

FAA Record of Conversation with Student Pilot, Warren K Gruber on June 17, 2016

Q: What was your Route of Flight?

A: "I flew from NC27 to EXX, then back here to NC27".

Q: Do you have a copy of your Flight Plan?

A: "Yes. (Pilot provided a copy of the Flight Plan)".

Q: What was the weather reporting?

A: "Light and Variable Winds".

Q: Where did you get the weather from since Lower Creek doesn't have weather reporting?

A: "Morganton-Foothills".

Q: When you landed at your destination, did you check the weather before returning?

A: "Yes".

Q: Did your instructor give you any limitations for your cross country flight?

A: "No, not that I am aware of".

Q: After going around twice, did you consider diverting to an alternate airport?

A: "No, I did not".

Q: Can you recall the details of the flight?

A: "After checking the weather and pre-flighting the aircraft, I took off from NC27, flew over Barrett's Mountain onto EXX. Landed at EXX; checked the weather at EXX, showed light and variable winds, but nothing of concern. I departed EXX. I attempted to land twice on Runway 23, but during both attempts, I encountered gusting crosswinds. I noted that the windsock was favoring Runway 05 with a slight crosswind, so I went around for a landing on Runway 05. I brought the plane down and it bounced. I pulled back on the yoke and added some power as the plane touched down again and then the nose wheel dug into the ground, then the aircraft flipped over".

Q: What is the name of your Flight Instructor?

A: "Richard Gilbert".

FAA Follow-Up Questions, June 27, 2016

Q: Did you and your flight instructor have any kind of briefing before you departed NC27?

A: "No, we didn't have a briefing before I took off".

Q: When you initially checked the weather before taking off, do you recall which weather briefing source you used?

A: "No, I do not know what the source was".

Q: Was your flight instructor with you during the weather briefing?

A: "No, I checked it myself. And when I said I checked the weather before coming back to NC27, I looked at the wind sock, then when I was over Barrett's Mountain, I flipped on the weather report; I didn't hear anything that concerned me, so I continued with the flight".

Q: Did your flight instructor discuss you any possible alternate airports prior to departing NC27?

A: "No, we did not talk about any alternate airports".

FAA Record of Conversation with Flight Instructor, Robert D Gilbert on June 27, 2016

Q: Did you conduct a General Briefing prior to Mr. Gruber taking off from NC27?

A: "Yes, we had a short briefing".

Q: Did you conduct a Weather Briefing with the student prior to his flight?

A: "Yes...well, we went over the planned flight and talked about possible scenarios for crosswinds. After we talked, he went over and checked the weather on the computer".

Q: Did you discuss an alternate airport for him to land at if he were to encounter any problems?

A: "No, we just talked about possible crosswind scenarios".

Q: Do you happen to know what the rating is for the windsock at NC27?

A: "No, I do not know".



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: June 22, 2016
Person Contacted: Warren Gruber (Student Pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: ERA16CA222

According to Mr. Gruber,

He went to visit his flight instructor to get signed off on his first solo cross-country.

He then went to the airport. He took off and flew to EXX and then flew back to NC27. There was a slight crosswind which favored Runway 23, so he joined a right hand traffic pattern for Runway 23. When he turned on the base leg, there was a wind gust, so he did a go-around.

He then re-entered the traffic pattern again, there was another wind gust which was worse than the previous one, so he went around again.

The wind then changed, so he entered the traffic pattern for Runway 5. He "came in," the airplane then "bounced," and "went high." He then pulled back on the control wheel, the nose landing gear dug into the ground, and the airplane nosed over.

Someone told him later that as he touched down, the wind shifted 180 degrees.



INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 6/26/16
Warren Gruber (Student Pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: ERA16CA222

According to the student pilot:

This was a solo, cross country flight as part of his student pilot training.

On his return flight from EXX to NC27, his route took him over Barretts Mountain. At that point he remembered selecting the AWOS for MRN which was the closest weather for NC27. He did not remember the report, but know that whatever was reported did not register as a weather issue for him, so he proceeded to NC27 and entered the pattern for landing. It was daylight conditions, and the time was approximately 1300.

He entered the traffic pattern and set up for the landing. The wind sock was favoring a landing on Runway 23 with a slight cross wind. He turned on a right downwind, turned to base, had the runway lined up and "got hit," with a large gust of wind. He then aborted the landing and proceeded to circle the runway proceeding towards Lenoir.

He turned and again entered the pattern; the wind sock was still favoring a landing on Runway 23. I set up for this landing and again got hit with a bigger gust of wind so he aborted the landing again. This time proceeding back over "the rock quarry."

He circled and entered the pattern once again. As he crossed the end of the runway the wind sock now was a slight cross wind but favoring a landing on Runway 5. He then proceeded in the normal approach pattern, circled and set up for the landing on Runway 5.

He was on final for Runway 05 and everything appeared to be fine. His "speed was good" and he "came in" and touched down. The plane then bounced. He pulled the yoke (control wheel) back and gave a slight bit of power, and then the airplane "flipped forward" (nosed over).

The airplane was on the runway "lying on its wings". Time was approximately 13:15

He advised that there were daylight conditions, scattered clouds, unknown ceiling, no precipitation, winds light and variable, and there were gusts..... speed unknown..., visibility 10 miles, density altitude- unknown, turbulence was ground induced – NC27 is in a valley next to a small mountain hill creating abrupt gusts/turbulence.

Directly after the “incident”, bystanders helped him egress from the airplane, turned the fuel valve off to make sure fuel was not leaking, and disconnected the battery connection from the ELT.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: July 14, 2016
Person Contacted: Warren Gruber (Student Pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: ERA16CA222

According to Mr. Gruber,

When he stated that he went to visit his flight instructor to get signed off on his first solo cross-country, he meant that his flight instructor was at his place of work, and that he brought his flight plan to him and they discussed it. He then signed him off for the solo-cross country, and he went to the airport.

When asked if his flight instructor looked at the weather report, he stated no and that they did not "call in to check the weather," while they were sitting there.

His instructor worked at a place where he could take breaks when he chose too, and had been having students come to his work for years for sign offs.