

Sorensen Tim

From: Thurston, Gregory J (FAA) [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 26, 2021 8:40 AM
To: Sorensen Tim
Cc: Thurston, Gregory J (FAA)
Subject: FW: Witness Account

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From: Ben Redman [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 23, 2021 11:24 AM
To: Thurston, Gregory J (FAA) [REDACTED]
Subject: Witness Account

At approximately 2:00 pm 4/22/21 I witnessed a Piper Archer performing what appeared to a a touch and go. From my vantage point during this lading I was only witness to seeing the aircraft after full power was applied. The aircraft appeared to be flying very slowly after liftoff and having difficulty with the crosswind. While in a nose high attitude, full power, flying very slowly, a turn to crosswind was executed at approximately 300'. I noted the entire turn appeared to be done wings level with all rudder. During this turn the aircraft was flying nose high attitude, full power at what appeared to be near stall.

As the aircraft flew crosswind for a bit I shifted my focus to starting an aircraft at our hangar to taxi to the fuel farm.

Upon shutting down at the fuel farm I witnessed the Archer on final to again attempt landing on runway 30. I shifted my attention to watching the Archer which was approaching in an unstable manner and appeared to be struggling with; crosswind, a high rate of speed and pitch control. Upon entering ground effect it appeared the pilot was struggling with directional control due to cross wind while mitigating being too fast to land. Much past the runway half way point the aircraft porpoised to find the ground and was forced rather than flared onto the runway. With minimal sufficient runway available full power was applied and lift off was executed with a high nose angle and low rate of climb. Again the crosswind appeared to be a challenge along with over control application. At about 150-200' a crosswind turn was executed while the aircraft was nose high, slow and at full power. During this turn which appeared un coordinated I witnessed the aircraft shudder, drop a wing and disappear below the tree line. After going out of sight you could hear impact with the ground and the engine go from full power to silent upon impact.

Upon arrival to the scene both occupants were outside the aircraft and unharmed. I asked if the master switch and fuel selector was off. One individual identified himself as the flight instructor who stated "this is really a bad way for an introductory flight and someones first lesson to end." No comments or discussion was offered by the other individual. I opted to keep any further discussion minimal and seeing no further relevant assistance could be offered I vacated the scene as professional first responders and police arrived.

Sorensen Tim

From: Thurston, Gregory J (FAA) [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 26, 2021 8:39 AM
To: Sorensen Tim
Cc: Thurston, Gregory J (FAA)
Subject: FW: 4/22 KFBL Statement
Attachments: 4.22 KFBL Statement Sara Weidler.pdf

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From: Sara Weidler [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 23, 2021 6:45 PM
To: Thurston, Gregory J (FAA) [REDACTED]
Subject: 4/22 KFBL Statement

Let me know if you need anything else from me or my student. Hope this helps!

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Sara Weidler
Flight Instructor - CFII, TCI
[REDACTED]



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Weather conditions:

30.00”Hg

Winds 240@11-17. Foreflight said the crosswind was up to 11kts for RWY 30. Max for the Piper Arrow and Archer is 17 kts.

Definitely turbulent, wouldn't teach a student how to land if it was their first landing lesson. Debated canceling my next lesson with my private student who was just learning to land. Hard to stay coordinated on the turns, felt like the plane was fishtailing throughout the turn. My student handled the crosswind well, had minimal left aileron input on landing, could have used more but kept the nose straight and over centerline with the right rudder. Did not feel super gusty once in ground effect.

I was in the pattern at KFBL with my commercial rated student practicing landings and power-off 180s in the Arrow. After our second lap, N7114C joined us in the pattern with no radio calls. I did not notice anything unusual about the first landing (wasn't watching them closely). They extended downwind for about a 4 mile final on the second lap, still no radio calls. Their approach was unusually high and way off centerline. On the landing, I could see they were uncoordinated, nose was turned left into the wind. With the sight picture I had, it was hard to tell if they landed straight or if they side-loaded it. On touchdown, they were on the downwind side of centerline. The touch and go looked uncoordinated, seemed like they were struggling to climb, but going fairly straight. We did a full stop taxi back. We watched their 3rd approach from the hold short line. They announced their position on Base and Final for this lap. Again, came in extremely high, thought maybe they were practicing forward slips. Plane's attitude looked as if they were doing a forward slip as the nose was left but seemed to be tracking straight. Their wings were rocking a lot and I wondered if the turbulence was that bad, it did not look like a fun ride. Coming up on the displaced threshold they started to drop like a rock, and were maybe 400-500 feet high. Watching them drop as fast as they did, I said to my student "they should go around, why are they not going around". They kicked the nose straight just as they were about to touch down (maybe still a little sideways). They landed so hard I was shocked to see them do a touch and go. It was one of the hardest landings I have seen, and after only a year and a half of instructing, I've witnessed a lot of hard landings. I don't often verbalize my thoughts on other landings with my students, but after that landing we both said something along the lines of how terrible it was. I even thought about asking on the CTAF if there was an instructor on board. Thought I might have to talk a student pilot down. The takeoff looked just as bad. I don't think they were going straight down the runway at this point. The nose went left immediately after rotation. Seemed to be going for the trees on the left side at the end of the runway. I can't recall if they turned over the trees or after the trees, either way we sat there in anticipation waiting to see what would happen. They cleared the trees and turned crosswind maybe

200-300 AGL. Not sure if the turn was intentional or not because they looked so uncoordinated and already going left. Rather than flying further on the crosswind to gain more altitude, they continued the turn to downwind looking just as low (see highlighted path in photo). FlightAware shows the turn a little sooner than reality I think. From our perspective, they were right at the tree line on downwind. We took off when they were about midfield, trying to get spacing for our power off 180. I did not pay attention to this landing, just watched the spacing (we were abeam the numbers when they looked like they were touching down). My student overshot final a little and when I looked ahead to see them, I saw them left of the runway again, trying to clear the trees in a left turn. Went from a climbing attitude to then nose down after the trees, they dipped below the trees and I lost sight of them. The attitude of the plane didn't look like they were stalling, but the continuous nose-up left turn may indicate otherwise. We did a go around as we were not completely lined up and knew they had just crashed. We wanted to fly over to see if they were okay. After my 4th attempt on the radio, the instructor came on and said they were fine. We landed and by the time we got to them, they both were out of the plane, everything shut off, and the police were walking up.

I talked to the instructor and he said he hit 700 hours the day before the accident. It was the student's very first lesson. An instructor with that amount of hours does get more comfortable with students making mistakes, but watching the touch and go's, I thought the instructor definitely let the student take it too far. When I do emergency lessons with my students, I always tell them to save themselves before the airplane. Walking away, I tried to encourage the instructor and said "it's just an airplane, you'll be okay" his response was "well unlike you guys, we have G1000s". I was a little shocked at his response and his attitude toward the crash.