

ROOKIE RTF TRAINER



Scan the QR CODE with a Smartphone to watch the video!



We placed this 1180 mm span trainer from Top Gun Park Flite in the hands of BMFA Examiner and club Instructor, Brian Cooper who takes a close look at the requirements for a beginner and tries it out on a buddy-box

There are many successful ways into the fabulous hobby of radio controlled aeroplanes. However, if you ask experienced modellers what is the best model for the job, there will be a variety of differing answers.

The general consensus of the very basic requirements is that a trainer should have a high wing layout and it should be light and not fly too quickly.

After that, things descend into size of model, undercarriage layout, radio functions (channels), power, etc. It can be a minefield for a newcomer.

A NOVICE'S MODEL

The people at Top Gun have entered the arena with this rather cute offering in their Park Flite range. It comes complete with a 4-channel 2.4 GHz radio, plus a 1250 mAh 10C LiPo battery and charger for the receiver. The charger is supplied with a mains adaptor and it can also be worked via a 12 volt input but no cable/harness is supplied for the 12 volt option. The only thing noticeably absent is an extension lead for the aileron servo to make it easier to plug into the receiver.

The model is made from hard, lightweight EPO foam, which the manufacturers claim is crash resistant, and it has an electric motor for power. All the servos, receiver, motor and speed controller are already installed, which merely leaves a novice the relatively simple task of gluing a few bits together to complete the construction.

The impressive instruction manual leaves nothing to chance. It assumes (rightly) that the purchaser has never built a model before and that everything is going to be a new experience. The photographs and drawings are all 'close-up' and clear, and the wording is basic and straightforward.

Not only does the manual explain how to assemble the model, but it goes on to explain about the safety, care and transportation

of LiPo batteries. Also there is some sound safety advice about operating the throttle unless the model is restrained. All basic stuff, but maybe not immediately obvious to a beginner! There is even a comprehensive section that

**'rather cute...
crash resistant'**

Definitions) to help the tyro become acquainted with the language of aeroplanes.

QUICK ASSEMBLY

There really isn't much to do to assemble this model. The wings need to be glued together, and they are moulded so that they 'jig' together accurately. The ailerons are already hinged (from hard foam) and attached so we don't need to worry about them. There are some additional hinges for the ailerons which are, curiously, not mentioned in the instructions. They are very small and fiddly, and a novice might easily glue the hinge together rather than actually glue it to the wings and ailerons. We left them off as the foam hinges looked to be sufficiently strong to cope.

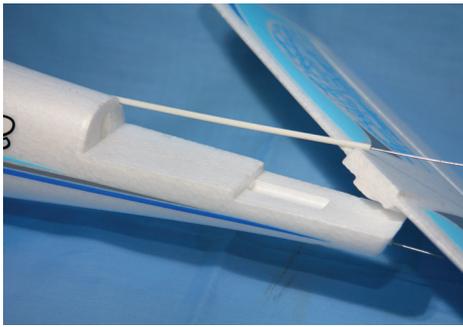


Two happy first-time pilots after a flight with the Rookie

deals with the basics of how and why an aeroplane flies, and it offers some useful tips on actually flying the model. Added to all of that, there is an educational Glossary of Terms (and



Box contents; nothing else required apart from a little time to assemble it!



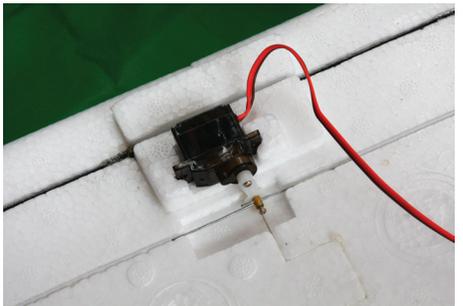
The stabiliser is glued into the recess at the rear of the fuselage



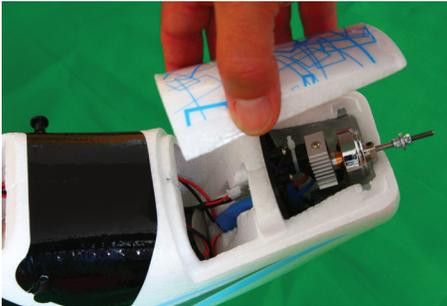
Fin unit glues onto the tail seat and locks it all in place



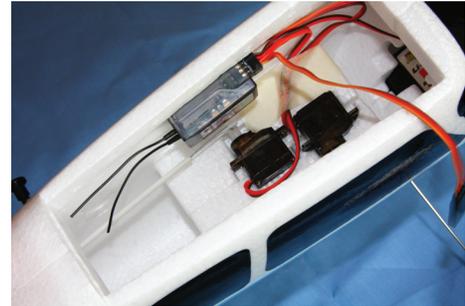
Elevator and rudder pushrod lengths are adjustable for trimming



The single central aileron servo controls outboard dual cranks to the aileron control surfaces



Front battery access hatch removed to show the 180 Watt brushless 'bell' motor, and space provided



The elevator and rudder servos are pre-installed, with just a receiver to be added

'elevators and rudder are already attached'

The only detail we need to concentrate on is threading the aileron pushrods into the servo before finally bringing the two wing halves together.

The wing is braced with a carbon tube spar, which is glued into slots in the underside of the wing.

When the wing is done, it can be fitted to the fuselage, and it is then that we discover that the wings have mouldings protruding on the underside, which ensures the wing sits in exactly the right place; it is impossible to get it wrong!

There is a plastic wing-protector that goes on top of the wing and helps to prevent the retaining rubber bands from cutting into the foam; very neat and very clever!

The tailplane has similar 'engineering' to ensure it sits square to the wing but it is advisable to 'eyeball' the thing from the front to ensure that it lays level in relation to the wings.

The fin sits on top of the tailplane and this is the only component that could possibly be glued on a bit 'wonky'; it needs to be upright and pointing absolutely straight down the centreline of the fuselage. The shape of the foam makes it obvious where it is supposed to be, but there is no 'engineering' to ensure its exact location and it is possible for the fin to shift about before the glue takes effect.

Again, the elevators and rudder are already attached courtesy of channels cut into the hard foam. We need to attach the control horns and connect the control rods. The instructions explain the control throws, etc.

The (tail dragger) undercarriage is as simple as it gets. It is a single piece of piano wire that has been bent to the right shape. It is held in place by simply pushing it into a plastic 'holder' on the underside of the fuselage. It is quite hard to push it in, and it feels like it isn't going to come out without a fight.

The wheels are quite small and the undercarriage wire is a bit springy, so operating from grass could be a challenge!

The propeller and spinner simply fit onto the threaded shaft of the

motor; very simple and easy.

The last job, and probably the most daunting task for a beginner, is to fit the enormous decals that decorate the

model. The colour scheme is unusual and has the appearance of having been scribbled on by a young child. Whilst this might sound a bit 'off-putting' the finished result actually works quite well.

The decals are giant stickers, and some care is required to apply them without getting wrinkles in them.

ROOKIE POWER

The supplied LiPo battery lives under the 'bonnet' in front of the windscreen, and it (the bonnet) is held in place by a couple of small magnets.

The instructions show where the balance point (Centre of Gravity) is located and it came out spot on. It was then discovered that there was a small amount of ballast weight already glued into the nose. The manufacturers have left nothing to chance here!

The supplied radio transmitter is very basic, but it does the job. It has a switch and a knob that gives the transmitter the appearance of a 6-channel radio but it is only a 4-channel one. The extra switch is a useful safety 'arming' switch for the electric motor. The knob allows the ailerons and elevator throw to be adjusted in flight. If it feels too responsive, it can be turned down, and vice-versa.

The only thing missing is the option for a buddy-box. A buddy-box (dual control) system is generally regarded as the norm for training beginners to the hobby these days, but it can still be done without if needs be.

LET'S GO FLYING!

This is a fairly small model and it is extremely light so we waited for a day when the wind had died down to about 5 mph before sending the Rookie into the sky.

The grass at the club field is short but it was still too much for

ROOKIE RTF TRAINER



An 11.1 Volt 1250 mA LiPo is supplied with a basic 2-3 LiPo cell balance charger



The Rookie is an ideal package for a beginner as it comes complete with a 2.4 GHz transmitter



A gentle push from a hand launch and the Rookie gets away nicely

'control responses were in keeping with a training aeroplane'

the undercarriage on the Rookie, so we had to hand-launch the model; no problem really. The motor was sent up to full power and the model was given a gentle throw into the wind. It began to climb away immediately and it was clearly happy being off the ground. The speed was slow and the control responses were in keeping with a training aeroplane of this size and type. It was very easy to control and the little Rookie gave plenty of thinking time during turns, etc.

It was deliberately flown 'badly' to see what would happen and yes, it started to fall from the sky but, the speed at which it did it left plenty of time to correct it.

The stall is virtually non-existent. The power was reduced to zero and the elevator gradually increased to full up, but the model is so light, it just stops moving forward and then sits there wondering what to do next. Eventually, it begins to gently descend to earth, a bit like a harrier manoeuvre from a 3-D model, but a lot more gentle, and slow, and forgiving.

This aeroplane is as unthreatening as it gets. It won't do aileron rolls, mainly because the roll rate is not sufficiently fast enough to accomplish the manoeuvre, but also because the ailerons seem to become totally ineffective when the model becomes inverted. Having said that, it WILL roll if the rudder is used as well, and a high entry speed is used.

It is decidedly unhappy about flying inverted. As mentioned earlier, the ailerons die when the model is upside down but there is also insufficient elevator power to hold the nose up. It will not spin, mainly due to the fact that the model is too gentle at the stall. However, it can do loops.

What this model does, and does quite well, is simply fly around gently and in an unhurried state, and teaches the tyro pilot the basics of keeping an aeroplane in the air.

Landing it is, as one would expect, a fairly straightforward affair. The power is reduced, and the model simply begins to gently glide down to the ground. We merely have to steer it to a chosen touchdown point.

The undercarriage tends to dig in when the model lands and it brings the Rookie to a rather sudden stop, but the landing speed is so low that it doesn't cause any grief, it just looks a bit untidy.

SUMMING UP

This is a model for calm days only. It is doubtful that it can handle winds above 10 mph. But it is a delightful and unassuming little aeroplane on calm days. On warm days, it can catch a thermal and climb to the heavens. Without thermals, the model was landed after 8 minutes and the 1250 mAh LiPo battery still had plenty of life left in it.

I let some kids fly it: these kids literally had only experienced a couple of goes on my larger trainers, and they were by no means 'ace' pilots. They all managed to get on OK with the Rookie, even without a buddy-box, although the Tx had to be grabbed back a few times. They all said it was good fun!

The model (package) has now been given away to the first kid in my area who showed a genuine interest in wanting to learn to fly

SPECIFICATION

INFORMATION

NAME:	Rookie RTF Trainer
MANUFACTURER:	Top Gun Park Flite Aircraft
DISTRIBUTOR:	CML Distribution Ltd
PRICE UK:	£133.19 (Mode 1 or Mode 2)
MODEL TYPE:	Electric Trainer
MOTOR:	180 Watt Brushless 'bell' outrunner
FLIGHT BATTERY:	3S 1250 mAh 3-cell LiPo (with charger)
CONSTRUCTION:	Moulded in durable EPO foam

R/C FUNCTIONS

Radio: 2.4 GHz, 4-channel (supplied)
Three 9 g servos fitted

1: Ailerons	3: Throttle (ESC)
2: Elevator	4: Rudder

SPECS

WINGSPAN:	1180 mm (46½")
WING AREA:	310 sq in (2.15 sq ft)
WING LOADING:	10 oz/ sq ft
LENGTH:	890 mm (35")
WEIGHT:	21 oz (580 g) with LiPo battery

DISLIKES

- Flimsy wire undercarriage

LIKES

- Well manufactured
- Scale appearance
- Easy assembly
- Very stable in flight
- Perfect package for a novice pilot

CONTACTS

CML DISTRIBUTION LTD
WWW.CMLDISTRIBUTION.CO.UK
01527 575349
WATCH THE VIDEO
WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=6HLICHIWU90&FEAT
URE=PLAYER_EMBEDDED#T=9S