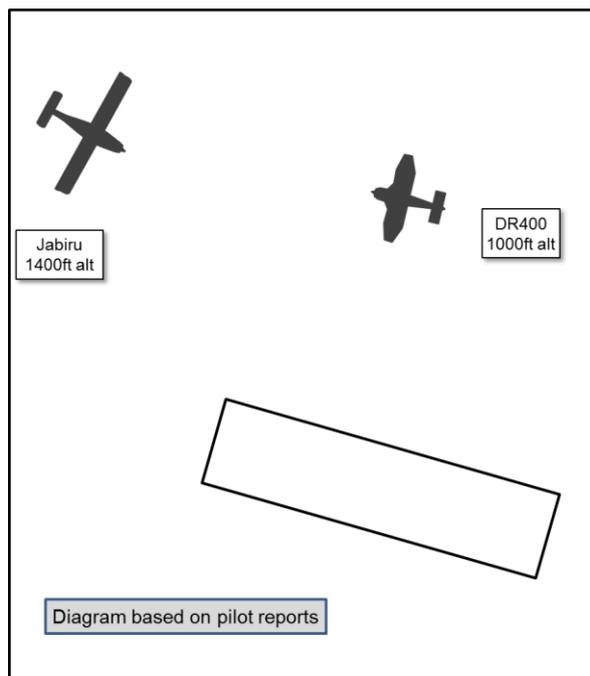


AIRPROX REPORT No 2014164Date/Time: 2 Sep 2014 1610ZPosition: 5109N 00038E
(1nm N Lashendon/Headcorn)Airspace: Lon FIR (Class: G)Aircraft 1 Aircraft 2Type: DR400 JabiruOperator: Civ Trg Civ PteAlt/FL: 1000ft 1400ft
QFE (1015hPa) NKConditions: VMC VMCVisibility: 10km NKReported Separation:

0ft V/0.5nm H NK V/200m H

Recorded Separation: NK**PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB**

THE ROBIN DR400 PILOT reports flying a white aircraft with strobe lights illuminated and transponder selected with Mode 3A only. The aircraft was not fitted with a TCAS. He was one mile north of the airfield, downwind for RW10. When about halfway downwind he observed the other aircraft in his half past twelve, heading towards him at the same level. He immediately turned sharply to the right and advised over the radio that he was doing so. He did this because, had the other aircraft turned to the left, there would probably have been a collision.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE JABIRU PILOT reports flying a white and blue microlight at 80kts without lights or a transponder. He was flying his first cross-country solo; the cloud base was 1500ft so he was flying at 1400ft. He called Headcorn to report inbound and advised that he was a student pilot and was having trouble spotting the airfield. A few minutes later he heard his call-sign on the radio and an instruction to bank right. He couldn't see anything straight ahead, but looked left and saw an aircraft in his 11 o'clock, below but climbing and about 200-300m away. He then banked right, away from the other aircraft. He turned 180° and then saw another aircraft turning finals to Headcorn on his left, so he asked to join base-leg, which was approved. After landing and reporting in, he admitted to the radio operator that he was having trouble finding the airfield, the radio operator commented that the other pilot didn't need to do what he just did but, feeling relieved that his first solo was completed, the Jabiru pilot didn't pursue this any further.

Factual Background

The weather at Gatwick was recorded as:

METAR EGKK 021550Z 21010KT 9999 SCT029 21/14 Q1002

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

Both pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to fly into such proximity as to create a danger of collision¹. Furthermore, the pilot of an aircraft in the vicinity of an aerodrome is required to conform to the pattern of traffic formed by other aircraft at that aerodrome.²

Summary

An Airprox was reported on 2nd August 2014 at 1610z when a DR400 and a Jabiru flew into conflict in the Headcorn visual circuit. The DR400 was established downwind in the visual circuit at 1000ft and the Jabiru pilot was joining the circuit. Both pilots took avoiding action but, because the incident does not show on radar, the exact separation is not known.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both aircraft.

The Board first looked at the actions of the Jabiru pilot. He was on a first solo cross-country exercise and members of the Board who were familiar with Headcorn acknowledged that it could be difficult to find. Perhaps under considerable self-pressure to complete the sortie as planned, the Board opined that the Jabiru pilot would instead have been better served in orbiting to positively ascertain his position before attempting to join, rather than blindly pressing on towards the airfield. They wondered whether the pilot had been adequately briefed on 'lost' procedures and also questioned the wisdom of the instructor who sent out the student pilot on a cross-country exercise in a cloud-base of 1500ft. Nevertheless, to his great credit, the Jabiru pilot had communicated to Headcorn that he was having trouble finding them, and this should have been a cue to other aircraft on the frequency to be wary of an inbound aircraft that might not conform to normal circuit patterns. Understandably intent on looking for the airfield, unable to climb to avoid it due to cloud, and not releasing how close he was to the airfield, he inadvertently flew the wrong way downwind (albeit at 1400ft, so above the circuit traffic); no doubt flustered by all of this, the inexperienced Jabiru pilot's look-out inevitably faltered as he flew head-to-head with the DR400.

For his part, the DR400 pilot was in the circuit at 1000ft and would not have expected to meet traffic in the opposite direction. Assuming that he had not heard of the Jabiru pilot's plight on the radio, the Board decided that the element of surprise probably made the situation appear worse to the DR400 pilot than it really was, hence his assessment of the high risk of collision despite the fact that the two aircraft seemingly already had 400ft separation. The DR400 pilot's own avoiding action additionally ensured that the situation did not deteriorate further.

The Jabiru pilot had reported that he had been instructed to bank right during the incident and the Board offered a word of caution regarding instructing other aircraft to carry out avoiding manoeuvres; those not in the cockpit could not have known the Jabiru aircraft's dynamics or circumstances pertaining so there were clear dangers in passing such directive instructions.

In deciding on the cause, the Board agreed that it was that the inexperienced Jabiru pilot had flown into conflict with the DR400 whilst uncertain of his position; a contributory factor being that the Jabiru pilot had flown downwind in the wrong direction. Notwithstanding, given the height separation introduced by the Jabiru pilot by staying above circuit height, and the additional avoiding manoeuvre of the DR400 pilot, they assessed the risk as Category C, effective and timely actions had been taken to avoid a collision.

¹ Rules of the Air 2007 (as amended), Rule 8 (Avoiding aerial collisions).

² Ibid., Rule 12 (Flight in the vicinity of an aerodrome).

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The Jabiru pilot flew into conflict with the DR400.

Contributory Factor(s): The Jabiru pilot inadvertently flew downwind in the wrong direction.

Degree of Risk: C.

ERC Score³: 20.

³ Although the Event Risk Classification (ERC) trial had been formally terminated for future development at the time of the Board, for data continuity and consistency purposes, Director UKAB and the UKAB Secretariat provided a shadow assessment of ERC.