



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Preliminary Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Groveland, FL	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ERA20LA145
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	04/07/2020, 1400 EST	<b>Registration:</b>	N271BL
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Schempp Hirth STANDARD CIRRUS	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

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On April 7, 2020, at 1400 eastern daylight time, a Schemp Hirth Standard Cirrus glider, N271BL, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Seminole-Lake Gliderport (6FLO), Groveland, Florida. The private pilot was fatally injured. The glider was operated as a 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

According to the tow pilot, it was customary to tow gliders to 2,000 ft. prior to release and he said the initial takeoff from runway 36 was "...normal with slight PIOs (pilot-induced oscillations) from the glider but nothing extreme. While climbing out at approximately 500 ft. we hit [an] area of turbulence, which is when I noticed the glider get low on tow and out of sight in the mirror. At that time is when I felt the glider release. I continued straight ahead in the event it was a rope break, [as] the glider would then have made a turn back to the runway to land."

The tow pilot did not witness the glider's descent, and neither did he witness the accident. He added that at no time did he see the spoilers deployed.

Two witnesses on the ground, who were residents of the gliderport residential community, described watching the glider release from the tow at a "low" altitude and turn to the east. They each described the turn continuing to the south, and then the nose of the glider "point down," before it descended vertically from view.

The glider came to rest on the gliderport property behind a residence on the east side of the turf runway. Continuity of the flight control system could not be confirmed by a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) aviation safety inspector because of the way the glider rested. The glider was retained for further examination.

An officer with the parent company of the gliderport was familiar with the glider and said that another pilot had recently flown it in competition, and the glider was not disassembled after the competition but was hangered fully assembled. Flight control checks were performed and "certified" on the glider prior to the competition.

The pilot held a private pilot certificate with ratings for airplane single engine land and glider. The pilot's most recent FAA 3<sup>rd</sup> class medical certificate was issued in January 2012, and he declared 110 total hours of flight experience on that date. The pilot obtained his glider rating October 1, 2019. His total flight experience could not be determined, but examination of the pilot's glider logbook revealed he had accrued 19.0 total hours of glider experience as of January 15, 2020.

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Schempp Hirth	<b>Registration:</b>	N271BL
<b>Model/Series:</b>	STANDARD CIRRUS Undesignat	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Glider
<b>Amateur Built:</b>	No		
<b>Operator:</b>	On file	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

### Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual Conditions	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	ZPH, 120 ft msl	<b>Observation Time:</b>	1415 EDT
<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	20 Nautical Miles	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	29° C / 16° C
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Scattered / 5000 ft agl	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	3 knots / , 60°
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>		<b>Visibility:</b>	10 Miles
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.07 inches Hg	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Groveland, FL (6FLO)	<b>Destination:</b>	Groveland, FL (6FLO)

### Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	28.411389, -81.835278

### Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Brian C Rayner
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Jason Mikulak; FAA/FSDO; Orlando, FL
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.