

Michael Hicks

From: Riley Wagner [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 3:19 PM
To: Michael Hicks
Subject: Re: Riley Wagner Partially Completed Form 6120

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Riley Wagner 10/18/23 FAA/NTSB Report I was doing a long cross country with a friend who has a PPL but was solely a passenger for this flight, with multiple stops planned. Our goal that day was to visit several airports, build cross country time for my instrument rating, and collect stamps for the Washington passport program. Our flight was conducted as a Part 91 personal flight and started at S50 airport; I did a thorough preflight. I noticed no issues, the brakes looked fine, the pad material seemed a bit shallow, but nothing of concern, no fluid leaks. I confirmed brake functionality during taxi and runup.

During this cross country we had previously landed at 7 other airports in the preceding hours; 21W, 4S6, YKM, ELN, 2W1, S93, and ESW before this incident happened. Those 7 airports included 2 other grass strips (4S6 and ESW) with no performance issues at all, 4W0 was our last planned stop. I had previously confirmed landing distance and ground roll for this 2344ft grass strip with a wide margin for error. We had a completely adequate amount of room to land and takeoff for the conditions and circumstances that day.

We started our descent NE of Keechelus lake and descended into the valley where 4W0 was located. We overflew the field at 3000 msl (1500~ above TPA) to observe wind and field conditions. An aircraft inbound to KESW who had just landed at 4W0 reported on when I asked about conditions that "field was clear and winds were light from the west." We subsequently confirmed these conditions with our visual overfly and proceeded to enter the left crosswind and began descending to TPA.

I began landing checks as we were in the left downwind and turned left base for a nominal final. The approach end of 26 has very tall trees, and the airport is surrounded by them, for this reason I elected to stay higher than normal to avoid these tall trees, flaps were 40, 62~kts as I continued the descent. The aircraft floated in ground effect from about the 500ft mark of runway 26 all the way to midfield (1200ft ~), slightly east of where the windsock is located, giving me 1200ft to stop at a touchdown speed of 55kts. From this point, things looked good, and I felt we would have plenty of room to stop. I held my nose high for soft field technique and aerodynamic braking, retracted flaps to 0 for maximum braking effect, and applied maximum braking.

A moment after I applied max brakes, I thought to do a go around, as we were not slowing at all, however based on the height of the trees at end of the runway, the performance of the aircraft, and since I retracted flaps for maximum braking effect, we would have hit the trees on the go around. We were committed to land at this point.

In the same moment my PPL friend questioned if I was even on the brakes, as we were not slowing whatsoever. The pedals felt spongy, and my body was braced all the way back in my seat to push as hard as I could against the pedals. The wheels continued to spin and did not lock at all, we did not skid, just rolled in the grass. As we reached the end of the runway, we realized what was about to happen, I pulled mixture, shutoff fuel, avionics, mags, master, not even a second later we had overrun and gone over the steep embankment at the west end of the runway at 30~kts.

The aircraft prop struck, and we flipped over upside down against some small trees and bushes. We immediately evacuated the aircraft and called emergency services. Amazingly, neither my friend nor I were injured at all, not even scratch. From there we called the airport manager and the aircraft owner, and I spoke to someone from the NTSB.

After we were waiting at the incident site, I observed the grass was dry to the touch and about 6'in high. I could see our tire impressions in the grass leading back past windsock, with little to no dirt ripped up. If the dirt was pulled up, it would indicate brakes locked and wheel and skidding in the grass/dirt.

Based on the POH and my calculations earlier in the day we would have been able to stop in the remaining rollout with 500ft~ to spare. When I did think to go around it became too late and the remaining runway was not sufficient for a safe climb out to avoid the trees on the departure leg. If the brakes had functioned as they had at earlier grass strips, we would've had no issue stopping, no question about it. I am thankful no one was hurt.

On Mon, Nov 6, 2023 at 2:32 PM Michael Hicks [REDACTED] wrote:

Mr. Wagner,

Mr. Basti was correct. I have not received anything from James.

Respectfully,



MICHAEL A. V. HICKS

National Transportation Safety Board

Air Safety Investigator

Phone: [REDACTED]

From: Riley Wagner [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 1:44 PM
To: Michael Hicks [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Riley Wagner Partially Completed Form 6120

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Hello Mr. Hicks, when Mr. Paul Basti sent James and I this form to fill out he indicated we could fill out our sections separately and send it to you, I believe James has done the same. Have you received his portion of the form? Thank you.