nose down to maintain a healthy airspeed.

By the time a glider pilot earns his "C" certificate he has acquired a great deal of experience in low-altitude flying and has learned to maintain a healthy Angle of Attack.

By the time a glider pilot sports his "C" button he has made many normal landings which a power plane man would class as Emergency.

We suggest that flight instruction begin with glider training. We recommend that glider training can well begin in glider clubs in the high schools.