



## LIMITED OCCURRENCE INVESTIGATION REPORT – FINAL

<b>Reference Number</b>		CA18/3/2/1524					
<b>Classification</b>		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Serious Incident</td> <td style="width: 20%;"><b>Date</b></td> <td style="width: 30%;">27 January 2026</td> <td style="width: 10%;"><b>Time</b></td> <td style="width: 10%;">1100Z</td> </tr> </table>	Serious Incident	<b>Date</b>	27 January 2026	<b>Time</b>	1100Z
Serious Incident	<b>Date</b>	27 January 2026	<b>Time</b>	1100Z			
<b>Type of Operation</b>		Training (Part 141)					
<b>Location</b>							
<b>Place of Departure</b>		Potchefstroom Aerodrome (FAPS), North West Province		<b>Place of Intended Landing</b>		Potchefstroom Aerodrome (FAPS), North West Province	
<b>Place of Occurrence</b>		On Runway 21 at Potchefstroom Aerodrome, North West Province					
<b>GPS Co-ordinates</b>	<b>Latitude</b>	26°40'16.78" S	<b>Longitude</b>	027°04'55.17" E	<b>Elevation</b>	4 520 ft	
<b>Aircraft Information</b>							
<b>Registration</b>	ZU-FNS and ZS-GFP						
<b>Make; Model; S/N (ZU-FNS)</b>		Jabiru J430 (Serial Number: 791)					
<b>Make; Model; S/N (ZS-GFP)</b>		Schempp-Hirth Flugzeugbau; Nimbus 4D (Serial Number: 6)					
<b>Damage to Aircraft (ZU-FNS)</b>		None		<b>Total Aircraft Hours</b>		820.3	
<b>Damage to Aircraft (ZS-GFP)</b>		None		<b>Total Aircraft Hours</b>		11 299.91	
<b>Pilot-in-command</b>							
<b>Licence Type (ZU-FNS)</b>		Airline Transport Pilot Licence (ATPL)		<b>Gender</b>	Female	<b>Age</b> 35	
<b>Licence Type (ZS-GFP)</b>		Glider Pilot Licence (GPL)		<b>Gender</b>	Male	<b>Age</b> 35	
<b>Licence Valid (ZU-FNS)</b>		Yes	<b>Total Hours</b>	3 663.0	<b>Total Hours on Type</b> 165.3		
<b>Licence Valid (ZS-GFP)</b>		Yes	<b>Total Hours</b>	4 512.5	<b>Total Hours on Type</b> 60		
<b>Total Hours 30 Days (ZU-FNS)</b>		13		<b>Total Flying on Type Past 90 Days</b>		14	
<b>Total Hours 30 Days (ZS-GFP)</b>		8		<b>Total Flying on Type Past 90 Days</b>		8	
<b>People On-board (ZU-FNS)</b>		2+0	<b>Injuries</b>	0	<b>Fatalities</b>	0	<b>Other (on ground)</b> 0
<b>People On-board (ZS-GFP)</b>		1+0	<b>Injuries</b>	0	<b>Fatalities</b>	0	<b>Other (on ground)</b> 0
<b>What Happened</b>							
<p>On Tuesday, 27 January 2026, a chief flight instructor (CFI) and a student pilot (SP) on-board a Jabiru J430 aircraft registered ZU-FNS took off on circuits training from Potchefstroom Aerodrome (FAPS) in North West province with the intention to land at the same aerodrome. Meanwhile, a Nimbus 4D glider registered ZS-GFP was being towed by a vehicle from a hangar at FAPS to the threshold of Runway 03 with the intention to conduct a private flight before returning to land at the same aerodrome. Visual meteorological conditions (VMC) by day prevailed at the time of the flights. The ZU-FNS aircraft operated under the provisions of Part 141, whilst the ZS-GFP glider operated under the provisions of Part 94 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011, as amended.</p>							

According to the ZU-FNS CFI, they took off for circuit training from Runway 21 (RWY 21) and, later, landed back on the same runway. The SP was the pilot flying (PF). Due to light and variable wind conditions as well as the absence of traffic in the circuit at the time, the pair decided to take-off again, but this time from RWY 03. After take-off, the PF performed a teardrop manoeuvre and landed on the opposite RWY 21. *FAPS is a licensed aerodrome and has an asphalt runway orientated 03/21, which is 1 765 metres (m) long and 30m wide.* According to the CFI, shortly after take-off, they noticed a vehicle that was towing a glider to the threshold of RWY 03. The pair assumed that the glider would be towed clear of the runway.

The glider pilot (ZS-GFP), a Swiss national with a Sailplane Pilot Licence validated by SACAA for a 28-day period as a Glider Pilot Licence (GPL), stated that the operation began with the glider towed from the hangar to the launch area at the threshold of RWY 03 using a vehicle which he understood was standard procedure. After entering the taxiway, he held his position to give way to the departing Jabiru (ZU-FNS) in accordance with the right-of-way requirement. Once the aircraft had safely departed, the glider pilot made a radio call to announce his intention to enter RWY 03. Upon reaching the threshold, he positioned the glider for departure.

Meanwhile, the ZU-FNS crew attempted to establish communication with both the glider and the tow vehicle via the designated aerodrome radio frequency 123.00 Megahertz (MHz) to warn them of the active traffic, but without success. The crew then broadcasted their intention to land on RWY 21. Whilst on final approach, the glider was still positioned at the threshold of RWY 03. Further attempts to make radio contact failed, and the crew initiated a go-around.

During this period, another flight instructor from an approved training organisation (ATO) who was monitoring the radio frequency approached the glider pilot who was, at the time, standing outside his glider to enquire about the non-communication of his intention on the radio. The glider pilot stated that he was waiting for the tow aircraft and had no intention to vacate the runway. This information was relayed by the instructor on the ground to the crew on-board ZU-FNS.

Later, the tow aircraft established contact whilst on a holding position short of RWY 03 and advised that they were following their standard procedure and that they expected to launch the glider for take-off in approximately 15 minutes. The ZU-FNS crew continued to fly a non-standard left-hand side circuit pattern and, subsequently, decided to land on RWY 21 with sufficient length available as the glider was not willing to vacate the runway. The ZU-FNS landed safely and continued to taxi towards the threshold of RWY 03 to take a picture of the glider before vacating the runway (see Figure 2).

The glider pilot reiterated the landing event as stated by the ZU-FNS crew. Later, the Jabiru vacated the runway and taxied to the apron. The tow aircraft later arrived and launched the glider as planned.



**Figure 1:** An aerial view of FAPS and the positions of the ZU-FNS and ZS-GFS. (Source: Google Earth Map)



**Figure 2:** A picture of the glider taken by the CFI following a full-stop landing near RWY 03 threshold. (Source: CPI)



**Gridding Procedures.  
Runway 03.**

Runway 03 will mostly be in use for launching up until a tailwind of about 12-15 knots. (for rope break options)

**Before** entering the Runway make sure that there is no aircraft on the final approach or base leg segment.

**LOOKOUT! Radio call must be made to enter the runway !**

**Expedite** all movements on the runway. Park gliders in the **green** area's and leave tow out gear and vehicles in the **orange** area.

**KEEP RED CLEAR AT ALL TIMES**

**Figure 3:** FAPS demarcation for glider operation positioning. (Source: Operator)

According to Jabiru J430, Section 5 of the Owner's Manual

**PERFORMANCES**

**TAKE-OFF AND LANDING DISTANCES**

*Take-off safety speed is 1.3 V<sub>si</sub> 65 KIAS.*

*Landing approach speed (Full Flap) 65 KIAS*

<i>Take-off Distance to 50' (Factored):</i>	<i>392m (1286ft)</i>
<i>Take-off Ground Roll (Factored):</i>	<i>249m (817ft)</i>
<i>Landing distance from 50' (Factored):</i>	<i>588m (1929ft)</i>
<i>Landing ground roll (Factored):</i>	<i>155m (509ft)</i>

**CAUTION:** *Take-off and landing distances must be used as a guide only. Ensure all other factors are accounted for before attempting to operate from a runway of marginal length.*

*Actual aircraft performance will be affected by factors including, but not limited to:*

- i. Aircraft weight and loading (CG position)*
- ii. Runway altitude above sea level*
- iii. Runway slope and surface (paved, sand, gravel, grass – wet or dry)*
- iv. Aircraft configuration (flap angle, spats fitted or removed)*
- v. Pilot skill*

• *The distances quoted above are for the following typical scenario:*

- i. An aircraft at 600kg and a forward CG position*
- ii. Operating from a paved, level runway surface*
- iii. Runway height of 100' above sea level*
- iv. Ambient temperature of 24°C, nil wind*

The runway length was sufficient to land with adequate clearance remaining.

#### Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP)

*The AIP on FAPS with reference AD 2-FAPS-1, dated 15 April 2023, was found not to contain any information with reference to glider operations at this aerodrome.*

#### Civil Aviation Regulations

The following Parts of the Civil Aviation Regulations 2011 apply to safe flight operation.

#### Part 91.06 Rules of the Air: Taxi Rules

*According to CAR Part 91.06.11, at uncontrolled aerodromes, aircraft landing or taking off have priority, followed by towed aircraft, such as gliders, moving from the apron to the runway under the tow driver's responsibility, with all movements requiring clear radio broadcasts of intentions and positions in accordance with local procedures. (Refer to Part 91.06.11)*

#### Part 139.01.11 Use of Runways or Taxiways

*For unmanned aerodromes:*

*Aircraft may operate without ATC clearance, provided it is done in a manner that shall not endanger aircraft traffic.*

#### Mandatory Radio Communication in Advisory Airspace

*According to CAR's Part 91.06.17 of the Air Rules, it states that when operating in advisory airspace, the Pilot-in-Command must ensure that the aircraft's presence and intentions are communicated to others. If two-way radio communication cannot be established, the pilot must broadcast their intentions before entering the airspace and continue to make position reports, such as at reporting points and when leaving the area. Throughout the flight in that airspace, the pilot must maintain a continuous listening watch on the designated frequency. However, within the Johannesburg FIR, using SELCAL with prior notification to the flight information centre is considered an acceptable alternative to continuous radio listening.*

### **Findings**

#### Pilot

##### ZU-FNS

1. The CFI had an Airline Transport Pilot Licence (ATPL) Aeroplane that was initially issued by the Regulator (SACAA) on 12 August 2020. The renewed licence was issued on 1 September 2025 with an expiry date of 31 August 2026.

2. The CFI's Class 1 medical certificate was issued on 1 August 2025 with an expiry date of 1 August 2026 and with no restrictions.
3. The CFI had a total of 3 663.0 hours of which 165.3 hours were accumulated on the aircraft type. The aircraft type was endorsed in her logbook.
4. The CFI was licensed, medically fit and qualified to operate the aircraft at the time of the flight.

ZS-GFP

5. The glider pilot, a Swiss national (Switzerland), had a foreign Sailplane Pilot Licence (SPL) that was initially issued on 23 May 2007. The licence was validated by the Regulator for recreational flying for 28 days (from 1 to 28 January 2026).
6. The glider pilot had a total of 4 512.5 hours of which 60 hours were accumulated on the glider type. The glider type was endorsed in his logbook.

Aircraft: ZU-FNS

7. The aircraft had an Authority-to-Fly (ATF) Certificate that was issued by the Regulator on 3 July 2025 with an expiry date of 31 July 2026. The aircraft was registered to the owner on 29 July 2022.
8. The aircraft's last maintenance schedule was conducted on 23 May 2025 at 288.3 airframe hours after which a Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) was issued with an expiry date of 22 May 2026 or at 388.3 airframe hours, whichever comes first. The aircraft had a total of 379 airframe hours; it had accumulated a total of 80.7 hours since the last maintenance inspection.
9. Maintenance of the aircraft was conducted by an approved person (AP) who had a valid AP Certificate that was issued by the Regulator on 26 September 2024 with an expiry date of 25 September 2026. The aircraft was endorsed in the AP's operational specifications.
10. The aircraft was operated by an approved training organisation which had a valid ATO Certificate that was issued by the Regulator on 5 February 2021 with an expiry date of 28 February 2026. The aircraft was not endorsed in the ATO's operational specifications.

Glider: ZS-GFP

11. The glider had an Authority-to-Fly (ATF) Certificate that was issued by the Regulator on 21 November 2025 with an expiry date of 30 November 2026. The aircraft was registered to the current owner on 28 August 2019.
12. The glider's last maintenance schedule was conducted on 3 November 2025 at 11 266.17 airframe hours after which a Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) was issued with an expiry date of 2 November 2026 or at 11 466.17 airframe hours, whichever comes first. The glider had a total of 11

299.91 airframe hours; it had accumulated a total of 33.74 airframe hours since the last maintenance inspection.

13. Maintenance of the glider was conducted by the AP who had a valid AP Certificate that was issued by the Regulator on 26 September 2024 with an expiry date of 25 September 2026. The aircraft was endorsed in the AP's operational specifications.
14. The aircraft and the glider were licensed and serviceable with no defects noted on any of their maintenance logbooks at the time of the flights; they operated within the required Regulatory framework.

#### Environment

15. Fine weather conditions prevailed at the time of the flights; the weather had no bearing to this serious incident.

#### Mission

16. The ZU-FNS crew was conducting routine circuit training at an uncontrolled aerodrome; light winds prevailed at the time and the crew elected to change runways from RWY 21 to RWY 03, creating reciprocal operations that required heightened situational awareness and communication.
17. The glider (ZS-GFP) was initially towed from the hangar and gave way to departing traffic. Although the glider pilot broadcasted his intention to backtrack on RWY 03, he did not confirm with active traffic that it could safely enter the taxiway before positioning at the threshold for launch.
18. The glider remained stationary on the active runway for an extended period before launch, unnecessarily occupying critical space and increasing risk to other aircraft.
19. Repeated radio calls by the ZS-FNP crew to the glider and tow vehicle went unanswered, indicating failure to maintain continuous active listening, contrary to advisory airspace and local procedures.
20. The situation created a direct conflict as the Jabiru crew on final approach had to execute a go-around. A third party's (another instructor) enquiry to clear the runway was refused by the glider pilot who stated that he was waiting for the tow aircraft, confirming poor judgment and non-compliance.
21. The glider remained on the runway until the tow aircraft arrived and launch it, highlighting non-compliance with right-of-way rules, local gliding procedures, and safe runway practices; this resulted in runway incursion and increased collision risk.

## Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP)

22. The AIP information on FAPS with reference AD 2-FAPS-1, dated 15 April 2023, did not contain information referencing glider operations at this aerodrome.

### **Probable Cause**

The glider entered and remained in the active runway without confirming clearance through effective radio communication and whilst not ready for immediate launch; it failed to respond to repeated radio calls, resulting in a runway incursion.

### **Contributing Factors**

1. Non-compliance to the standard operating procedure for radio communication in advisory airspace by the glider pilot and the tow vehicle driver.
2. Non-compliance to the gliding standard operating procedures regarding runway occupancy and launch readiness by the glider pilot and the tow vehicle driver.
3. Poor planning by the glider pilot who positioned the glider on the runway long before the arrival of the tow aircraft.
4. Absence of glider operation information in the AIP for FAPS, reference: AIP AD 2-FAPS-1, dated 15 April 2023.

### **Safety Action**

1. Operators must reinforce right-of-way and runway readiness in briefings and training, practice scenario-based circuit and glider operations, follow clear local procedures for runway use and communication, and respond promptly on the radio while co-ordinating proactively with all aerodrome users.

### **Safety Message and/or Safety Recommendations**

1. It is recommended to the Director of Civil Aviation that the AIP, with reference to FAPS, be updated with the inclusion of gliding operations information to mitigate a safety hazard to powered flight aviators.
2. It is recommended to the Director of Civil Aviation that when issuing the validation of a foreign pilot licence, a review of the validation process be undertaken to assess the overall competency, communication and airmanship to ensure adequate compliance with the SACARs and SACATs when flying in South African airspace.

### **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 desktop 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.*

<b>Purpose</b>
<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>
<b>Disclaimer</b>
<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**