



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

Aviation Investigation Final Report

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Location: | Louisville, Georgia | Accident Number: | ERA23LA268 |
| Date & Time: | June 3, 2023, 17:09 Local | Registration: | N828WD |
| Aircraft: | Jabiru J250 | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | Loss of control on ground | Injuries: | 1 Minor |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

The pilot reported that, during the takeoff roll, the airplane started to drift left of the runway centerline. He responded with right rudder; however, the airplane continued to drift to the left. He continued to add right rudder until the pedals reached the hard stop. The airplane departed the runway surface and entered a rough, grassy area. The airplane's nose landing gear collapsed, and the wreckage came to rest nose down, resulting in substantial damage to the airplane.

A postaccident examination of the flight controls, wheel brakes, and tires did not reveal evidence of a preexisting mechanical malfunction or failure. The pilot reported that there were thunderstorms in the area. There was no wind information available for the departure airport; however, several airports in the area reported gusting wind conditions. The closest recorded observation noted distant lightning to the west. Based on this information, it is likely that the pilot encountered wind conditions that exceeded his ability to maintain directional control during the takeoff roll.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's decision to take off in wind conditions that exceeded his ability to maintain directional control, resulting in a runway excursion and substantial damage to the airplane.

Findings

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Aircraft | Directional control - Not attained/maintained |
| Personnel issues | Decision making/judgment - Pilot |
| Environmental issues | Gusts - Response/compensation |

Factual Information

History of Flight

| | |
|---------|--|
| Takeoff | Loss of control on ground (Defining event) |
| Takeoff | Runway excursion |

On June 3, 2023, about 1709 eastern daylight time, an experimental amateur-built Jabiru J250, N828WD, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Louisville, Georgia. The private pilot received minor injuries. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

The pilot reported that he was preparing for a takeoff at Louisville Municipal Airport (2J3), Louisville, Georgia on a local flight. During the takeoff roll, the airplane started to drift left of the runway centerline. He responded with right rudder; however, the airplane continued to drift to the left. He continued to add right rudder until the pedals reached the hard stop. The airplane departed the runway surface and entered a grassy area. The nose gear collapsed on the rough terrain and the wreckage came to rest nose down. The pilot reported in a later interview that there were thunderstorms in the area.

The weather observations for 2J3 were not archived and attempts to recover the data were unsuccessful. The 1655 observation (about 14 minutes before the accident) at East Georgia Regional Airport (SBO), Swainsboro, Georgia, located 23 nm south of 2J3, included wind from 050° at 7 knots with gusts to 14 knots. Distant lightning to the west was also noted. The 1715 observation at Thomson-McDuffie County Airport (HQU), located about 33 nm north-northeast of 2J3, included wind from 050° at 8 knots with gusts to 17 knots. The 1715 observation at Baldwin County Regional Airport (MLJ), Milledgeville, Georgia, located about 44 nm west-northwest of 2J3, included wind variable at 3 knots with gusts to 10 knots.

An inspector with the Federal Aviation Administration responded to the accident site and examined the wreckage. The nose gear collapsed under the engine compartment. The lower, forward fuselage was crushed and impinged on the rudder pedals. The wings, aft fuselage, and empennage were undamaged.

The National Transportation Safety Board investigator-in-charge examined the wreckage at a storage facility after the wreckage was recovered. An examination of the flight controls revealed continuity from the control surfaces to the cockpit controls. The lower, forward fuselage was crushed in an upward and aft direction, compromising and deforming the cockpit floor and impinging on the rudder controls. An examination of the tires and wheel brakes revealed no evidence of a preexisting mechanical malfunction or failure that would have precluded normal operation.

Pilot Information

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---------------|
| Certificate: | Private | Age: | 70, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine land | Seat Occupied: | Left |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Restraint Used: | 3-point |
| Instrument Rating(s): | None | Second Pilot Present: | No |
| Instructor Rating(s): | None | Toxicology Performed: | |
| Medical Certification: | BasicMed | Last FAA Medical Exam: | June 15, 2021 |
| Occupational Pilot: | No | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | April 2, 2022 |
| Flight Time: | 857 hours (Total, all aircraft), 4 hours (Total, this make and model), 857 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 17 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Jabiru | Registration: | N828WD |
| Model/Series: | J250 | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | 2007 | Amateur Built: | Yes |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Experimental (Special) | Serial Number: | 327 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Tricycle | Seats: | 2 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | January 1, 2023 Condition | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 1320 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | 545 Hrs at time of accident | Engine Manufacturer: | Jabiru |
| ELT: | Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident | Engine Model/Series: | 3300A |
| Registered Owner: | On file | Rated Power: | 120 |
| 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: | KSBO,329 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 23 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 16:55 Local | Direction from Accident Site: | 178° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Scattered / 12000 ft AGL | Visibility | 10 miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | 7 knots / 14 knots | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | None / None |
| Wind Direction: | 50° | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | N/A / N/A |
| Altimeter Setting: | 29.77 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 30°C / 17°C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | No Obscuration; No Precipitation | | |
| Departure Point: | Louisville, GA | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | None |
| Destination: | Louisville, GA | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | | Type of Airspace: | Class G |

Airport Information

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| Airport: | Louisville Municipal 2J3 | Runway Surface Type: | Asphalt |
| Airport Elevation: | 327 ft msl | Runway Surface Condition: | Unknown |
| Runway Used: | 13 | IFR Approach: | None |
| Runway Length/Width: | 5002 ft / 100 ft | VFR Approach/Landing: | None |

Wreckage and Impact Information

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 Minor | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 1 Minor | Latitude, Longitude: | 32.985944,-82.384806(est) |

Administrative Information

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Hicks, Ralph |
| Additional Participating Persons: | John Pless; FAA/FSDO; Atlanta, GA |
| Original Publish Date: | June 26, 2024 |
| Last Revision Date: | |
| Investigation Class: | Class 3 |
| Note: | The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident. |
| Investigation Docket: | https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=192370 |

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).