

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Cessna F150L, G-BABC
No & Type of Engines:	1 Continental Motors Corp O-200-A piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1972 (Serial no: 831)
Date & Time (UTC):	14 November 2017 at 1330 hrs
Location:	RAF Henlow, Bedfordshire
Type of Flight:	Training
Persons on Board:	Crew - 2 Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Nose leg detached and propeller, engine, forward lower fuselage and right wing damaged
Commander's Licence:	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	71 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	16,288 hours (of which 1,125 were on type) Last 90 days - 23 hours Last 28 days - 12 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Synopsis

A high rate of descent developed when landing with flaps set to 30° and, despite intervention from the instructor, the aircraft struck the ground in a nose-down attitude. The nose leg detached and the propeller sustained damaged, but the aircraft bounced and landed heavily on its mainwheels before coming to rest in a nose-down attitude.

History of the flight

The student pilot was being taught short field landing techniques, using flaps set to 30° but, during the first approach to grass Runway 26L¹, a high rate of descent developed shortly before touchdown so the instructor took control and went around. Following an in-flight re-brief, the student's second approach was better until approximately 30 ft agl when idle power was selected, with the result that the nose pitched down and the descent rate increased rapidly.

Although the instructor took over control and selected full power, he was unable to change the flap setting or to prevent the nosewheel from striking the runway. The aircraft bounced to approximately 20 ft agl but, because the propeller had been damaged, maximum thrust

Footnote

¹ Runway 26L is the left of two parallel grass runways at RAF Henlow.

was not available. The instructor was therefore unable to prevent the aircraft descending but he held the control column fully back, to prevent the aircraft diving towards the ground and to try to cushion the subsequent touchdown. It landed heavily on both mainwheels but the nose leg had already detached and it pitched forward and both the nose and the right wing tip contacted the ground. The tail rose until the fuselage was inclined almost vertically, for a few seconds, before the aircraft toppled back onto its mainwheels (Figure 1). The occupants then switched off the fuel and electrics before opening their doors and vacating without difficulty.



Figure 1

G-BABC resting on its lower engine cowling

Instructor's assessment

In previous training the student had only landed with the flaps set to 20° and had not appreciated the effects of selecting idle power with the flaps set to 30°. The instructor resolved to give future students more landing practice with the flaps set to 30° before trying to teach them short field techniques.