



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Buffalo, Minnesota	Accident Number:	CEN24LA041
Date & Time:	November 17, 2023, 13:10 Local	Registration:	N30494
Aircraft:	Piper J3C	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control on ground	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that, while practicing touch-and-go landings, the tailwheel-equipped airplane touched down and immediately veered right. The pilot attempted to correct with opposite rudder and brake; however, the airplane exited the right side of the runway. During the excursion the airplane collided with an airport sign, and the right wing struck the ground, which resulted in substantial damage to the right wing and its lift strut.

The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

At the time of the accident, the pilot was landing the airplane on runway 18 with wind from 210° at 12 knots.

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 directional control during the landing roll with a quartering headwind.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	Directional control - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	Crosswind - Effect on operation

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing-landing roll	Other weather encounter
Landing	Loss of control on ground (Defining event)
Landing-landing roll	Attempted remediation/recovery
Landing-landing roll	Runway excursion
Landing-landing roll	Collision during takeoff/land
Landing-landing roll	Landing gear collapse

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	727,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Lap only
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	November 2, 2023
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	August 4, 2023
Flight Time:	603 hours (Total, all aircraft), 125 hours (Total, this make and model), 287.2 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 3.3 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Co-pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	36,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Rear
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Lap only
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 13, 2020
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	July 27, 2023
Flight Time:	298 hours (Total, all aircraft), 9.1 hours (Total, this make and model), 213.9 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N30494
Model/Series:	J3C	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1940	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	4874
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 15, 2023 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1170 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	738.3 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	C91 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	C85-8
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	85 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:	KCFE, 966 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	13:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	300°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 9000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	12 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	210°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.99 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	6°C / -6°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Buffalo, MN (CFE)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Buffalo, MN (CFE)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:10 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	BUFFALO MUNI CFE	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	967 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	18	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3200 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Straight-in

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	45.159655,-93.84329

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Brown, Zane
Additional Participating Persons:	Daniel Sindt; FAA FSDO; Minneapolis, MN
Original Publish Date:	May 29, 2024
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=193405

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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](#).