

# The sideways rider.

Smith Field Airport KSMD is located at the north side of Fort Wayne, Indiana and is a general aviation airport eleven nautical miles from DeKalb County Airport in Auburn, Indiana. EAA Chapter 2 holds Young Eagle Rallies in the summer on the second Saturday of the summer months.

Chapter 2 and EAA Vintage Chapter 37 from Auburn share common membership and cooperate holding rallies at each airport. At any given rally the chapters have flown as many as one-hundred or more Young Eagles at Smith Field. To do so requires coordination, cooperation, and dedicated volunteers for registration, escorts, marshals, safety officers, and of course pilots.

I was participating as a pilot flying our 1946 Aeronca Champ one rally that was even busier than usual. There were seven or eight planes flying at the rally that morning and as Maverick was told... the pattern was full!

Children can participate from the ages of eight to 17 and since the Champ could carry only one rider I usually... but not always... took older children that were there alone or didn't care if they flew with siblings or not in the four-seaters.

On this morning, I was assigned a nice, polite young man who was seventeen years old.

We walked to the plane, and I explained the flight and what to expect and we walked around the plane moving the control surfaces to get acquainted with the airplane. He asked good questions, and we got acquainted as best as could be expected in such a short time.

Once in the plane and after the required passenger briefing, we were propped and marshaled out to taxi and hold with other planes waiting to take off.

I am very proud to have participated with these polished volunteers and coordinators. Safety was not just a buzz word; it was a culture, and I was

always impressed at how well the rallies were run and how professional the pilot briefings were.

The flight with the young man was smooth and we had a nice conversation over the intercom, and I remember he even flew a little bit.

As I approached the downwind, I saw Dave in his Piper Cherokee 140 closing in on the downwind from a forty-five as well behind me. I knew Dave would have to slow way down to keep distance from the Champ which would back up other planes so I radioed him I would extend my downwind and let him land first and he agreed.

As I turned final, I realized I was way downwind and too high, so I pushed the nose down to speed up and of course speed increases lift and at final I was still way high.

I announced to my passenger that I was going to do a slip and it was safe and okay to do but I wanted him to be aware.

When we taxied up to the ramp, he thanked me for the flight and when his father approached with the escort he yelled “hey Dad! This airplane can fly sideways!”

We had a good laugh and he said he wished we could go back up and do that again!

Had I had a younger, more tentative rider we would have just ridden a long, slow final. That’s part of the experience of flying kids in the Young Eagles program.

Brad Moore

