



Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Aviation Safety - Eastern Region (AS-ERA)

Date: April 18, 2023
Subject: ERA23LA199 Pilot Interview
Contact: Carey Castle

The following is a record of conversation with Mr. Carey Castle. Mr. Castle returned my call at 1220 EDT on April 18, 2023. He was interviewed by phone and provided a phone number of [REDACTED] and an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

I advised Mr. Castle that I would be typing the notes and would send them to him for review and comment.

Mr. Castle stated that he has flown this airplane 2-3 times before and never had an issue. When he initiated his takeoff on runway 5 at the Lake Cumberland Regional Airport (SME), the wind was from 060° at 6-7 kts gusting to 12 kts. He rotated at 55 kts and immediately got the stall light. He attempted to lower the nose and level the airplane; however, the airplane settled back onto the runway, on the left edge of the runway. It happened quickly; he felt like everything was fine until rotation and he got the stall light. When the airplane came back down on the left side of the runway, it seemed like the left tire caught the grass and pulled the airplane to the left, and then the airplane hit the ILS system, damaging the wing. HE stated that there were no preexisting anomalies or malfunctions that would have precluded normal flight. The engine was fine, and the engine run-up was good. He believes that it was the gusting wind and his inability to correct for it. He stated that he should have stayed on the ground for another 5-10 kts but hindsight is 20/20.

The call ended at 1233 EDT.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on April 18, 2023. He replied on April 18, 2023, at 1354 EDT with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. The corrected digest was e-mailed to him on April 18, 2023.

Statement of Events-Aircraft Accident N2448R

Date: 8 Apr 2023

Time: Approximately 0855L EST

Pilot: Carey W. Castle (Student Pilot Cert number [REDACTED])

This is my statement to the best of my recollection, for the accident in Piper Cherokee N2448R.

I was scheduled for solo flight to depart Lake Cumberland Regional (SME) to Lexington Blue Grass airport (LEX) in N2448R. I checked the weather and conditions at both locations and after discussion with my CFI decided to takeoff from SME and if conditions were not favorable at LEX or enroute, just do a local area sortie.

The aircraft preflight was completed, I pulled the plane out of the hangar and it was topped off with fuel. I then completed engine start at the north ramp and taxied to runway 05 via Twy A. The winds at my last check with AWOS on the north ramp were from 060 @ 7knts gusting to 12knts. The windsock was checked and in general agreement with the AWOS. Taxi was normal and pre takeoff checks completed at the 05 hold short line on Twy A with no issues. I cleared the airspace, announced and pulled onto the runway at approximately 0854L, ran the engine up for takeoff, all indications were normal, and I released the brakes.

Initial rollout felt normal, and I rotated at approximately 55+mph with slight right aileron input in anticipation of the wind. As the plane lifted off, I observed a stall warning light (no horn in this model) and I immediately tried to level off leaving the engine at full throttle. The plane settled back on the runway and was pulling left. I was unable to straighten out before it left the runway after passing the 4000 feet remaining marker. After that, I had no control but did pull back on the throttle. The plane continued in a left curve through the grassy area striking an ILS antenna and continuing until it intersected and crossed Twy A. The plane came to a stop just after crossing the taxiway. I made a call on the SME CTAF that N2448R had departed the runway and then turned off the master switches, gathered my materials and waited outside the plane until SME personnel arrived on scene. During that time, I notified the airport manager via phone and the aircraft owner.

There were no physical injuries to me in this incident. During my walkaround I noted the plane has a damaged cowling, prop damage with engine sudden stoppage, the nose gear is sheared off, and several large dents to the leading edge of the left wing. I did not move or touch any aircraft parts or pieces but did take all my personal effects from the plane.

[REDACTED]
Carey W. Castle