

Incident Statement

Date of Incident: December 7, 2024

Time of Incident: Approximately 10:30 AM

Location: Valdosta Regional Airport (KVLD), Valdosta, Georgia

Aircraft Information:

- **Pilot Name:** Jeffery Schofield
- **Aircraft Tail Number:** N100SW

Summary of Incident:

On December 7, 2024, while practicing takeoffs and landings at Valdosta Regional Airport (KVLD), I experienced a hard landing incident due to an in-flight canopy issue.

Details of the Incident:

While in the pattern, the canopy of the aircraft came partially open. The right front latch held the canopy in a partially closed position until the final approach, at which point the latch came loose, and the canopy fully opened. This sudden occurrence caused an abrupt drop in the aircraft's nose attitude.

As the nose dropped, the nose wheel clipped the grass just before the runway threshold. The main landing gear subsequently made hard contact with the runway and collapsed. The aircraft slid on the runway surface before coming to a complete stop.

Aircraft Speed and Configuration:

At the time of the incident, my approach speed was approximately 80-85 miles per hour.

Post-Incident Actions:

Once the aircraft came to rest, I exited the cockpit. I attempted to communicate with the control tower via radio but was unsure if my transmission was received. I gathered my belongings and observed the airport fire department approaching the scene.

I informed the responding fire department crew that I was experiencing pain in my lower back. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) were called and took me to the hospital.

Contributing Factors:

The aircraft canopy has three locking mechanisms: two side locks and one main lock at the rear of the canopy. Upon reflection, I believe I secured the two side locks but inadvertently failed to secure the main rear lock before flight. This oversight likely caused the canopy to open during flight, ultimately leading to the incident.

Damage and Injuries:

- **Aircraft Damage:** The nose gear clipped the grass, and the main landing gear collapsed upon impact with the runway. The aircraft slid on the runway surface, sustaining damage.
- **Injuries:** I reported lower back pain, which was evaluated by EMS at the scene.