Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Kalispell, Montana	**Accident Number:**	WPR19LA134
Date & Time:	May 4, 2019, 11:46 Local	**Registration:**	N185FT
Aircraft:	Cessna A185	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control on ground	**Injuries:**	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot and his pilot-rated passenger conducted a landing on a turf airstrip when the airplane pulled to the right as it slowed. The pilot was able to make a full stop landing and taxi back to take off. The takeoff was uneventful, so he remained in the airport area for another landing. During that landing, the airplane pulled hard to the right as it slowed. The pilot initiated a balked landing and returned to the original departure airport. During the final landing the airplane touched down on centerline for what initially appeared to be a normal landing. However, shortly after landing the pilot was unable to maintain directional control of the tailwheel equipped airplane and it veered off the right side of the runway, despite the pilot's attempt to correct back to the left with left rudder and braking.

Postaccident examination of the airplane revealed the tailwheel did not turn to the left properly; however, it could not be determined if the anomaly existed before the accident or if it resulted from the accident.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The loss of directional control during landing for reasons that could not be determined based on available evidence.

Findings

Not determined	(general) - Unknown/Not determined
Aircraft	Directional control - Not attained/maintained

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing-landing roll	Loss of control on ground (Defining event)
Landing-landing roll	Runway excursion

On May 4, 2019, about 1146 mountain daylight time, a Cessna A185F, N185FT, sustained substantial when it was involved in an accident at Glacier Park International Airport (GPI), Kalispell, Montana. The pilot and the pilot-rated passenger were not injured. The airplane was operated under the provisions of Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 as a personal flight.

According to the pilot, while landing at Ferndale Airport (53U), Bigfork, Montana, in light and variable wind conditions, the tailwheel-equipped airplane pulled to the right as it slowed. He accomplished a full stop landing and taxied back to take off. The pilot stated that the takeoff was uneventful, and he remained at 53U for another landing pattern. During the second landing, the airplane pulled hard to the right as it slowed, which prompted the pilot to initiate a balked landing; he elected to return to GPI where the flight had originated earlier that day.

The pilot stated that the wind was reported at 210° magnetic at 5 knots at GPI. The landing on runway 20 was normal, on centerline, and with the tailwheel lock engaged. However, shortly after touching down, he lost control of the airplane, and it veered off the right side of the runway, despite his left rudder inputs. The pilot believed there was an issue with the tailwheel. He stated that the airplane came to rest about halfway down and 10 ft off the edge of the runway.

Postaccident examination of the airplane revealed substantial damage to the left wing. The airplane was further examined by an airframe and powerplant mechanic under the oversight of a Federal Aviation Administration inspector. The tailwheel and flight control system, including the rudder system, were examined. It was noted the tailwheel would turn right freely and "break free" normally. The tailwheel would only turn left about 15° and would not break free. It could not be determined if the anomaly with the tailwheel was present before the accident or resulted from the accident.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight instructor	**Age:**	71,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Restraint Used:**	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	August 24, 2018
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	April 12, 2019
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 24376 hours (Total, all aircraft), 3510 hours (Total, this make and model), 18810 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 90 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 35 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Pilot-rated passenger Information

Certificate:	Private	**Age:**	46,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine sea	**Seat Occupied:**	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	**Second Pilot Present:**	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:	Unknown	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	May 14, 1999
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	(Estimated)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	**Registration:**	N185FT
Model/Series:	A185 F	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1977	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	18503329
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	**Seats:**	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 11, 2018 100 hour	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	3350 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2117.7 Hrs at time of accident	**Engine Manufacturer:**	Continental
ELT:	C91 installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	IO-520-D-4
Registered Owner:	On file	**Rated Power:**	285 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	GPI,2977 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	
Observation Time:	11:55 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:		**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.89 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	8°C / 1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Bigfork, MT (53U)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	Kalispell, MT (GPI)	**Type of Clearance:**	VFR
Departure Time:	11:20 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	Glacier Park Intl GPI	**Runway Surface Type:**	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	2976 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Dry
Runway Used:	20	**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:	9007 ft / 150 ft	**VFR Approach/Landing:**	Full stop;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:		**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	48.310554,-114.256111(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Nixon, Albert
Additional Participating Persons:	Clifford Carpenter; Federal Aviaiton Administration; Helena, MT
Original Publish Date:	May 3, 2022
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=99386