



Robert Gretz
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: 12/20/23

Subject: ERA24LA070

Contact: Michael Torrente, FAA S. FL. FSDO

Mr. Torrente was interviewed via telephone. He stated that he examined the wreckage and noted substantial damage to the lower fuselage. Adequate fuel remained onboard and less than 1 ounce of water was drained from the fuel system (sumps). Mr. Torrente was able to rotate the propeller and confirm continuity to the rear accessory section, with both magnetos rotating. He also attained good (above 70psi) compression on all cylinders. Examination of the spark plug electrodes did not reveal any anomalies.

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Date: 12/21/2023

Subject: ERA24LA070

Contact: Hernandez Spinola, Homestead, FL

The following was extracted from an email statement by Mr. Spinola:

“This Monday 12/18/2023 I was invited to go on a flight with Melody on her airplane in order to start familiarizing myself with that aircraft because the school I work for was considering using it.

As I arrived I told her to demonstrate to me how she does a pre-flight in order for me to start getting to know the aircraft because I have never seen that aircraft before.

We determined that she would be Pilot in Command and sole manipulator of the flight controls because I did not know much about that airplane.

She went through the pre-flight with me as we were waiting for the fuel truck to come. We waited almost 1 hour and decided that it would be best to just go to self serve and fuel it since we had no estimate when the fuel truck would come.

She topped the aircraft off so we had 2 full tanks. She took a sample of the fuel from the wings and from the front sump which I believe it comes directly from the engine.

After the Fueling we got in the aircraft and she proceeded to use the checklist in order to turn the airplane on and taxi. We were assigned runway 27R for some touch and go's. She did the run up holding short of 27R and I did not notice any discrepancies.

She then proceeded to take off after being cleared, did 1 touch and go and I did not notice anything wrong with the airplane.

On the second touch and go (third climb out) she did a touch and go (landed and took off again immediately), after taking off she retracted the landing gear. Then a couple of seconds after she announced to me that the engine seemed to have failed. I immediately looked at the mixture, prop, and throttle levers and they were all fully pressed and I did notice a decrease in performance. The airplane started slowing down and sinking even with the levers fully in.

When I realized she had committed to landing the airplane, I immediately announced to tower that we were experiencing an engine failure and would be landing immediately so she could focus 100% on controlling the aircraft.

I estimate we somewhere between 100 - 200 feet above ground level when it all happened.

She proceeded to land immediately, we seemed to touch down at the very end of 27R and immediately went into the grass. The airplane slid a little to the right on the grass.

We were both wearing seatbelts so we did not suffer any injuries."

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Date: 1/3/2024

Subject: ERA24LA070

Contact: Hernandez Spinola, Homestead, FL

Mr. Spinola was interviewed via telephone. He stated that he was not familiar with the accident airplane make and model. He was seated in the front right seat and went on a familiarization flight as the flight school where he instructed was thinking about using the airplane. Since he was a passenger, he did not familiarize himself with the airplane. During initial climb from the accident touch-and-go, he recalled the pilot retracting the landing gear about 100 ft above the ground. He could not recall if the pilot retracted the flaps on the ground or when she retracted the landing gear. After the landing gear retracted, he felt a decrease in performance. He was wearing noise-cancelling headsets and could not recall if there was a decrease in engine noise, but the pilot reported a loss of engine power. At that time, he looked at the throttle, mixture, and propeller controls. He remembered that they were all in the full-forward position. There was not a lot of time at 100 ft and he did not remember seeing the tachometer. He made an emergency radio transmission as the pilot was performing a forced landing on to the runway.

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Date: 01/04/24

Subject: ERA24LA070

Contact: Michael Torrente, FAA S. FL. FSDO

Mr. Torrente was interviewed via telephone. He returned to the wreckage today to examine the engine logbook. While there, he checked the fuel injector nozzles and they were absent of debris. He stated that the previous reported (by another pilot) loss of engine power on takeoff roll and subsequently rejected takeoff was a water event. The water was purged from the fuel system and a corroded fuel pump was replaced, which fixed the issue. Mr. Torrent will send me engine logbook entries.



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Date: 01/08/24

Subject: ERA24LA070

Contact: Anthony Pujado, FAA S. FL. FSDO

Mr. Pujado was interviewed via telephone. He stated that according to Air Traffic Control information, the airplane had not flown for about 1 month prior to the accident flight.