



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Sunburg, Minnesota	<b>Accident Number:</b>	CHI04LA072
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	February 13, 2004, 14:00 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N186AC
<b>Aircraft:</b>	American Champion (ACAC) 8GCBC	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation		

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## Analysis

The airplane sustained substantial damage when it impacted a ditch and subsequently nosed over while landing on a gravel road. The pilot stated the purpose of the flight was to take aerial photographs of several Minnesota farms. The pilot reported that while in cruise flight he had the "sudden urge to use the bathroom" and he selected a nearby gravel road to land on. The pilot stated that during landing rollout he noticed a sign on the left side of the road. While he attempted to maneuver the airplane to avoid striking the sign, the right wheel "got sucked into the ditch which was full of snow." The airplane subsequently impacted the ditch and nosed over. The airplane was configured with extended range fuel system that increased the airplane's maximum endurance to approximately 7 hours. The accident flight was reported to be approximately 5 1/2 hours in duration.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's improper in-flight decision to land off-airport. A factor to the accident was the snow covered ditch.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

### Findings

1. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) UNSUITABLE TERRAIN OR TAKEOFF/LANDING/TAXI AREA - SELECTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - DITCH
4. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOW COVERED

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Occurrence #2: NOSE OVER

Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

## Factual Information

On February 13, 2004, at 1400 central standard time, an American Champion Aircraft 8GCBC, N186AC, piloted by a commercial pilot, sustained substantial damage when it impacted a ditch and subsequently nosed over while landing on a gravel road near Sunburg, Minnesota. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The flight was operating under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91 without a flight plan. The pilot was not injured. The flight departed at 0830 from a private airstrip near Castlewood, South Dakota.

The pilot stated the purpose of the flight was to take aerial photographs of several Minnesota farms. The pilot reported that while in cruise flight he had the "sudden urge to use the bathroom" and he selected a nearby gravel road to land on. The pilot stated that during landing rollout he noticed a sign on the left side of the road. While he attempted to maneuver the airplane to avoid striking the sign, the right wheel "got sucked into the ditch which was full of snow." The airplane subsequently impacted the ditch and nosed over. The airplane was configured with extended range fuel system that increased the airplane's maximum endurance to approximately 7 hours. The accident flight was reported to be approximately 5 1/2 hours in duration.

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	34, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Front
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	December 16, 2003
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	UNK	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	February 2, 2004
<b>Flight Time:</b>	10043 hours (Total, all aircraft), 9500 hours (Total, this make and model), 9957 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 11 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	American Champion (ACAC)	<b>Registration:</b>	N186AC
<b>Model/Series:</b>	8GCBC	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	369-94
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	December 12, 2003 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	2150 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	20 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	3660 Hrs at time of accident	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	O-360-C1E
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	On file	<b>Rated Power:</b>	180 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	On file	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	ILL,1127 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	15 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	13:55 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	135°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	10 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	270°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29.79 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	-1°C / -7°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Castlewood, SD (PVT)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Sunburg, MN	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	08:30 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	45.358333,-95.205001

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Fox, Andrew
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Wendy Johnson; Federal Aviation Administration - Minneapolis FSDO; Minneapolis, MN
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	September 1, 2004
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=58804">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=58804</a>

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](#).