

Sunday, April 28th, 2024

Aircraft incident at Little River Airpark, McAlpin FL. , Saturday, April 27th.

David Stiles, Pilot and owner of F 35 Beechcraft Bonanza, N3880B

David French, co-pilot (retired Delta Airlines pilot)

Friday, April 26th. Check weather forecast for the following day. "Cloudy" conditions, no precip forecast. David and David check the route from FL10 to Lantana FL. Decide on a fuel stop in Gainesville or Ocala. Stiles pre-flights the aircraft for the following days trip.

Saturday, April 27th. Re-check weather – no changes noted.

8:15 am. Re-preflight fuel and oil. Note dew moisture on ground but not excessive.

8:30 am. Load aircraft with tools, snacks and overnight bags. Approximate weight of these items 25 lbs.

8:45 am. Enter plane. Give David French a safety briefing, particularly how the door works and emergency exiting procedures.

9:00 am. Start aircraft and once cylinder head shows temperature and oil pressure and temperature are in the green, taxi to the turf runway #27, 2644 feet long.

9:15 run-up. All systems good. Check written check sheet. Re-check door and windows and Mr. French's seatbelt.

9:25 start roll. Quick scan that RPM and Manifold Pressure are full on.

There is a "hump" at the ½ way point which is my typical go/no go point. I quickly scan the iPad for speed, which I noted was 47 knots. Stall speed dirty is 52 kts. I went for the "go".

Noted at this point is one of the "old timers" from the airstrip commented that moisture tends to accumulate on the down-side of this hump as it is more in the shade than the close side. Thus there was the possibility that some of the momentum of the take-off roll may have been lost going down this "hump".

Roll continued. Attempted to "pop" the aircraft off the ground and into ground effect. Tried that again. Too late. Going to crash straight ahead.

Aircraft clips a mound at the end of the runway and spins around and stops shortly thereafter.

David French says "fire!". "Let's go!" says Stiles. "go go go". I believe I turned off the ignition and removed the key quickly says Stiles. French starts with the door handle, Stiles reaches over and opens the door. Both pilot and passenger quickly exit.

French says; "do you have a fire extinguisher?" Stiles reaches back into the plane, grabs the extinguisher and French sprays the fire on the left side of the aircraft almost putting it out. A neighbor shows up with another extinguisher and French continues to spray. Fire overwhelms and everyone backs off.

In hindsight, the pilot David Stiles notes that waiting an hour for the dew to burn off and using 10 degrees of flaps would have prevented the occurrence. Also, performing a "no-go" at the decision "bump" would have prevented the accident.