



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Winter Haven, FL	Accident Number:	ERA23FA142
Date & Time:	March 7, 2023, 14:00 Local	Registration:	N10510 (A1); N9221D (A2)
Aircraft:	Piper J3C (A1); Piper PA28 (A2)	Injuries:	2 Fatal (A1); 2 Fatal (A2)
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional (A1); Part 91: General aviation - Instructional (A2)		

On March 7, 2023, at 1400 eastern standard time, a Piper J3C airplane, N10510, and a Piper PA-28-161 airplane, N9221D, collided in midair in Winter Haven, Florida. The flight instructor and pilot receiving instruction on each airplane were fatally injured. Both flights were operated as Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 91 instructional flights.

According to the operator of the float-equipped J3C, the airplane was returning to Jack Brown’s Seaplane Base (F57), Winter Haven, Florida for a water landing after a local flight. The J3C was not equipped with a radio and was therefore not self-announcing or able to receive transmissions on common traffic advisory frequency (CTAF). A witness reported that J3C had approached from the north and had just turned in a westerly direction and appeared lower than the PA-28. According to recorded CTAF radio transmissions and Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) data, the PA-28 pilot receiving instruction was performing power-off 180° landing maneuvers to runway 29 at the Winter Haven Regional Airport (GIF), Winter Haven, Florida. Four seconds after the PA-28 pilot announced a left turn to the base leg of the traffic pattern, the airplanes collided nearly straight on. ADS-B data revealed that the collision occurred about 575 ft mean sea level. Surveillance video footage showed no altitude or heading changes immediately before the collision. The right wing of the PA-28 fractured during the collision and both airplanes impacted a lake east of the approach end of runway 29 at GIF.

All major portions of both airplanes, except for the right wing and aileron of the PA-28, were recovered from the lake. Examination of the Piper PA-28 revealed impact damage to the forward fuselage and wings. The cabin door was impact separated forward of its hinge attachment points. The right wing was separated from the airplane in the wing root area. A 50-

inch section of the inboard portion of the right wing was recovered with a 37-inch portion of the flap attached by two hinges. A 48-inch piece of the right flap was impact separated and recovered; however, the rest of the outboard portion of the right wing was not recovered. There was significant hard body impact damage and fragmentation to the leading edge and wing structure at the outboard separation point.

Examination of the J3C revealed that the fuselage and empennage remained intact; however, the inboard lower corner of the right float was impact crushed along a 30-inch span beginning about 28 inches after of the bumper, with impact scars along the longitudinal access of the float. An 87-inch span of the chine and inboard sister keelson were torn away 52 to 139 inches aft of the bumper, leaving a 6 to 8-inch opening in the float hull. The bulkheads adjacent to this missing section were impact displaced aft.

Examination of both airframes and engines revealed no evidence of any preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures that would have precluded normal operation of the airplanes.

The wreckage of both airplanes was retained for further examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information (A1)

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N10510
Model/Series:	J3C 65	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	JACK BROWNS SEAPLANE BASE INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information (A2)

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N9221D
Model/Series:	PA28 161	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	Sunrise Aviation, Inc	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Pilot school (141)
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	GIF,146 ft msl	Observation Time:	13:53 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	1 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	28°C /17°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 4100 ft AGL	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	10 knots / , 300°
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.01 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	
Departure Point:		Destination:	

Wreckage and Impact Information (A1)

Crew Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	28.055456,-81.740814

Wreckage and Impact Information (A2)

Crew Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	28.055456,-81.740814

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Spencer, Lynn
Additional Participating Persons:	Cory Best; FAA/FSDO; Orlando, FL Devon Dorato; Sunrise Aviation; Ormond Beach, FL Ben Shipp; Jack Browns Seaplane Base; Winter Haven, FL
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	