

Pitts S-1T, G-WILD

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/2001

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Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Pitts S-1T, G-WILD	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming AEIO-360-A1E piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1983	
Date & Time (UTC):	20 July 2001 at 1915 hrs	
Location:	Compton Abbas Airfield, Dorset	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Slight damage	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilots Licence	
Commander's Age:	42 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	333 hours (of which 90 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 10 hours	
	Last 28 days - 4 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The pilot had flown the aircraft from White Waltham to Compton Abbas to attend an aerobatics competition. The weather for the flight was forecast as wind, south-westerly 5-10 k with good visibility and a cloud base of 1,800 feet. Some drizzle was expected later in the flight. On arrival at Compton Abbas the weather had deteriorated significantly with the surface wind southerly at 10 kt, poor visibility with heavy rain and low cloud. Runway 26 was in use, which was a runway with short wet grass and a downslope. The pilot positioned his aircraft behind the landing traffic ahead of him at what appeared to be sufficient separation to allow the other aircraft to clear the runway. With the other aircraft on the ground the pilot continued his approach, keeping the aircraft yawed to the left in order to maintain visual contact with the other aircraft. The pilot held his aircraft off until the other aircraft had cleared the runway and then landed. Due to the nose of his aircraft obscuring the runway ahead he was not sure of the amount of runway remaining although on previous

landings he had only used approximately half the runway distance available. The touch down speed was slightly high and the pilot applied the brakes, which locked the wheels. The aircraft skidded and then departed from the end of the runway, bounced and landed in some standing crop, which caused the aircraft to nose over onto its back. The pilot, who was uninjured, then exited the aircraft immediately. The airfield staff and a local Fire Fighting Service attended the scene.

The pilot concluded that there were a number of factors that had contributed to him landing too far down the runway. They included his concern over the possibility of having to carry out a go around in the circumstances of the deteriorating weather; possible problems of depth perception due to the heavy rain on the cockpit canopy and; his previous experience of using only half of the runway length when landing, but travelling further than he was aware of whilst holding off for the other aircraft to clear the runway. Added to these were his higher than normal speed and difficulty in seeing how much runway remained due to the position of the nose of the aircraft. The wet grass had meant that the previous landing aircraft, when clearing the runway, had had to reduce its taxiing speed to avoid skidding and this eroded the planned separation distance between the two aircraft. It also led to the poor braking action of his own aircraft. With regard to safety issues the pilot commented that his personal survival clothing, which included a flying helmet, fireproof suit, leather boots and gloves as well as aerobatic restraint harness had helped in preventing him sustaining any injuries.