



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Student Pilot Statement

Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: November 20, 2020, 12:49 PM EST
Person Contacted: Sundaresh Siddiah (Student Pilot)
Contact # [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA045

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individual named above:

- Mr. Siddiah stated that it was a very windy day.
- He and his flight instructor flew to the practice area to practice basic maneuvers, then returned to the airport.
- His instructor informed him that he (the instructor) would do the landing because Mr. Siddiah did not have experience with that much wind.
- He stated that on their first attempt to land on RWY 25, during final approach his instructor was maintaining the centerline at 75 KIAS until about 100-200 feet above ground level, when the wind started to blow the airplane off centerline. His instructor executed a go-around maneuver.
- The instructor made another attempt, during which the winds were gusting across the runway.
- He stated that the airplane departed the left side of the runway into the grass, hit the small lip of a taxiway and flipped over.
- He stated that there were no injuries, and they were very calm, and they secured the exited the airplane.
- When he came back home, he looked back at the flight on FlightAware. "We were right on speed."
- He said that the accident happened around 11:40 EST.
- The call ended at 1:03 PM.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 11/24/2020
Person Contacted: Philip McPherson, flight instructor
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA045

Narrative:

Mr. McPherson was contacted by phone on 11/24/2020 at 9:55 AM EST. He was called at [REDACTED].

At the beginning of the interview he was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation.

Mr. McPherson declined the interview and informed me that his statement would be sent to me from his attorney. He provided me with the following information: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] He stated that he would be flying until 4 PM today but that he would let his attorney know that his statement should be given to the FAA and NTSB as soon as possible.

He stated that he was having an issue with the 6120 form allowing him to select the "flight instructor" box and wanted to know what he should do about that. I informed him that it was fine to leave it empty if it was not allowing him to select it, as I would enter the appropriate information into our system. I also informed him that he did not need to look up the weather, and only needed to indicate what he used for his weather source before the flight.

The call ended at 10:02 AM.

Narrative History of the Flight

Prior to departure mid-morning on Wednesday, November 18th Mr. McPherson initiated a standard weather briefing by calling WX Brief. Analysis of the area weather conditions determined his flight to be VFR with winds at 15kts and gusting to the low 20's at airports near 47N. Central Jersey Airport does not have its own AWOS.

Mr. McPherson had a scheduled flight lesson with his second student, Sundaresh Siddiah. Mr. Siddiah was the student aboard the aircraft at the time of the incident. At the time of departure Mr. McPherson and his student, Mr. Siddiah, noted the winds were moving variably from 07 to 25. A decision was made to use runway 25 necessitating a right crosswind. The student performed the takeoff and continued south to the practice area to begin his lesson. The lesson was uneventful. Upon return, Mr. McPherson instructed the student that he (Mr. McPherson) would execute the landing since the winds were forecast to be beyond the student's current capabilities. This particular student was a beginner and had not yet performed any landings at that point in his training regimen.

On Mr. McPherson's first landing attempt, the winds were a direct 90 degree gusting-crosswind. He used the wing low side-slip technique to get the aircraft into position to land but was not comfortable on final, and therefore, decided to execute a go-around.

Upon his second attempt Mr. McPherson established a straight in approach directly down the runway centerline and landed the aircraft just beyond the numbers on Runway 25. During flair, the plane drifted slightly off the center line slightly to the left. Touch down was accomplished with the right main wheel, followed by the left then the front. With all three wheels down and the aircraft heading forward he began to slow the plane down to a stop by aerodynamically braking with the ailerons.

At this point, Mr. McPherson felt greater wind resistance from his right, thus he deflected the yoke as far right as it would detent with the right aileron fully down. The wind resistance persisted and he continued with proper wind correction including right rudder. However, the wind managed to move the aircraft further left off of the runway and onto the grass.

While on the grass, Mr. McPherson attempted to keep the rudder straight, while trying carefully to maneuver the aircraft back to the runway. In his attempt to cautiously control the aircraft he hit two runway edge lights. The aircraft started to slow as it approached the oncoming taxiway but could not fully stop.

The aircraft then broke its nose-wheel and tipped over. The plane landed ventral side up with Mr. McPherson and his student suspended upside down by their lap belts and shoulder harnesses. It is uncertain to Mr. McPherson whether the nose gear broke as a result of exiting the grass and onto the taxiway or due to other mechanical deficiencies. It was, however, unexpected considering the speed of the aircraft and it took both occupants by surprise.

Mr. McPherson then determined he and his student were safe and unharmed. While simultaneously removing his seatbelt and shoulder harness, he then made certain there were no fuel leaks, opened his door and exited. He then instructed his student to exit out of the aircraft in the same manner.

An aircraft maintenance worker and a third-party asked them if they needed assistance. Mr. McPherson determining the aircraft to be stable, returned to place the fuel selector on the off

position, cut the mixture, make certain the primer was locked, turn off the master switches, and remove the key from the ignition. Once complete, he requested that everyone present step away from the plane and then contacted the flight school owner, Mr. Farzan Saleem, and informed him of what had just occurred. Mr. Saleem arrived shortly thereafter along with police, fire crews, and paramedics.

Mr. McPherson is an exemplary CFI and it would be unfortunate to allow this alleged incident to cloud his otherwise exemplary career as a safe and experienced pilot. He takes pilotage serious and makes safety his priority. Mr. McPherson cooperated with all responders and officials at all times.

Mr. McPherson submits that but-for unpredictable wind gusts exceeding the crosswind component he never violated the safety limits of the aircraft and as a CFI was fully within the capability of similarly experienced pilots. Due to the prevailing wind direction (as a direct cross wind) the orientation of Central Jersey Airport left him the option of landing in either direction but still in a direct cross wind, with no other alternatives. Also, other traffic was heard while monitoring local frequencies giving credence to the fact that many pilots were flying on this day.

On his previous day of teaching, forecast winds were at the same speed. He successfully taught another student how to land in the event of an engine failure with direct crosswinds that were also forecast in the mid-20kt. velocity range. Mr. McPherson has also routinely landed in higher crosswinds without issue in C-172's. Review his of his logbook will demonstrate the virtual seven-day a week frequency he has flown for the past 5 months. Also, before being grounded due to the pandemic, he was almost flying with a seven day frequency since January 8th 2018. It is very unlikely that November 18th 2020 was the only day of the year since 2018 with forecasts winds higher than 20 kts. Yet Mr. McPherson has NEVER been party to a runway incursion or landing incident of any kind.

Mr. McPherson's philosophy as practiced by him and taught to his student's is "if the landing is in doubt, go around". Further, "if you are not comfortable completing the landing, find a neighboring airport that has a runway that would diminish or cancel the crosswind (and make certain you have enough fuel and reserve to make it there").

Mr. McPherson has in fact landed at neighboring airports before as alternates and trained at the neighboring airport Princeton, which he would have happily diverted to had he reason to believe he could not safely land the aircraft (which he did).

Therefore, Mr. McPherson had no reason to believe that he was not skilled enough to safely handle the direct x-wind landing on the date of the incident based on his skill level, prior landings, and following his own teachings. It should be noted that this was a successful landing with all three wheels on the ground and no side-loading and that only due to an unusually strong gust did the aircraft drift off the runway and onto the grass. The landing itself was not in doubt. To be certain, the incident, including the drift, loss of the front wheel, and flipping of the aircraft began during the rollout phase of the landing. This can be corroborated with the written statement by his student.