



Top contributor

• 12h • 

Prayers 🙏

4h Like Reply



I watched the whole thing. He was at the fuel pumps taxied right down and took off I don't think it was long enough for a run up. Flew down the runway 15 feet up gaining speed as soon as he reached the end he began a climb. Right after that transition engine began sputtering. Crosswind he leveled it ran good again so he began a climbing turn downwind where it sputtered and died completely. Short base to final 200' agl he wasn't going to make the runway. He decided to turn back down wind and crashed the plane. Not a spin just made a sharp right turn. 10-15 knots of wind.

38m Like Reply

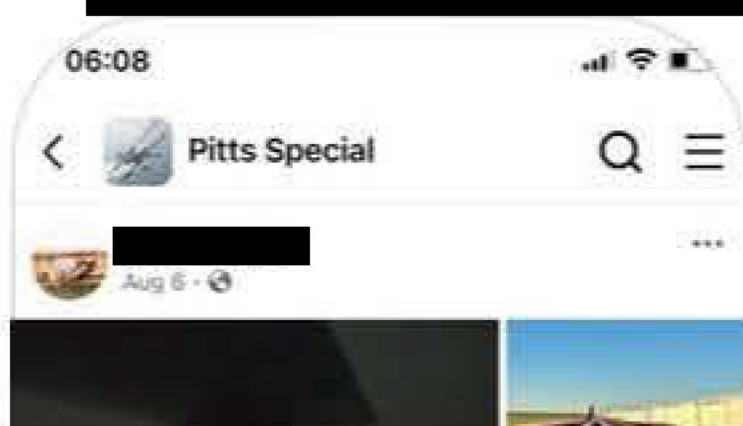


did you hear about this?

11h Like Reply



Top contributor



Write a public commen...



From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: Pitts crash kszp 8/25/24
Date: Sunday, August 25, 2024 8:01:23 PM

[REDACTED]
Deputy Regional Chief – Western Pacific Region
National Transportation Safety Board

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Web: [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, August 25, 2024 3:39:41 PM
To: Joshua Cawthra [REDACTED]
Subject: Pitts crash kszp 8/25/24

[CAUTION] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

My name is [REDACTED] and I was a partial witness to this crash earlier today. I'm an instructor at [REDACTED]. While I was on the ground conducting an instrument training flight, I saw the Pitts take off and begin his crosswind turn. Just after liftoff, the Pitts backfired twice. 2 pops. I didn't think a whole lot of it at the time and I wasn't watching very closely but I believe I saw a bit of a wing wobble and it seemed like it may have been climbing a little slower into the crosswind turn. At that point I turned my attention more fully to the lesson I was teaching. I saw nothing more until after he had already impacted. I hope this limited information is helpful.

5:30 p.m

8/25/2024

KSZP

This afternoon at 12:30 after having lunch with my CFI, I drove my vehicle to an aircraft I was due to clean. Driving there I passed through the CP Aviation ramps towards the fuel island here at SZP and saw the red Pitts aircraft stationary prepping to start his engine. To Avoid crossing his path I went down the middle row hangars here at the airport to get to the airplane I was cleaning. Upon arriving 2-3 min gone by and i'm cleaning the twin aircraft while pausing to watch the red pitts take off runway 22. I see the pilot line up the airplane with centerline and is on the roll for a few seconds then putting the aircraft in ground effect. The twin aircraft I was cleaning is $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way from the west end of the airport along the red line near the taxi line. Upon him being in ground effect he's somewhat near the end of the runway and rotates slightly and I could hear really loud popping sounds coming from the engine maybe 3-4 pops within 2 seconds then the engine sounded fine. Pilot makes his crosswind turn and is fine but once he starts to make the crosswind to downwind turn the popping sound was heard again then smoothed out. Most pilots reference the hill on downwind "Goat hill" peak being a pattern altitude 850ft, once he passed the hill a couple feet, I heard the popping sound and an immediate engine out sound. Pretty much sounded like the engine quit on downwind, not power to idle the sound can still be heard but genuine engine out. After hearing that i noticed there was an RV aircraft already on final and as the pitts made its base turn immediately it seemed at such a somewhat fast speed both airplanes would collide but the pitts pilot avoided the other aircraft and made a slight right turn going vertical opposite direction of the RV turn had some nose up force and suddenly dove nose down into the crash site it was at. From his engine quitting to the crash it was all within a 15 second timeframe.



From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: N42JF Statement
Date: Monday, August 26, 2024 1:14:55 PM

[CAUTION] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

On August, 25th at approximately 1215pm local, the accident aircraft N42JF departed KSZP from runway 22. Upon initial climb on the upwind leg, the engine began a series of stumbles at '100 feet agl then regained power. The aircraft began a left crosswind turn while appearing to make power as it was visibly climbing then turned onto the downwind leg when at this time the engine roughness was heard again. Around mid field the aircraft initiated a left turn to base meanwhile another aircraft was in the pattern on a base to final leg. From my vantage point I could not hear engine noise anymore. The accident aircraft which I can only presume was contending with a potential traffic conflict with the aircraft on final now; started a right turn back to down wind and at this point was low in the pattern. My last view of the airplane before impact was in a shallow right turn headed roughly down wind then disappeared into the horizon. Seconds later black smoke began to rise indicating a crash.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: ***WITNESS CODE A**^Fwd: Witness to Plane Crash at Santa Paula Airport (KSZP) Today (Aug, 25, 2024) at 12:30 PM
Date: Sunday, August 25, 2024 8:37:07 PM

FYI

Regards
Erik

Erik R Grosf
Chief Special Operations Div
NTSB HQ
Washington DC

From: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, August 25, 2024 11:29:00 PM
To: eyewitnessreport <eyewitnessreport@ntsb.gov>
Subject: Witness to Plane Crash at Santa Paula Airport (KSZP) Today (Aug, 25, 2024) at 12:30 PM

[CAUTION] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing you to indicate that I witness the plane crash today (Aug 25, 2024) at Santa Paula Airport (KSZP) around 12:30 PM. I was at the airport waiting for a friend to pick me up and fly to Santa Rosa, CA. I was watching the planes coming into the airport to see if it was my friends plane. I noticed a plane try to attempt a landing, but aborted. A red single engine bi-plane was close behind him coming down very quickly. He was heading northeast and made a quick turn to land on runway 22 at Santa Paula. He appeared to be coming down at a steep angle. After turning 90 degrees heading north and trying to make the approach for the runway, for some reason he turned away from the runway in an easterly direction. He was very low and I found that unusual. Then a few seconds later I saw the smoke from the explosion of the crash. Other people that witness the crash said he just took off from the airport and noticed his engine was sputtering. I could not hear the engine from the plane. They said it appeared he had engine trouble and was returning back to the airport. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: KSZP Aircraft Accident 8/25 Witness Statement
Date: Monday, August 26, 2024 4:34:18 AM

[REDACTED]
Deputy Regional Chief – Western Pacific Region
National Transportation Safety Board
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, August 25, 2024 8:23:12 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: KSZP Aircraft Accident 8/25 Witness Statement

[CAUTION] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good evening,

I was instructed to reach out to you to provide a statement regarding the aircraft accident that occurred at KSZP on 8/25/24 at approximately 12:24pm local time.

I was speaking with a student who was preflighting the aircraft we were about to go up in near the midfield windsock when I noticed the aircraft that was involved in the accident. When I first noticed the aircraft it appeared that it was on a left downwind for runway 22, approximately abeam the runway 22 numbers from my vantage point. What caught my attention originally was that the aircraft appeared to be much lower than normal. As I continued to watch, it appeared that the aircraft began to enter a left base, but the speed did appear lower than normal. It then appeared from my vantage point that the aircraft made a turn back to the right (almost as if to reenter a downwind). At this point the aircraft dipped below the treeline, and I was no longer able to see the aircraft. I originally thought that the pilot was possibly intentionally trying to fly low level along the river, but within about 10 seconds I noticed a large plume of smoke coming from just east of the approach end of runway 22 which confirmed to me that the aircraft had crashed.

There was another aircraft on final when this event occurred. All that I can recall was that it

was a white, low-wing aircraft. The other aircraft appeared to break off from the final and initiate a go around right about the time the smoke became visible. The other aircraft then appeared to navigate themselves to fly over the crash site.

I called 911 to report the crash as soon as I saw the smoke starting to show. This would have been at 12:24pm local time, and I believe I was the first to contact 911.

I did not have access to a radio during the event, and am unsure if any radio calls were made by the pilot of the accident aircraft. I did not witness the approximately last 10 seconds of flight by the accident aircraft as it had disappeared below the treeline. From what I did witness, I did not observe any type of obvious stall/spin situation when the accident aircraft was attempting to make it to the runway.

Please let me know if there is anything else I can try to provide to you or be of assistance for.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.