



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Sparks, Nevada	Accident Number:	LAX04CA220
Date & Time:	May 23, 2004, 19:05 Local	Registration:	N53AS
Aircraft:	LET Blanik L-13	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

A glider landed long and collided with high vegetation. While on the downwind leg of the traffic pattern, the pilot noted that he was close to the runway. During final approach the glider was above the glide slope, and the pilot elected to deploy full spoilers and configure the glider in a forward slip. Despite his efforts to reduce altitude and airspeed, the pilot could not make the runway and landed the glider in sagebrush located past the end of the runway. The pilot reported no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures with the aircraft.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the student pilot's misjudged altitude, distance, and speed, and failure to attain the proper touchdown point, resulting in an overshoot of the runway.

Findings

Occurrence #1: OVERRUN
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

1. (C) ALTITUDE - HIGH - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) DISTANCE/SPEED - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) PROPER TOUCHDOWN POINT - NOT OBTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH VEGETATION

Factual Information

On May 23, 2004, about 1905 Pacific daylight time, a Let Blanik L-13 glider, N53AS, landed long and collided with terrain and high vegetation at the Air Sailing Gliderport, Sparks, Nevada. Northern California Soaring Association was operating the glider under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91. The student pilot, the sole occupant, was not injured; the glider sustained substantial damage. The local instructional flight originated Sparks about 1635. Day visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a flight plan had not been filed.

In a written statement, the pilot reported that he was attempting to land on runway 03. While on the downwind leg of the left traffic pattern, he noted that he was close to the runway. During his left turn to base leg, he realized he had become so close to the runway that he had to immediately make his turn to final approach. The glider was above the glide slope, and the pilot elected to deploy full spoilers and configure the glider in a forward slip. Despite his efforts to reduce altitude and airspeed, the pilot could not make the runway, and the glider collided with sagebrush located past the end of the runway. The glider incurred damage to the horizontal stabilizer, right elevator, and tail cone assembly.

The pilot thought the accident could have been prevented if he had established the glider on the downwind leg. He further added that, while on base leg, he could have maneuvered the glider in abbreviated figure eights, in an effort to reduce altitude. The pilot reported no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures with the aircraft.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	Age:	44, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	45 hours (Total, all aircraft), 36 hours (Total, this make and model), 10 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	LET	Registration:	N53AS
Model/Series:	Blanik L-13	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	027057
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:		Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	0
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	Northern California Soaring Association	Rated Power:	
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	RNO	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	18:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 10000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots / 0 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	280°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.87 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	18°C / 0°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Sparks, NV (NV23)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Sparks, NV (NV23)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Air Sailing Gliderport NV23	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	03	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	39.871944,-119.700836

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	McKenny, Van
Additional Participating Persons:	Gary Hamlin; Federal Aviation Administration; Reno, NV
Original Publish Date:	September 1, 2004
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=59303

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](#).