

Samuel Whitehurst

CFI

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On May 2nd 2024, I was conducting a pre-solo progress check with a student pilot in N230EP. We were doing uncontrolled airport operations at KDED on the west side of the airport circling to the north to enter a left downwind for Runway 5. Another aircraft was entering from the east so I instructed the student to give them a wide berth and enter behind them. While trying to visually identify the aircraft, I looked down at the MFD to get a general position. I identified the aircraft entering the pattern and also noticed another aircraft on ADS-B below them indicating 1200' below us. I looked down to find the airplane and identified it, though given the angle and distance I was looking from I did not initially identify the aircraft as an aircraft. From the angle it looked like the top of a parachute. Given the fact that KDED has a large parachute operation, I thought it was weird for a jumper to have ADS-B but returned my focus to the flight. A few moments later I looked back towards the aircraft and was, first, able to identify the aircraft as a seaplane, and second, witness the aircraft begin to flare too high and rotate around the vertical axis to the left, quickly losing the remainder of their altitude and crumpling into the ground. In the moment, having never seen a plane crash in person, I was unsure of what I saw. I asked the aircraft behind me in the pattern (tail number ending in 7DD) to fly about halfway through downwind and look slightly North-Northwest of the field for a downed aircraft. Since there were more than 3 in the pattern and due to recent issues we have had with KDED residents, I had my student full stop land and taxi back to the runway. 7DD circled some smoke in the trees and after a minute or so declared that the smoke was not coming from a crash site and returned to normal ops in the downwind for 5. After we took off again to remain in the pattern I overflew the same area I saw it go down, identified it again and told KDED CTAF that I would be circling in this area north of the field. While monitoring the CTAF I contacted 121.5 and reported the accident. After an IDENT and a few questions I was transferred to KDAB Approach 126.55 to continue the report. Once I answered the few questions they had I returned in the pattern for one more touch and go since most of the aircraft departed the pattern and then elected to discontinue the activity and return to KEVB due to noticing a breakdown in monitoring I noticed in myself. We returned to land in KEVB with no further issues.

If there are any other questions I can answer, please reach out at the phone number above.

Thank you,

Samuel Whitehurst

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Date: 5/7/2024