



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Merritt Island, Florida	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ERA19TA114
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	March 2, 2019, 09:18 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N93XL
<b>Aircraft:</b>	REMPE KITFOX	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Hard landing	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Serious
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The pilot stated that the airplane bounced on landing and then veered to the left. He applied full power and attempted to go around, but the airplane banked sharply to the right and impacted a creek adjacent to the runway. The pilot sustained serious injuries, and the airplane sustained minor damage to the left wing tip, engine cowlings, and propeller. The pilot said that his flying skills had diminished and that he lost control of the airplane. He also said there were no mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane or engine that would have precluded normal operation at the time of the accident.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's failure to maintain airplane control during an attempted go-around.

## Findings

<b>Aircraft</b>	(general) - Not attained/maintained
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Aircraft control - Pilot

# Factual Information

## History of Flight

<b>Landing-flare/touchdown</b>	Hard landing (Defining event)
<b>Landing-aborted after touchdown</b>	Loss of control on ground
<b>Uncontrolled descent</b>	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

On March 2, 2019, at 0918 eastern standard time, an experimental amateur-built Kitfox XL4, N93XL, sustained minor damage when it impacted Sykes Creek during a rejected landing at the Merritt Island Airport (COI), Merritt Island, Florida. The commercial pilot was seriously injured. The airplane was registered to and operated by the pilot under the provisions of Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed for the local personal flight that originated at COI at 0900.

The pilot stated that he bounced on landing and the airplane veered to the left. He applied full power to go-around and the airplane "went sharply to the right" and impacted the water. The pilot said the airplane sank in about 8 ft of water before he was able to release the seatbelt/shoulder harness and float to the surface. He did not recall anything after that.

A witness, who was a flight instructor, observed the accident from an airplane on the hold short line for runway 29. He saw the accident airplane turn onto the final approach leg of the traffic pattern and make a stable approach to the runway. The flight instructor turned away for a moment, but when he looked back up, the airplane was in a 90° right bank flying perpendicular to the runway. The right-wing tip was about 10 ft from the ground as the airplane veered toward the water. The right-wing tip struck the water first, which resulted in the nose of the airplane pitching down under the water and submerging the cabin.

Another witness was fishing on his boat with his son when he first observed the airplane. He said the airplane bounced while landing and then climbed about 15 to 25 ft before making a sharp right bank. The airplane then crashed nose first into the water. The witness and his son immediately responded, lifted the pilot on to their boat, and successfully revived him with CPR before rescue personnel arrived.

A postaccident examination of the airplane revealed minor damage to the left-wing tip, engine cowling, and the propeller.

The pilot told a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector that his flying skills had diminished and that he lost control of the airplane. He reported there were no mechanical problems that would have precluded normal operation of the airplane or engine at the time of the accident.

The pilot, age 89, held a commercial pilot certificate with a rating for airplane single-engine land. His last FAA third-class medical was issued on March 22, 2010. The pilot reported a total of 5,000 flight hours, of which, 50 hours were in the accident airplane.

Weather reported at Patrick Air Force Base, Cocoa Beach, Florida, about 9 miles southeast of the accident site, at 0856, was wind 250° at 4 knots, visibility 10 miles, clear skies, temperature 23°, dew point 21°, and an altimeter setting of 30.14 inches of mercury.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial; Private; Sport Pilot	<b>Age:</b>	89, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	3-point
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Sport pilot None	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	5000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 50 hours (Total, this make and model), 10 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	REMPE	<b>Registration:</b>	N93XL
<b>Model/Series:</b>	KITFOX XL4	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	2009	<b>Amateur Built:</b>	Yes
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Experimental (Special)	<b>Serial Number:</b>	BCX001
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	November 4, 2018 Condition	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1050 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	10 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	90 Hrs at time of accident	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Rotax
<b>ELT:</b>	Not installed	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	503 UL
<b>Registered Owner:</b>		<b>Rated Power:</b>	50 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	On file	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	COF, 8 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	9 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	08:56 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	200°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	4 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	None / None
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	250°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	N/A / N/A
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.13 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	23°C / 21°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Merritt Island, FL (COI )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Merritt Island, FL (COI )	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	09:00 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class E

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	Merritt Island COI	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Asphalt
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	5 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Used:</b>	11	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	3601 ft / 75 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Go around

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	28.341388,-80.685279(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Read, Leah
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Rene Padilla; FAA/FSDO; Mirimar, FL
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	August 10, 2020
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=99046">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=99046</a>

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