

One Way of Tuning a Buka Style Fighter Kite

As with any fighter kite, getting it fly so you have control of its flight requires the kite be accurately tuned. With a buka, tuning is a little different from the tuning of a diamond shaped fighter kite because, the buka has an adjustable bendable leading edge spar that must be curved correctly for the buka to fly well.

Here's how I adjust a buka for flight.

First set the curve in the leading edge spar using the tension line on the backside of the leading edge spar. The exact amount of curve will vary by flyers' preference and wind conditions, so I suggest setting it at a point that provides predictable flight success. After flying the buka for awhile, you can adjust the amount of curve of the leading edge to your preference. The ends of the leading edge spar will be pulled toward the backside of the kite.

I use my rule of '3 fingers' as an easy guide....place your index, middle and ring finger in a vertical stack and fit your finger stack between the leading edge spar tension line and the point where the spine meets the leading edge spar. You should feel a very slight pressure on one of your fingers from the tension line; depending on how you have your fingers oriented, it will be the index finger or your ring finger. This amount of curve works in most wind conditions.

Next adjust the bridle so the main bridle line is centered on the upper yoke portion of the 3-point bridle. This may need to be readjusted once the kite is flying.....you'll only know if it needs re-adjustment if the kite tends to pull or fly to only the right or left and not fly straight. The re-adjustment is done just like with a diamond shaped fighter with a 3-point bridle.

After the lower bridle line is positioned at the center of the upper bridle yoke, move the tow connection loop towards the tail of the kite along the main bridle line. You want the tow connection loop to be in a position that when you hold or hang the kite by the tow connection loop the trailing edge of the kite will be barely touching a table top and the leading edge of the kite will be about 1.5"-2" above the table top. The kite will be at an angle when hanging by the tow connection loop.

The above is a basic pre-flight setup that will almost guarantee flight success.

Of course this setup will only work if the kite has the suitable stiffness for the wind speed you are flying it in.....if your buka only spins.....virtually or completely out of control.....try the following: Move the tow connection loop closer to the tail of the kite so that when the kite is hanging from the tow connection loop, the leading edge is only about 1/2" higher than the trailing edge relative to the ground or a table top. Then try flying the kite. If the kite still spins wildly, it could be the spars in the kite are too stiff for the wind speed you are attempting to fly in.

Often, when a buka is too stiff for the wind speed you have at the moment, it may mean the kite is too small for the wind speed. Smaller kites have shorter spars and shorter spars are stiffer than longer ones. Generally, the lighter the wind speed, the larger the kite needs to be in order for the wind to be able to deform the kite skin sufficiently to make it a controllable good performing kite.