

A unique "partner training" buddy box package that delivers power with grace

by Jonathan Pope

READYTOFLYFUN

T-Hawk

3-channel
RTF trainer

If we were to recall our very first experience in model aviation, going back to that initial feeling of excitement when we saw a model soar through the sky, that moment was probably nothing short of inspiring. We then pursued this interest and developed a growing appreciation for the skills that reward us with a lifelong pastime. At the very heart of this journey was a mentor. At one time, we relied on a family member, friend, or outgoing club member to invite us into this world and show us the many things there are to know when getting started. Then, at some point, we are the ones who become the ambassadors of this hobby and are in the position to invite a new pair of eyes to first see and discover model aviation. Today's mentors and initiates have the good fortune to be able to fly a three-channel ready-to-fly partner training package that will reward newcomers with early success flying a buddy box system. For the first time, a park-flyer-sized, three-channel electric RTF trainer is now available with a "Partner Radio Training System" that includes two high-quality, four-channel radios.

THE T-HAWK KIT

The T-Hawk is the original flagship three-channel trainer from ReadyToFlyFun that continues to be updated and improved. This brilliant orange bird features a high-quality, exceptionally tough plastic fuselage pod with a composite tail boom; tough, plastic-

covered, molded foam flying surfaces with pre-formed wire pushrods and rugged plastic control horns. Industry standard RC components are pre-installed as is a powerful speed 480 motor with pusher prop. The conventional-style tail bolts quickly and securely to the boom with finger grip nuts. And in case of a mishap, two spare propellers and an extra rudder and elevator are included so the day needn't be over.

There are two styles for the main wing also included in this package: a glider-style, 58-inch trainer wing, or a shorter-span 40-inch sport wing. Both come reinforced with a wood stiffener laminated into the top of the wing and are strengthened with nylon tape on the bottom with additional nylon reinforcing tape in the center section of the leading and trailing edges. Plastic covers with molded arrows help align the center of the wing perfectly when being mounted to the fuselage and prevent the rubber bands from damaging the wing. Heavy-duty landing gear with 2.5-inch foam wheels make take-offs and rollouts easier, and a non-steerable tail wheel compliments the overall ground handling.

Two 8.4V 1000mAh NiMH flight batteries and a peak detection charger combo pack including both a DC auto cigarette adapter and an AC home adapter make this a complete hobby-grade RTF kit.

PHOTOS BY WALTER SIDAS



SPECS

- PLANE:** T-Hawk
- MANUFACTURER:** ReadyToFlyFun
- DISTRIBUTOR:** ReadyToFlyFun
- TYPE:** Ready-to-fly 3-channel trainer
- FOR:** Beginners and sport modelers
- WINGSPAN:** 58 in. training wing, 40 in. sport wing
- WING AREA:** 256 sq. in. training wing, 217 sq. in. sport wing
- WEIGHT:** 23.9 oz. training setup, 20.4 oz. sport setup
- LENGTH:** 32 in.
- WING LOADING:** 13.46 oz./sq. ft. training setup, 13.54 oz./sq. ft. sport setup
- RADIO:** Partner Radio System on the 72MHz FM band includes 2 Tensho Model Sky Commander 4-channel advanced PPM FM transmitters with training cord. Partner Radio System on the 27MHz band includes the FlyRite RC 4-channel Trainer console and FlyRite RC 4-channel Student console with integrated training cord. T-Hawk includes receiver, speed control and two micro servos (industry compatible components)
- POWER SYSTEM:** 480 brushed motor, 5 5/8 in. diam. prop, speed control, KAN 7-cell 1000mAh NiMH battery
- FULL THROTTLE POWER:** 11 amps, 85.8 watts, Training Setup: 3.59 W/oz., 57.4 W/lb.; Sport Setup: 4.21 W/oz., 67.3 W/lb.

TOP RPM: 13,000

DURATION: 8-15 min., depending on flying style; 5 1/2 minutes, full throttle

MINIMAL FLYING AREA: Ball field

PRICE: \$279.95, 72MHz; \$229.95, 27MHz

COMPONENTS NEEDED TO COMPLETE: 8 AA batteries for the transmitter

SUMMARY

It has just been announced that ReadyToFlyFun was selected by the North Carolina State University 2006 Aerospace Study Summer program for a second year in a row to teach aviation-related subjects and flight using the T-Hawk. Why? This three-channel trainer is so stable and predictable that it can gently glide in for a hands-off landing with the included 58-inch training wing. With its speed 480 motor and 40-inch sport wing (also included), the T-Hawk will perform multiple loops and hard banking turns, offering versatile performance and thrills to the pilot with developing skills. "Durable by design" is an asset for any trainer, though if any part of this tough plane does break, all parts are completely serviceable and individually replaceable. With the available Partner Radio Training System, the T-Hawk is unique in the marketplace – this affordable three-channel electric RTF park flyer trainer provides beginners with an unequalled opportunity to meet with success.



BUDDY BOX SYSTEM

An effective way to learn to fly is with the help of an experienced pilot and using a buddy box system. The Partner Radio Training System is a big improvement over passing a single transmitter back and forth. It allows the student and instructor each to have a transmitter in hand at all times. This avoids any distractions from taking your eyes off the plane and the stress of fumbling a pass. With the Partner Radio Training System, the instructor can in a moment regain control of a model and give full flight control back to the student through the simple a flip of a switch. The student will learn faster with unbroken concentration and gain quicker confidence.

This training package is offered in both the 27MHz and 72MHz versions. Both offer the advantages of learning with a four-channel transmitter. The left stick will teach proportional throttle and is ready for a seamless transition to more advanced training using a fourth channel for rudder on your next plane, while the right stick can teach the elevator and ailerons on your next ship.

You have your choice of two radio systems that can be repurposed for use with more advanced aircraft. The 27MHz FlyRite RC Trainer Console connects to a passive Student Console with an integrated trainer cable. It features analog trims on all channels and a battery voltage meter. The 72MHz Tensho Sky Commander 4 is an advanced PPM system that features analog trims on all channels, a battery voltage meter and low battery audio alarm, servo reversing, adjustable servo travel volume, and mixing for future V-Tail or Elevation models. I was impressed to find features such as a piezo speaker alarm that will beep if the transmitter is off (helpful for locating a downed plane in the woods), an automatic motor shut-off if the radio signal is lost (to prevent a runaway plane), and a "safe start" speed control (so you don't accidentally start the motor).

AIRBORNE

The T-Hawk was reviewed back in the March 2005 issue of *Fly RC* when this 40-inch wingspan park flyer was seen as "a superior RTF ship" in its category. Certainly nothing has changed about the defining traits: durable construction that is remarkably resilient to impacts, quality electronics for

solid control, docile low speed performance and ample power providing a broad speed range for mild three-channel aerobatics.

The newly included 58-inch, glider-style training wing adds nine inches of stability to each side of the fuselage with only a 1.2-ounce weight penalty. A wing tension line is used to pull the wing tips up for just under four inches of dihedral.

Recently, I had the opportunity to bring a number of middle school students to our local club field to try out the T-Hawk and the Partner Radio Training System. The first part of our afternoon was becoming familiar with



the features of this three-channel orange beauty. We connected up our partner radios and checked to make sure all systems were a go. Our grass field was looking a little wild, so we decided to hand-launch. With the power of the Speed 480 motor and seven-cell NiMH battery, hand-launching at full throttle was little more than a push. I was sure to keep the wings level and go for only a modest climb until a good airspeed was established. The T-Hawk was easy to trim and will fly straight and level hands-off.

Here was the chance for these awestruck kids to have their first lesson. The high-mounted training wing with its ample dihedral allows the plane to fly by itself. If the kids get the plane into any weird attitude, the T-Hawk will pull itself back to level flight with only a touch of power and a bit of lost altitude – that is if they don't try to over-control the plane by throwing the sticks around wildly. To prove a point, about 500 feet out from the runway and up only 50 feet or so, I chopped the throttle and pointed the nose into the slightest head-wind breeze and put the transmitter down. The T-Hawk (needing only a few heading corrections) landed by itself in the runway!

We took turns passing the partner transmitter around, and everyone had a chance to

fly. Don Ramsey is the Technology Education teacher at Newtown Middle School and co-advises these students in the school's RC Club. Here are his observations on the events from this successful day: "As a technical educator for over 25 years, I had not given much thought to the possibilities of remote control airplanes for the classroom until I saw Jon mesmerize students in the principles of flight with these energetic yet graceful model airplanes. Trainer students one by one paired up with Jon using partner radios. After each student would enter the inevitable bank and dive, Jon would simply utter 'my plane' as

the plane seemed to self-correct and regain lost altitude, and then turn control back over saying, 'enjoy.' I stood in awe of the T-Hawk's user-friendly performance but even more in deference to the sparkle of satisfaction upon the faces of first-time model airplane fliers. As far as presenting math and science principles in the most inspirational way, RC flight is definitely 'cleared for takeoff' in any progressive school program!"

CONCLUSION

Our hats go off to a product that has filled such a deserving niche. ReadyToFlyFun has made available an unprecedented partner radio training system in an introductory electric RTF trainer, with a choice of radio systems. The T-Hawk is an ultra-durable, highly-capable, three-channel park flyer outfitted with quality gear that can follow you to your next plane. ReadyToFlyFun's web-based factory-direct sales offer the flexibility of custom build-to-order packages for you to buy only what you need, and deliver spare parts quickly to minimize the down time with your first trainer. With great flying characteristics using either wing, the T-Hawk will offer the novice a stable and predictable hands-off floater and the enthusiast enough power and responsiveness to enjoy three-channel high jinks even in a mild wind. Let us greet tomorrow's mentors and students carrying their vivid orange planes and wearing that unmistakable smile! ☺

Link
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For more information, please see our source guide on pg. 177.