

To fly these, download and install the X-plane free demo:
http://www.x-plane.com/downloads/x-plane_10_demo/

Then:

Open the X-plane folder and inside it open the Aircraft folder
In the aircraft folder create a new folder called Downloaded planes and move my x-plane folders into that folder.

plug in a game controller/joystick and launch X-plane.

In X-plane Settings menu choose Rendering Options and click on "Run full screen at this resolution".

In the Aircraft menu choose "Open Aircraft" and navigate the directories to your "Downloaded planes" folder, open it, and select the plane you wish to fly.

After a few seconds you will be back at the airstrip looking out from inside the model.

From the View menu choose "View is from runway". This will put you outside the model with the plane lying on the ground (it may be bouncing, which I think is a problem with X-plane and really light models with CGs near the neutral point). You can zoom closer to the plane using the + key, further with the - key, and move left/right with the left/right arrow keys on the keyboard.

Move your control sticks and you should see responding control movements on the plane.

From the Settings menu choose Joystick & equipment. This is a fairly complex series of tabbed windows offering a matrix for mapping controller and keyboard movements to aircraft controls. Use the first tab to set your controller sticks and their proper up-down, left-right orientations. It's likely that you will need to trim the elevator/stab for the model in flight so be sure to map controls for elevator trim. Glider spoilers are called air brakes in x-plane. Set them as you like and then exit the window. Test your new controls by watching the plane as you move them. Double check that the stick movements are right.

There is a whole lot more that X-plane offers in terms of location, weather, date/time, view positions, etc. but for now just fly a bit to get a feel for it.

Expect this next part to be a bit tricky. We're going to use the winch to launch the model and it will get far away from your view position pretty quickly. If you like you can change the view to "View is chase" and you will fly up straight behind the plane, which at first might make it easier to get a feel for how the simulator works. In this view you can move your view position using the arrow keys on the keyboard.

When you are ready to launch go to the Aircraft menu and choose "Aircraft situations" and in this window choose "Glider winch". This will model a full scale glider winch at an airport but it works for models too, it just pulls from the nose rather than back under the CG area.

When you have selected the Glider winch situation, x-plane will return you to the view inside the model so just change the view back to your chosen view.

At the top of the screen you will see a blinking instruction to Release brakes for winch. The default key for brakes is 'B'. Doing so will start the winch pulling and

in a second or so, you will have airspeed to climb. This winch must be released intentionally by you so once it is pulling you will see a message to press the spacebar to release the winch. Once you do, you'll be flying.

It's likely that you will need to trim the elevator/stab for the model in flight now so do so with the controls you set in the matrix for control mapping above.

The demo will let you fly in the Seattle region for about 10 minutes before stopping your ability to control the plane. You can reboot x-plane and have another 10 minutes as many times as you like without going beyond the free demo, which other than flight time, is fully functional.

The flight simulation for full-scale aircraft is considered to be pretty good. For smaller models, the changes in airfoil don't seem to model as carefully so using this to test flight performance is not really possible (at least for as much as I have learned the program).

Have fun exploring.