



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	SANTA ROSA, California	Accident Number:	LAX95LA320
Date & Time:	September 2, 1995, 11:20 Local	Registration:	N31266
Aircraft:	BELLANCA 7GCBC	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT MADE A THREE-POINT LANDING NEAR THE RUNWAY THRESHOLD. WHEN THE AIRPLANE TOUCHED DOWN IT BEGAN TO TURN TO THE RIGHT AND THE PILOT APPLIED THE BRAKES. THE AIRPLANE CONTINUED THE RIGHT TURN AND GROUND LOOPED WHEN IT ENTERED THE SOFT TERRAIN NEXT TO THE RUNWAY. ACCORDING TO THE OPERATOR, THE AIRPLANE DID NOT EXPERIENCE ANY PREEXISTING MALFUNCTIONS OR FAILURES.

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. The pilot's improper use of the brakes and the soft terrain were factors in this accident.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - ON GROUND/WATER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

1. (C) DIRECTIONAL CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) BRAKES(NORMAL) - IMPROPER USE OF - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. GROUND LOOP/SWERVE - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

4. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SOFT

Factual Information

On September 2, 1995, at 1120 hours Pacific daylight time, a Bellanca 7GCBC, N31266, ground looped following a three-point landing on runway 32 at Santa Rosa Airport, Santa Rosa, California. The pilot was completing a visual flight rules personal flight. The airplane, operated by United Flight, Watsonville Airport, Watsonville, California, sustained substantial damage. Neither the certificated private pilot nor his passenger was injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed. The flight originated Watsonville Airport at 1000 hours.

The pilot said in a telephone interview that the airplane touched down normally and then it began to turn right. The pilot had the control stick back and he applied the brakes to arrest the turn, but without success. The airplane exited the right side of the runway and ground looped when it entered the dirt.

The local controller said in a telephone interview that the accident occurred near the approach end of the runway. He also said that the surface winds were calm.

The operator submitted the required aircraft accident report. He indicated in the report that the airplane did not experience any preimpact malfunctions or failures.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	40,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 1, 1995
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	121 hours (Total, all aircraft), 29 hours (Total, this make and model), 15 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 11 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BELLANCA	Registration:	N31266
Model/Series:	7GCBC 7GCBC	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Aerobatic; Normal	Serial Number:	403-72
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 20, 1995 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1650 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	34 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3778 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-320
Registered Owner:	NORMAN & CAROL GRAY	Rated Power:	150 Horsepower
Operator:	UNITED FLIGHT SERVICES, INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	STS ,125 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	11:23 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	20 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/ None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	20°C / 12°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	WATSONVILLE (WVI)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(STS)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	10:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	SONOMA COUNTY AIRPORT STS	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	125 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	32	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	5115 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	38.500942,-122.75933(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Llorente, A.

Additional Participating Persons: BRIAN ASHLEY; OAKLAND , CA

Original Publish Date: March 21, 1996

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29207>

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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](#).