



Record of Conversation

Dan Baker
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Central Region

Date: 10/14/20

Subject: CEN20LA419, Mid-air Collision at San Marcos

Person Interviewed: Christopher Noftsger, N30LU Flight Instructor

Mr. Noftsger was flying an instructional flight with a student in N30LU at San Marcos Municipal Airport, TX when a midair collision occurred between N540LK (F1 Exp airplane) and N108VK (C172) in the traffic pattern.

Mr. Noftsger said they turned onto downwind and were behind N108VK and N540LK. He thought N540LK was in front of N108VK at that time. He heard N540LK radio he was performing a 360° turn and observed the F1 make a right turn. He said the F1 completed about 300° of the turn and flew southwest over the final approach to Rwy 08 before turning back in a teardrop pattern to reenter downwind. Mr. Noftsger was concerned with the non-standard flight path of N540LK and took control of the airplane from the student and slowed his airplane to slow flight (about 55 kts) and extended their downwind to allow N540LK room to reenter. He thought N540LK was flying fast at about 100 kts during the maneuver and should have broke out of the pattern and performed a standard reentry to downwind instead of performing the 360° turn.

Mr. Noftsger said they extended downwind to follow N540LK and overflow “the Stadium” when they turned to final. He said it was very difficult to see the other airplanes when they were on downwind looking towards the setting sun, and he did not see any other airplanes other than N108VK and N540LK in front of him. He said once they were on final he could see N108VK, but did not see N540LK. He said the setting sun behind them on final created shadows on the ground that made it difficult to distinguish the airplane in front of them. While on final he looked down to check configuration when his student, Brian Hutmacher, said he saw N108VK flip and impact the ground. They overflowed the wreckage, saw the second airplane on the ground at that time, and landed on a different runway. He said his airplane remained behind both N108VK and N540LK during the entire pattern.