



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	ST. PETERSBURG, Florida	Accident Number:	MIA00LA243
Date & Time:	August 20, 2000, 11:12 Local	Registration:	N70673
Aircraft:	Piper J3-C65	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation		

Analysis

The pilot was flying the airplane from the front seat when it was placard by the FAA for solo flight in the rear seat only. The pilot dropped off his banner in the sod area adjacent to the runway and side stepped to the left landing on the runway. The tail of the airplane came up; he applied throttle, aft stick, and his body weight shifted forward. He inadvertently applied brakes, experienced a loss of directional control, and subsequent nose over of the airplane.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:
 The pilot's improper judgment not to sit in the pilot's seat (rear seat) and improper use of brakes on landing roll resulting in a loss of directional control and subsequent nose over.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) JUDGMENT - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
 2. (C) BRAKES(NORMAL) - IMPROPER USE OF - PILOT IN COMMAND
 3. DIRECTIONAL CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
-

Occurrence #2: NOSE OVER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - RUNWAY

Factual Information

On August 20, 2000, at about 1112 eastern daylight time, a Piper J3C-65, N7073, registered to a private owner, operating as a 14 CFR Part 91 banner tow flight, experienced an on-ground loss of control on landing at Albert Whitted Airport (SPG), St. Petersburg, Florida, and nosed over inverted. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed. The airplane sustained substantial damage. The commercial pilot reported no injuries. The flight originated from SPG about 1 hour 12 minutes before the accident.

The pilot stated he entered a left base for the sod area located adjacent to runway 36 to drop off his banner. He completed the banner drop and side stepped to the left and made a wheel landing to runway 36. The tail of the airplane came up; he applied a little throttle, aft stick, and his body weight shifted forward. He inadvertently applied brakes, experienced a loss of directional control, and subsequent nose over of the airplane.

The pilot was flying the airplane from the front seat. Review of Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, Aircraft Specification No. A-691 states that the Model J3C airplane is placard stating, "Solo flying in rear seat only."

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	26, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 29, 2000
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	952 hours (Total, all aircraft), 905 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 249 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 68 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N70673
Model/Series:	J3-C65 J3-C65	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	17694
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 28, 2000 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1250 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	44 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	12549 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	O-320A2B
Registered Owner:	THOMAS W. MERRIFIELD	Rated Power:	150 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:	ADVERTISING AIR FORCE	Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	SPG ,8 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	11:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 3500 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	240°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	34°C / 24°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	10:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	ALBERT WHITTED MUNI SPG	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	8 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	36	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2864 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	27.769966,-82.629524(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Smith, Carrol
Additional Participating Persons:	PAUL E KAHLER; TAMPA, FL
Original Publish Date:	March 2, 2001
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=50036

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).