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Sr. ASI / ERA

Date: May 19, 2023

Subject: ERA23FA235

Contact: Mr. Dusty Garus, Pilot
Mr. Freeman Barber, Owner

Mr. Garus and Mr. Barber were interviewed in person at the Summerville Airport (DYB), Summerville, South Carolina. The interview was conducted in a conference room at the airport's terminal building. With their permission, FAA Operations Inspector Charles Lewis was also present for the interview. Both Mr. Garus and Mr. Barber were informed that this was an official NTSB interview and that a Record of Interview (ROI) would be prepared and part of the public docket. They also understood that they each had a right to have a witness present and they stated that they would be each other's witness.

Mr. Barber said he owned N255HJ (a Honda HA-420) and purchased it in September 2021. The airplane was based at CHS but made frequent stops at DYB. Mr. Garus owns a grading company and Mr. Barber is a developer, and they are good friends. Both are type-rated in the HA-420 and are on the airplane's insurance policy. Though they are both single pilot rated in the airplane, they are not "two-crew" trained, so when flying together, only one of them acts as the pilot-in-command (including radios). Mr. Barber attended Honda HA-420 recurrent training at Flight Safety International (FSI) in Greensboro, North Carolina, in Dec 2022. Mr. Garus attended Honda HA-420 recurrent training at Flight Safety International (FSI) in Greensboro, North Carolina, in Mar 2023. Mr. Garus reported that he had about 1,880 total flight hours, of which, 235 hours were in the HA-420. The day of the accident was also his birthday.

Mr. Garus explained that the purpose of the accident flight was to take friends to Wilkes County Airport (UKF), North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, to attend a NASCAR event in Wilkesboro. They departed DYB around 2:30 pm EDT, with Mr. Barber as the pilot-in-command (PIC). All but two of the passengers had flown with them before, including Mr. Barber's wife, who was also onboard. The flight to UKF was uneventful and there were no issues with the airplane.

Mr. Garus stated that while in Wilkesboro, he knew he would be PIC on the return flight to DYB. He monitored weather via Foreflight and saw storms passing over the Summerville area. He extended their stay in Wilkesboro to let the storms pass, and once he saw that the weather had improved, they headed back to DYB. Mr. Garus said that he knew he would be landing on a wet runway.

Mr. Barber stated that they purchased 150 gallons of fuel before the left. When asked how much fuel they had onboard, he said, "min fuel." Mr. Barber explained that they do not normally top off the fuel tanks unless they are going on a long cross country. The flight from Wilkes County Airport to Summerville was 38 minutes. Plus, the cost of fuel in Summerville was cheaper than in Wilkesboro. Mr. Barber said that try to park the airplane with 1800 to 2,200 lbs. of fuel onboard depending on the next mission.

In preparation for the flight, Mr. Garus said he used the pilot's control display unit (CDU) to calculate Takeoff and Landing Data (TOLD) for landing on a wet runway. Mr. Garus was asked what the calculated Vref was, and Mr.

Barber responded, "122", and Mr. Garus responded "119." When asked for clarification as to which was the correct speed, Mr. Garus said when the Vref speed was calculated it appeared on the primary flight display (PFD1) screen, and the needle (bug) pointed to the Vref value, which he said was right about 119/120. He said he used Vref 120 for the approach/landing. Mr. Garus did not recall the landing distance the computer calculated, but he said the way the TOLD system was designed, it would present the calculated data as "accepted", meaning based on the data he entered, they had sufficient runway length to land at DYB, which is a 5,000 ft-long runway. Mr. Garus added that he has made "hundreds" of landings at DYB, on both a dry and wet runway, without issue. He felt confident that he had sufficient runway to land. Mr. Garus said his rule of thumb on landing distances for the HA-420 is: 2,760 ft on a dry runway, then add 1,000 ft for a wet runway. *

*[*Upon review of a draft of this record of interview on May 30, 2023, Mr. Garus said he misspoke when he said he used "2,760 ft on a dry runway, then add 1,000 ft for a wet runway" as a rule of thumb for landing distances. Mr. Garus added, "My only explanation is that my answer that morning was definitely not what I thought I said nor what I intended to say (by 1000 ft). I meant to say "3700 (and thus 3760 feet) and add 1000 for wet conditions". As soon as I read your ROI I noticed it. We didn't even use 2700 feet in the Cirrus Vision Jet. The thumb-rule of 4000 feet dry and 5000 feet wet (which was also mentioned and Freeman and I both agreed), is a rounded up version of the answer I meant to provide that morning. To add to that, My personal minimums started out as 5000 feet dry and 6000 feet wet until I had several landings under my belt. I avoided DYB for several months after my SOE unless I knew for sure it was dry. Again, 2700 feet doesn't even make sense as it was less than we would use for the Vision Jet that touched down with much, much less energy. Please allow me to be clear here...In no circumstance would I have ever applied "2700 feet dry, add 1000 feet for wet to anything regarding the Honda Jet". Though I understand that was my response that morning, it was simply a case of misspeaking and not my intent. I started the number with a 2 but meant 3. I sincerely hope that can be corrected.]*

Mr. Garus said he prepared for the RNAV 24 approach into DYB, which he prefers to use on night approaches due to trees (which are hard to see in the dark) at the end of the runway. He said air traffic control (ATC), cleared him to the PROSO intersection. He crossed PROSO at 2,000 ft, and ATC cleared him for the approach. Mr. Garus said he had the approach coupled with the airplane's autopilot and flew the approach at Vref 120 from the FAF. He said that he and Mr. Barber are real "sticklers" for checklists, so he completed the Before Landing Checklist, extended the landing gear, and set the flaps to full. At 600 ft, Mr. Garus turned off the autopilot and manually took control of the airplane. Just prior to crossing the threshold, he reduced power, and lowered the nose of the airplane to ensure a touchdown early in the TDZ. He described the approach as "perfect." Mr. Garus said that as the airplane flew over the threshold, he brought power to idle, and planned to land firmly on the main landing gear and get the nose on the ground quickly. This was due to the fact that the brake system activates once it senses weight on wheels, and he wanted to get on the brakes quickly due to the runway being wet. Mr. Garus could not recall where on the runway he landed, but Mr. Barber said it was before the first 1,000 ft marker. He said he touched down at Vref.

[Mr. Garus and Mr. Barber both interjected that when they attended recurrent training in March 2023, employees of Honda spent about 3-4 hours with them, during which time, told them, that as soon as all three-landing gear are on the ground, they need to "stand on the brakes no matter what" and let the braking system do the rest of the work.]

Mr. Garus said that as soon as he applied brake pressure, the anti-skid system "kicked in" but it responded differently than he was used to. He said the system activated in a slower on/off cycle versus the more rapid on/off cycle he had felt on previous wet runway landings. Mr. Barber concurred that he felt the same thing with anti-skid system.

Mr. Garus said that as the airplane traveled down the runway, they passed the second of three taxiways. He was not too concerned because there was still a lot of runway until they reached the last taxiway. At this point, Mr. Barber began to say "Go-Around." Mr. Garus said he was thinking the same thing, but at that moment, the left brake grabbed, and the airplane's nose yawed hard to the left, and there was no traction to power up and go-around. Mr. Garus said he used the rudder pedals to try and get the airplane centered, but it began to skid left and right, and he worked to keep the airplane on the runway and "between the blue lights." When the airplane got within 200 ft of the remaining runway, the airplane began to swerve to the left again, but Mr. Garus said he was able to get the nose centered right before it exited the runway. The airplane then traveled off the runway (about 40 mph), into the grass. The grass felt very slippery (greasy, like a banana peel) and as it accelerated the speed of the airplane. The airplane then went down an embankment and came to an abrupt

stop. Mr. Garus said he stayed in his seat and began to shut down the airplane's fuel and electrical systems. One of the passengers said there was a fire. Mr. Garus said he activated both "squibs" to activate the engine's fire extinguishing system, but he could not recall if he had already turned off the master to the electrical system. If so, the fire extinguishers would not have activated. There were no engine fire CAS messages.

Mr. Barber said he gave the passengers an abbreviated safety briefing before they departed which included how to operate the main cabin door and emergency exit. He recalled getting out of his seat first and when he turned

to face the cabin, he saw all the passengers still seated. Mr. Barber first went to the emergency exit because he felt the impact had damaged the main door. The emergency exit was hot, so he went back to the main door, and it opened immediately. As the door opened, one of the passengers rushed him and knocked him clear out of the airplane and stepped over him. Then the other two passengers and Mr. Garus exited the airplane with a handheld fire extinguisher. Mr. Barber then re-entered the airplane to grab "phones" and his wife's purse. Mr. Garus and Mr. Barber said the fire started small and looked like a "candelabra" but grew more intense and they could see it under the airplane. They both felt that the fire appeared to be fuel or hydraulic oil fed and started below the right wing and was feeding on the grass. The light of the fire helped illuminate the area so they could see where they were.

Mr. Garus said that there were no mechanical problems with the airplane during the flight and he never saw any crew alerting system (CAS) messages. Mr. Barber concurred, and they both reiterated that there had been no mechanical problems with the braking system prior to the accident. Mr. Barber explained that it was a textbook flight, approach, and landing. He could not recall a single thing that Mr. Garus should have done differently.

Mr. Garus said that he never felt like he lost directional control of the airplane. He said that it was very difficult to keep the airplane on the runway and the constant left and right yaw prevented a safe go-around, but the airplane just did not have enough room to stop. All three-landing gear stayed on the runway the entire time. He did not use the emergency brake.

Mr. Garus added that the condition of the wet runway that night was no different than other times when he has landed with it being wet. The runway is crowned nicely, drains well (never observed any ponding water) and was well maintained.

Mr. Garus also said that he had not been drinking alcohol that evening and he did not take any medications. He loves aviation and does a lot of reading/research to make sure he is as educated and safe as possible when flying. In the last 60 days he has completed recurrent HA-420 training, a BFR in his Cirrus SR-22 and 3 days of upset recovery training in an Extra 300. He takes continuous training very seriously.

End of Interview