

Memorandum of Conversation

Date: March 3, 2020

Time: 1500 central standard time

Conversation Including: Michael Matthews
FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector
Grand Rapids FSDO



Conversation Regarding: CEN20CA089, N6520W

Duration of Call: 15 Minutes

Summary & Factual Information from Conversation:

NTSB Investigator Fox called FAA Inspector Michael Matthews to discuss his onsite examination of a Piper PA-28-140 (N6520W) airplane that impacted a snowbank during a landing on February 16, 2020, at the Sparta Airport, Sparta, Michigan.

Inspector Matthews stated that the accident occurred while the student pilot was on his first solo flight. The student pilot told Inspector Matthews that the airplane had slid and came to rest facing 90° to the desired runway heading on his first solo landing. The student pilot taxied back to the ramp to discuss the landing with his flight instructor. They decided that the student pilot should continue the solo flight and make another landing. The student pilot stated that during his second solo landing the airplane began to slide/swerve to the left upon touchdown. The student pilot was unable to regain directional control with a right rudder input and the airplane impacted a small snowbank beside runway 25.

Inspector Matthews stated that the airplane came to rest about 10 ft from the south edge of runway 25 in the snow on a heading of 280° magnetic. Most of runway 25 was covered with 1-2 inches of snow/slush. The airplane was recovered from the runway environment where it was examined in a hangar.

Inspector Matthews stated that his examination of the airplane found no mechanical malfunctions of the flight controls, nosewheel steering, or wheel brakes. The outboard 3 ft of the left wing was bent upward. The nosewheel strut was bent to the right and the nose tire was canted in the fork, consistent with a lateral impact with the snowbank.

Inspector Matthews stated that the student pilot and his flight instructor had made several landings on runway 25 before the flight instructor exited the airplane and endorsed the student pilot's logbook for his first solo flight. As such, the flight instructor was aware of the snow/slush covered runway before the student pilot departed on his first solo flight.

--- End of interview summary ---

I can attest that the above summary and factual information was taken on the above stated day, and is correct to the best of my knowledge:

Signed: _ Andrew Todd Fox _

Dated: _ March 3, 2020 _

Andrew Todd Fox
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator