

I bought the plane from a friend. I have seen it fly and it flew nicely. His son flew it to my house. It is a Kolb Firefly Ultralight. Upon receiving it, the weather was bad so I decided to just taxi it up and down the runway to get used to it. I noticed that it was hard to taxi in a straight line but I didn't feel it was a great concern. I thought maybe the landing gear had a little "tow out" which would cause it to be squirrely.

On July 30, 2017, the weather looked good. Visibility was at least 40 miles with no wind. I decided I would test fly on that day. My wife came outside on the deck with her camera to take pictures of the first flight. After doing a complete test flight precheck, I proceeded to take off. On the ground run, I rotated off the ground only several feet high. The ultralight immediately started to drift to the left. It climbed sufficiently and I cleared the neighbor's trees on the north side of the runway. I continued to climb and it continued to make a left turn. I pressed the right rudder and gave it right aileron. It continued to climb left. I climbed to about 800 feet to see if I could get it to track in a straight line. It felt like a sudden gust of cross wind. It took 1/2 to 3/4 power, full right rudder, and right aileron and it would not track straight. With difficulty, I did get it to make a slight right turn with full power, full right rudder, and full right aileron. I flew it for approximately 20 minutes. Now my problem started with the inability to land. Anytime I would back off the power it would make a left turn. I tried 3 times. The first time I stayed high to see if I could line up with the runway. I could not land. Second approach was several hundred feet high. I laid the right wing down, stood on right rudder, added power (which added to much speed to land) and still could not get it lined up with the runway. One of my concerns is that I have 4 gallons or less of fuel with no history of the fuel consumption. After much deliberation, I decided to make a low approach base leg only. I made a left turn and was hoping to touch down as quickly as possible. This obviously failed. The machine made a quick left turn before the wheels ever got a chance to hit the ground. I struck the trees on the southside of the runway approximately 60 feet off the ground. The aircraft came down through the trees and landed upside down on the dirt road. It was spilt in two and was a total loss.

A neighbor happened to come by while I was freeing myself from the ultralight and assisted me.

In hind sight, maybe I should have let the ultralight track to the left and looked for a large field but if anything would have happened no one would have known my location. After replaying the accident in my mind, I decided that when I was doing my test taxiing, I might have been introvertly pressing the left trim button on the control stick. I might have done this several times which resulted in the crash. As much as I would hate to admit it, this was at no fault of the machine and could probably have been pilot error.

I was taken to the hospital, treated and released that day.