

FILLING THE GAP FROM SOLO TO BECOMING A QUALIFIED PILOT

Many clubs are working hard to attract new members and obviously want to keep them. It is often asked how fun and interest can be maintained for a Junior pilot who flies solo very young and then has to wait to age 16 to qualify for the Cross-Country Endorsement.

It is worth noting that going solo is a great achievement and the beginning of a journey of continuous progress whilst having fun. A mix of solo flying and advanced training or coaching in a two-seater will support the development of flying and soaring skills.

Detailed below are ideas that clubs currently use to help develop young (as well as not so young!) pilots. It is not intended that all the ideas shown below are covered as the young pilots will have other time and focus commitments at home and school! But we hope this will provide some helpful information in support of Junior pilots.

Activity	Notes
BGA Bronze endorsement. One area of important focus is of course preparation for the Bronze. There is no age limit to qualify.	https://members.gliding.co.uk/flying-information-and-resources/pilot-licensing/bronze-and-cross-country-endorsements/
Soaring skills	
BGA Cross-Country endorsement. Field landing and navigation training is great fun and can be done leading up to age 16, at which point the pilot can qualify.	https://members.gliding.co.uk/library/bga-requirements-guidance/gliding-certificate-endorsements/
Aerobatics endorsement	
Cloud flying endorsement	https://members.gliding.co.uk/library/junior-gliding-centre-documents/code-of-conduct-for-parents-or-carers/
Cross-country training	
Flying different gliders	Engage with Aim High or Senior Instructors/coaches within the club.
Flying at different clubs - this will provide JP with new challenges.	Relevant to experience and CFI/Instructor approval.
UKJG Winter and Summer series participation.	Under supervision and with home/club approval.
	Throughout the year, UK Junior Gliding runs events aimed at young pilots.
	The Winter Series welcomes junior pilots of all abilities from pre-solo to instructors. Join them for a weekend away, seeing a different site,

	<p>meeting pilots from across the country all while gaining new flying experiences.</p> <p>Pilots will meet others of a similar age and participate in well organised flying competitions. Contact the Junior development team for more information.</p>
Inter club competitions and social events.	<p>Some clubs organise Junior competitions with other clubs.</p> <p>Could include spot landing/other non-soaring activities as well as duration flights etc.</p> <p>Overnight camping could be included see BGA guidance.</p> <p>https://members.gliding.co.uk/library/child-protection/child-protection-club-guidance-overnight-camping/</p>
Two-seater training / coaching	Learn/observe techniques
Tasks in local area	Whilst always remaining in gliding range of the airfield, you can practice techniques
Silver Height and Duration	Having completed some of the other skills e.g., thermal soaring, and having completed the Bronze endorsement, the pilot may be ready to attempt longer duration flights and heights.
Lectures/coaching sessions	<p>Use a bad weather day to provide lectures/seminars for various gliding topics, such as understanding weather, NOTAMs, navigation planning and other support for Bronze theoretical knowledge.</p> <p>Discover 'Managing Flying Risk', which is vital reading for all glider pilots.</p> <p>Revisit the safe winch launching guidance.</p>
Simulator training	If your club does not own one, the BGA simulator can be booked via the BGA office.
Technical training	There are online seminars and training provided by the CTO through the BGA.
Learning how to carry out a glider DI	The individual must hold a Bronze to be signed off and other club rules may apply. Learning and experience are key points here.
Learn how to rig a glider	The individual must hold a Cross Country Endorsement to be signed off and other club rules may apply. Again, learning and experience are the key points here.
<p>Duty pilot</p> <p><i>Note - this supports good integration with other club members</i></p>	Many clubs have what they call Duty Pilots who help to co-ordinate ground operations on the airfield, manage flying lists and team up student pilots and instructors. They work with the duty

	<p>instructor team. The task is usually shared by all club pilots who are not otherwise contributing to instructing or towing and a roster is often used to ensure the task does not come around too often.</p> <p>Learning from other duty pilots and reading the clubs requirements and job description can be very helpful preparation for an eventual significant contribution to the club as a duty pilot.</p>
Ground handling and driving club vehicles.	Most clubs have a ground handling training record card, and although the control or driving of club vehicles may have age restraints and insurance limitations, in many cases they can still be used for training purposes under supervision.
Mentoring and/or liaison with JGC lead.	<p>It has long been recognised that the mentoring of individuals, if they wish to participate, can help support ongoing progression and enjoyment of the sport and information on bursaries and financial assistance could also be discussed.</p> <p>There are BGA guidelines to assist in the setting up of an effective programme.</p>
Links with schoolwork and Duke of Edinburgh award.	Many young pilots use gliding to support on-going course work or the completion of the skills section for D of E. This obviously has its advantages as the pilot can complete essential school activities whilst doing something they enjoy.
Integrate young pilots with other club activities	This could include being a co-opted member of the committee, assisting the club in the promotion of increasing membership, particularly amongst their peers, and leading on a project such as fund raising for club equipment or defibrillator.

The above list isn't exhaustive! We hope it contributes to helping to fill the gap between solo and qualification as a pilot by qualifying for the BGA Cross-Country Endorsement.

These learning opportunities will be helpful to any pilot, whatever their ambition.

Stay safe!

BGA

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