

**Mark Favolise Gouge**  
PPL Check Ride  
231110

Three days prior to the check ride, I communicated with Mark via text (his preferred mode) and he gave me a route to plan from KBED to KRCK. The morning of the check ride, Mark drove down from Sanford, ME (90 mins) and arrived at KBED 30 mins early (07:00), which was greatly appreciated (it was IFR conditions, and I was concerned it may be difficult for him to fly). We used the third floor conference room (308) which Tony arranged ahead of time. It was unlocked, but if you need access, call Neil at the Ops number on the back of the badge. He's awesome.

Mark is a really great guy, and wanted me to succeed. He did his best to create a low stress and relaxed atmosphere during the oral test. We chatted a bit before getting started, and I learned he had worked for the FAA for 15 years, was a corporate jet pilot, and now a full time DPE. He set the stage that he was straight forward, not looking to trip me up or ask tricky questions. He also reminded me he's not a mind reader, and even if something seems really obvious, it's best to call it out. He reviewed my log book and the 8710. A small error was found, and fortunately my CFI was onsite and able to resign the corrected form (this was critical, and I'm grateful my CFI had the foresight to be on-call, as otherwise we would not have been able to proceed.). Mark provided the three possible outcomes, and walked me through the plan for the day.

Mark then let me know the "test has begun" and we got started. The oral exam was structured as a conversation and was true to form, pretty straight forward with no curve balls. We talked about current vs. proficient, what is required during a ramp check, required docs, etc, all of which were pretty much out of the ACS. He was interested in details around the Annual Inspection. Well thought out questions around engine performance, signs when something is not working, and how to fix it.

We then looked at my XC flight plan. I had done a pretty thorough job getting ready, and he didn't dive into the log in great detail. He was interested in my route planning and why I picked certain altitudes. We talked about the importance of NOTEMS and he shared some horror stories of pilots who didn't check the NOTEMS prior to flying and ended up in a bad spot. We also looked over the Sectional and decoded some of the symbols.

Next up was decoding a METAR and talking about weather. We discussed sources of weather and analyzed the weather charts. This was all straightforward and I felt well prepared. We then talked about alcohol limits.

All in all, the Oral was very fair and if anything, I felt over-prepared. I think Mark was looking for areas of weakness, so coming in with the ducks in a row helped. He didn't play the game of waiting for me to dive too deep into a topic and then testing me on that, though I did just try to

answer the question. If you work through the Blue Oral Prep book and FARAIM, you should be in good shape. This section took about (2) hours.

We then went to the plane for the practical test. Prior to this, Mark laid out a scenario and provided an overview of the sequence of events. I made an effort to vocalize my thoughts during the flight. Precheck went smoothly, and generally Mark was a quiet passenger with no overt attempts to distract me. We did a soft field take off and proceeded to fly the course using piloting and dead reckoning (no electronics). This went smoothly, so we then moved into slow flight with turns to headings, climbs and descents. We headed towards Plum Island and performed Instrument maneuvers along the way under the foggles, along with unusual attitudes (he didn't do any crazy dives or climbs, but just let it drift over time). He had me enter a Nav radio frequency while holding altitude and direction under the foggles to test the ability to do two things at once. Just go slow and take your time so you don't lose your heading or altitude.

Over the ocean, we performed emergency descent, steep turns and stalls. For the power on stall, he was not as concerned with altitude loss, but rather getting the nose down to the horizon and avoiding the secondary stall.

For the emergency landing, we used the beach as our target. The key here is to immediately trim up for best glide (73) and aim straight for the beach (90 degrees) along the shortest course. I initially approached the beach at a 45 degree angle. We then did a go-around and climb out. Be sure to watch the altimeter closely.

Finally, S-Turns over the beach (keep the wing tip over the midline) and then we did the diversion. I was able to use the GPS-NRST and picked KBVY. Based on ground speed, I had to estimate rough time and fuel burn which was straight forward. We then did a Soft Field, full stop, taxi back (be sure to have the taxi diagram out, esp. If it's an unfamiliar airport), followed by Short field TO, Landing and finally slip to landing. The slip to landing is an area that would be good to practice on a regular basis. There were (well fed) Coyotes near the runway, so we needed to keep an eye on these. When I was on the downwind, a jet was on final. I glanced at the iPad to locate the traffic, whereas Mark wanted me looking outside for traffic.

We then returned to KBED. Be sure to watch the Bravo shelf (it's 2k vs. the usual 4k over KBED, esp with a West wind). Full stop landing and we were done. This took about (2) hours.

#### Observations

- It's a long and stressful day (despite Mark's best efforts to make it relaxed). Bring food and water to snack on.
- Mark is awesome and wants you to succeed. If you don't know something, say so, and look it up. He's not looking to trip you up, just make sure you're a safe pilot.
- Over-prepare.
- Not everything needs to be (or will be) perfect, just safe. If he hasn't said that you failed a maneuver, keep going and put any mistakes behind you so they don't mess up the next objective.

- Mark is pretty quiet in the plane - initially this was a little off putting, but I think he's just seeing how you do.
- If you get flustered, he may press a bit more to see how you handle stress. If everything goes well, he'll likely move on to the next task.
- Look outside and don't get distracted with the iPad.
- Watch the airspace, esp. the Bravo, if you're flying in an unfamiliar area. There is a lot going on, and it's easy to get distracted with radio calls, maneuvers, etc.
- Practice slips to landing and realistic emergency landing on a real field lined up in the proper direction.
- The cost was \$700 (cash preferred).
- Looking forward to my next check ride with Mark for Instruments. I highly recommend him.