

January 21st, 2024

The event occurred while my student and I were taxiing to runway 2 on taxiway delta. My student, Zeynep Tuncay, had the flight controls, she was taxiing not any faster than a brisk walk. Zeynep went to make the right turn where the taxiway curves right to hold short on runway 2 on delta. The aircraft did not turn to the right. At that moment, Zeynep pulled the throttle to idle and applied brakes, and the aircraft did not stop. As the aircraft got closer to the edge of the taxiway, I also pressed on the brakes, still the aircraft did not stop. We were not able to maintain directional control to stay on the taxiway. As the aircraft went straight off of the taxiway, I managed to point the aircraft slightly to the left to avoid going into a deep ditch filled with water that was just to the right. The aircraft came to a stop in a tree. Fortunately, we were both left uninjured.

The aircraft had previously been written up for maintenance by Hunter Larkin, another Epic instructor, on the day of the event. Hunter reported that the right brake pressure was inconsistent; They had lost brake pressure and had the pressure come back making the brakes overly stiff on more than one occasion. After that, Maintenance signed the aircraft off for return to service. The same thing happened to us as the brakes were seemingly operational up until the point of the failure that caused the aircraft to hit the tree.

I reviewed the maintenance write-up regarding the brake issue prior to Zeynep starting the airplane. During my preflight, I did not visually see any abnormalities concerning the brakes. After starting and just after commencing taxiing, we checked the brakes for correct operation while taxiing out. Since the brakes were set and held during the engine run up and were still working, it would be hard to assume they were not operating correctly. At that point, there is not much else one could do to further ensure the brakes operational condition.



Andrea Stewart