



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Mammoth Lakes, California	Accident Number:	LAX03LA118
Date & Time:	March 23, 2003, 12:50 Local	Registration:	N5291K
Aircraft:	Ryan Navion	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor, 2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The airplane veered off the runway during the landing roll and collided with terrain and high vegetation. At 1152, the airport's airport automated weather observation station (AWOS) was reporting winds at 200 degrees, 15 knots gusting to 25 knots. The pilot reported that the airport advisory conditions relayed to him over the CTAF were winds of 250 to 270 degrees, 15 knots gusting to 25 knots, and runway 27 was in use. The pilot also observed the airport windsock showing winds from the west/northwest. During the landing sequence, and after the landing gear contacted the runway, the pilot experienced a "substantial and unexpected gust of wind" from the southerly direction. The left wing raised and the airplane veered off the right side of the runway. The pilot applied rudder and aileron to compensate before deciding to attempt a go-around. The airplane continued to rise in level flight before he "experienced a sensation of downward force." The airplane came to rest in sagebrush approximately 210 feet north of the parallel taxi way.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's inadequate compensation for the wind conditions and failure to maintain directional control during the landing roll. A factor was the gusty crosswind.

Findings

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

Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - VARIABLE WIND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - CROSSWIND
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
4. (C) COMPENSATION FOR WIND CONDITIONS - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) DIRECTIONAL CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (C) GROUND LOOP/SWERVE - NOT CORRECTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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

Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

7. TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH VEGETATION

Factual Information

On March 23, 2003, about 1250 Pacific standard time, a Ryan Navion, N5291K, veered off the runway and collided with terrain and high vegetation during the landing roll at Mammoth Yosemite Airport, Mammoth Lakes, California. The airplane, owned and operated by the pilot under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91, sustained substantial damage. The private pilot and one passenger were not injured; however, the remaining passenger received minor injuries. The personal cross-country flight originated at Furnace Creek, Death Valley National Park, California, at 1105, with an ultimate destination of Rio Linda, California. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a visual flight rules (VFR) flight plan had been filed and activated.

The pilot submitted a statement in the Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report, (NTSB Form 6120.1/2). While en route to Rio Linda they experienced moderate turbulence, and the pilot observed inclement weather along the route of flight. With these factors in mind the pilot decided to divert to Mammoth Lakes airport to wait out the weather.

At 1152, the Mammoth Lakes airport automated weather observation station (AWOS) was reporting winds at 200 degrees, 15 knots gusting to 25 knots. The pilot reported that the airport advisory conditions relayed to him were winds of 250 to 270 degrees, 15 knots gusting to 25 knots, and runway 27 was in use. The pilot also observed the airport windsock showing winds from the west/northwest.

During the landing sequence, and after the landing gear contacted the runway, the pilot stated that he experienced a "substantial and unexpected gust of wind" from the southerly direction. The left wing raised and the airplane veered off the right side of the runway. The pilot applied rudder and aileron to compensate before deciding to attempt a go-around. The airplane continued to rise in level flight before he "experienced a sensation of downward force." The airplane came to rest in sagebrush approximately 210 feet north of the parallel taxi way.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	45, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
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:	August 16, 2002
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	May 17, 2001
Flight Time:	208 hours (Total, all aircraft), 162 hours (Total, this make and model), 154 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 18 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 9 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Ryan	Registration:	N5291K
Model/Series:	Navion	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	NAV-4-2191B
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	December 2, 2002 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3100 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	19.2 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3250 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	GO-480
Registered Owner:	Ken Whittall-Scherfee	Rated Power:	295 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:	MMH,7128 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	11:52 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	15 knots / 25 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	200°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.06 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	12°C / -5°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Furnace Creek, CA (L06)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	Rio Linda, CA (Q94)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:05 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	Mammoth Yosemite KMMH	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	7128 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	27	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	7056 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor, 2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	37.623889,-118.840835

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	McKenny, Van
Additional Participating Persons:	Larry Cheek; Federal Aviation Administration; Reno, NV
Original Publish Date:	September 1, 2004
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=56690

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](#).