

Mr. Rose:

I returned your call earlier but it went to your voice mail, so I wanted to give you this information on my accident this morning.

I took off in my Tri-Pacer this morning from the Fairhope, Alabama airport heading to Shields Airport for my A&P mechanic to perform the annual inspection on the airplane. As I was approaching Shields, I saw there was a rainstorm directly over Shields.

Rather than chance a landing at Shields in the rain, I decided to land and wait out the storm. I landed on what looked like from the air a farmers airstrip. As soon as I touched down, I realized it wasn't a maintained airstrip. The landing was on rough and really wet ground but it was manageable.

After the storm over Shields moved on, I attempted to take off in the same direction that I had landed, to the south. However, because of the ground roughness and the sloppy wetness, I was not able to get up to the airspeed needed for rotation (60 mph).

Being at the south end of the runway after the aborted takeoff, I saw a smoother strip of land on the west side of the "runway." So, since the wind was not really a factor, I decided to attempt to take off to the north. The strip on the west side of the field was actually fairly smooth for about one third of the length of the field but then I started running into wet, sloppy areas and the plane started skidding left and right until I was unable to maintain directional control. At that point I closed the throttle but it was a few moments too late. In the last skid the left wing hit the ground and the airplane quickly flipped.

I was taken almost immediately to a hospital emergency room and received 9 staples to close the gash in my head. The Baldwin County Sheriff's Office called my daughter who's number was on file as my emergency contact and verified with her that I was the pilot of the airplane.

I will be glad to meet you at the site on Monday. Just let me know about what time you will be there.

William Bruce

- home land line

- cell