



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Little Rock, Arkansas	Accident Number:	FTW03LA039
Date & Time:	November 13, 2002, 16:30 Local	Registration:	N5278U
Aircraft:	Larson Kitfox III	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

While the pilot taxied the airplane at the private grass airstrip, the homebuilt airplane inadvertently became airborne. After becoming airborne, "apparently due to a gust of wind," the airplane "appeared to be flying just above the stall speed" approximately 100-200 feet agl. Beyond the east end of the departure runway, the airplane circled left and then back toward the runway. As the airplane flew over the tree line adjacent to the runway, the "wing stalled and the airplane spun" to the ground. The 3,500 hour pilot had zero flight time in the make and model of the accident airplane. Flight control continuity was confirmed. No pre-impact discrepancies were found.

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 aircraft control during an intentional taxi resulting in the inadvertent lift-off of the airplane and subsequent inadvertent stall. Contributing factors were the pilot's lack of total experience in the make and model of aircraft, and the wind.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - ON GROUND/WATER

Phase of Operation: TAXI

Findings

1. TAXISPEED - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
3. (C) LIFT-OFF - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF

Findings

4. (C) AIRSPEED - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) LACK OF TOTAL EXPERIENCE IN TYPE OF AIRCRAFT
6. STALL - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

7. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

On November 13, 2002, at 1630 central standard time, a Larson Kitfox III, experimental homebuilt airplane, N5278U, impacted the terrain northwest of the east runway following a loss of control during an inadvertent takeoff from a private grass airstrip near Little Rock, Arkansas. The airplane was owned and operated by a private individual under Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91. The private pilot, sole occupant of the airplane, received serious injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a flight plan was not filed. The personal flight originated at the time of the accident.

On the Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report (NTSB Form 6120.1/2) the operator reported that the pilot wanted to taxi the tailwheel-equipped airplane. After becoming airborne, "apparently due to a gust of wind," the airplane "appeared to be flying just above the stall speed" approximately 100-200 feet agl. Beyond the east end of the departure runway, the airplane circled left and then back toward the runway. As the airplane flew over the tree line adjacent to the runway, the "wing stalled and the airplane spun " to the ground.

Witnesses called 911. Witnesses and local authorities responded to the scene.

The FAA inspector, who responded to the accident site, confirmed flight control continuity. Physical evidence of fuel was found in the area of the accident site. The outboard portion of the right wing and the cockpit was destroyed. No pre-impact discrepancies were found.

The private pilot had accumulated 3,500 hours total flight time with zero flight time in the make and model of the accident airplane.

An FAA experimental airworthiness certificate was issued for the airplane in 1994. On February 4, 2001, the last annual inspection was performed at an accumulate aircraft time of 83.0 hours. The airplane had flown 14.9 hours since the inspection. The airplane was powered by a 64 horsepower Rotax 582 LC engine.

On the Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report (NTSB Form 6120.1/2) the operator reported the wind from the southwest at 5-10 knots. At 1553, the local weather observation facility at Little Rock (LIT) reported the wind from 190 degrees at 6 knots, visibility 10 statute miles, clouds few at 25,000 feet, temperature 18 degrees Celsius, dew point 03 degrees Celsius, and the altimeter setting 30.22 inches of Mercury.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	46, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
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 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 3, 2002
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	June 6, 2001
Flight Time:	3500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 0 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Larson	Registration:	N5278U
Model/Series:	Kitfox III	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	796
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 4, 2001 Condition	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	973 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	20 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	103 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Rotax
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	582 LC
Registered Owner:	Thomas P. Beary	Rated Power:	64 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	LIT,262 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	5 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	180°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 25000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	190°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.21 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	18°C / 3°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Little Rock, AR	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	16:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Pumpkin Patch	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	248 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	27	IFR Approach:	Unknown
Runway Length/Width:	2500 ft / 50 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Unknown

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	34.729442,-92.224441

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Roach, Joyce
Additional Participating Persons:	Jackie Black; FAA FSDO; Little Rock, AR
Original Publish Date:	May 30, 2003
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=56049

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](#).