



Section/division **Accident and Incident Investigations Division**

Form Number: CA 12-57

LIMITED OCCURRENCE INVESTIGATION REPORT – FINAL

Reference Number	CA18/2/3/10671							
Classification	Accident			Date	21 July 2026		Time	0720Z
Type of Operation	Training (Part 141)							
Location								
Place of Departure	Port Alfred Aerodrome (FAPA), Eastern Cape Province			Place of Intended Landing	Port Alfred Aerodrome (FAPA), Eastern Cape Province			
Place of Occurrence	Port Alfred Aerodrome (FAPA), Eastern Cape Province							
GPS Co-ordinates	Latitude	33°33'21"S	Longitude	026°52'57"E	Elevation	272ft		
Aircraft Information								
Registration	ZS-JGD							
Make; Model; S/N	Piper; PA28-180 Cherokee (S/N: 28-7405169)							
Damage to Aircraft	Substantial			Total Aircraft Hours	15 696.14			
Pilot-in-command								
Licence Type	Student Pilot Licence (SPL)			Gender	Male		Age	18
Licence Valid	Yes	Total Hours	27.2	Total Hours on Type	12.7			
Total Hours 30 Days	1.4			Total Flying on Type Past 90 Days	2.7			
People On-board	1+0	Injuries	0	Fatalities	0	Other (on ground)	0	
What Happened								
On Tuesday morning, 21 July 2026, a student pilot (SP) on-board a Piper PA28-180 Cherokee aircraft registered ZS-JGD was conducting a circuit training (first solo) from Port Alfred Aerodrome (FAPA) in Eastern Cape province with the intention to land at the same aerodrome. The flight was conducted under visual meteorological conditions (VMC) and under the provisions of Part 141 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011, as amended. The SP's flight instructor (FI) stated that they conducted a pre-flight inspection of the aircraft with no anomalies noted. They then boarded the aircraft and started the engine. Favourable weather conditions prevailed at the time of the flight. The SP, who was the pilot flying, taxied to the threshold of Runway 28L, applied full power and commenced the take-off roll. The aircraft climbed to circuit altitude and the SP completed six uneventful touch-and-go landings. After a full-stop landing, the FI disembarked from the aircraft to allow the SP to conduct his initial solo training flight. The SP completed engine ground runs, with the engine parameters within the normal operating range. At approximately 0713Z, the SP lined up the aircraft on Runway 28L and took off. He completed one circuit and, during landing on Runway 28L at a speed of 75 knots (kts) with the flaps set at 40 degrees, the aircraft touched down deep								

and hard with the nose landing gear first and porpoised; as a result, the nose landing gear strut bent slightly rearwards. When the SP attempted a go-around, the throttle was stuck in the forward position. The SP lost directional control and the aircraft veered to the left of the runway and came to rest on the overgrown grass area. The SP was not injured; he disembarked from the aircraft without assistance.

The aircraft sustained substantial damage to the nose landing gear, propeller blades and engine fire wall.

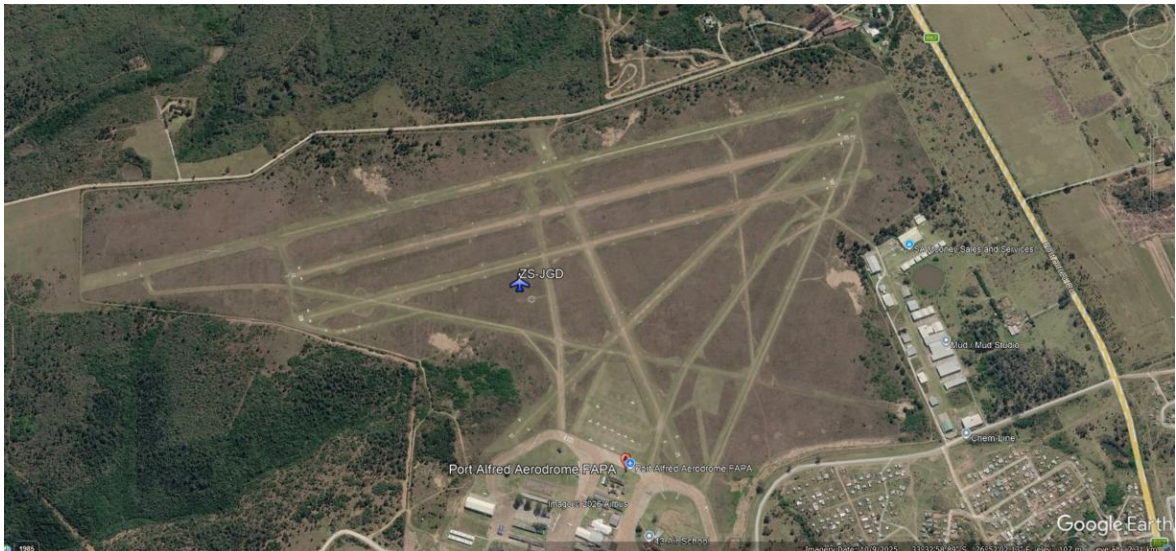


Figure 1: The aerodrome layout and the approximate final position of ZS-JGD. (Source: Google Earth)



Figure 2: The aircraft after it came to a stop. (Source: Operator)



Figure 3: The blue arrow points to the damaged propeller blade. (Source: Operator)



Figure 4: The arrow points to the damaged nose gear. (Source: Operator)

A bounce during touchdown happens when an aircraft contacts the runway hard, usually because of an incorrect landing attitude or excessive rate of descent during flare. The sharp impact can force the tail down, suddenly increasing the wing's angle-of-attack and lift, causing the aircraft to rebound into the air. The severity of the bounce depends mainly on the aircraft's speed at touchdown and how much the pitch attitude changes.

A slight bounce may be corrected by adding enough power to cushion the next touchdown while smoothly adjusting to the correct landing attitude. If there is a crosswind, the pilot must maintain crosswind correction, lowering the upwind wing further as speed reduces.

A severe bounce should not be salvaged. The safest action is to immediately execute a go-around by applying full power, maintaining directional control, and lowering the nose to a safe climb attitude, even if the aircraft briefly descends or bounces again.

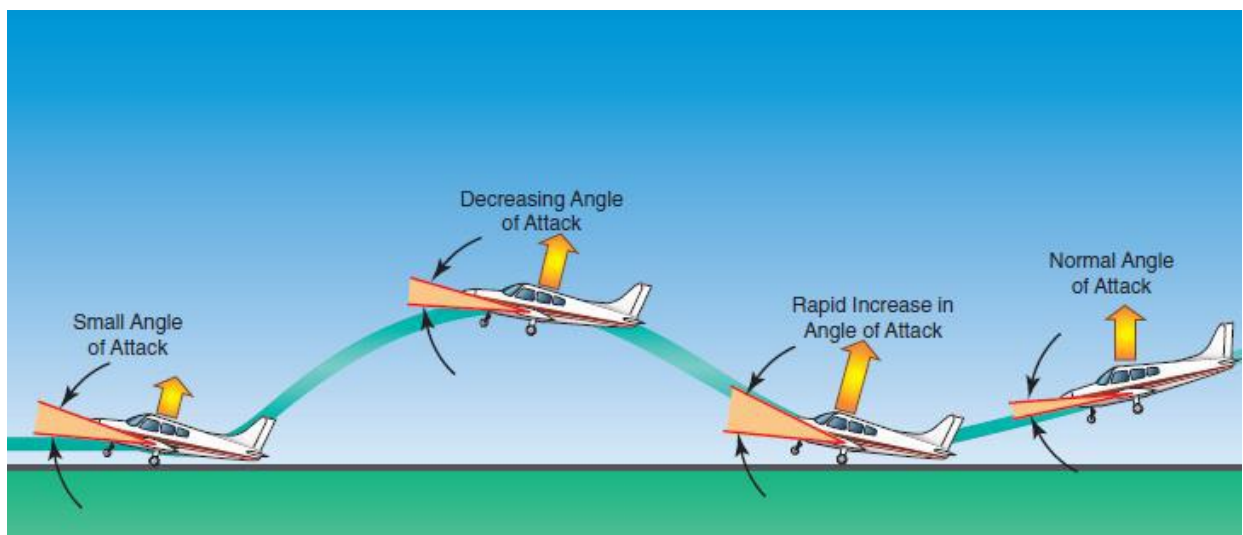


Figure 5: An illustration of a bounce sequence. (Source: Source: FAA-Airplane Flying Handbook, Chapter 8)

The SP stated that the aircraft's speed was too high on final approach, and that the aircraft porpoised after touch down on the runway. The SP attempted a go-around, but the throttle was stuck in the forward position. The aircraft drifted to the left side of the runway before it came to a stop on the overgrown grass area. He retarded the mixture to shut down the engine.

Crew

The SP had a Student Pilot Licence (SPL) that was initially issued by the Regulator (SACAA) on 19 September 2025 with an expiry date of 15 September 2026. The SP's Class 2 aviation medical certificate

was issued on 5 September 2025 with an expiry date of 30 September 2030. The SP had a total of 27.2 hours of which 12.7 hours were accumulated on the aircraft type.

Aircraft

The latest mandatory periodic inspection (MPI) of the aircraft was conducted and certified on 12 May 2026 at 15 627 hours after which a Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) was issued with an expiry date of 11 May 2027 or at 15 727 hours, whichever comes first. The aircraft had accumulated a total of 69.14 hours since the stated MPI. The aircraft had a valid Certificate of Airworthiness (C of A) that was issued by the Regulator on 21 December 2001. The latest C of A had an expiry date of 31 December 2026. The aircraft's Certificate of Registration (C of R) was issued to the current owner on 25 July 2018.

Aircraft Maintenance Organisation

The aircraft maintenance organisation (AMO) which conducted the MPI had an AMO Certificate that was issued on 26 September 2025 with an expiry date of 30 September 2026. The aircraft type was endorsed in the AMO's Operations Specifications.

Approved Training Organisation

The approved training organisation (ATO) had an ATO Certificate that was issued on 1 August 2023 with an expiry date of 31 July 2028. The aircraft type was endorsed in the ATO's Operations Specifications.

Findings

2. The student pilot (SP) had a total of 27.2 hours of which 12.7 hours were acquired on the aircraft type. The SP was conducting a solo consolidation flight towards attainment of a Private Pilot Licence (PPL).
3. The aircraft records indicated that the aircraft was properly maintained.
4. The approved training organisation (ATO) was properly certified and rated for the type of training conducted.
5. The SP initiated the flare too high which resulted in an excessive rate of descent; the aircraft landed deep and hard, and it porpoised during which nose wheel strut bent slightly rearwards, causing the propeller to strike the runway surface.
6. The SP attempted a go-around, but it was not successful due to the throttle that was stuck forward; he continued with the landing despite an excessive approach height.
7. The SP lost directional control of the aircraft before it rested on the overgrown grass area on the left side of the runway.

8. The SP vacated the aircraft unassisted; he was not injured.
9. Favourable weather conditions prevailed at the time of the flight; the weather was not a contributing factor to this accident.
Probable Cause(s)
Unstable approach resulted in the aircraft touching down deep and hard with the nose wheel first and porpoised, consequently, the nose gear strut bent slightly rearwards, and the propeller struck the runway.
Contributing Factor(s)
1. Poor landing technique. 2. Failure to initiate a timely go-around after recognising that the aircraft's approach speed was excessive.
Safety Action(s)
None.
Safety Message and/or Safety Recommendation/s
None.
About this Report
<i>The decision to conduct a limited investigation is based on factors including whether the cause is known and the evidence supporting the cause is clear, the level of safety benefit likely to be obtained from an investigation and that will determine the scope of an investigation. For this occurrence, a limited investigation has been conducted, and the Accident and Incident Investigations Division (AIID) has relied on the information submitted by the affected person/s and organisation/s to compile this limited report. The report has been compiled using information supplied in the initial notification, as well as from follow-up desk top enquiries to bring awareness of potential safety issues to the industry in respect of this occurrence, as well as possible safety action/s that the industry might want to consider in preventing a recurrence of a similar occurrence.</i>
<i>All times given in this report are Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC) and will be denoted by (Z). South African Standard Time is UTC plus 2 hours.</i>
Purpose
<i>In terms of Regulation 12.03.1 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011 and ICAO Annex 13, this report was compiled in the interest of the promotion of aviation safety and the reduction of the risk of aviation accidents or incidents and not to apportion blame or liability.</i>
Disclaimer
<i>This report is produced without prejudice to the rights of the AIID, which are reserved.</i>

This report is issued by:

**Accident and Incident Investigations Division
South African Civil Aviation Authority
Republic of South Africa**