LIMITED OCCURRENCE INVESTIGATION REPORT – FINAL

Reference Number	CA18/3/2/1538						
Classification	Serious Incident	**Date**	27 February 2026	**Time**	1256Z		
Type of Operation	Private (Part 91)						
Location							
Place of Departure	Bram Fischer International Airport (FABL), Free State Province	Place of Intended Landing	Rand Airport (FAGM), Gauteng Province				
Place of Occurrence	Runway 29 at Rand Airport (FAGM), Gauteng Province						
GPS Co-ordinates	Latitude	26°14' 18.35" S	Longitude	28° 08' 50.90" E	Elevation	5 474 ft	
Aircraft Information							
Registration	ZS-CJG						
Make; Model; S/N	Piper; PA-28-180 Cherokee (Serial Number: 28-2761)						
Damage to Aircraft	Substantial	Total Aircraft Hours	8 660.4				
Pilot-in-command							
Licence Type	Private Pilot Licence (PPL)	Gender	Male	Age	29		
Licence Valid	Yes	Total Hours	120.6	Total Hours on Type	120.6		
Total Hours 30 Days	7.7	Total Flying on Type Past 90 Days	36.3				
People On-board	1+1	**Injuries**	0	**Fatalities**	0	**Other (on ground)**	0

What Happened

On Friday, 27 February 2026, a pilot and a passenger on-board a Piper PA-28-180 Cherokee aircraft registered ZS-CJG took off on a private flight from Bram Fischer International Airport (FABL) in Free State province to Rand Airport (FAGM) in Gauteng province. The flight was conducted under visual meteorological conditions (VMC) by day and under the provisions of Part 91 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011, as amended.

The pilot stated that a pre-flight inspection of the aircraft was conducted with no anomalies noted. The aircraft took off and routed to FAGM; the flight was uneventful. The wind was calm with a light fall of rain during approach for landing on Runway 29 at FAGM, and the approach speed was approximately 80 miles per hour (mph). After touchdown and during the landing roll, the pilot stated that the aircraft started to veer off to the right of the centreline. He then applied the left rudder to recover; however, the aircraft was unsteady (oscillated). He, therefore, lost directional control of the aircraft which exited to the left (opposite side) during which the nose gear strut collapsed.

The aircraft came to rest on the grass on the left side of the runway. The aircraft was substantially damaged. Both occupants were not injured.

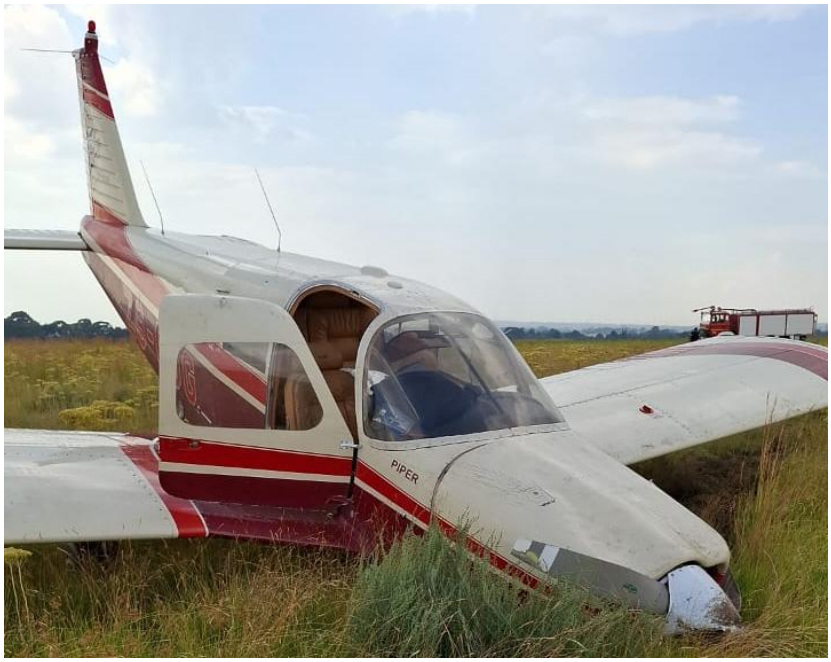

Figure 1: The resting position of the aircraft after the serious incident. (Source: Recovery team)

After the serious incident, the aircraft was recovered to the aircraft maintenance organisation (AMO) facility at FAGM. Upon inspection of the aircraft by the investigating team, it was found that the rudder was trimmed nose right. They were also able to verify that the trim control was working and that there was continuity in the control cables. *It should be noted that because of the damage sustained to the nose gear, the investigating team could not accurately assess the rigging of the rudder control* or if the rudder trim was affected.

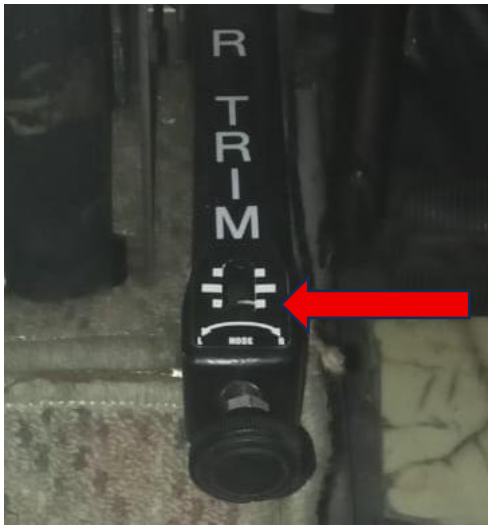

Figure 2: Rudder trim indication in the aircraft after the serious incident.

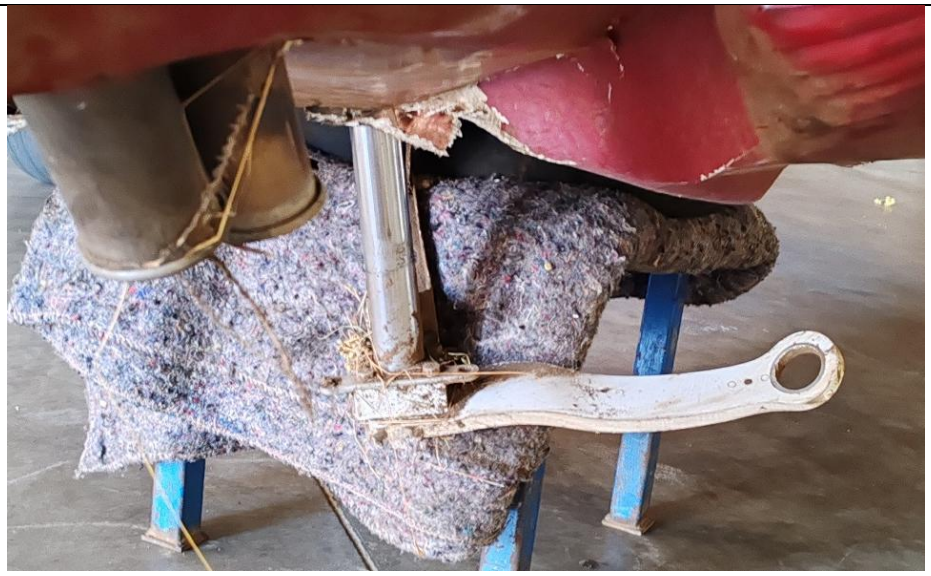

Figure 3: The damaged nose gear strut.

The Metrological Aerodrome Report (METAR) recorded at FAGM on 27 February 2026 at 1200Z indicated broken cloud cover at 3000ft with the wind blowing from a 250° direction at 5 knots (kts). The temperature was 25°C with a dew point of 10°C and visibility of 10km or more.

Wind Direction	250°	Wind Speed	5 kts	Visibility	10km+
Temperature	25°C	Cloud Cover	BKN030	Cloud Base	3000 ft
Dew Point	10°C	QNH	1021		

During the interview of the pilot by the investigation team, he stated that the aircraft exhibited a tendency to yaw and roll to the right during flight, and that he did not check or adjust the rudder trim. He further stated that during the approach to land on Runway 29 at FAGM, he had selected 25° flaps with an approach speed of approximately 80 mph. He stated that he aimed for the threshold numbers and touched down just beyond them. After touchdown, the aircraft veered to the right and he applied left rudder input to regain control; however, the aircraft oscillated as if about to overturn and it, subsequently, exited to the left side of the runway.

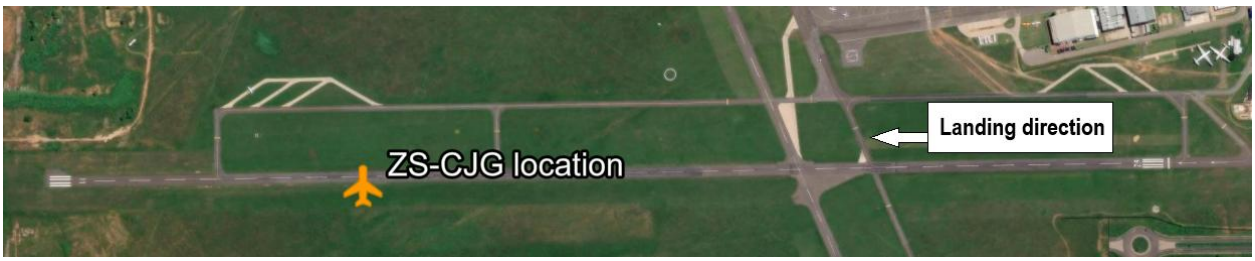

Figure 4: Location of ZS-CJG after the serious incident.

Landing Roll Distance (Source: Cherokee PA28-180 Pilot's Operating Handbook (POH)

The Cherokee PA28-180 POH indicates a landing roll distance of 635ft with flaps down and a landing distance of 1185ft over a 50-ft obstacle.

Findings

1. Personnel Information

1.1. The pilot had a Private Pilot Licence (PPL) that was initially issued by the Regulator (SACAA) on 25 November 2024. The licence was reissued on 22 December 2025 with an expiry date of 31 December 2027. The aircraft type was endorsed in his licence. The pilot had accumulated 120.6 total flying hours on the aircraft type.

1.2. The pilot had a Class 2 aviation medical certificate that was issued on 13 May 2024 with an expiry date of 31 May 2029. The pilot had no restrictions listed in his medical certificate.

2. Aircraft

2.1 The initial Certificate of Airworthiness (C of A) was issued on 23 April 2018. The renewed C of A had an expiry date of 8 October 2026.

2.2 The Certificate of Registration (C of R) was issued to the present owner on 31 January 2023.

2.3 The last 100-hour mandatory periodic inspection (MPI) of the aircraft was certified on 21 January 2026 at 8 577.7 total airframe hours.

2.4 The Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) was issued on 21 January 2026 with an expiry date of 21 January 2027 or at 8 677.7 total airframe hours, whichever comes first.

2.5 The aircraft had a total of 8 660.4 airframe hours at the time of the serious incident, which meant that the aircraft was flown a further 82.7 hours since the last MPI.

2.6 The right nose trim condition identified by the investigating team likely caused the aircraft to yaw and roll to the right in-flight. The nose trim condition also likely impacted the aircraft's directional stability during the landing roll. This indicated that the aircraft was probably unstable on approach and did not touch down in the area initially stated by the pilot.

3. Environment

3.1. There was light rainfall at the time the aircraft landed.

Probable Cause(s)

It is possible that the aircraft was unstable on final approach; consequently, after touchdown and during the landing roll, directional control was lost and the aircraft veered off the runway.

Contributing Factor(s)

1. Poor airmanship.
2. Poor landing technique.

Safety Action(s)

None.

Safety Message

None.

About this Report

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.

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.

Purpose

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.

Disclaimer

This report is issued by:

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