

Runway 14, wind 200°/15....

Those of us who have had the privilege of approaching an aircraft carrier from astern will know that that's about the only time you're fairly assured of having the wind straight down the runway. On other occasions, such as most of the time at Northam, there's going to be a bit of crosswind to deal with. Remember it affects all legs of the circuit. On downwind you need to allow for it so your spacing doesn't go astray. If you've got a decent tailwind on base, you need to get the aeroplane set up early because you're going to get the base leg done pretty quickly, and you'll also need less power so you can lose 500 feet quickly. And conversely you'll need a bit more power with a headwind.

On finals, you get a good look at the wind direction because you're pointing the nose into it. If it's from the left, you'll need right rudder in the flare to point the nose down the runway and avoid bending the struts. There are a couple of ways to tell if you touch down with not quite enough rudder. The more obvious one is that the nose isn't pointing straight down the centreline, and another sign is that the aeroplane's inertia will straighten it out and you'll feel a little bit of a yaw.

With any significant crosswind, as soon as you straighten up, the wind will try and push you off the centreline, so you need aileron into wind. Remember too, most aeroplanes are unstable in roll, which makes them easy to turn, but they are very stable in yaw, which makes it easy to hold a heading. What that means in a crosswind landing is that you usually don't need much aileron input to stop the drift, but you often need a good bootful of rudder to straighten up, as aeroplanes are resistant to being yawed. So remember – rudder to straighten the nose, aileron to stop the drift, and don't be scared to use the pedals – they're not footrests!

On the training side, Glen Millsted passed his GFPT at Jandakot last month, and will continue with his PPL training when his farming and family commitments allow. Unfortunately, future Oscar-winning cinematographer Murray Basham's work commitments prevent him from flying often on weekends, but we are slowly working towards his GFPT. And after twelve years out of the cockpit, new committee member Simon Cooper did an AFR in June and did his first nav on September 2. Having successfully found Merredin, Simon's next task will be to negotiate the treacherous skies over Jandakot and Perth.

Happy flying.

Kevin Lathbury
