

Statement from Andrew Everett DeFeo, Pilot [REDACTED]

April 25, 2018

On April 22, 2018 at approximately 1:15 pm I was serving as the tow pilot for Aerotow launches for Adirondack Soaring. Towing gliders is part of my volunteer responsibility as a member of Adirondack Soaring and I have towed gliders since April of 2016. The sequence of events from my perspective as the tow pilot during the tow that resulted in the accident are as follows:

1. Announcing first on the CTAF: "Pawnee 47Z lining up on runway 32 [the prevailing wind runway] for glider hookup," I then taxied onto runway 32.
2. The glider was then connected to the towplane for aerotow by the ground crew.
3. Slack on the towline was removed by following hand signals and aerotow prelaunch signals.
4. The pilot confirmed via radio that he was ready for launch.
5. A ground crew member ahead and to the left of me (off the runway area) provided the "Begin Takeoff" signal (rapid circles of one arm).
6. I announced on the CTAF "Saratoga Traffic Pawnee 47Z taking off runway 32, glider in tow, Saratoga Traffic."
7. Launch appeared normal, at first. At approximately 20-30 feet above ground level (AGL), the towplane lurched forward, pitching downward. In response, I immediately pushed forward the towline release mechanism as the towplane neared impact with the runway, and applied up elevator pressure. It did not feel as if the towline released. The rapid and near immediate pitching downward at low altitude, made elevator control input ineffective. The aircraft wings were not in a stalled condition.
8. The aircraft impacted the ground in a nose low attitude, striking the prop, with the right side of the aircraft then collapsing downward. The aircraft then exited the runway, knocking down a runway light, clipping the right wing of the aircraft on a sign near the intersecting runways, ground looping (two rotations) before coming to rest on the edge of runways 5-23.
9. I exited the aircraft immediately and moved approximately 100 feet away from it.
10. Neither I or the glider pilot sustained any injury.

[REDACTED]
Andrew Everett DeFeo