

Handy Hints

Accelerated Tire Test

Wayne Hadath



I fly my F-1 Rocket a lot and its 500-5 tires touch down at about 70 kt. The plane initially had a lot of positive camber, and because the spring gear spreads out when loaded there is also a lot of lateral motion.

The kit came with Airtrack tires that said 6 ply but in this case it meant a 6 ply rating. Initially I had 3 degrees toe-in and 3 degrees positive camber, and these tires lasted 31 hours, mostly touch and goes. The outer edges wore first with all of this camber so I tried demounting and reversing the tires on their rims, but it seemed to be a lot of work for minimal savings.

I changed the camber and toe to zero, these settings in the three point and with full fuel, and replaced the Airtrack 6 ply rating tires with a set of Condor 10 ply rating tires. These lasted 180 hours before becoming too worn to be useful.

The next set were Airtrack 10 ply rating and these lasted 140 hours. After these I installed another set of Airtrack 6 ply rating and these lasted 68 hours.

Next I tried a set of Condor 6 ply rating and they lasted 60 hours. I have recently installed a set of the 10 ply rating Condors and expect 120-150 hours, or a season of flying.

In Sept 2009 I switched the inner tubes to Michelin Airstop butyl rubber type. The kit came with Specialty Tires inner tubes that required at least a monthly refill. The Michelins get topped up at the first of the year, and at the end of the season they might need just a bit of air added. It would be possible to run a whole season - I run 42 psi.

My conclusion is that the ply rating seems to make a difference to life of a tire. On average the 10 ply rating costs only \$15 per tire more than the 6 ply rating, and gets double the life. A Michelin tube costs more than a tire but it can outlast many sets of tires, and I consider them well worth the money. With wheel pants these tubes mean a lot less maintenance. **R**



*Condor 10 ply rating with Michelin Airstop inner tube is the top choice so far.
Three degrees camber and toe means a lot of asymmetrical wear*