

Cawthra Joshua

From: George Ford [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2017 8:04 PM
To: Cawthra Joshua
Subject: George Ford Sport 43 Statement Reno Air Races

Josh,

It was nice meeting you during this tough situation.

Please find my statement below. I am also sending an exact copy of this to James Richardson from the Reno FAA FSDO.

Feel free to look me up when you get up near the Longview WA area.
George

Statement from
George Ford
[REDACTED]
Longview WA 98632
[REDACTED]

To: FAA and NTSB
09/19/2017

To Whom it may concern:

During the final heat of the Medallion race at the Reno Air Races at approximately 0900 on Sunday September 17, 2017 I witnessed a mid-air collision involving Sport #96 Mark ter Keurs flying a GP-4 and Sport #26 Robert Swortzel flying an RV-8.

#26 was in Position 7, #96 ter Keurs was in Position 8. I was in position 9 Sport #43 on the far outside of the flight. We were entering the start of the chute via an echelon turn to the left. I saw that both #26 and #96 were both further back in the formation than normal. #26 closed the distance and came back up nearly to the correct position in the flight. #96 was also back from the flight and was catching up to the flight to fly along side #26 as we were beginning to all fly "Line Abreast" for the release. #96 moved forward back into position very quickly. I believe #96 must have lost sight of #26 as he closed the distance due wings not level.

At that time I saw #96 possibly try to slow or correct his position to the right using his Ailerons. Contact occurred with #96 propeller hitting #26 right aileron. Also #96 wings may have made contact with the upper portion of #26 Vertical Stabilizer.

In seeing this develop I immediately called on the radio that there was contact with the two airplanes. After this, the radio frequency jammed with possibly too many pilots making transmissions. I watched as #26 flew up and out of the flight to the left and rearward. #96 Flew up, near my position and rearward. #96 looked to be in more control than #26 was at this time.

I waited for instructions momentarily however the frequency was jammed and luckily I was in a good position to be chase plane. I made a radio call of my intentions as I exited the flight as instructed in our operating procedures towards #26 departure path. Shortly after this I believe I heard that the pace aircraft would follow / chase #96 to the runway.

I visually acquired #26. He was regaining some control of his aircraft at this point and was heading in the correct direction towards the airport (Runway 32). I followed at a safe distance to the right and made several transmissions encouraging him to keep working the controls flying the airplane all the way to touchdown.

After I saw that he made a successful landing I climbed out of the area and I returned to runway 08 to land.

I hereby declare that the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

George Ford