

## Accident

<b>Aircraft Type and Registration:</b>	JS-MD 3, G-JSMD
<b>No &amp; Type of Engines:</b>	1 M&D Flugzeugbau Gmbh & Co. Kg Md-Tj42 turbojet engine
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	2020 (Serial no: 3.MD079)
<b>Date &amp; Time (UTC):</b>	15 June 2023 at 1221 hrs
<b>Location:</b>	Nympsfeld Airfield, Gloucestershire
<b>Type of Flight:</b>	Private
<b>Persons on Board:</b>	Crew – 1                      Passengers – None
<b>Injuries:</b>	Crew – 1 (Serious)      Passengers – N/A
<b>Nature of Damage:</b>	Aircraft destroyed
<b>Commander's Licence:</b>	Light Aircraft Pilot's Licence (Sailplanes)
<b>Commander's Age:</b>	70 years
<b>Commander's Flying Experience:</b>	2,027 hours (of which 20 were on type) Last 90 days – 46 hours Last 28 days – 21 hours
<b>Information Source:</b>	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and BGA accident report.

## Synopsis

During a winch launch, the aircraft was seen to pitch up into a steep climb. The left wing then dropped, and the aircraft lost control and struck the ground. The pilot recalled little after the launch but believed he may have slid backwards in the seat during the launch.

The BGA have highlighted two safety areas around winch launching and ensuring adequate restraints prior to launch.

## History of the flight

The pilot reported securing his harness, accepting the cable for a winch launch and selecting negative flap with the intention of moving to positive flap once the aircraft began accelerating. There was a light north-easterly wind and the weather was fine. After the acceleration began, the pilot stated that he believed he slid backwards in his seat before recalling nothing further of the event.

Witnesses described the ground run and the takeoff as normal, but the glider subsequently rotated 'more vigorously' than normal. A steep climb followed during which the left wing was seen to drop, and the aircraft descended while continuing to roll and yaw left before contact with the ground in a steep nose-down attitude. The winch was stopped quickly and the pilot, who had sustained significant injuries, was transferred to hospital by air ambulance.

## Discussion

The pilot was an experienced glider pilot and this was his 6<sup>th</sup> winch launch on this type. The aircraft was within the weight and balance limits, but it was not possible to ascertain the flap position for the takeoff due to the damage sustained in the impact.

As part of their investigation, the BGA engaged with the aircraft manufacturer to investigate the pilot's report of sliding back in his seat. The seating position in this glider is more reclined than others and the manufacturer's chief test pilot performed some winch launch tests under launch similar conditions. He reported that it is possible to slide back in the seat during the launch and, in his test, it was 'only possible to control the aircraft with his fingertips'. Of note was that this did not occur if the pilot restraints were tightly secured.

The BGA's assessment of the accident was that the rapid pitch up at start of the flight led to a stall and subsequent loss of control at a height that was not recoverable.

## Safety Action

The BGA have written to all gliding clubs, highlighting the following:

A reminder to pilots of the hazard of being forced rearwards during acceleration on a winch launch and highlighting the need for the pilot to be adequately restrained during this phase of flight.

A reminder of their 'Safe Launching Initiative' with guidance on their website for both winch launches<sup>1</sup> and aerotows<sup>2</sup>.

---

## Footnote

<sup>1</sup> [Safe Winch Launching - Pilot & Club Info \(gliding.co.uk\)](#) [accessed December 2023].

<sup>2</sup> [Safe Aerotowing - Pilot & Club Info \(gliding.co.uk\)](#) [accessed December 2023].