



First Solo Flight: Anthony Has Landed

Saturday morning, January 14th, Anthony Hayes was scheduled to make his first solo flight in a Cessna 150 airplane from the Hayward Executive Airport. I arrived at my hanger located on the airport at 8:00am where the airplane that he would be flying that morning was located. When I arrived, his flight instructor, John Favors, was giving him final instructions. The flight was designed to accomplish about twenty minutes of flying time in the airport traffic pattern. After an initial “walk-around preflight” of the airplane Anthony would be flying that day, he began a check list which included items such as fuel on board, engine oil, tires, flight controls and inspection of the general condition of the airplane’s skin on its wings and fuselage. After completing his check list, he was ready to get inside the airplane’s cockpit to begin his “Before Engine Start Checklist.”

The items on his check list were: all electrical equipment off, mixture rich, engine primed, carburetor heat cold, throttle set and carburetor heat cold. When all items on the checklist had been completed, Anthony was ready to start the engine and signaled his intent by announcing loudly from the pilot’s open window “clear propeller.” To start the engine he turned the ignition switch key to the ignition switch start position and the engine starter began a “high pitch whine”... the engine immediately roared to life. He turned on the radio for communicating with the control tower and received the Automatic Terminal Information System announcement, which provides pilots’ flight information; such as, wind direction, speed, altimeter setting, airport ceiling (cloud cover if any) runway in use and other information critical to their flight.

Beginning his taxi toward the airport movement area, Anthony called the Hayward Airport control tower on the 121.400 Very High Frequency channel to taxi to runway number 28 right “run-up” area to perform his engine run-up and engine power check. After the run-up was completed, he switched his radio to the control tower frequency and taxied up to the runway hold line. Before turning onto the runway for take-off, he called the control tower and asked for permission to take off: “Hayward tower, N104 FR ready for takeoff on the right for ‘touch and go’.” To which the tower replied: “Cleared for take-off.”

After his right-hand turn onto the runway and a momentary stop, I heard the familiar sound of the Continental O-200 engine wind up to full power and the Cessna 150 started its roll down the runway (as gracefully as you would expect a bird to perform), it flawlessly ascended into the air. In a few seconds, Anthony was beginning to make a left crosswind turn westward toward the Bay while climbing through 450 feet. While still climbing to a level off altitude of 650 feet, he made a 90-degree left turn and proceeded downwind until given permission for the airplane to “option” by the control tower to land on 28 left, which means that he was cleared to land or touch and go.

Anthony began to configure the airplane for landing by starting with his “before landing check list”: carburetor heat full on, throttle reduced to 1700 rpm, one notch of flaps (below 100 mph), reduce speed to 75 miles per hour and turn on to base leg and adjust speed, altitude and power. Observing the runway, he makes a left-hand turn onto final approach and watches his rate of descent power and speed until he has crossed the threshold of the runway. As the airplane crosses the runway threshold, his speed deteriorates and he slightly raises the nose. After several seconds, the main landing gear tires gently embrace the concrete runway surface; whereupon the engine was reset to full power and the



airplane gracefully climbs back into the air. I sent up a cheer from my vantage point near the runway; I said loudly to his flight Instructor sitting beside me, "Anthony has landed." Two more landings and Anthony taxied off the runway over to the green ramp where we were waiting to greet and congratulate him on his first solo flight. We all crowded together and took pictures with Anthony, shook his hand and congratulated him for a job well done.

