

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Reims Cessna FA152 Aerobat, G-BGAF	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-235-L2C piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1978	
Date & Time (UTC):	6 April 2006 at 1253 hrs	
Location:	Southend Airport, Essex	
Type of Flight:	Training	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Nose landing gear, propeller, engine and wing	
Commander's Licence:	Student pilot	
Commander's Age:	24 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	20 hours (all on type) Last 90 days - 7 hours Last 28 days - 5 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

On landing the student pilot flared the aircraft too high and then released back pressure on the control wheel, causing the aircraft to land heavily on its nosewheel which separated from its mountings.

History of the flight

During training with an instructor at Southend Airport, the student pilot completed three circuits and landings on Runway 24. The instructor was satisfied with his performance and instructed him to carry out three more circuits solo. The student reported that the first solo circuit and landing were satisfactory, but whilst attempting to land at the end of the second circuit, he flared the aircraft too high. As it began to drift to the left, he reacted by releasing back pressure on the

control wheel, which caused the aircraft to descend rapidly and touch down heavily on its nosewheel. The aircraft bounced and drifted further left before coming to rest on grass near the left hand edge of the runway. The uninjured student vacated the aircraft before the AFRS arrived.

Visibility at the time of the accident was reported to be in excess of 10 km and there was no cloud below 5,000 ft. The surface wind was from 270° at 13 kt, giving a crosswind component of approximately 7 kt. The flying school's operations manual stated that student pilots should not fly solo if the crosswind component exceeds 8 kt.

Aircraft damage

The nose landing gear leg had broken off its mountings; the engine, propeller and one wing were damaged.

Discussion

The instructor, who had not flown with this student before, stated that during their flight together the student demonstrated an ability to cope with distractions and to position the aircraft correctly. On one occasion the student had noted that the aircraft was higher than usual on final and was able to correct the approach unprompted. The instructor commented, however, that it was difficult

to assess the student's ability comprehensively in one flight and that another instructor, with whom the student flew more regularly, was more likely to have a thorough understanding of his abilities.

The student, who had flown solo only once before, considered that he had caused the accident by releasing back pressure on the control wheel. The school's Chief Flying Instructor reported that since the accident, the student has undergone training aimed specifically at improving his judgement and conduct of landings, including a reminder to execute a missed approach if a safe landing is not assured.