



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

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Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: 10/16/2022
Subject: ERA24FA038, Interview with Co-owner
Contact: Jeff Nelson ([REDACTED])

Mr. Nelson was a co-owner of the accident airplane. He was interviewed at the Everett-Stewart Regional Airport (UCY) and the following is a summary of the interview.

The airplane was recent purchase and Mr. Nelson was partnered in the airplane. He was a commercial pilot with ratings for Airplane Single Engine, multiengine and instrument airplane. Mr. Nelson had accrued 1,080 total hours of flight experience of which 4.7 hours were in the accident airplane make and model.

Mr. Nelson, Stanley Hales, and Nate Ruedy were the partners.

Mr McDonald, the flight instructor was providing instruction to the 3 owners for familiarization and to meet insurance requirements. The goal was to meet requirements and increase individual proficiency as much as possible. Mr. McDonald was a recognized aerobatic instructor with experience in this make and model airplane.

Mr. Nelson was familiar with Mr. McDonald's reputation and experience, and he was also recommended by another owner of the Xtremeair XA42. The accident pilot, Mr. Hales, had accrued 10 hours of instruction. The "ground" instruction was limited to discussion of the airplane and its features, and aerodynamic characteristics during pre-flight and walk-around inspections. Discussion about emergency procedures and limitations was limited to V-speeds and aerodynamic characteristics specifically, but many topics were covered in conversation both individually and in group discussions with Mr. McDonald.

Most flights included aerobatic maneuvers. No formal weight-and-balance was performed prior to each flight. The pilots and the instructor all relied on their knowledge of the airplane's limitations prior to each flight.

When asked about fuel loading and fuel usage, Mr. Nelson said, “We would generally fill up the acro tank and limit the fuel in the wing tanks.” You take off on the acro tank, and after takeoff switch to left or right for enroute, and once you get to the maneuvering area, back to acro for aerobatic maneuvers. Then, if you were to pause between aerobatic maneuvers, you would loiter on one of the main tanks, then back to acro when you resume aerobatics. Then, when returning to the home airport, one or the other main tanks would be used, and then approach and landing on acro tank.”

When asked, Mr. Nelson said the performance and handling of the airplane was essentially the same no matter the fuel load, as it had “so much power... you couldn’t feel the difference.”

When asked about the accident flight, Mr. Nelson said, the airplane entered the aerobatic box about 1,110 to 1,200 ft agl and its roll at the top of the avalanche maneuver about 2,100 to 2,200 feet agl. It was their first flight in the box. “The airplane was flying north to south and was to perform an “avalanche” maneuver, which is a half loop, and at the top the loop, a snap roll thru 360 degrees, then complete the loop. Basically, a full loop with a snap roll at the top. The whole maneuver is a positive “G” maneuver.

“When the airplane reached the top of the loop and initiated the 360-degree snap roll, it continued thru 360 degrees to a 540-degree snap roll. The airplane was upright when it should have finished the roll inverted. The airplane was slowed considerably, the engine was at full power, and the gyroscopic effect of the propeller pulled the nose down, with no airspeed, and the airplane entered a spin. Once in the spin, the rotation stopped, the wings were facing us, then the airplane entered a secondary spin and descended to ground contact. I would estimate it was a nose-down attitude of maybe 75 degrees.

The fuel selector was low on the center console in the aft cockpit and could not be easily bumped out of its selected position.

Mr. Nelson said each flight was briefed prior to takeoff. He said all his flights were performed between 5 and 7 thousand feet.

All too common stall spin accident. I don’t think there was anything wrong with airplane. They flew to another airport, did some touch-and-goes, and came back before entering the box.