



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Watervliet, Michigan	Accident Number:	CEN24LA176
Date & Time:	May 1, 2024, 11:20 Local	Registration:	N8618V
Aircraft:	Bellanca 7ECA	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control on ground	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that while landing on a turf runway in a tailwheel-equipped airplane, the main landing gear encountered soft terrain upon touchdown. The airplane rapidly decelerated and the tail rose. The pilot applied full aft pressure on the control stick but was unable to regain control before the airplane nosed over and came to rest inverted. During the nose over the airplane sustained substantial damage to the vertical stabilizer, rudder, and right wing strut.

The pilot reported that there were no preimpact mechanical failures or malfunctions that would have precluded normal operation.

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 control during the landing roll on a soft turf runway.

Findings

Environmental issues	Soft surface - Awareness of condition
Environmental issues	Soft surface - Effect on operation
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	(general) - Not attained/maintained

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing-landing roll	Loss of control on ground (Defining event)
Landing-landing roll	Attempted remediation/recovery
Landing-landing roll	Nose over/nose down

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	63,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 3, 2023
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	June 19, 2023
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 1723 hours (Total, all aircraft), 412 hours (Total, this make and model), 1600 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 40 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 32 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bellanca	Registration:	N8618V
Model/Series:	7ECA	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1975	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Aerobatic; Normal	Serial Number:	1084-75
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	December 27, 2023 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1650 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	16 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3720 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	C91A installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-235-C1
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	115 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KBEH, 641 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	9 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	11:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	239°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	16 knots / 24 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	250°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	Unknown / Unknown
Altimeter Setting:	29.86 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	22°C / 15°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Michigan City, IN (MGC)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Watervliet, MI (40C)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	09:55 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Watervliet Municipal Airport 40C	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	656 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Soft;Wet
Runway Used:	20	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2600 ft / 200 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	42.200667,-86.249333(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Maxon, Cory
Additional Participating Persons:	Josh Osman; Federal Aviation Administration: FSDO; Grand Rapids, MI
Original Publish Date:	June 28, 2024
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=194207

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).