

Piper PA-38-112 Tomahawk, G-BTFP, 11 February 1996

AAIB Bulletin No: 4/96 Ref: EW/G96/02/04 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration:Piper PA-38-112 Tomahawk, G-BTFP

No & Type of Engines:1 Lycoming O-235-L2C piston engine

Year of Manufacture:1978

Date & Time (UTC):11 February 1996 at 1343 hrs

Location:Teesside Airport, Co Durham

Type of Flight:Private (Training)

Persons on Board:Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries:Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage:Bent and cracked nose gear oleo

Commander's Licence:Student Pilot

Commander's Age:51 years

Commander's Flying Experience:28 hours (all on type and of which 3 hours were solo)

Last 90 days - 8 hours

Last 28 days - 7 hours

Information Source:Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot plus ATCOccurrence report

The student and his instructor commenced a circuit training detail using Runway 23 at 1302 hrs. The weather was fine and the surface wind was 240°/10 kt. The student had had previous experience of crosswind landings and after two circuits, the instructor left him to practice circuits alone. He briefed the student that if the wind speed increased or the direction shifted unfavourably, then he was to land.

When the student took off solo the wind was 250°/12 kt but after three circuits, the direction had veered to 270° and the strength had increased to about 17 kt. The aerodrome controllers saw the aircraft bounce two or three times during the second landing and, being aware of the increasing crosswind component, the controllers summoned the airport fire service to weather standby at 1333 hrs. On the third attempt to land on Runway 23 the aircraft landed heavily and bounced again. Appreciating the student's predicament, the controller suggested to the student that he might like

to land on the disused Runway 28 because it was more into wind. The student accepted the suggestion but on his fourth attempt to land, the aircraft again touched down heavily and bounced three times before it departed the runway for the grass. Having been alerted, the fire service were in attendance within one minute.

The student later stated that the change in the wind conditions had unsettled his flying. His instructor stated that the change was quite sudden and on his final landing, the student had pushed forward on the control column thereby over stressing the nose gear.