

Pilot Statement (via E Mail):

After an area tow to 12,500 ft to the east acrobatic area, I proceeded inbound for a landing on 16L. After a normal and smooth wheel landing and decelerating, I experienced a large gust of wind from my right lifting my right wing. As it was too slow to go around and in an effort to further reduce my speed to lower the tail and regain directional control with the tail wheel, I applied pressure to both brakes. The left brake being more effective than the right, caused the airplane to turn a hard left and exit the runway to the left rotating counterclockwise and coming to a stop approximately 270 degrees from the initial touchdown. The momentum of the left turn and the right wheel digging into the soft dirt caused the right wing to come in contact with the ground before stopping. At no time did the propeller make contact with any surface and the engine continued to run until I shut it down after stopping. When I began my shift, I was told that there were some issues with the steering of the tailwheel. Please contact me with any questions.

QA Manager Statement:

A little before 13:30 on August 25, 2016, from my office window I noticed a fire truck on the airmanship ramp and a tow plane shutting down. I went to the area and was told by some of the maintenance personnel that "a tow plane ground looped." At that time I noticed the pilot outside of the aircraft and he appeared to be gathering items from within the aircraft. I immediately went over to the Site Manager and Soaring Maintenance Manager offices to inform them of the incident.

The three of us proceeded to the airmanship ramp and began to assess the damage. At that time I approached the pilot and asked if he was "ok," and if he sustained any injuries. His initial comment to me was something to the effect "the only thing bruised is my ego." The pilot then told me that during the landing roll out a gust of wind lifted one wing and caused the other wing to strike the ground resulting in a ground loop. At no time was there any mention of the aircraft not functioning properly in any capacity.

I told the pilot I would need a statement and advised him to complete a NASA incident report.

Joe Morales
QA Manager
ALS Logistics Services