

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Ikarus C42 FB100, G-HIJN	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 912 ULS piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2004	
Date & Time (UTC):	15 September 2009 at 1732 hrs	
Location:	Hoylake Beach, Merseyside	
Type of Flight:	Training	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Noseleg, front forks, engine mount, and front spat	
Commander's Licence:	Student	
Commander's Age:	48 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	62 hours (of which 35 were on type) Last 90 days - 11 hours Last 28 days - 4 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and subsequent AAIB enquiries	

Synopsis

During a solo navigation exercise the pilot, on suggestion of his instructor, attempted a landing on the intertidal zone of a beach. The flare was misjudged leading to a bounced landing and collapse of the nose landing gear.

History of the flight

The student pilot flew some dual circuits at Ince Airfield and then received a briefing from his instructor to fly a solo navigation exercise to Llandudno and back. The instructor suggested he land on Hoylake beach on the return leg (the student and instructor had previously landed on another beach together). The weather was benign with good visibility, high cloud base, and a light easterly wind.

On the return leg of the flight, the student flew over the beach to check that it was clear, before flying a normal approach into wind. He flared the aircraft, and it touched down very promptly on the main wheels before bouncing; he was surprised at the height of the bounce. He pitched the nose down and flared again but the aircraft bounced a second time. Touching down from the second bounce, the student lowered the nose, and the nose landing gear collapsed. He was not injured and evacuated the aircraft without difficulty. There was no fire.

Assessment of cause

The student reported that the expanse of sand with no points of reference may have led him to flare too high. He considered that he should have gone around.

The importance of ground texture to pilots judging their landing is understood and surfaces with poor texture

(such as sand or, in the case of amphibious aircraft, smooth water) are known to cause pilots difficulty in judging their height. It is probable that the student flared too high, because of the poor texture and lack of reference points.

At the time of the accident, the student had flown five hours solo.