

## Pilot and EAA Officer Accomplishes First Solo



Date of solo 1/17/2016

Time of solo 14:55-15:15

Plane Type Cessna 152

Tail Number N4850H

Airport KLVJ (Pearland Regional Pearland, Texas)

CFI Jon Diesler

Pilot Douglas Kutchinski

Age 63

Everyone remembers their first solo, and I'm no exception. It was a clear day, visibility was a severe clear, winds 300 and 10 knots. My flight instructor and I took to the air for the fourth attempt to get everything just right.

My first attempt was unsuccessful due to user error – I wasn't ready and made a lot of mistakes.

The next attempt found me in lots of traffic and the weather was at 1100 foot ceilings.

I tried four times to get it right and each time something wasn't just right. First it was me I wasn't ready and made a lot of mistakes. Then, it was the weather, 1100 foot ceilings and lots of traffic. Conditions not conducive for a student pilot to do a

solo. Next it was the cross winds. I didn't have a good technique for cross wind landings. Next time I went out I practiced crabbing and slipping. My instructor said I have to come out here and nail the first landing. Then you'll be ready to solo. So the morning before the flight I did what is called couch flying by my friend Dave. Go over in your mind the perfect landing. I did that all morning. When I got out to the field I was ready. I nailed the first landing and the other five practice landings we did. Then Jon said "well, how do you feel?" I said I'm ready. I dropped him off at the FBO and taxied out to the runway. I did everything correct. Looking for traffic, turns at the proper height, radio calls proper, landing checklist. Base and final legs set up properly, and squeaked the first two landings. The third landing I turned too tight on base and final and got bobbed by the wind coming off the ditch and trees at the end of runway 14. It didn't feel right so I did a go around. I went over in my mind what I needed to do to nail the third landing. Move out further from the runway on the downwind leg. I extended the downwind leg just a bit to give me more time for the set up on final. On final I hit the bobble at the ditch and trees but since I had the plane stable I just sliced right through it and landed perfectly. When Jon arrived back at the plane he said "what do you want to do next?" I briefly thought about doing more touch and go's but discretion being the better part of valor, I simply said "Jon, Mission accomplished, let's park the plane."