

NTSB Identification: **ERA11FA287**  
14 CFR Part 91: General Aviation  
Accident occurred Friday, May 06, 2011 in Spring Hill, FL  
Aircraft: Czech Sport Aircraft AS Piper Sport, registration: N420PS  
Injuries: 1 Fatal.

This is preliminary information, subject to change, and may contain errors. Any errors in this report will be corrected when the final report has been completed.

On May 6, 2011, at 2328 eastern daylight time, a special light sport Czech Sport Aircraft AS Piper Sport, N420PS, was destroyed when it impacted wooded terrain in Spring Hill, Florida. The certificated commercial pilot was fatally injured. Night visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed for the flight from Page Field (FMY), Fort Myers, Florida, to Joliet Regional Airport (JOT), Joliet, Illinois. The positioning flight was conducted under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91.

According to preliminary information from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the airplane departed Fort Myers at 2213. The pilot was receiving flight following from Tampa Approach Control, and was advised to contact Jacksonville Center, which the pilot acknowledged. There were no further transmissions received from the pilot.

Radar data indicated that at 2327:53, the airplane was proceeding northbound, over a residential area at 6,500 feet. At 2327:57, the altitude readout was 6,400 feet. At 2328:02, the altitude readout was 6,000 feet, indicating an average rate of descent of about 4,800 feet per minute (fpm) during the previous 5 seconds. The next and final altitude readout occurred at 2328:11, at 3,500 feet, indicating an average rate of descent in excess of 16,000 fpm during the previous 9 seconds. Altitude readouts then ceased; however, there were several additional "skin paint" radar returns, including two to the northeast of the original track that led to the accident site.

The pilot became separated from the airplane and was found deceased in a front yard, about 800 feet laterally, 125 degrees true from the last altitude-encoded (3,500-foot) radar position, and about 1,800 feet, 250 degrees true from the airplane's impact site.

According to a witness who was about 1/3 mile southeast of the airplane's impact site, he saw what he thought was a helicopter "spiraling" towards the ground. He then saw a "red burst" and smoke. He went inside a building to inform others of the crash, and when he went back outside, he heard another "boom." The witness did not note an in-flight fire.

The airplane impacted the ground in the vicinity of 28 degrees, 28.08 minutes north latitude, 082 degrees, 29.10 minutes west longitude. There was a post-crash fire, and the majority of the wreckage, except for the tail section, exhibited extensive fire and impact damage. The tail section did not exhibit any fore-to-aft soot streaks that would have been consistent with an in-flight fire.

Positions of the major components and airframe crush patterns were consistent with an almost vertical, nose-down, slightly inverted ground impact. All flight control surfaces or their remnants were accounted for at the scene. The leading edges of the wings were mostly burnt away, and the leading edges of the horizontal stabilizer and rudder did not reveal any evidence of bird strike. The engine and propeller exhibited signs of being powered at impact.

The airplane was equipped with a single overhead canopy attached to the airframe by two hinges at the front. Organic glass (transparent plastic) shards were found at the crash site, but in much smaller quantities than normally comprise the canopy and rear side windows. Portions of the canopy frame were identified, as were

the two front-mounted gas struts that lightened the canopy and kept it in the opened position on the ground. The sliding fabric sunscreens, normally mounted toward the rear, interior area of the canopy, were also found at the crash site.

No organic glass shards were found or reported as found in the residential area where the pilot was located.

The airplane was also equipped with a Ballistic Recovery Systems (BRS) whole-airplane parachute system. The activation handle, which normally would have been located on the burned-away instrument panel just forward of the between-seats throttle console, was found by itself without the safety pin installed. The ring normally attached to the safety pin was also located in the wreckage, with the pin itself mostly melted. The BRS firing pin was found still inserted into the firing mechanism; however, the drogue chute had been partially deployed at the accident site, consistent with the firing charge having been "cooked off" during the post-crash fire.

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