



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Huntsville, AL	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ERA20CA116
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	03/01/2020, 1400 CST	<b>Registration:</b>	N296BA
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Let L 23 SUPER BLANIK	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Loss of control in flight	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Serious
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Instructional		

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## Analysis

According to the glider pilot, the purpose of the flight was to release from the tow about 300 ft above ground level, return to the airport, and land on the departure runway in the opposite direction, which would simulate the response to a "rope-break" emergency during the initial climb. After departure from the runway and release from the tow, the pilot completed a 270° turn on the north side of the runway and had to make another 90°, left base-to-final turn to return toward the runway. While still on the base leg, the glider encountered an 11-knot wind from the south, gusting to 18 knots. The pilot believed that the glider must have encountered "wind shear" as he "lost all elevator control," and the glider then impacted terrain. The Federal Aviation Administration inspector who conducted a postaccident examination of the glider reported that he established flight control continuity. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the glider that would have precluded normal operation.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's failure to maintain glider control and his exceedance of the glider's critical angle of attack while maneuvering in gusting wind conditions, which resulted in an aerodynamic stall.

## Findings

<b>Aircraft</b>	Angle of attack - Capability exceeded (Cause)
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Aircraft control - Pilot (Cause)
<b>Environmental issues</b>	Gusts - Effect on operation (Cause)

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

Approach	Other weather encounter Loss of control in flight (Defining event) Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)
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### Pilot Information

Certificate:	Flight Instructor; Commercial; Private	Age:	69, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Rear
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Glider	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With Waivers/Limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	04/23/2019
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1834 hours (Total, all aircraft), 295 hours (Total, this make and model)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Let	Registration:	N296BA
Model/Series:	L 23 SUPER BLANIK No Series	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:	1994	Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	948117
Landing Gear Type:	Tandem	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	03/30/2019, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:	90 Hours	Engines:	
Airframe Total Time:	1680 Hours at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	Huntsville Soaring Club	Rated Power:	
Operator:	Huntsville Soaring Club	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KMDQ, 763 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	8 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1955 UTC	Direction from Accident Site:	325°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots / 18 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	190°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.12 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	19° C / 3° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Huntsville, AL (3M5)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Huntsville, AL (3M5)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	CST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

## Airport Information

Airport:	Moontown (3M5)	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	655 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	09	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2180 ft / 160 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Simulated Forced Landing

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	34.747222, -86.460833 (est)

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Brian C Rayner	Report Date:	06/29/2020
Additional Participating Persons:	Kenneth Lancaster; FAA/FSDO; Birmingham, AL		
Publish Date:	06/29/2020		
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.		
Investigation Docket:	<a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=101021">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=101021</a>		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).