



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	St. Augustine, Florida	Accident Number:	ERA23LA165
Date & Time:	March 26, 2023, 11:30 Local	Registration:	N541SP
Aircraft:	Piper PA-28-151	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control on ground	Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that following a local flight, the approach to landing and touchdown were normal, however, as he applied wheel brakes, the airplane veered to the right. He attempted to correct with left rudder and brake application but was unable to stop the right veer. Subsequently, the airplane exited the runway to the right and impacted a drainage ditch about 175 ft from the runway's edge, which resulted in substantial damage to the fuselage and engine mounts.

The pilot reported that this was the first landing of the flight, and no anomalies were noted with the brakes or flight controls prior to the landing. He recalled that during the runway excursion, shortly before impacting the ditch, the airplane straightened out and stopped the right turn.

Shortly after the accident, the wings were removed for recovery which prevented the investigation from determining whether air was present in the brake lines. Photographs of the main landing gear wheels, brakes, and brake lines revealed no evidence of catastrophic mechanical failures or evidence that brake lines had become disconnected. Review of maintenance records found no evidence of recent brake work, and the endorsements showed that the brake fluid reservoir was serviced routinely.

The operator and pilot both submitted a National Transportation Safety Board Aircraft Accident Incident Report (6120.1) and neither party reported that there were mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane.

About the time of the accident, the automated weather observing system reported wind 220° at 9 knots, gusting to 15 knots, which was a direct crosswind for the landing runway 13. It is likely that the airplane encountered a crosswind gust during the landing roll, which resulted in the airplane veering right toward the direction of the crosswind. This conclusion is further supported by the pilot's report that the airplane straightened out, once the crosswind became a headwind, shortly before its collision with the ditch.

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 in gusting crosswind conditions, which resulted in a runway excursion and an impact with a ditch.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	Directional control - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	Crosswind - Response/compensation

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing-landing roll	Loss of control on ground (Defining event)
Landing-landing roll	Runway excursion

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	83,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 Waiver time limited special	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 17, 2019
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 288 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N541SP
Model/Series:	PA-28-151 NO SERIES	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	28-7415570
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 18, 2023 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2325 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	9579 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	C91 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-E3D
Registered Owner:	RED BARON RENTALS LLC	Rated Power:	160 Horsepower
Operator:	Florida Aviation Career Training Inc.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Pilot school (141)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	SGJ,10 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	11:43 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	223°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	9 knots / 15 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	220°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.09 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C / 21°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	St. Augustine, FL	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	St. Augustine, FL	Type of Clearance:	VFR
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	Northeast Florida Regional Airport SGJ	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	10 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	13	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	8001 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	29.95925,-81.339729(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gerhardt, Adam
Additional Participating Persons:	Cheryl King; FAA/ FSDO; Orlando, FL
Original Publish Date:	July 7, 2023
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=106962

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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](#).