

Cynthia King

From: Kerry Huffstutler [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 3, 2017 10:43 AM
To: Cynthia King
Subject: Fwd: I18 M Glider Nationals - Incident Report - Glider Content ID:LA

Kerry King Huffstutler
[REDACTED]

Begin forwarded message:

From: Richard T Schaefer [REDACTED]
Date: August 2, 2017 at 5:40:23 PM CDT
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: I18 M Glider Nationals - Incident Report - Glider Content ID:LA

This is an incident report for a Glider Flight with Tow Plane N42VA and Glider with contest ID LA.

I am the chief tow pilot for the Contest and have towed many contests at Uvalde over the years with the Pawnee N42VA.

The Incident happened Aug 2, 2017 shortly before 1:30 at Uvalde Airport.
This was the second Contest day for the 18 Meter national glider competition, following two practice days of flights and operations.

The weather conditions was partly cloudy skies with AWOS winds reported as light.
A group of 5 tow pilots were towing a grid of (I think 34) gliders starting at 12:30 PM.

Prior to the incident it was a very uneventful day in the air, with very smooth operations on the ground.

This particular flight was my seventh flight for the day and was also with the last glider (LA) on the grid.

Just prior to this flight I landed on the grass (as usual) between the main runway and the taxi way.

The second last tow plane/glider operation on the grid was already rolling as I was landing.
The rope was attached to my glider and I was given the commands to take up slack and launch as usual.

The tow was normal, climbing into ground effect, picking up speed to 80-83 MPH and then climbing out of ground effect.

By the time I had reached 300 ft I knew I was climbing to fst and made a radio request: "Was that a rope break ?".

I received no response on the Radio, so I continued as towing as normal, although I had an excessive climb rate.

Shortly after that I turned around to visually confirm that the glider was no longer on tow. At that same time I could see the glider down low.

There was no turbulence and no indication of a tow release, other than the excessive climb rate. At the time I saw the glider it was no longer within the airport perimeter, and was flying roughly south (a 45 degree angle from the corner of the airport perimeter).

From my altitude I could not judge the altitude of the glider, but it appeared to travel between a 1/4 and 1/2 mile in a straight line, roughly south before impacting the ground. It looked like a violent event from the air.

I immediately made a radio call for assistance.

Another tow plan announced they were going to fly over the crash site ... so I returned to the airport for landing.

A normal landing after a contest tow is to do a LOW down wind east of the AWOS and drop the tow rope as we are abeam the AWOS.

When I dropped the rope there was a lighter than normal release pressure on the tow handle. But I can not confirm that this indicated that the rope was disconnected prior to this point until all the ropes are accounted for,

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Richard T. Schaefer

E-mail:

[REDACTED]

Web:

[REDACTED]

Voice:

[REDACTED]

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