

Cross-Country Training Program for Condor

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Cross-country training programs in this country are very few and far between, even using the most generous possible interpretation of the phrase 'training program'. Harris Hill in Elmira has an active XC training program, but it too is mainly a hit-or-miss operation, using informal training flights and Kai Gertson's 'Introduction to Cross-Country Soaring' pamphlet. There are occasional organized XC racing camps, but those are also few and far between (literally). So, when I started thinking about using Condor to not only train myself in XC techniques but to start teaching others, I realized that I would have to create my own training syllabus basically from scratch, starting with this article.

Cross-country training using Condor should be much more straightforward and comprehensive than a program based at a real-world soaring site, as many of the limitations imposed by the site and its typical weather are eliminated. Any weather and any terrain can be accommodated, and both of these factors can be tailored to specific lesson objectives. Takeoffs and landings aren't required, nor is there any need to return to the departure airport. In fact, partial tasks can be the rule rather than the exception in Condor, as the lesson can be terminated whenever and wherever it is convenient. The student, the instructor, and the desired soaring terrain can all be in different places, as they only come together in simulation space on the internet. So, what would a good XC instruction program look like in the Condor world? The following is the outline of a potential program:

XC Soaring Program

Condor Familiarization (lesson 1 – 1 hour)

Condor Setup

PDA Operation

Instrument/glider Familiarization

View Control (mouse-look)

Basic Soaring Skills (lessons 2-4 – 1 hour each)

Flatland Tasks (lessons 5-7 – 2 hours each)

Ridge Soaring Skills (lesson 8 – 1 hour)

Optimum position on ridge

How to thermal on ridge
Upwind transitions
What not to do

Ridge Soaring Tasks (lessons 9-11 – 2 hours each)

Keystone Ridge Task 1
Mifflin Cumberland Run
West Swiss or New Zealand?

Mountain Soaring Skills (lesson 12 – 1 hour)

Differences between mountain and ridge flying
3D vs 2D situational awareness
Having safe outlets
Understanding ridge crossings in mountains

Mountain Soaring Tasks (lessons 13-15 – 2 hours each)

New Zealand Task
Provence Task
Logan Task

***Racing Techniques - the difference between winning
and also-ran***

Coring thermals more efficiently
Leaving thermals earlier
Flying straighter lines
Finding energy lines

Racing Tasks (lessons 16-18 – 3 hours each)

Mifflin ridge day
Mifflin thermal day
Mifflin weak blue day?