



Investigator Name: Leah D. Read
Title: Sr. ASI
Division: ERA

Subject: ERA23LA290

Contact: FAA IIC / Tampa FSDO (SO-35): Angel Negron-Crespo

The following is a summary of FAA Inspector Angel Negron-Crespo's Written Report regarding the accident involving N8579W - 1963 Piper Cherokee PA-28-235:

PIC Statement: "On 7/5/2023, I planned a trip from KCLW (Clearwater Airpark) to KSRQ (Sarasota Intl). I performed a pre-flight inspection per recommended checklist. Performed engine start and equipment checks per checklists prior to taxiing for departure on Runway 34. Performed engine runup with no issues noted. Entered Runway 34 and accelerated to take off speed with no issues. Rotated and flew off the runway. At approx. 100 ft and still climbing the engine began to roll back. I switched tanks with the fuel selector and engine continued rolling back to idle. I leveled off at approximately 200 feet and had no luck with engine and decided to land on h airfield, touched down in runway grass runoff at approximately 55-60 MPH and applied max aero braking and aircraft brakes. Aircraft skidded thru grass, the aircraft ran off the edge of the grass where there is a 3-4 foot drop off and came to rest on the entry gate to the airfield. I immediately shut off the fuel and mags, made a radio call to KCLW Unicom informing them of situation and then turned off electrical power. Battery was removed from aircraft as requested by fire company."

Accident Aircraft - Condition Inspection

07/07/2023 - Onsite inspection conducted by FAA IIC. Aircraft was relocated to a hangar with good access and appropriate lighting. Noted substantial damage to LH wing structure leading edge and

lower skin. Main spar damage was visible through ruptured skin. Wing damage was caused by impact with telephone poles during final stages of the accident flight. Nose landing gear collapsed under fuselage. Propeller tip was bent backwards, no rotation damage signature was noted indicating it had stopped prior to initial impact. The RH wingtip exhibited damage to the composite cap only. Aircraft forward section was lifted and shored for access to powerplant. Removal of upper and lower cowling revealed damage to the engine mount structure and buckling of the firewall lower section, mostly due to the nose gear collapse. Throttle and Mixture control cable continuity was confirmed operational. Left and Right Main tank overwing fuel service ports exhibited moderate corrosion at wing flange indicating possible water intrusion. Fuel cap rubber seals exhibited limited compressibility and dry rot due to age.

- Left Main fuel tank drain sumping revealed no contamination.
- Right Main fuel tank drain sumping revealed significant water contamination.
- Fuel strainer and System drain sumping revealed significant water contamination.
- Carburetor bowl drain plug exhibited moderate corrosion pitting.
- Drained carburetor bowl fuel revealed significant water contamination.

N8579W ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

PIC/ FAA IIC - Interview

- PIC confirmed he had sump drained only the Main tanks prior to flight and missed the Strainer/System drain.
- PIC shared that prior to takeoff, he positioned the fuel tank selector to Right Main for the intended flight. This tank had the largest amount of water contamination.
- The PIC had recently purchased the aircraft in March 2023.
- PIC Hrs Make & Model: 8.5 hrs.
- PIC Hrs Last 90 days: 9.5
- PIC Hrs Last Year: 41.9
- PIC Total Hrs: 176.3

Maintenance Record Review

- Last Annual Inspection Completed: 02/01/2023 at AFTT 1269.0
- No post annual (recent) airframe or engine maintenance actions were noted that could jeopardize airworthiness. Last two

maintenance log entries were completed by the owner/PIC who holds an A&P mechanic certificate.

- It is important to note that although the FAA Aircraft Registry file contains multiple registration applications by the previous owner, the sampled maintenance records do not have annual inspection entries from year 2009 to 2020 (11 Years). This may indicate that the accident aircraft was either out of operation or was operated out of regulatory compliance from 2009 to 2020 and again in 2021.
- Two (2ea) annual inspections were recorded within the last 12 months (Sept. 2022 and Feb 2023) the last annual possibly being a pre-buy or "fresh" annual inspection.
- The overall condition of the aircraft's fuel system during the post-accident investigation puts into question the procedures followed by the IA's that previously completed the annual inspections in 2020.